Sustainability, the TKFA, and the communal area of Omatjette in the context of the land question in Namibia

Report on the field research in Namibia

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Contents

Glossary

ADC	Agricultural Development Centre
AGM	Annual General Meeting
DRF	Desert Research Foundation
DTA	Demokratische Turnhallen Allianz (Democratic Sportshall Association)
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation)
LAGSUS	Language, Gender and Sustainability Research Project
MAWRD	Ministry for Agriculture, Water, and Rural Development
NEPRU	Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit
NIED	Namibian Institue for Educational Development
SARDEP	Sustainable Animal Range Development Program
SWAPO	Southwest African People's Organisation
TKFA	Tjohorong Kondjee Farmers' Association
TUCSIN	The University Centre for Studies in Namibia
UNAM	University of Namibia

Summary

The field research of the sociology component of LAGSUS, between July 20 and August 31, provided the first direct experience of the Namibian subproject. The effectiveness of this experience was enhanced by a number of fortuitious circumstances which allowed to achieve the following main results:

- An insight into the linkages between political, economic and historic factors influencing the development and its perception among theHerero; this was achieved through the study of literature as well as through participation in the commemoration of the Herero genocide at Ohamakari (August 14), and through participation in the conference "Decontaminating the Namibian Past" (August 17-20) – see the chapters on *The Herero genocide and its relevance for the research project* and *Sustainabilty, Power and Trust in the Omatjette area*
- Being able to take part in a number of interviews and the organization building workshop of the Tjohorongo Kondjee Farmers Association (all of them arranged by Rose Marie Beck before my coming to Namibia) provided me with a very good insight into some of the local problems as well as the attempts to overcome some of them through the efforts of the Farmers Association; this knowledge provided the background for some additional interviews I conducted in Otopupa, the home village of my assistant for the video work; see the chapter on *The TKFA and rural development in Omatjette*
- The newly formulated method of using improvised theatre of school children for an indirect approach to elucidate social relationships among adults could be promoted through various contacts (NIED and KCAC) and also tested in the Omatjette primary school; this test resulted in two versions of a story produced by grade seven and a recording of a discussion with parents following a showing of the second version at the Omatjette primary school; see the chapter on *The experience with the theatre method*
- Some additional information on the water and development situation of Omatjette was obtained through complying with the request of the local extension officer for the water office: to produce a short video film which could be used for fundraising; this confirmed the centrality of a dependable water supply for virtually all development efforts, a topic which had been repeatedly raised also in other contexts;
- The discussions with Rose Marie Beck during the field research, and the discussions during the LAGSUS conference and the internal LAGSUS workshop in Omaruru, complemented by final discussions with Thomas Bearth and Michael Fremerey in Windhoek led to a clarification of the research agenda and method for the sociology component. They also led to a clarification of my own perception of my role within the overall project. These points are dealt with in the last two chapters of this report: *Epistemological conclusions* and *Methodological conclusions for the sociology component*

While the details for the above results are provided in the sections mentioned, two further points need to be mentioned.

1) I have deliberately attempted to achieve clarity through abstraction and condensation, a process which has occasionally relied on making use of mere impressions during the field research. This necessarily involves the risk of a skewed representation of conditions in Omatjette. I hope that running this risk, however, makes it easier for the reader to detect my errors – and to help me correct them by providing feedback. This report, therefore, is unfinished. Its completion requires the collaboration of the other members of the research team – through giving open and critical feedback.

2) One particular event does not fit the scientific narrative of this research report, but needs to mentioned for administrative purposes: on the first evening of my stay in Windhoek, on the way back to Pension Steiner I was held up and robbed by a group of youngsters on the railway bridge next to the Wernhill shopping centre. While the losses were not tragic, they involved the 128 MB memory stick which is part of the equipment provided by LAGSUS. The robbery was reported to the police, of which I only retain a slip with a reference to the orginal file, because my attempt to get the full report failed due to the absence of the relevant officer when I went to get the copy on the last day of my stay.

The Herero genocide and its relevance for the research project

The sociology project's field research period lasted from July 20 to August 31, which coincided with some events of national importance to Namibia, but particularly the Herero: in August 1904, Generalleutnant Lothar von Trotha attacked the Herero at Ohamakari near the Waterberg in a deliberate attempt to annihilate all Herero.
In commemoration of this fortunately unsuccessful attempt an official event had been organized at Okakara which was attended by several thousand Herero and other guests. The list of invited speakers ran to 25, of which only a fraction could deliver theirs speeches, as few of the speakers kept to the allotted time of 5 minutes. It was in this framework that Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul apologized in the name of the German government for the crimes committed in the name of Germany one hundred years earlier[1]. While this did not settle the claim for the payment of reparations[2] which the Herero Paramount Chief Kuaima Riruako sought to achieve by filing a court case on June 13, 2001, through the Washington-based *Herero People's Reparation Corporation*[3], it did appease the festering anger of many Herero – and caused a number of speakers after Heidemarie Wieczorekt-Zeul to change their speeches: the demand for an apology was turned into a grateful acknowledgement of the apology.
This anger had been graphically expressed by a black Namibian farmer in a bar the night before. Realizing that I was not the owner of the place but a German guest, he seized the opportunity to speak to a German to repeat again and again his frustration about the German denial of the genocide and of concentration camps. He went to the extent of threatening that angry people could "take justice in their own hands" and kill white farmers such as the Diekmanns who still occupied the area at Ohamakari. For him, the remark of the German ambassador had been an insult: "Just forget about reparations.[4]" For him this was a

[1] For the official text see http://www.bmz.de/de/presse/reden/ministerin/rede20040814.html. This text does not contain, however, the phrase acknowledging that the crimes committed by v. Trotha would today commonly be judged as genocide with proceedings similar to the one brought against Milosevic. This official version also does not contain the vehemence with which more than one angry Herero still shouted "apology" after her speech had ended. It was in response to these shouts that she went back to the microphone to declare: "Let there be no misunderstanding: my whole speech was an apology."– as the report published first in *Politik* on August 16, 2004, and then again in the *Hamburger Abendblatt* on Sept. 21, 2004, mentions.
[2] Petros Kuteeue in: *The Namibian,* August 20, 2004
[3] *The Namibian,* January 24, 2003, Full story at http://www.news24.com/News24/Africa/News/0,6119,2-11-1447_1311006,00.html
[4] I did not check the veracity of what the German ambassador had said: what is important in this context is how it was perceived. That this sort of perception may be quite widespread became clear to me when I witnessed a number of misunderstandings which caused people to feel hurt and angry during the conference "Decontaminating the Namibian Past": all of these emotional reactions had to do with the feeling that the injuries of the colonial past are carried over into the present – as an unbroken tradition of not being able to listen to and to respect the original inhabitants of the place. To respect them as human beings *and* as the rightful owners of the

provocation. He went on to prove what the Germans had done: he called a number of people to show the traces left behind by the Germans: "See this man's skin? How light his colour is? This is the result of rape. And see that woman? That nose is not a Herero nose!" He was unequivocal in demanding reparation payments, and for him it was clear that the German government is still responsible for the white settlers of German origin in Namibia.
This was a chance meeting at a beer hall – and yet it gave me a glimpse of what I believe to be a rather widespread frame of mind. It came from a successful man, who had completed his studies and managed to open his own farm and who was pround of his achievements. And yet he seemed wounded by the injustices of the past. While it is empirically impossible to establish, it does not seem unreasonable to hypothesize that it is a similar anger and a similarly felt wound which was behind the shouts for "apology" even after Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul's speech: it seems reasonable to assume a collective trauma[5] at the root of emotional reactions which also came to the fore during the conference "Decontaminating the Namibian Past", and which are possibly at the root of what can be experienced as a certain reluctance and mistrust in the research areas around Omatjette.

The Conference "Decontaminating the Namibian Past"

At the conference "Decontaminating the Namibian Past" - which was organized by Dr. Wolfram Hartmann from the History Department of UNAM from 17-21 August 2004 – the wound was made explicit in Uazuvara Katjivena's presentation in the first plenary session of the conference. It was made explicit in his paper and also in his complaint that he was only given 15 minutes to present the painful experiences of his own grandmother in a historical context – and that his paper was not included in the package of papers handed out to participants. While this oversight was quickly corrected, it lent credence to the complaint that white people simply could not listen: that the majority of voices about the history of *black* Namibian people came from foreign and *white* historians – in general and at the conference itself, which claimed to seek a redress for this imbalance.
Katjivena was one of the presenters at the conference who had decided to make the link between the trauma experienced by his grandmother and his own involvement in science explicit. In a chapter entitled *Reconciliation: The Healing* process, he writes[6],

> When my grandmother was sending me back to the white man's school to learn to understand why the white people did what they did to us, she was teaching me to see the people behind the events. She was teaching me that all people are capable of doing evil for a multitude of reasons. When we, the oppressed people of Namibia, were working on a blueprint for an independent country, we were aware of our errors, our limitations and our disadvantages. It was that awareness that brought about the policy of reconciliation. We wanted to forgive and be forgiven. We wanted to start afresh by deliberately aiming to circumvent the mistakes of the past. But no one can erase the pain, sores and humiliations of the past with a handshake. Mistakes have to be visible to be rectified.

On that basis he put forward a strong plea for an official apology by the German government in his *paper* – a plea which was absent in the *presentation*, as the conference took place after Heidemarie Wieczoreck-Zeul's speech at Ohamakari. On that basis he also put forward a

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land – two aspects which seem to get mixed up in reactions like the one reported and also in parts of the discourse about land reform.

[5] For the best account I have found on the effects of traumatic experiences see Herman (1992); traces of the trauma of 1904/1095 were also found by Kößler in letters written to a German missionary in 1946 (Kößler 1998)

[6] Katjivena (2004)

suggestion for a true dialogue as a basis for a "culture of peace" – and a call for reparation payments from the German government.
Another presenter from that group was Yvette Abrahams who touched on the issue of healing from the point of view of the need to mourn over the immensity of the loss caused by genocide, a mourning she had experienced only during her PhD work – which she had only been able to do because her grandmother and her mother had made sacrifices to enable her to study: "So, some of you ask for the conditions which it takes to start mourning? I can tell you: It takes three generations and a lot of eggs."
It was by selling eggs that her grandmother had been able to earn the money for her studying, and the mourning in the third generation had been her own mourning when studying the past horrors for her PhD[7].
I mention these two instance of critical and at the same time proud self-reflection because they seem to allow a better understanding of other reactions to the presentations of well-meaning critical white scientists at the conference I was able to observe. Tom Fox was severly censured for his discussion of how the events of 1904 were "appropriated" in the current discourse on nation-building – for referring to fragmented "ethnic identities" at the time, as well as for his "poor understanding" of the Hendrik Witbooi papers (Fox 2004). Henning Melber was criticized for his use of the name *Morengo* instead of *Marenga* for one of the early "freedom fighters" in a presentation reviewing how all the major national days were related to violent events (Melber 2004). What was remarkable in both cases was the emotional intensity of the reproach – in both cases the reproach that a white scientist had not shown enough understanding (in the first case) or respect (in the second case). What made the second event remarkable was that the critic insisted on one particular version of the spelling of the name as being the "true" Herero one which - according to other sources - had been the *mis*spelling first used by colonial German authorities. Henning Melber explicitly used the spelling he had heard from a member of that family at a funeral. The importance of correctly spelling names as a sign of respect completely sidelined the main issue of Melber's paper in the discussion following the presentation: the curious fact that virtually *all* national holidays in Namibia commemorate events of violence.
These were not the only instances of what on would normally gloss over as "irrational" behaviours, but they suffice to indicate that past traumatic experiences colour even scientific discussions about the history of Namibia. As one participant remarked with respect to the title of the conference: "the point is not only about decontaminating the past: it is the present which is still contaminated. Reconcilation and healing have to take place in the present and take care of the past as it lives on in the present[8]."

[7] The consequences of what she calls *Post-Colonial Stress Disorder* – as a result of the genocide committed by the Germans - is described as follows in he paper (Abrahams 2004):
"A loss of such immensity made the act of grieving impossi ble. To have even begun to grieve would have been such a great sorrow-work we would still be crying, three generations later. Instead, we became angry. When I look around me and see the violence which has engulfed African families, I see not only the living men who look for manhood in all the wrong places, but laos the missing great-grandfathers who did not olive to be parents. Genocide means that not only aour father, but your brothers, sons, uncles, sometimes also wives and daughters, are gone. The entire eocllectivity which makes you, you, is gone. What is left bt the pain? When I look aroung me and see a collective, compulsive addicdtion to violence and lies, I see a post-traumatic stress disorder echoing down the generations. Ido not mean to remove from each person the right to decide between right and wrong, or our personal responsibility for our actions. The questions which interest me are these: how long does it take to find our minds after such an event? How do we create a theory and practice which will lead us to sanity? Mabe it is up to us, the great-grandchildren of genocide, to provide the answers.

[8] These were not the exact words. I did not have a tape recorder running. These words are my verbal expression of the meaning I heard in that participant's words.

The past lives on in the present not only as a collective psychological trauma, but also in the form of the unequal distribution of land – and income in general[9] - which resulted from the colonial wars causing the psychological trauma. For those who identify with the victims, the denial of the genocide, as well as the non-acknowledgement of the fact that the present unequal economic structures are an outcome of the genocide and therefore injust, is tantamount to a continuation of the process of victimization.
Although the conference did not go far enough in ending the victimization – in the minds of some outspoken participants -, it addressed the issue of the historical veracity of the genocide in two ways. First, it gave a prominent place – in the first plenary session which was attended by various ambassadors – to a presentation refuting point by point the denial of genocide in a famous essay by Brigitte Lau, and an attempt at understanding why she, herself a historian and custodian of the National Archives in Namiba, could have produced a work of such shoddy scientific quality. The relevance of this refutation is demonstrated by the fact that the net based "free" encyclopedia *Wikipedia* – the providers of which pride themselves of a "progressive" frame of mind – explicitly do *not* refer to the Herero war as genocide, quoting colonial sources as well as Brigitte Lau's paper[10], but not the one work presently seen as the most authoritative account of the events: Jan-Bart Gewald's *Herero Heroes* (Gewald 19999). Thus, a web-based source which considers itself as fundamentally democratic because of its allegiance to the "open source" movement – "free access to information" – contributes to what the scientists cited before see – and *feel* – as a continuation of the victimization.
The second deliberate attempt to counter the prolongation of denials to accept the historical veracity of the genocide was a statement formulated by the remaining participants on the last day of the conference in response to a one-page "letter to the editor" published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung Windhoek.* The letter had been written in response to the conference and by a notorious rightwing activist who published a whole book trying to refute the *Völkermordlüge* (*The lie of the genocide*)[11], claiming that even historians were not of one mind concerning the veracity of the genocide. The relationship between the space accorded by the newspaper to this "letter" and the space accorded to reporting about the conference itself, in conjunction with the reporting one can find on the web on *Hamakari* (Hofmann 2004) lend credence to Katjivena's complaint that fourteen years after independence the mind of the "German" community in Namibia has not changed (Katjivena 2004). The main motive behind the statement formulated by conference participants was therefore to demonstrate that from a *scientific* point of view there could be no doubt about the veracity of the genocide – which the *Allgemeine Zeitung* reported on Sept. 2.

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[9] Werner (2003, quoting Hansohm *et al* 1999), writes: "The pattern of poverty in Namibia mirrors the unequal distribution of land. Namibia has the unenviable reputation of displaying some of the highest income inequalities in the world. In the late 1990s its Gini-coefficient was 0.70. Income inequalities are vast. Ten per cent of household representing 5.3% of the population consume 44% of total private consumption, while 90% of households consume an estimated 56%. The richest 10% of the population receives 65% of income."

[10] The entry „Hamakari – Schlacht am Waterberg" at *Wikipedia* (http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schlacht_am_Waterberg) ends with the following words: „Somit muss die Schlacht am Waterberg trotz einiger taktischer Erfolge als eine strategische Niederlage für die Schutztruppe angesehen werden. Die zwei Wochen später aufgenommene Verfolgung der Hereros in die Omaheke und die Besetzung der wenigen Wasserstellen durch die Schutztruppen führte zum Tod durch Verdursten von tausenden Hereros." This *Wikipedia* entry for „Schlacht am Waterberg" is taken word for word from a "historical forum" (*Geschichtsforum*) on the web (http://www.geschichtsforum.de/archive/index.php/t-74.html) – obviously disregarding the comment that references to recent literature are missing.

[11] The full title of Claus Nordbruch's book (2004) is *Völkermord an den Herero in Deutsch-Südwestafrika? Widerlegung einer Lüge* (*Herero Genocide in German Southwest-Africa? Refutation of a lie*). One brief visit on his website (http://www.nordbruch.org) is enough to see where he stands: he fights for the right to publish nationalist (if not nazi) songs and opinions in the name of freedom! Small wonder that some Namibians were incensed when an official document of the German government quoted Nordbruch as a reference – according to a story I heard during the conference, the truth of which I was not able to confirm, however..

During the writing of this report I discovered that the history department later distanced itself from this public statement again, claiming that it did not reflect "the spirit of tolerance, empathy, and mutual understanding which had characterized the deliberations during the conference.[12]"
In one sense, this distancing can be understood as the correction of a mistake: the mistake of hijacking the authority of an international scientific conference for the purpose of winning a point in a local feud between historians and journalists of one particular newspaper. In another sense these events underline what had become clear at the conference itself: that the fight about "truth" cannot be separated from the fight about political and economic interests and rights. Michel Foucault made the description of "regimes of truth" a major part of his work of describing the historical development of "discourses" – *Language, Gender and Sustainability* is now unwittingly involved in a live struggle over a "regime of truth" concerning the past and present situation of the Herero in Namibia. This struggle about "the truth" is inseparable from the struggle for the improvement of the living conditions of the Herero in the "communal areas" - and from the fight of the Herero as a community for a place in a nation which emerged from the colonial situation through violent struggle, and only in 1990[13].
While Rose Marie Beck acknowledged this situation through her choice of collaboration with TKFA as much as through her carefully balanced behaviour in the research area, it took me the special circumstances of this year 2004 to understand the specificity of the Namibian subproject of LAGUS.

The Omatjette research area

In Omatjette, the mistrust concerning the *intentions of white people* surfaces in the form of a continuous questioning of the purposes of the research itself and similarly constant attempts to gain some form of assistance through the research project. In the case of the TKFA these attempts were successful – and beneficial for the research project because the involvement of LAGSUS in TKFA's process of organization building furnishes a wealth of data not otherwise available.
The questioning of the purpose of the research project happened during virtually all the interviews I conducted outside of the interviews already scheduled in Rose Marie Beck's programme. In the more personal setting of talking to the foster parents and real grandmother of my research assistant and translator, Howard Tjijendeke, this took the form of beginning the conversation by asking me: "And what have you learnt while you were here in Namibia and in this area?" In the more official setting of interviews connected to the TKFA or the showing of the video of the school children's theatre performance, this took the form of asking: "How will this research benefit *us*?"
The following paragraphs seek to provide an explanation for this attitude by referring to the history of communal areas in the colonial context – where they were intended as reservoirs for cheap labour and as areas for the children and for the old. In addition, the present economic and political situation has to be taken into account, which seems to have taken over

[12] Reported in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of September 22 (http://212.227.21.151/index.php?page=news/news.php&identifier=1079863988&id=8848). As I was present, I know that the discussion about the resolution had not been started in order to support the claims for reparations, as the article claims. It had been started because one local scientist had been so incensed about the Newspaper's publishing of Claus Nordbruch's piece, which *posed* as "science" while the *real* scientists were having a conference where (contrary to Nordbruch's claim) the term *genocide* was *not* in question.
[13] In his speech at the Commemoration Ceremony at Ohamakari Chief Kuaima Riruako emphasized that the former Paramount Chief Hosea Kutako had given his walking stick to Samuel Nujoma before the latter went into exile to prepare armed struggle. This was intended as a gesture of support – or even authorization, as Riruako seemed to interpret it, stressing the fact that the walking stick has not yet been returned.

the structures from the past with only a few changes, changes which seek to reddress economic imbalances, but which do not appear to reach their aims. Local residents simply have a reasonably accurate assessment of their overall rather disadvantaged situation. At the same time I would like to emphasise that I needed the additional information from the literature – particularly Jan-Bart Gewald's seminal work *Herero Heroes*[14] – and the conference to accept the attitudes I encountered as justified, rather than interpreting them as another instance of what in the development literature is called the "dependency syndrome": asking for ever more assistance from the outside instead of taking recourse to one's own resources.

Development and the land question in communal areas in Namibia

Colonial acquisition of land for purposes of settlement started in the 1890s. Contrary to most modern nationalist interpretations, the colonial wars were started by Germans because of the fear of settlers that the Herero were planning a revolt[15] – a fear which led the administration into misreading the situation into one of a rebellion which needed to be stopped, and thus turned into a self-fulfilling prophesy, as Gewald[16] shows in some detail. That the war then turned into a fullblown attempt to exterminate the Herero can be traced to how the better educated bourgeois colonial administrator Leutwein lost out to von Trotha who could support his claims towards the German authorities in Berlin with his military experience particularly in putting down the "Boxer rebellion" in China, as much as with his aristocratic connections[17].

As Leutwein had foreseen in his arguments against v. Trotha, the result of the exterminationist, i.e. genocidal policy was an acute shortage of labour for settlers, for the administration, and for the military itself. Germany was unable to operate profitably its violently acquired full possession of the territories of what today is central and southern Namibia. In this situation the suggestion of missionaries to establish concentration camps was welcomed in Berlin[18] and put into practice in Namibia, leading to a partial solution of the labour problem as well as to many additional deaths and suffering amongst the predominantly Herero inmates – who had in most cases surrendered themselves voluntarily, putting their trust both in the official proclamation of peace of the colonial admininstration, and in the direct apeals by the missionaries themselves[19]. The missionaries, in turn, had in their delusion seen the concentration camps as an opportunity to establish a living model of the Kingdom of God in Africa [20].

The need to satisfy the labour demand of the white colonial economy, while not burdening it with the rapidly increasing number of animals owned by Herero and other indigenous peoples, led to the establishment of "Native Reserves" after the concentration camps had been dismantled – a policy which led to at least eight reserves for the Herero alone, among which was Otjohorongo in the Omaruru district[21]. The policy was continued after South Africa –

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[14] Gewald (1999)

[15] This is not true for the war against the Nama under Hendrik Witbooi, who had consistently refused negotiations with the Germans, being fully aware that this would ultimately result in the displacement of the indigenous population. See Sippel (2000)

[16] Gewald (1999), particularly the first half of chapter 5

[17] Steinmetz (2004, p. 10ff.)

[18] One of the – for me - most astonishing papers at the conference was presented by a mission historian: Hanns Lessing presented the evidence for the likelihood that the very idea of concentration camps had been suggested to chancellor Bülow in Berlin by missionaries – despite their knowledge of the negative consequence of earlier "concentration camps" in the Boer war (Lessing 2004)

[19] For the details see Gewald (1999), chapter 6

[20] This is reconstructed from the missionary archives in some detail by Lessing (2004)

[21] Pisani (2000, p.57) spells it as *OtjAhorongo*

which was first seen as a liberator in the same manner as Great Britain by many Herero, Nama, and other people - had taken over the administration of the former German territories as a result of the First World War. By 1939, seventeen reserves had been established on an area totalling about six million hectares, generally on "small patches of land land with limited ecological, economic and political viability". Pisani[22] concludes that

> the official policy was one of spatial separation and not of regional development. The reserves became reservoirs for a supply of cheap labour, and their residents predominantly practised subsistence agriculture as a mode of production. The white settler population constituted a ruling class, and black Namibians a working class and underclass largely excluded form economic and political power.

While the creation *Otjohorongo* communal area – in which Omatjette is situated - was actually initiated by Herero under then chief Daniel Kariko[23], available official figures can be used to demonstrate the comparative overcrowding and consequent environmental degradation of this area, as compared to commercial farm areas[24]:

> The Otjohorongo communal area in the Daures constituency of the Erongo Region was created as a "homeland" for some of the *Ovaherero* when the colonial authorities purchased 55 farms of 5,000 ha each (total area approximately 275,000 ha) from white families. Today, this area is inhabited by close to 10,000 people. Thus, the land on which 55 white families once lived (with 4 children each, i.e. 220 people in total), must now sustain 10,000 people. In other words, the number of people has increased 44 times on the same piece of land! Needless to say, this has had a tremendously negative impact on the natural environment.
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> In terms of livestock, the 2002 livestock census (MAWRD 2003) found that there were 11,769 head of cattle, 58,201 goats and sheep, and 2,420 horses and donkeys in Otjohorongo. Using a conversion of five SSUs for on LSU, this communal area is currently found to sustain the equivalent of 25,829 cattle. Assuming an average carrying capacity of 20 ha per head of cattle, then the sustainable size for this communal area should be at least 515,584 ha. This implies the doubling of the communal area by purchasing approximately 48 farms averaging 5,000 ha each in size, at an approximate total cost of N$73 milllion (assuming a price of N$300 per hectare). This type of calculation can be applied to other parts of the country, and the results will be equally mind-boggling.

The "other parts of the country" refer to those 33,5 million hectares - or 41% of the total land area of Namibia - which are still "communal areas", as against the 36,2 million hectares – or 44% of the total land area - held under freehold title in the commercial farming sector (see Table 1).

Table 1: Basic Statistics on Namibia's Land Reform[25]

Amount of land owned by commercial farmers	36.2 million ha
Amount of land owned by communal farmers	33.5 million ha
Number of households resettled since 1990	6,661
Number of emergent farmers who have purchased since 1990	300

Before independence, such freehold titles – i.e. legal ownership of land – were open only to whites. In the "Native Reserves" individual ownership of land was not possible[26]. This has

[22] Pisani (2000, p.58)
[23] Gewald (1999, pp. 148ff.)
[24] The following quote is taken from Kaumbi (2004, p.92)
[25] Sachikonye (2000, p.72); Sachikonye based the table on Adams (2000) and Werner (2003)

changed with the land reform legislation of 1995[27], which allowed government to purchase land for purposes of redistribution and resettlement, based on the principle "willing seller – willing buyer." Yet, until 2002 only about 1.5% of the commercial farming were acquired in this manner[28], with an additional 300 farms purchased by black farmers with the assistance of *Affirmative Action Loan Schemes* administered by the Agribank of Namibia[29].
This continued inequality in ownership explains the growing dissatisfaction with the slow process of land reform, a dissatisfaction which surfaced in the speech of Hifikipunye Pohambo, currently Minster of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation and designated successor to Sam Nujoma, at the Hamakari Commemoration: He claimed that the "Willing seller – willing buyer" principle had not worked, because there had not been enough offers from white farmers. Therefore, the government now had no choice but to resort to other legal measures of expropriation offered by the Constitution, in order to end the anomaly of roughly four thousand two hundred white families owning over 90% of the agricultural land with freehold titles in independent Namibia.[30]
As several people commented, this has to be understood partly as SWAPO rhetoric in an election year: there is a broad consensus that land reform is necessary[31]. Because the SWAPO base is in the North, in former *Ovamboland*, this rhetoric does not expicitly mention that the concentration of 800,000 of Namibia's 1.8 million people on just 3% of the land is more a result of colonial non-interference, than of colonial interference[32]. The main interference with respect to the northern territories had been the building of a fence between the "Police Zone" – i.e. the bigger part of then South West Africa where virtually all the commercial land was located – and the North. The intention of the fence had been to control the movement of

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[26] Harring and Amoo (2004, p.4)
[27] For details see Harring and Amoo (2004) and Werner (2003)
[28] According to Harring and Amoo (2004, p.4), who gives the number of farms as 97; while Sachikonye (2000, p.72) mentions 118 farms with an area of 710,000 ha.
[29] Sachikonye (2000, p.72); Based on Agribank's own records, Werner (2003) gives the following table:
Table 2: Affirmative Action Loan Scheme: Full-time Farmers 1992-2001

Macro-Region	No. of loans	Ha. purchased	% of total	Amount granted	%of total
South	47	412,640	31	21,152,338	13
North	184	918,131	69	138,371,797	87
TOTAL	231	1,330,771	100	159,524,135	100

Source: Agribank 2002

[30] Harring and Amoo (2004, p.22) quote from the former Prime Minister Hage Geingob's opening speech to the Conference on Land Reform in 1991 about the situation after indepdence:

> "There are about 6292 farms. Out of these, 6123 farms are white-owned, and cover 95 per cent of the surface area of the commerical districts (34,4 million hecatres). Within this ownership category the overwhelming majority of the farms belong to individual white farmers, including non-Namibians. To be more specific, a total area of 2,7 million hectares (382 farms) belong to foreign absentee farmers, that is to say 0,9 million hectares belonging to citizens from Austria, France, Italy, Switzerland, while the bulk of 1,7 million hactares is owned by South African Residents. Similarly,there are individual Namibian farmers with more than two large farms, as against thousands of their landless fellow countrymen who live in squalid poverty."

[31] This consenus is mentioned in a long and detailed letter to the editor by Mannfred Goldbeck and Sven-Eric Kanzler (available at http://www.namibweb.com/spiegeld.htm) criticizing the bias in the report "Kriegstrommeln in Südwest" in the SPIEGEL (No.28, 2004). The letters sent to a limited number of white farmers, requesting them to offer their farms for sale, which served as an argument against land reform in the SPIEGEL report, have been likened by a (white) Namibian anthropologist to letters sent by a man to a woman, announcing his *intention* to propose marriage at a future date.
[32] The fence still exists – and still serves the purpose of controlling the movement of cattle: only certified cattle which have been vaccinated can move south, as the head of the Agricultural Development Centre in Omatjette explained to me.

people and of cattle[33] by keeping the people from the North where they had always been living: in the most fertile areas of the territory.
Virtually all of this land belongs to those 8% of the entire agricultural land which receives 500 or more mm of rain per year – which is generally seen as the lower limit to dryland cropping. While only 5% of all commercial agricultural land receives this amount of rainfall, 60% of commercial farmland - and 55% of all agricultural land including the communal lands – receive less than 300 mm of rainfall[34]. These figures are also subject to a high and rather unpredictable variability, "ranging from less than a quarter of the long-term mean to more than twice this value", and only a fraction is available for plant growth. On average, "it is estimated that of the total rainfall in an area, 83% evaporates almost immediately, 3% is available for runoff and groundwater recharge, while the remaining 14% is taken up by the soil and used for plant growth, returning to the atmosphere by evapo-transpiration."[35]
This situation applies to communal areas – with the exception of the fertile lands in the North, which were left untouched by white settlers – as well as to commercial areas, although it has been estimated that only 27 million hectares of the total of 33.5 million hectares of communal land are agriculturally usable, due to the inclusion of areas with no groundwater and rainfall averages between 50–100 mm annually[36].
Consequently, "farming" in the European sense of a deliberate mix of crop production and animal husbandry is possible on less than 10% of the agriculturally usable area in Namibia, most of which lies in the North. The remaining area is unsuited for anything but extensive ranching – which was the dominant mode of production of the Herero in the 19th century, and which was also practised by all white settlers[37]. Under these conditions, even the commercial farms in the ecologically slightly more advantaged regions required state subsidies to be economically viable, despite the vast areas they occupied. Contrary to the prevailing perceptions of the commercial farming sector as a healthy and thriving sector of the Namibian economy, observers note that it contributes only 6% to Gross Domestic Product, while providing jobs which support about 15% of the population[38]. Considering the increasing indebtedness of the commercial farm sector[39], the conclusion is that presently "nobody can operate most Namibian farms at a profit"[40].
Detailed calculations show why most of the Namibian farms are either "a rich man's hobby"[41], subsidised from earnings in other sectore of the economy, or are maintained by older farmers who cling to their "rural lifestyle" despited living off the substance of their property[42]. Redistributive land reform is therefore more of a political necessity than an economic one, as some observers note - a necessity which is well worth paying the price of

[33] Harring and Amoo (2004), p.4
[34] Werner (2003)
[35] Seely and Zeidler (2002), p.75
[36] Werner (2003)
[37] Harring and Amoo (2004, p.13) remind of successful German attempts to establish a functioning dairy industry and to import dryland farming techniques from the North American prairies to raise wheat, barley, and corn; fruit and citrus orchards had also been created. All of experiments were later abandoned by the South African authorities whose aim was to use Southwest Africa solely as a supplier of meat to South African markets.
[38] Hansohm, cited after Harring and Amoo (2004, p. 13f.), Werner (2003) estimates that the agricultural sector as a whole, and including the linkages to other sectors, has contributed about 18% to the Namibian GDP since 1990
[39] Harring and Amoo (2004, p.9), quoting a paper by Werner: "Debt loads are large, with debt repayment amounting to about $300 million (N) a year; about one-third of Namibian's estimated agricultural income. Debt loads are rapidly increasing: in 1991 the average commercial farmer had to sell 31% of his livestock to pay his debts; in 1998 this had increased to 64%, effectively doubling debt in seven years." Similar figures are found in Werner (2004, p. 22f.) who gives the expected overall agricultural debt in 1999/2000 as "just over N$1 billion".
[40] Harring and Amoo (2004, p. 14)
[41] Sherbourne (2004)
[42] Harring and Amoo (2004, p.9)

continuing to subsidize the agricultural sector, as previous colonial regimes have done[43]. For these reasons it seems possible that the absence of the mention of land reform in the poverty reduction goals of the Namibian Government reflects an awareness of this sitution, rather than an oversight that needs to be corrected[44]. In fact, past land reform efforts have often displaced farm workers and their families, rather than making them beneficiaries of redistribution[45].
If redistributive land reform is unable to solve the problem of the limited number of farm workers, it will consequently be much less able to solve the problem of poverty of the vast majority of the rural population, who represent 70% of Namibia's total, living on 55% of Namibia's total income. Depending on the measurement used, 50-67% of all households are considered poor, with the majority living in rural areas[46], overwhelmingly on overcrowded communal land.
It has to be kept in mind, though, that in most parts of Namibia, "overcrowding" occurs at rather low densities, due to the climatic and geological conditions. Under conditions of "sparse shrubland", receiving less than 300 mm of rain per annum, and with an estimated carrying capacity of 10-19 kg/ha[47] the question of sustainable land use becomes a very difficult one, as the Herero had to painfully realise in the 1920s[48], when they were forced to relocate to newly established reserves by the South African administration.
The roughly 20,000 Herero – out of 80,000 - who had survived the ordeal of the colonial wars, the the flight to neighboring countries, and the concentration camps, therefore had to find a way of surviving in areas which were largely unknown to them[49]. The need to pay grazing fees and taxes forced many of the men to live outside of the reserves to earn cash income, leaving behind women, children and the old. These, then, were largely responsible for gathering enough knowledge to practise what the administration thought to be a way of "subsistence farming" – the knowledge of how to keep the herds alive which the Herero started to build again: pastoralism was the only alternative to the hunting and gathering way of life practised by the "Bushmen" in still more marginal areas of the Kalahari or Omaheke deserts.
Despite these adverse conditions the Herero were able to rebuild substantial herds in many areas – substantial enough to cause an increasing concern about the degradation of the environmental conditions in the communal areas[50], leading to deteriorating grazing conditions

[43] Harring and Amoo (2004)
[44] Sachikonye (2004, p.74), comparing the Namibian with the Zimbabwean land reform efforts, writes: "It is significant that Namibia's land reform is not an integral part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy for Namibia approved by Cabinet in 1998 (RoN 1998). Neither this Strategy nor the National Poverty Reduction Action Plan 2001-2005 link land reform to poverty reduction efforts. In other words, the Namibian Government does not view land redistribution as one of the major instruments in reducing poverty. In fact, there is an inexplicably pessimistic view expressed in the Poverty Reduction Strategy, namely that the agricultural base was too weak to offer a sustainable basis for prosperity. The gap between land reform and poverty reduction objectives should be urgently addressed, therefore."
[45] Sachikonye (2004, p. 2004); Werner (2004), looking at neighboring countries, also describes some of the options for addressing the farm workers plight.
[46] Werner (2003)
[47] These are the conditions obtaining in the area of the Otjohorongo communal lands, according to the digital maps published by the ACACIA research project of the University of Koeln at http://www.uni-koeln.de/inter-fak/sfb389/e/e1/download/atlas_namibia/main_namibia_atlas.html
[48] See chapter 2 in Gewald (2000)
[49] This did not cause them to forget where they had lived earlier on, as the many letters and petitions to colonial officers quoted in Gewald (1999, 2000) show. They also did not abandon their claims to these former lands, as shown in an analysis of praise poems recited at various commemoration ceremonies held in regular intervals on white farms, as Henrichsen (2004) is able to show.
[50] With the exception of the North, where high population density is the main problem, the situation is similar in the communal lands of other communities, such as Damara and Nama. For the concern about increasing pressure on pasture see, for example, "Namibia National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan", particularly chapter 4

which, in turn threaten the long-term viability of these herds. This, then, is the basic developmental dilemma with which the inhabitants of the research area and all government agencies are faced: The distance from the markets offers little – if any – opportunities for non-agricultural development; in the absence of irrigation agricultural development means herd development; herd development is limited by the scarcity of water and suitable grazing; short term herd development which exceeds the carrying capacity of the land leads to the degradation of the vegetation, thus depressing the future carrying capacity.

The TKFA and rural development in Omatjette

In Omatjette, the very existence of one single organization for the representation of farmers' interests vis-à-vis government agencies is seen as an achievement: only in 2001 were the two formerly independent organizations *Tjohorongo Farmers' Association* and *Kondjee Farmers' Association* merged into the *Tjohorongo Kondjee Farmers' Association* (TKFA). Formerly, opportunities for development grants from the government sometimes had been missed because government agancies refused to make payments to two separate organizations.
The reason for the existence of separate organizations had been divided loyalties: The patron for the *Kondjee Farmers' Association* had been the late chief Jeja, while the loyalty of the *Tjohorongo Farmers' Association* lay with chief Zeraua[51]. While Chief Zeraua – who should rather be called "King Zeraua" according to the senior traditional concillor in Omatjette – is officially recognized as chief by the government, Chief Jeja relied on local recognition. This he was granted because people in the area perceived him to be the true representative of their interests. The merger of the two Farmers' Associations therefore depended on a prior agreement between Chief Jeja and Chief Zeraua. After the two chiefs had agreed to jointly act as patrons for the new organization, the merger could take place in practice. For the registration it was sufficient to submit a written constitution of the new single organization – in the official language of the country: i.e. in English. There were, however, considerable differences between the members of the two formerly independent organizations. It can presently only be assumed that the reported distrust between them might be related to their differing socio-economic position: there are presently no confirmed data which would allow to establish a link between the characteristis of the households of members and their adherence to one or the other of the previous organizations. What seems to be clear, however, is that political loyalties also played a big role: Chief Zeraua is clearly associated with SWAPO, while Chief Jeja was known to support the *Demokratische Turnhallen Allianz* (DTA).
It is worth noting that "divided loyalties" and the resulting distrust were mentioned as one of the biggest obstacles to local development by a group of young adults in Omatjette[52]. If we take this as an indication of a more widespread awareness of this problem, both the reluctance to find a successor to Chief Jeja[53] and the emphasis of the TKFA on initiating a process of organization building become more easily understandable. What did not become obvious through local observation is that these divided loyalties largely have their origin in the colonial context: The founding of the DTA goes back to the attempt of the South African

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on "Sustainable Land Management"
(http://www.dea.met.gov.na/programmes/biodiversity/biodiversity%20strategic%20plan2.htm)

[51] I owe this information to the work of Rose Marie Beck and the many discussions with her. Any errors in this summary are, of course, my responsbility.

[52] In a discussion following the public showing of the video presenting the schoolchildren's theatre play (see below)

[53] In order to avoid the many painful experiences of the past (Rose Marie Beck, pers. comm.)

Administration to present the DTA as an alternative to SWAPO to the international community, as one of the measures to justify its continued presence[54].
Because the TKFA stresses the importance of co-operation with the traditional authorities, it is also worth mentioning to what extent "tradition" in Namibia is a re-invented tradition, a re-invention which also served the purpose of maintaining the Apartheid Regime while granting limited autonomy to the people living in the "Native Reserves". While the institution of a central political representative and head – what has become know as "chief" – clearly predates the colonial experience, the need to have these chiefs and their "traditional councillors" recognized by the South African administration in fact established a lower layer of state authority in the nominally "self-governed" reserves[55]. While the racist notions have been removed with the *Traditional Authorities Act* of 1995[56], the structure with respect to the administration of the communal areas has remained, and with it the government's legal instruments to prevail over decisions of traditional authorities[57]. This legal situation might explain why the same group of vocal young adults saw the traditional authorities mainly as a body of "yesmen" with respect to government decisions[58]:
In this situation the leading members of the TKFA probably had no choice but to opt for a course of a strong neutrality with respect to political parties, while declaring the work of assisting the members across party divides as political in itself. This stance was strongly emphasized during the organization building and visioning workshop which had bee organized in collaboration with Rose Marie Beck at the Secondary School in Otjiperongo on August 7-8. Together with an additional interview in Otopupa with both members and non-members of the TKFA this workshop was my main source of original information. These were supplemented with the then existing transcriptions from earlier meetings, particularly the last Annual General Meeting of the TKFA, excerpts of which have been published in Rose Marie Beck's presentations at TUCSIN (*The University Centre for Studies in Namibia*, July 22) and the LAGSUS conference.
Rather than giving a sequential account of the workshop in this section (for more details see Appendix V), this chapter draws together some observations which on the basis of which this observer could formulate some prelimiary hypothesis concerning the post-independence social processes of which TKFA is an active part.
The hypothesis has two aspects:

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[54] du Pisani (2000), p.71: "The Turnhalle Constitutional Conference was intended to provide South Africa with the opportunity to construct a moderate and legitimate alternative to the popular appeal of SWAPO" [which had been recognized by the UN General Assembly as the] "sole authentic and legitimate representative of the Namibian people" (UNGA Resolution 3111 [XXVIII])
[55] For details see Winterfeldt (2002)
[56] Traditional Authorities Act, 1995: No. 17 of 1995
[57] For details particularly with respect to the administration of land see Harring and Amoo (2004)
[58] The verbatim quote of this section of the recording: "Because they are … they they they are men, they are just making up by the government. They can consider anything by the government and they say yes. … Without even conducting their … their their their community. This is also happening in this area …. Because they belong to the leading party I think so."
This might be seen as an expression of hurt pride, or frustated energy of a younger generation, unable to contribute to the traditional authorities because the traditional councillars are not elected, but nominated – under the "colonial" tradition as now – and therefore not really accountable to the local population. In addition, their terms of office usually run for a lifetime or until derious misdemeanour occurs. Hence, these younger people see themselves as unable to contribute to the developmental goals of government programmes. This frustration might, however, also indicate a deeper problem: these adults strongly criticized the recent decentralization efforts of the government, because in their experience the participatory needs assessment with the local population later serves to justify measures which differ considerably from what has been establisched as the "local need".

- The TKFA strengthens the position of the middle class Herero living in the city by facilitating their building up of herds in the communal areas[59] – the possible conflicts between them and the resident population (some of whom have also built up substantial herds, even without being members) have surfaced during the AGM and were explained at the workshop as the divide between "Part-time farmers" and "Full-time farmers"
- This conflict has potential negative consequences for the resource base on which herds of both part-time and full-time farmers depend – consequences which do not seem to be addressed at present.

TKFA and the development of urban middle class

The basis for the first aspect is the observation that almost all member of the executive committee of the TKFA are part-time farmers: they hold positions in the modern sector of the economy and reside in the cities[60]. During the workshop they formulated their work for the TKFA as voluntary work aiming to support the development of the communal areas. Using criteria developed by Ostrom[61] for the sustainability of community organisations for the management of natural resources, the workshop participants also reflected on the benefits they derive from their involvement. One of them formulated it in the following manner (paraphrased quote): "I am one of those who wants to see the community prosper. That is why I do not pull out even if right now I don't get anything for myself." More explicitly, a participant at the LAGSUS conference formulated the interest in a deferred compensation (paraphrased quote): "We are building up a base for our retirement."
In retrospect, it appears almost obvious that the conflict lines between "part-time farmers" and "full-time farmers" are almost identical to theconflict lines between "ordinary members" and the "leadership", and to some extent between the "rural branches" and the "urban branches". This is suggested also by the two complaints which had surfaced during the last AGM and which were discussed in the context of the workshop's self-reflective "taking stock of what is" and "finding out where to go" were perceptions that

- urban branches did not contribute enough financially, but were profiting particularly from the auctioning services of the TKFA in the rural area; and
- members from the urban branches were only "taking" instead of giving: because they claimed compensation for using their private transport for attending rural meetings – while not asking for compensation for the time and effort they invested in the organization.

One of the acknowledged contributions of Rose Marie Beck's presentation of the results of her communication analyis was to make workshop participants aware that these conflict lines exist and influence all the discussions. This influence, however, is rarely openly visible, as it often takes the form of "who should discuss this point?", rather than "what kind of decision needs to be taken?" This postponing of the discussion of the real issues and of decision-making is often based on a refusal to discuss mutal perceptions openly, which leaves all parties dependent on their own interpretations – a situation which Rose Marie Beck

[59] I owe this view partly to a discussion with Volker Winterfeldt at UNAM: he stressed the importance of class analysis for an adequate sociological understanding of the processes in independent Namibia. This view is substantiated in the collection of essays published in Winterfeldt, Fox and Mufune (2002).
[60] A prominent exception is a full-time woman farmer. Yet her case strengthens the hypothesis: she has in the meantime become a commercial farmer with the assistance of a government programme, keeping only a part of her herd in the communal area.
[61] Ostrom (1999); this was one of the substantial inputs of what was termed the LAGSUS "action research component" – an ingenious way to get participants to attempt to take a look at their organization "from the outside".

characterised as a lack of trust, a characterization which was fully supported by one of the influential members of the Executive Committee of TKFA.
As Manfred Rukoro's presentation during the LAGSUS conference made clear, there is grateful acceptance for the suggestion to avoid some of this communicative confusion[62] by having all the relevant documents translated into Herero - and distributed widely. In the context of LAGSUS and in the light of the above arguments, the use of English as a second "official language" for TKFA also might be linked to the fact that as members of an urban elite, the executive committee was simply so familiar with the use of English that they failed to notice the problem this presented to other members. In the future, it might be interesting to try to find out to what extent this prevalence of fluency in English in the executive committee was more characteristic of the former *Tjohorongo Farmers' Association* than for the former *Kondjee Farmers' Association*. In other words: language use in the decision-making bodies of the formerly separate organizations could be taken as an indicator for the class base of the organization as a whole. Should it turn out that fluency in English had been less present in the *Kondjee Farmers' Association*, the hypothesis of an *increasing* influence of members of the urban middle class would be strengthened.
Irrespective of the result of such a complementary future inquiry, the concrete activities of the TKFA can also be interpreted as supportive of this hypothesis. The two main services the TKFA offers to its members are

- The organization of auctions for cattle and goats
- The organization of vaccination campaigns

Both of these services belong to a category of activities aimed at "modernizing" livestock husbandry in rural areas. They are "development" activities which run parallel to the services offered by state institutions such as Omatjette's *ADC* (*Agricultural Development Centre*). The declared goal of these development activities is the increasing commercialization of animal husbandry in the communal areas: it is a common view that "traditionally" the Herero *keep* cattle as a sign of status and well-being, rather than *sell* them. If, therefore, for a "traditional Herero" development is synonymous with the building up of a large and healthy herd, for the "modernizers" development is synonymous with changing this attitude towards a rational *commercial* use of these herds[63]. The latter requires the assessment of the number of animals which can be sold each year without diminishing the herd: the rate of off-take which can be supported by the available feed and the multiplication rate of the animals. One of the requirements for increased marketing is the registration and ear-tagging of animals according to the Namibia cattle improvement scheme – which is partly a response to import requirements for meat into the EU: the meat must come from cattle with certified vaccinations against some of the major infectious cattle diseases. According to the observations of the head of the Omatjette ADC, this commercial attitude is more widespread than one would expect, the indicator being the use of additional feedstuff for the animals, such as salt, molasses and vitamin E: one needs to sell one or two of the animals in order to buy the additional feedstuff which are necessary to achieve more healthy and therefore more marketable animals[64]. Taking the number of farmers waiting outside the ADC almost every day in order to get the registration books and ear tags, the attribution of a "traditional attitude" to Herero herders is indeed questionable.

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[62] It is noteworthy that this was the one point about the LAGSUS conference which was underlined in the report in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* (AZ online, 15.8.2004)
http://www.az.com.na/index.php?page=news/news.php&identifier=1079863842&id=8566
[63] I had a chance to interview two Herero trainees of a financial company in Windhoek, who strongly emphasized that for "a Herero" the *possession* of a healthy heard of cattle was the clearest sign of "development."
[64] Interview with Jamé Vehaka, July 28

Taking an interview with a group of farmers and youth in a neighboring village as an indication, local people see two main obstacles to increased marketing, both of which have nothing to do with their *willingness* to sell:

- The fact that the "blue book" for the registration of animals is available only in English; and
- The low price offered for animals at "auctions."

In fact, most of the marketing events taking place at the kraal in Omatjette[65] are called "permits" to indicate that these are buyers' markets. In the interview, people insisted that for cattle there were only two buyers in Omatjette: an individual from South Africa and a certain Mr. Uwe Bachmann from Omaruru, who buys for Agra, a big agricultural trading company. People were generally rather dissatisfied with the price for cattle (with a rough average of 10N$ per kg of live animal), but reasonably satisfied with the price for goats (with an average of 3N$ per kg of live animal). Higher prices would be offered by Meatco, but Meatco did not come as far as Omatjette. This is in line with observations elsewhere that livestock from communal areas fetches prices thirty percent lower than livestock from commercial farms[66]. TKFA was not in a position to change that system, because the only available scales for weighing the animals belonged to the buyer. Acquiring a scale was therefore a priority for the TKFA, who was also lobbying for the translation of the "blue book" into Otjiherero.

The opportunity for this interview had sprung from a chance meeting with one of the participants of the TKFA workshop in Omatjette, who happened to live in the neighboring village of Otopupa where I had wanted to meet family members of my interpreter and assistant anyway. Against the background of the domination of the executive committee I was interested to learn about the interest of ordinary residents in an organisation which had set itself the goal of achieving a membership rate of 60%. As it turned out, 5 of the 20 cattle owners in Otopupa – i.e. 25% - are members. The reason for this low membership rate given were "unclear procedures for becoming a member" – which may be a correct assessment of the state of affairs, considering the amazing discovery at the workshop that at present not even a membership roll is in existence.

Two details deserve to be mentioned with respect to the hypothesis advanced above: 1) the richest man in the village owns a herd of well over 100 (according to another information 400) head of cattle – and is not a member of the TKFA; and 2) two of the workshop participants live in Otopupa, one of them being set off from "ordinary residents" by having fenced in a certain portion of the land[67], the other one by owning a car which he used as a well-running taxi business. Both of them had been among the least vocal participants during the workshop.

It seems to me that these facts support the hypothesis that the services of TKFA are particularly interesting for that segment of the population which is somewhat well established and on the way to becoming even richer. The LAGSUS team interviewed another member of this group at length in Omutiuanduko.

I think it would be interesting to see whether hints in support or refutation of this hypothesis appear in the data material for the conversation analysis. It would also be interesting to see whether local people have their own hypothesis concerning their relationship to the "modern" or "developed" sector of the economy - beyond the complaint that in the Omatjette area no development is taking place because of a general lack of water, a diversion of funds to other

[65] which is presently renovated with EU money.

[66] Seely and Zeidler (2002), p. 77, reporting about an AGRA auction in Outjo in October 1998

[67] In communal areas fencing was legal only for a short time after independence and remaining fences have become areas for struggle in other areas (see http://www.namibian.com.na/Netstories/Ops1-99/fencing.html)

areas[68], and because there are no or hardly any men of working age left in the area (see also the chapters on epistemological and methodological conclusions).

TKFA and sustainable resource use

These questions also address the often mentioned expectation that the research project should have practical relevance for the people of the area: increasing herd size and increasing take-off will increase the pressure on the remaining grazing resources – unless this is compensated by bringing in commercially purchased feedstuff. Studies in other areas of Namibia have shown that sustainable grazing regimes are made difficult by

- communal ownership
- large herds by individual owners
- absentee ownership

The reasons for overstocking mentioned by communal farmers themselves were in particular the high number of livestock kept by a few individuals, the lack of communal decision making, the lack of emergency grazing areas in case of drought, and the lack of incentive to de-stock in case of drought because of low prices on the market[69]. As the issues mentioned are similar to those mentioned in an internationally known book[70], one can conclude that the knowledge about constraining factors is an aspect of local knowledge. At the same time the lack of communal decision making does not seem to be an unavoidable result of the particular conditions in Namibia: a study in Northwestern Namibia found that both commercial farmers and pastoralists have developed range management practices which allow sustainable land use. For both commercial and communal farmers the main instrument is the management through resting, which allows for regrowth of the vegetation[71].
It seems that the classic model of degeneration of the commons can be avoided not only under the relatively good conditions of tropical forests – which has been described by Ostrom – but also under the much harsher conditions of arid Namibia. It is therefore appropriate to suggest the use of criteria developed by Ostrom for consideration by the TKFA. This seems particularly appropriate Ostrom also points out that "the conflict between absentee livestock owners and local pastoralists has … proved difficult to solve in many parts of the world."[72]
In the absence of established mechanisms for decision making, the reason for this difficulty is that the local caretakers of the absentee owners' livestock cannot on their own sell off animals once local conditions deteriorate because of a drought. Instead, these animals continue to put pressure on the grazing – in competition with the livestock of the resident owners[73]. It seems that this was one of the issues in the conflict between "full-time farmers" and "part-time farmers" which erupted briefly at the last AGM of the TKFA.
For these reasons, it would appear that the initiative for capacity building with participatory methods of decision-making[74] would do well to address this issue as openly as the marketing strategy and some other issues have been addressed during this years first workshop. This

[68] This complaint was levelled (in the discussion following the showing of the video) at the (Damara) senior councillor for the whole constituency: that funds would always go "to his side"
[69] Seely and Zeidler (2002) studied the effect of different management practices under very similar ecological conditions in the Southern Kunene area, comparing a privately owned commercial farm with one in a communal area and a redistributed farm owned by a few families.
[70] Scoones (ed. 1995), cited after Seely and Zeidler (2002), p.83
[71] *Sustainable grazing management in semi-arid regions: An ecological-economic modelling approach*, a study in progress, conducted by Brigit Mülle at the Centre for Environmenal Research (UFZ) in Leipzig; see http://www.ufz.de/index.php?en=3159
[72] Ostrom (1999), p.9
[73] Seely and Zeidler (2002), p.80
[74] This initiative was presented to participants as a plan for future collaboration with LAGSUS at the very end of the workshop by Vehaka Tjimune

would, however, require a step beyond the present discussions which focus on the internal structure and decision-making mechanisms of the TKFA. Questions of the relationship between TKFA and the rest of the community and questions of the relationship between stocking density and the sustainability of the farming system as a whole do not yet seem to have been considered. It might be that these questions will surface once the drive to develop a common vision for a sustainable future in a participatory manner gains the breadth of membership involvement envisaged during this first workshop. Assisting this process would go a long way to give added meaning to the aim for the collaboration between LAGSUS and the TKFA which was formulated at the workshop as a sustainability goal – and in contradistinction to how "development projects" normally go: "We want something that remains behind after the project leaves."

Sustainability, power and trust in the Omatjette area

This chapter of the report is the most tentative one, attempting to draw together observations from the field study, the LAGSUS conference and our internal workshop, and arguments found in the literature and focussing them on the theme of sustainability. In line with the role of this subproject, this focussing is done through the lens of a comparative sociological perspective with particular attention to the role power and trust play in human relationships and communication. These observations – and the way I interpret them - would not have been possible without the prior work of Rose Marie Beck who attempted to follow up on what the SARDEP project of the GTZ had left behind[75].

[75] SARDEP was officially closed in March 2004, as mentioned on the still existing GTZ website, which situates the project as an attempt to support the development and adoption of sustainable livestock practices (Source: http://www.gtz.de/laender/ebene3.asp?Thema=8&ProjectId=75&Reihenfolge=4&spr=1; English translation R.D.):

> „Das Vorhaben wurde 1991 eingeleitet, um den zunehmenden Produktivitäts- und Substanzverlusten der weidewirtschaftlichen Ressourcen in den "kommunalen" Gebieten Namibias durch angepasste Formen der Weidewirtschaft entgegenzuwirken. Damit unterstützt das Vorhaben einen Prozess, in dem bisher benachteiligte Menschen in den "kommunalen" Gebieten in die Lage versetzt werden, ihre Lebensgrundlage über die Anwendung geeigneter Methoden der Ressourcennutzung nachhaltig zu verbessern.
> *The project was initiated in 1991 in order to counter the trend of an increasing loss of productivity and resources in the "communal" areas of Namibia with adapted forms of grazing. The project thus supports a process of enabling hitherto disadvantaged people to sustainably improve their livelihoods through the use of suitable methods of resource use.*
>
> Das SARDEP Programm unterstützt kommunale Tierhalter/innen bei
> - der landwirtschaftlichen Problemidentifizierung und Lösungsfindung;
> - der Herstellung und Ausweitung von Kommunikationswegen zwischen Farmern und Dienstleistungsorganisationen
> - der Anwendung verbesserter Viehzuchtpraktiken
> - der Verbesserung der Weidegebiete.
>
> *SARDEP supports the communal livestock owners in*
> - *identifying agricultural problems and finding solutions for them*
> - *the creation and enhancement of channels of communication between farmers and service providers*
> - *the use of improved breeding methods*
> - *the improvement of the grazing areas*
>
> Die Leistungen des Programmes haben sich über die Jahre auf verschiedene Regionen ausgeweitet und haben sich hauptsächlich an bäuerlichen- und Dienstleistungsnachfragen orientiert, um somit einen Prozess zu unterstützen der weitgehend auf Nachfrage ausgerichtet ist.

Based on a more in-depth knowledge of the local conditions because of his intimate involvement with the field research of Rose Marie Beck, Tjeripo Musutua – in his paper at the LAGSUS conference - drew attention to the importance of relationships of power in the Omatjette area, particularly with respect to the working of the water committees and the Boergoat project. In particular, he showed how the interpretation of one man's actions can be shaped through local power relationships to the extent that only additional interviews in private can reveal the sense behind his public words and actions. While he had appeared only as a "difficult person" in the context of the documented public meeting of the Boergoat project, additional interviews with poor participants of the project, and with himself, showed that he had had the interests of these poorer segments of the population and an image of the equal distribution of benefits in mind. The point made by Tjeripo Musutua which I want to underline here, is that being a member of the poorer segment of the population – as indicated by the small number of goats in his possession – his public suggestions aimed at benefitting himself as much as the other poorer members of the community. While – according to his own account – people sometimes realized in retrospect that his suggestions had made sense, the majority of the project participants still followed the line of arguments presented by the richer and more powerful members. One man in particular was in a position to enforce payment for the herding of the animals while at the same time benefitting from the improved ram for the insemination of his own female goats – which was against the earlier project agreements. Interestingly, lack of payment for the herder employed by the local people to take care of the project goats (which were supposed to be kept separate from all other goats) had created the situation in which the richer participant became the caretaker of the herd.
With respect to the shaping of "public opinion" through power relationships it should also be mentioned that in contrast to the assessment as successful at the public meeting, the poorer members interviewed later claimed that for them the project had actually been a financial loss. In their view, such projects generally benefitted the rich more than the poor. One of the reasons for this is that poor people "lack the resources" to participate – such as to buy one of the improved goats -, which motivates project initiators to approach those who have the resources first, if not exclusively[76].
Another reason might be family relationships between extension officers and community members: it took a me while to realize that the extension officer responsible for the project was related to two of the three richest hoseholds in the village. On the other hand, great care had also been taken to involve at least some of the poorer community members.
Even a cursory look at the network of relationships shows how complex the situation is - and at the same time reveals to what extent *all* "powerful" community members belong to the

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> *The services of the programme have been extended to various areas over the years and have been mainly oriented at responding to the requests of farmers and for services, thus a supporting demand-led process.*
>
> Das Management sowie die Feldarbeiter des Landwirtschaftsministeriums wurden dahingehend unterstützt, um ihnen bei den zunehmenden Antragstellungen der Bauern Hilfestellungen zu bieten, damit nachhaltige Methoden der Ressourcennutzung eingeleitet werden können.
> *The management and the field officers of the Ministry for Water, Agriculture and Rural Development (MAWRD) were assisted in responding to the increasing number of applications by farmers, in order to introduce sustainable methods of resource use.*
>
> Projektpartner: Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Wasser und Ländliche Entwicklung
> *Project partner: Ministry for Water, Agriculture and Rural Development*
> Laufzeit: 1991 - 2004

[76] In contrast to this self-representation by community members identifying themselves as "poor", one of the agents of modernisation – and extension officer – claimed that "these people" often hide an unwillingness to invest behind a pretended "lack of resources": In reality, they only needed to sell one or two of their animals, which would still leave them with enough to be reasonably comfortable.

same network. Even the opposing ones, such as the "difficult man": the village headman is also one of the two richest people in the village[77]. His daughter is the chairperson of the waterpoint committee, where both opponents in the conflict about the boergoat project serve as water guards, while the wife of the "difficult man" serves as the treasurer. The headman explained his daughter's position of chairperson as a result of her earlier efforts to organize the distribution of whater even before the present borehole was established. The wife of the rich man who benefitted most from the boergoat project, on the other hand, found her lacking in organizational skills and not the best person for the job. Her husband holds the position of vice-chairman – and she is the only woman who sits on a chair together with the men: "Because there I can hear better – the women always talk too much"[78]. The significance of this detail was underlined in Rose Marie Beck's presentation: the convention is that women sit together and on the ground. Only women of high status, such as a highly educated female extension officer or herself as a highly educated and white researcher can claim the right to a chair. That this is a "right" which is related to positions of power can be seen from old photographs: there, only chiefs sit on chairs.

The importance of relationships can also be seen in another village where the LAGSUS project followed up on the eruption of a conflict during one of the waterpoint committee meetings. There, one outstanding individual[79] had sort of hijacked the position of chairman and also built a direct line from the waterpoint to his house. Both advantages he was forced to give up by the combined pressure of the rest of the village – who all "belonged to one family", including the disputed man himself. While the community had for some time been resentful of the position and suspicious about the amount of water used through the private line[80], the conflict had erupted only when the man's daughter had publicly insulted the treasurer of the waterpoint committee – according to the mother of the present chairman of the waterpoint committee in the same village, who also claimed that the resented "haughty behaviour" had been caused not by the man's personal characteristics, but rather on instigation by his wife and daughter, who were seen to have pushed him to build and solidify his special position. Retreating from the position as chairman, he had not given up his ambitions completely: he had applied for the right to have his private borehole with the traditional council, and he was also among the few people who had already applied for the 20ha of "residential land" provided for by the new government laws[81]. The man's daughter herself, who was about to leave the village soon, saw "the village" as "against this household", citing a number of instances which did indeed look like the use of double standards for measuring this households behaviour as against that of other households: "They count how many drums of water we fill at the borehole, they don't do that for other households who are also known to have many animals."

I have presented this particular situation in more detail than the argument about the importance of relationships warrants: trying to make sense of these opposing views of the

[77] Altogether, there are only three who can be counted as rich according to local standards, the third one being the opponent of the "difficult man". According to the assessment of Tjeripo Musutua he is, however, not yet really "rich" in terms of the number of cattle he owns.

[78] I take the liberty to include this information from the interview notes of Rose Marie Beck – to whom I am very grateful for having made available all transcripts and interview notes.

[79] The only person far and wide to own horses and also to show off his riding skills at the Commemoration Ceremony at Ohamakari. Judging from the uniform he wore there, he belonged to the *Otrupa* section of the herero – which might have contributed to his rather late settling in the village.

[80] "Look at how green it looks around his house. Just like paradise" (paraphrased quote from the interview on August 6, 2004)

[81] These laws are part of the communal land reform and were also discussed at the TKFA workshop, where it was found that they were "inapplicable" because of a lack of space in the communal areas. Despite the difficulties, a deadline for application had been set by the government, which raised a common fear of being left behind in case of not applying. At the same time, hardly anybody understood what these new laws were about so that people felt incapable of using the application forms already distributed.

same situation for me raised the question of whom – and whose "information" – to trust. While I had first been inclined to side with the daughter because of her articulateness, I became swayed towards the side of the present chairman's mother later, because she seemed to present a more "holistic" view of the overall situation. In this change of opinion a little detail also played a role: I had earlier found the daughter's reasoning very sensible, that the "disappearance of records" every time the office of the treasurer changed allowed the cancelling of the debts of those mentioned in the records. However, this looked different in the light of the claim by the present chairman's mother that all records had been kept at the house of the former chairman. Who had usurped the office with claims based on his ability to read and interpret official documents – which had also made him appear to be in alliance with the local water office whose representatives, while not having any power to appoint office bearers of local waterpoint committees, had dealt with him preferentially because of his reading and writing abilities and because he appeared as a legitimate office bearer. This information surfaced because a representative of the local water office also happened to be present during this conversation and he felt the need to defend the water office's impartiality. These stories show the delicate position of the research project with respect to these local conflict: how difficult it is to get beyond the view the network of locally powerful people wants to project and / or actually believes in.[82] I do not want to suggest that the views of more wealthy or more powerful local people are not accurate. There are, however, *different* views about the same situations among other people who do not belong to this network –views which only surface in private settings and on condition that the listener is trusted not to misuse this information[83]. Because these stories surfaced on the basis of sufficient trust, they also show the necessity to include information originating from people affected by the conversations recorded for the purpose of transcription and conversation analysis into the framework of interpretation of these transcriptions, which is why I found it necessary to include the chapters about the epistemological and methodological conclusions into this report.

With respect to the local situation, these stories also show the necessity of paying attention to how both gender relationships and power relationships change in the local context. There seems to be an increasing recognition that women can also fill positions and perform actions "traditionally" reserved for men. Considering the history of communal areas, one of the reasons for the increasing self-confidence of women are their experiences of successful organizing and managing under conditions of the forced absence of men – enforced by the necessity to find work somewhere in the "white" economic sector during the colonial times which lasted until 1990. At the same time, there seems to be a reluctance to show this self-confidence publicly in the presence of men.

In some these considerations are particularly relevant for the TKFA, whose sustainability as an organization depends on members considering it "their" organization: 80% of its members are men, while 70% of the households in the area are female-headed. As these 70% female headed households are likely to belong to the poorer sections of the population, they are even more underrepresented in the decision-making structures of the TKFA, since at least one of three women present during the workshop belongs now also owns a commercial farm. It is also important with respect to the question of the sustainability of the farming (or rather: ranching) system: poor households do not own cattle, but only sheep and goats – whose grazing habits are rather detrimental to the regrowth of vegetation. In contrast, the "part-time farmers" who make up the majority of the executive committee, are cattle owning men.

[82] I make this distinction as a first reference to the general research problem of separating the "real opinions" from the "public opinions" which are necessarily shaped by the strategic consideration of how other people will react to a sentence – particularly with respect to a contested resource.

[83] It has probably been obvious that the view of the local situation which the LAGSUS team gained during the short field visit was also shaped by these relationships.

Which may explain why TKFA's main concern is with cattle, rather than with goats, as one of the workshop participants interjected in conjunction with the discussion about the relative absence of women in the membership and in the decision-making committees.
It is therefore significant that the question was discussed at the workshop at all. At the same time, it was discussed almost exclusively by the men, who also drew up the following list of reasons why so few women attended meetings like this workshop:

- Women often think that they do not have the knowledge or the language to speak up
- There is a history of women remaining in the back
- For this meeting the invitation was for each branch to send 2 or 3 representatives and this is how it turned out
- There is a general attitude that it is not good if women speak up in the presence of men – it is poor behaviour
- It is our upbringing: women just refuse to speak up in meetings, even if men give them the opportunity, they don't want – as one man remarked: "It's just their way of being"
- One should also not forget the background of a culture of apartheid. Even now there are mainly men in parliament – having more women means changing our culture. But because of HIV/AIDS we must change. (Topic of rape in marriage is broached)
- Some people are simply afraid

While drawn up by the men, the list seems to also represent the women's own views because, as one of them remarked: "You know that I can be rather controversial. So I would have intervened had it been necessary."
As a very preliminary conclusions from these stories, and against the background of the colonial and apartheid experience, I suggest that there is an increasing awareness of the need to "change the culture" and that one of the elements of this culture change concerns the relationship bewteen men and women.
There does not seem to be an equal recognition to acknewledge the need to also look at the necessity to include a change in power relationships in this change of culture. While the need for this is suggested in the occasional occurrence of a "difficult man" (whose valuable concrete suggestions for action are ignored because of his low position in the local network of power) or the surprizing outbursts during a discussion among young adults (as after the showing of the video), this need is at the same time not seen *within* the local power network. There are two immediate reasons for this:

1) While the situation of the environment is acknowledged as difficult, the awareness that it is deteriorating does not seem to be widespread; hence the need for a change of regime with respect to grazing management is not clear.
2) Since the need for this is not seen, there is not even a need to think about the relationship between the power structure (i.e. a few individuals owning substantial herds) and the environmental conditions (i.e. the failure to adapt herd sizes to changing rainfall regimes in different years)

In this situation the only local support for the poorer segments of the population are the locally wealthy and powerful people, who might in cases of dire need provide some additional support – if they are not challenged. This challening does occur, as is shown both in the case of the "difficult man" and in the case of the village community opposing the continuation of the usurper's priviledged access to water. As chances for succes in the case of individual challenging are small, as the case of the "difficult man" also shows, it seems wiser for most people not to risk the slight chance provided by outwardly loyal behaviour towards the local élite[84].

[84] A few further connections in this postulated network of power deserve mentioning: the secretary of the ADC is a daughter of the late Chief Jeja; the head of the ADC is married to a member of the Technical Advisory

This, however has negative consequences for both institutional and environmental sustainability: the lack of challenge to the views of the élite allows them to continue as a basis for decision-making, even when they these views reflect an inaccurate assessment of the situation. This may entail – as in the case of the danger of environmental degradation through overgrazing – overlooking a problem which needs to be addressed for the sake of the very sustainability which these decisions aim for.

In the case of the boergoat project, participants reported that the decisions taken "under the tree" were – somewhat mysteriously – always changed later and never really adhered to. This was cited as one of the reasons for the decision *not* to continue with the project and instead sell the herd and distribute proceeds of the sale – which did not even recover the intitial outlay, at least in the case of the two interviews I had a chance to observe.

In the case of the TKFA the differences between full-time farmers and part-time farmers, as well as the differences between members of the former *Kondjee Farmers' Association* and members of the former *Otjohorongo Farmers' Association* were in the workshop acknowledged to have resulted in a lack of trust. The lack of trust, in turn, had allowed a situation to linger where everybody was acting on the basis of what he or she *thought* the other person – the one presently speaking in public, or the one "behind" a particular guideline or decision – intended. As mentioned before, a similar situation seems to be characteristic for most organizations in this particular communal area[85]: It is worth quoting from this discussion – which more or less turned into a group interview – at some length[86]:

> **O:** … If something, if the government initiates something here … this is - which leads aah towards development … then everybody - if, like maybe I am from the catholic church … and I'm working somewhere in the government, like in the agricultural department, and .. **definitely** I will that thing first. The papers will come to me first. And I will be the one to inform the whole community: "Now the government wants to implement this project". Maybe a a a boerbock, aa boergoat a a a … a project and all those things. …. And only a few people will come to participate, and those people will happen to be from my church … And the other people won't participate in that project. Due to the fact that I am - that **I am** from the catholic church and I am working for the government, then they will think that I'm abusing monopoly power because I'm in that position.
> **R:** So it's not that you will actually not tell the others, … the others will not come.
> **O:** No! I definitely tell them. You will inform them but it's only a few people that will come. It's about beliefs and likes and dislikes. In this village. … If I don't like you and you got something in store for me then I won't participate. That's the thing.
> **R:** You mean if I invite you for coffee and you don't like me you will not come to my coffee (laughs)
> **O: No**! That person will definitely not go.
> **H:** Well ….
> **O:** Like the epidemic that we are facing. … the HIV epidemic …
> **R:** Mhm …
> **O:** You will start a group … eventually … youth group or something. Fight against HIV. … You will start just for a few days. That thing is the simplest thing. It's a fact, it's a reality, you just have to face it. And and and … get away from it … and and and a a … try to protect ourselves. Like we will just go on for two days … and… everybody just vanishing and you will be left alone.
> So, even we, we ourselves, the youth, we are discouraged … by that. I might be … I might be having those characters of a leader, and I will start something, and I will live that key (?) .. and

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Committee for Land Reform, who is also a driving force for the co-operation between LAGSUS und TKFA; and the principal of the Omatjette Primary School is married to the Marketing Officer of the TKFA.

[85] The rather vocal young woman who advanced these views in the discussion following the showing of the video explicitly mentioned the difference to other communal areas, where she had lived before moving to Omatjette.

[86] "O" stands for the woman, "R" is the researcher

later on, I will just be left alone. Then I will think that , no there is no need to do that. I just have to be on my own, and fight everything on my own.
(murmur)
O: Cause you know that you've started and you'll be left alone
H: Selfish
Pause

It seems to me that this statements contains in essence the characterization of the social reality as a "culture of distrust[87]" – and an hypothesis concerning the relationship between trust and sustainability:
Relationships and action networks are not sustainable in the absence of trust, because under such conditions, decisions and actions are based on assumptions rather than on accurate assessments of the social and / or "natural" reality. Hence "realistic planning" for sustainably improved livelihoods becomes rather difficult. It is on the basis of this interpretation of the data furnished by the field stay in Namibia that I find it difficult to follow Uta Ruppert's otherwise very sensible advice to abandon the concept of trust as a major and shared focus for the LAGSUS project.
As demonstrated by a even a quick Google search with the either the title of Fukuyama's best-selling book *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*[88] or the term "low-trust society" which he promoted with that book, the discussion of trust as an important variable for economic development and for the management of organizations has gained popularity. This is not reflected as yet in the Namibian discussions aiming at the promotion of sustainable development, particularly with respect to environmental sustainability: while both empowerment and the sustainability of natural resource management are mentioned in the objectives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (MAWRD)[89], there is presently no clear conception of the social conditions for achieving this. There are indications that social conditions find increasing attention in the collaboration with local and foreign researchers[90]. "Trust" as a variable does not figure there, however. One of the

[87] It may seem far-fetched, but on the basis of what is knows about the effect of traume in general (see Herman 1992), I also think that the origins of this culture of distrust have to be traced back to the traumatizing colonial experiences. As a consequence, the resulting behaviour can be seen in a more forgiving light: individuals do not display this behaviour out of a conscious choice of "bad will", but rather as a result of an unrecognized and unhealed pyschological wound.

[88] Fukuyama (1995)

[89] The Ministry's website (http://www.grnnet.gov.na/Nav_frames/Gov_launch.htm) give an easy access to the officially declared goals:

> "The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development manages and utilizes water and agricultural resources to achieve sound socio-economic development. Based on the National Development Plan (NDP1), the ministry adopted the following objectives:
> 1. to facilitate the empowerment of communities to manage their agricultural resources in a sustainable way;
> 2. to ensure progressive improvement in households food security and nutrition;
> 3. to ensure access to reliable water supply of an appropriate standard for households and other economic uses;
> 4. to continuously improve the capacity of the ministry to best serve its customers efficiently and in a cost effective manner;
> 5. to assist and advise on the land reform process; and
> 6. to improve agricultural income."

[90] The *Desert Research Foundation* has included socio-economic variables in a research project about the monitoring of rural livelihoods (Wulff and Richarz, 2004), and a research projects in connection with the German *Sonderforschungsbereich* ACACIA explicitly include the collaboration between natural and social scientists

LAGSUS contributions, therefore, could be suggestions for operational definitions on the basis of language indicators.

The experience with the theatre method

It was gratifying to find rather spontaneous acceptance of the method of using the theatrical display of children's views on development as a door to adult's perceptions in various institutions in Namibia. Laurinda Olivier-Sampson of the Drama Center of UNAM put me in touch with Joseph Molapong who provided an estimated work schedule and budget for possible future theatre workshops. He also collaborates with Joe Madisia from the Katutura Community Arts Centre whom I contacted in the first week of my stay in Windhoek on the basis of a recommendation from Ben Fuller of NEPRU (*Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit*). Both of them suggested to also liaise with Frederick Philander who was finally met at the very end of the stay by a group composed of Prof. Michael Fremery, and Joseph Baya. In this brief meeting he expressed his interest in a future co-operation which would satisfy the requirements for serious theatre work. Based on his previous experience[91] this meant a budget for the theatre people involved, a requirement which is the present LAGSUS budget cannot meet.
Interest was also expressed by Angelika Tjoutuku of NIED (*Namibian Institute for Educational Development*) whom I contacted on recommendation of Prof. Haacke at UNAM: As the method's sequence of steps begins with asking school children to write essays about a fictitious development project in their language, it seemed interesting to explore possible cooperation with a NIED unit which had organised essay competitions in local languages earlier on. In the discussions at NIED in Okahandja on August she discovered how close the LAGSUS concern about the importance of local languages was to her own dedication to fostering the use of local languages in the Namibian Education system and therefore decided to attend the LAGSUS conference. Based on her own earlier co-operation with theatre work in schools she saw possibilities for future collaboration in general. It remains to be seen whether the interest in the topic of a fictitious development project with defined personages found its way into the preparation of another national essay competition: she had been looking for an alternative to using the 1904 genocide as the most obvious topic for Herero in the year of commemoration.

Working with Grade Seven at the Omatjette Primary School

In Omatjette itself, the experimental application of the method was greately enhanced by the assistance of Howard Tjijendeke. I am grateful to Rose Marie Beck for introducing me to him as well as to the senior staff members of the Omatjette Primary School. Howard Tjijendeke had gather prio experience with theatre work with school children in the course of acting as an assistant teacher in the framework of AIDS/HIV education. Thanks to his abilities in translation and the principal openness of the vice-principal of the school, a brief discussion sufficed to be allowed to work with the students of Grade Seven, starting the same afternoon (Tuesday, July 27).
Following the outline of the method in Appendix II children on the first afternoon were invited to invent a story with a set number of characters. Finding that they could not memorize the roles, I gave them paper (as this was an afternoon session and they had to interrupt watching a video show to come to this theatre experiment, they had not brought paper themselves) and asked them to write down the list of characters.

[91] Philander (undated)

The following day the number of attending students had decreased (instead of increased, to the full number of students for Grade Seven), and some of those present were new, while some who had attended the precvious day did not come again. As Howard had expected on account of the low writing skills of students of this age, there appeared to be not a single story. However, in response to a remark that surely some of those who claimed to have written an essay, but forgotten to bring it along, would remember their story line, one paper with a story appeared.
This story we then took as a basis for developing a play by simply disgtributing the roles among volunteers and asking them to improvise along the lines of the story. This seemed to be the only option considering the unexpected shortage of time: in the meantime we had found out that the following week students would be busy with preparations for the examinations. The children enjoyed their improvised play a lot and were actually able to continue the play with few reminders of the story line which had been read out to them just once. Some of them – particularly the witch doctor, the chief, and the boy who is the hero of the story – got into their roles to the extent of inventing additions to the story on the spot. This was quite contrary to the expectations of my assistant who, based on his previous experiences with the "Our Future – Our Choice" project had expected them to need detailed instructions for the play.
The story line was this:

> *There was once a woman who was pregnant. And there was a chief who treated his people badly. He always commanded them about according to his whims. The woman thought about that a lot and could not sleep at night. One day she was sitting next to the fire thinking and thinking. Then a bird came and asked her: "What are you thinking about?" She did not want to tell: "What if I tell you, what will be the benefit?" – "Well, I will tell you according to my knowledge," said the bird. So the woman told the bird about the bad chief and that she could not be happy (and also was worried about her child?). "Please to not worry any longer," said the bird. "There is a clever boy in your village who will put things in order." And then flew away. (I know remember that there was also something about one or even two groups of youngsters who wanted to improve the situation in the village. – Maybe we should suggest tomorrow that the boy derives his plan from discussions in that group? But that would give a completely wrong idea about the meanig of such groups of "active citizens"?)*
>
> *That boy actually went to the chief and told him to watch out what would happen to him if he did not change his ways in treating people. "What do you want? You are nothing to me! Just get lost!" And the chief threw him out.*
>
> *The boy then went to a witchdoctor and appealed to him and finally the witchdoctor agreed to kill the chief and to also prevent the ghost of the chief to come back and trouble the people.*
>
> *The chief in fact died and people were very happy and started having a better life. The woman gave birth to her baby and was so grateful that she gave all her money to the boy.*

After the first attempt, the roles were revised, students remembered the importance of the difference between rich and poor people, and incorporated a narrator to tie the individual scenes into a coherent story line. Students also took the opportunity to criticize the chief in the story for his behaviour, announcing that development needed a democratic leadership style. Following this discussion, some of the characters were also distributed to different volunteers and both the actors and the spectators had much fun in the second run through the story. As it turned out, the only day available for the recording was the following day, Thursday, as students would go home to their villages immediately after school on Friday.

The following day the students' improvisations were again slightly different each of the two times they went through the play, this time helped by some props which they had brought along, together with more presentable clothes.
Showing the video immediately afterwards quickly attracted a number of younger students still around and also the remaining adults, including the teacher of Grade Seven, who at first appeared skeptical about this theatre experiment. Seeing the result, however, she suggested to redo the play to improve on it: it would be more interesting if filmed in an outside environment, rather than in a classroom, as on the first occasion. In spite of the examinations, the following Wednesday (August 4) was fixed for this recording.
The teacher's involvement resulted in an addition to the story line of the play, which would account for the differences between rich and poor people and also better explain how the boy became involved in the first place.
As can be seen from the contents of the story as quoted above, the play had departed considerably from the original intentions of the method: from a play about a fictitious development project, it had turned into a story about liberation from an oppressive chief through magic murder. While I had originally been concerned about the possible negative implications of such a story on the position of the LAGSUS project in Omatjette, particularly with a view to the planned public showing of the video, I was reassured by all involved that it would be seen as a children's play. I was also reassured that stories such as these followed established models and would be seen as such by potential viewers.
At the same time, during the transcription[92] of the two versions recorded at the school (see Appendix III) – and before an attentive reading of the literature on colonialism cited above – I was struck by the treatment of the village people by the chief in the story: it was as if the schoolchildren wanted to show me, a white man: "See, this is how we (the Herero) were treated by you (the Germans) earlier."
I do not want to ascribe a conscious intention on their part to this impression of mine, but found it striking that in the second recorded version of the play, the chief calls his people "workers" and "kaffirs". In both versions he beats them to speed up their work, in the second version using his belt as a whip.

A discussion following the showing of the video

Due to the very busy schedule of the ADC in Omatjette the intention to discuss the video with farmers was not possible. This second stage of the method (see Appendix III) is essential for the purposes of using it as a research method, rather than as a method to stimulate community action. Therefore we opted for a showing at the school with an invitation to parents and a public announcement in the form of a poster in front of the bigger of the two shops in Omatjette.
At the appointed time, the classroom was full of students, with only a few adults among them who remained for a discussion which lasted for more than an hour. While the size and constitution of the group does not allow to consider it as representative for the population of the communal area as a whole[93], the topics which surfaced in the discussion considerably influenced my interpretation of other observations and the literature review.

[92] The transcription was done under field conditions: Howard Tijkendeke was dictating from straight from the video, while I was typing. This explains remaining spelling mistakes: He corrected my spelling while translating into English. This method did not offer me as much learning into the language itself, as I had hoped, but did give me a much better idea of the contents of the children's improvised play, as I had to follow the relation between spoken sentences and written text much more closely than with other methods.
[93] The group consisted mainly of young adults, with the exception of one older woman in the "traditional" Herero dress. She was the mother of the boy who played the "hero" – and did not contribute to the discussion.

The most remarkable point was the critique with the existing traditional leadership and the government policies concerning development. Seeing the degree of agreement in this group of young adults I found it reasonable to take this as an indication of the existence of a much more widespread dissatisfaction in the younger generation. The second indication for this assumption is the observation of a similarly energetic expression of a frustration with the lack of employment in the group interview in Otopupa. There, the young people had mentioned a number of concrete activities they would be willing to undertake, such as gardening, a *Food for Work* project, improving their herds – for which they simply lacked some inputs locally not available, such as seeds or improved bulls/rams.
The Omatjette group did seem to see a connection between this general frustration and the widespread problem of alcohol abuse. What I found most remarkable was that they had an explicit theory of the cultural transmission of the "culture of distrust" I mentioned earlier: they found the distrust and the divided loyalties operational at all levels of societies, and mentioned how these mechanisms are transmitted from parents to children, and later enforced at school (for details see the transcript of that discussion in Appendix IV).
Two more outstanding criticism concerned the "ethnic bias" of the present senior administrator for the constituency and the decentralization policy of the government. The first criticism was introduced with the caution that the speaker did "not want to be racist" and then proceeded with the observation that government funds were mostly "diverted" to the Damara section of the communal area – which is not too surprising considering the fact that following the Odendaal commisions's suggestions of 1964, the former *Tjohorongo Reserve* became part of the *Damara Homeland*.
The second criticism was more surprising: these young people saw the colonial administration's style of action as more effective – and beneficial despite its limitations – than the participatory style of the present government: while the colonial administrators had come, asked some questions, then decided that a school or a clinic was needed in a certain place, and acted on this, the present government, in line with the policy of decentralization, would organize a group meeting, ask for the group's preferences and needs – and then enact something different, justifying these different measures with the remark: "But we have asked you what you wanted". It is interesting in this respect that the group in Otopupa also mentioned its frustration with an earlier interview in which they had taken part, in which their needs and their suggestions for development had been recorded: following that interview, nothing had happened – and they clearly did not want this experience repeated.
Finally, it seems remarkable that – contrary to our own efforts at finding cross-culturally valid definitions for development -, this group strongly agreed with virtually all people in the research area: "development" means the provision of water as a basis for *all* other activities, followed by electricity and and infrastructure of transport, education, and health provision[94].

Conclusions for future work with the method

While the topics reported above are interesting enough, it has to be kept in mind that they cannot be considered a straightforward result of the method as outlined in Appendix II: They did not refer to the video play, but came in response to the question about the problems with development in the area.
Considering the difficulty with the children's writing of a story, it also seems advisable to develop a more explicit method for faciliating the development of a story line without prejudicing the content. Overall, it seems that the sociology component's main contribution at this stage is not furnished by the theatre method, but by complementing the conversation analysis with additional data to allow for a contextualization of the data gathered by recording

[94] For details see the transcript in Appendix IV

official and non-official discussions and conversations (for details see the chapter on "methodological conclusions").

Epistemological conclusions

The observations mentioned above, the in-depth discussion with Rose-Marie Beck and the LAGSUS workshop in Omaruru have led me to re-think the role which the sociology component can play in the overall research project. Some of the conclusions I drew concern the nature of scientific inquiry in the field of social sciences and are reproduced in this chapter. Other conclusions are more concrete and concern methodological questions and the co-operation between the different sub-projects. These are reproduced in the following chapter.

The main *epistemological* point touches on a debate which has been going on in the social sciences between ethnomethodological and other approaches of trying to build theory "from the bottom up" in a strictly inductive fashion, and those approaches seeing the construction of theory as a somewhat independent activity. In its more extreme forms these deductive approaches treat observations as mere illustrations of previously formulated theoretical positions. To the extent that the testing of quantitative relationships between variables requires clearly spelled out theoretical relationships, the dominat quantitative approaches all fall into this category.

While I do not want to hide my sympathy for the insistence of allowing "the data" to speak for themselves – which is at the basis of approaches of *Grounded Theory* -, I also find it important to note that there is a difference between *data* and *people's voices*. One of the theoreticians who has reflected on this in a more systematic way is Pierre Bourdieu. I find it difficult not to take seriously two related observations:

1) *what people say* is itself not entirely in their choice: while they do make conscious and strategic decisions concerning what they say and how they act, these decisions take place in a context which sets conditions for the success of their actions. To the extent that they want to be successful (with respect to access to resources, for example), the have *no choice* but to respect these conditions. My overall conclusion is that the sociology component of LAGSUS cold have the role of highlighting these external conditions and thus provide an additional – and essential – *perspective* for the interpretation of the conversational data.
2) *Data* themselves do not exist independently of *scientific constructions*. As a number of authors have tried to insist, there is no such thing as an "innocent" observation – in everyday life as little as in the scientific endeavour. Data are constituted by the focussing of attention on particular details of the surrounding "environment". As far as I understand this scientific endeavour, the collection of data itself is intended to serves the obective of either "description" or "explanation". The aim is to "make sense" of these data. In my understanding – and I stand to be corrected by the linguistic experts in our project – this requires an interpretation of conversational details such as intonation and pauses. This interpretation, in turn, needs "secondary information" in the form of explanations about the meaning of these details *by native speakers*. Where the sociological perspective comes in as a complementary basis for interpretation is with respect to the *consequences* of the *strategic use* of the meanings thus established.

As I try to show in the following chapter, this has methodological consequences – and conseaquences for the practical mode of co-operation between the sub-projects. These points are therefore very much in need of an in-depth discussion withing the LAGSUS project. As our team-building effort in Omaruru showed, successful and mutually enhancing co-operation – what others call "synergy effects" – is furthered by some form of consensus. I think we

agreed that there is still room for solidifying our consensus with respect to the scientific foundations of our project – and the above remarks are intended as a suggestion for further discussion.

Methodological conclusions for the sociology project

Overall, the practical consequences from the above "theoretical orientation" will focus on the following three aspects:

1) Continue synthesizing sociological and anthropological literature on the societies of the project areas and provide these as digests to the other components. These digests would focus on the present socio-economic structure and put them in a historical context, in order to assist the focus on social change, particularly with respect to power relationships in the localities, and their effects on the management of natural resources. Of particular interest in this respect are changes in the gender relationships as influenced by and influencing market relations.
2) Continue to synthesize global trends in the development discussion, with a particular focus on the national and international driving forces behind local development initiatives coming from the outside. This will – together with the literature digests mentioned under 1) - allow the other more linguistically oriented researchers in the project to better assess to what extent changes at the local level are due to either external forces or local intiatives: it will put the local conversation analysis in a wider context, without neglecting the specific focus on the importance of language use. In particular, the literature review will allow to build hypotheses concerning three questions suggested recently by our external reviewer Uta Ruppert:
   a) What kind of change is intended by an external message?
   b) What are the external driving forces for local changes?
   c) How are the intentions behind particular messages and the driving forces embedded into institutional structures?
3) For practical field research, the focus will be on interviews with key informants, focussing in particular on local notions of sustainability in all its aspects: institutional sustainability, economic sustainability, and sustainability of natural resource management. The key question will be to what extent notions of sustainability themselves are being imported into the local discourse, or rather have long-standing roots in the local discourse. It is the particular task of the sociology component to also contribute to the positioning of the use of key notions in the local context by working out sociograms of the localities which would allow to grasp the sociological importance of the data collected by the other subprojects, which yield answers to the question "Who says what": the positioning of the speakers in the sociogram will allow hypotheses concerning the strategic meaning of the "what" – which can be confirmed or disconfirmed by further interviews with key informants. For the Indonesian sub-project this task will be made easier through collaboration with field researchers working for the research project "Stability of Rainforest Margins", while for others it may involve the organisation of a participatory workshop using methods of Venn diagrams. It is hoped that the for the identification of key informants and for the organisation of participatory workshops – where necessary – the sociology component will be able to rely on the cooperation of the socio-linguistic project components.

I hope for agreement that the third of these aspects in particular calls for a rather close collaboration between the sociology component an the socio-linguistic sub-projects in Indonesia, Namibia, Ivory Coast; and now also Uganda. While my own reflections have developed a bit further in this direction, I would prefer to be able to include feedback – and as much as possible personal discussions into the further development of the concrete details. At this point I would only like to share my strongest impression from Namibia – which also seems to have relevance for Indonesia: because of its own objective of making a practically relevant contribution to development efforts, and also because of the expectations of the people on whose verbal actions our data depend, LAGSUS is faced with a situation where we have to always consider how our "results" will in the future influence the very conversations we record. In this sense, we *have to* also think strategically in the same everyday manner as the people in Omutiuanduko do. It seems to me that we therefore have no choice but to consider questions of power and trust and their influence on sustainability in practical ways. I hope Rose Marie Beck will agree that this happened to some extent in our discussions in Omatjette – and I hope this will also happen in the other research areas in the future.

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