

Ongwediva College of Education

**PART FOUR: THE VIEW**



## **Explaining teacher education reform**

We have now come to the terminus of this African tour. At the outset you were promised a journey through the historical, social and educational landscape of a new-born nation state. This journey has exposed different characteristics of the landscape in an attempt to give some explanatory answers to the two main questions of the inquiry:

- What structural forces influenced the teacher education reform in Namibia?
- What consequences of reform could be identified on structural levels?

The chapter starts with a review of the highlights along the road that implicitly will lead towards answers to these questions.

### **A summative travelogue**

The journey started on the premises of a participatory, pre-judicious, and critical site. The initial bridging to the African landscape took place when the spectacles were picked up. These spectacles were going to assist in explaining the view along the road through hegemonic and counter-hegemonic lenses.

The first outlook presented the broader landscape and its constraining global and historical layers played out through the globalisation trends, the market of development business, and the illusory hopes of the African version of the modernised school as played out through the ritualised coulisse-school. The outline of a conflicting landscape emerged after the first euphoric hopes at independence. This outline had been composed around hegemonic ideas about development that furthered the already askew distribution of wealth and prosperity. At independence the Namibian borders were opened up for international

influences in a time when development was marked by consumerism, accelerated individualism and global financial speculation in an uncontested and expanding global capitalism. Independence created the hope and the illusion that everyone could participate in this development. A redefinition of the conditioned Western design of the modern state slowly started to emerge as a survival strategy for the new elite following the example of other African nations. However, the Namibian version of the modern state remained within the parameters of a law-governed society, but with internal flaws related to the marks of the gravy train, the utilisation of a two-third political majority for party interests, and a growing lack of acceptance towards divergence and critique. Representatives from all camps in the development business soon started to swarm the country. Donor projects landed in almost all areas of education based on diverse ideas about what was needed on the ground. Very few, however, had a critical perspective that challenged the common sense about development and education.

The second outlook exposed the origins of the historical residues into the common sense about education that maintained the ritualised coulisse-school. Here we passed through traditional, missionary, and colonial education before we landed in the classroom of the liberation movement. The historical luggage that remained as residues after this part of the journey had three interrelated and overlapping compartments. They contained the view on authority and gender that could be traced back to traditional education. This was further engraved under colonial education together with the discursive, mental, and social dichotomies of inferiority and superiority that maintained an askew distribution of prosperity. The liberation struggle introduced an authority with a different foundation that at times also furthered a constrained view on democratic development and education. The traits of a layered society and its effects on education reform started to be visible before a detour was made in a different direction.

An embryonic counter-hegemonic bloc was emerging as a challenge to the prevailing common sense about education. This bloc was initially small in size but had an impact on the war of position over the preferential right of interpretation when the national teacher education reform started. This impact was created through the joint efforts by the emerging organic intellectuals and intellectual defectors during the years in exile, and in northern Namibia before the reform started. However, the battleground for the intellectual war of position had many other actors and many skirmishes were expected. Therefore strategic positioning and alliances were created in support of the new policy.

The recurrent international outlook placed the reform at the critical and transformative end of the education spectrum as a conscious attempt to break with the prevailing education traditions. This break was legitimised by the political will and expectations of change. The international philosophical and practical connections were aiming at an acknowledgement beyond the vulnerability of a homebrew alternative brand. However, these international connections also created reasons for criticism from home-based nationalistic and conservative perspectives that further accentuated the intellectual war of position over teacher education reform in Namibia.

The last stop before we entered the reform arena presented the situational conditions for the war of position. It gave an overview of the main institutional actors and their positions. Contradictions and conflict existed both between and across institutional boundaries that formed the war of position and the imprints of reform. It was a combination of institutional belonging, position, and external intervention that created the conditions for a counter-hegemonic teacher education reform.

There were three levels of contested reform imprints within the reform arena. These levels were to sew the seams of a democratic counter-hegemonic teacher education reform. At policy level a struggle over opposing educational standpoints was identified. This struggle took place as a contradiction between the national agenda and decentralisation and as

a struggle over subject content and a critical literacy of pedagogy. At the programme level critical inquiry, school-based studies, and assessment practices were identified as important parts of the contested reform imprints. Assessment became a contested area that to a large extent was drawn back into control and differentiation thinking in education, while critical inquiry and school-based studies were more successful as programme imprints, even though still vulnerable and in need for further nourishment. At the third, institutional level the ambition was to create a basis for individual and institutional agency in pursuit of the human and social values of the reform policy. Efforts through staff development activities, infrastructural institutional development, and participatory evaluation models were identified. Staff development had the largest recurrent and acknowledged impact as it indirectly supported and maintained the philosophical outlook of the reform, but under constrained institutional conditions that eroded the reform policy.

The combined forces and their different reform identities staged an intellectual war of position from which a transposed reform emerged within a layered society.

### **The layered society**

Usually we take it for granted that development is something that goes through a number of identifiable stages over a rather long period of time. Societies have been organised, sequentially, along pastoral, feudal, industrial and emerging post-industrial lines with appurtenant developments in the field of education. The African nation state is in a more complex situation where different types of societal structures operate in parallel, not only as identifiable historical remnants, but also as pertinent social fabrics contributing to the societal mesh that can be called the *layered society*.

A symbolic alternative to the previous and prolonged exposure of the Namibian landscape can be made in a day's travel across the country

to demonstrate the layered society. This society extends over the life of hunters and collectors to inner-city climes of modern commercial centres. The travel starts at the outskirts of Tsumkwe in the Kalahari Desert in the communal family life of the Bushman (San) people still living their life as hunters and collectors. The journey continues to a traditional Owambo homestead outside Oshakati where the majority of the Namibian people survive from subsistence farming and the trickle down effects from modernist layers of society. Next the journey passes the fenced private farmlands that cover the major parts of the central highlands. These farms are inhabited by farmers of mostly German or Dutch-Afrikander descents and by the farm-workers' families who have lived on the farms for generations under what still can be described as feudal conditions. Next we pass through the large mining areas in the Namib Desert and the industrial sites outside the cities where generations of Namibians have toiled as contract workers. Industrial workers are today working under better conditions, supported by the workers' unions, but under constant threats from the world economy and its in-built competitive logic. Before we arrive at the end of the journey we pass through the shanty-towns or locations, as the areas for blacks are often called. These areas are at the outskirts of the urban communities and symbolise in many ways the humanitarian failures of the capitalist order. Our journey stops in the middle of Windhoek where we enjoy the inner-city comfort of air-conditioned multinational business offices and shopping centres - provided we have the requisite social, cultural, and economic capital.

What has been described here is a representation of the layered society. What this instant picture fails to evoke is a view of the complexity of the Namibian nation state and its multiple and parallel social fabrics and their appurtenant social practices and common sense. A broad historical grid exists over these parallel layers that inflicts on the framing of people's perceptions based on the broader social fabrics of colonial and liberating experiences from the nearest past time.

Children come from these layers and carry with them the aggregated common sense about education and schooling. The overwhelming majority sooner or later open the door to the ritualised coulisse-school where their common sense is verified. This entrance also promises a journey to the modern world as a false hope and illusion created by the 'education for all-slogan'. However, the majority has always returned to the layers where they come from and usually not more competent for that situation. Others disappear from their original layer and turn up in the classrooms as formally qualified teachers from the BETD programme. These teachers have gone through a teacher education programme based on democratic and participatory notions and have started to return to the classrooms with a mission to transform the ritualised coulisse-school into something along the lines of the counter-hegemonic reform policy.<sup>1</sup>

This was the agenda and the mission of the reform. It was complicated by influences from the historical and parallel engravings through identities formed out of the layered society.

### **Identities in the intellectual war of position**

The people in charge of the reform expected a continuation of the liberation struggle by other means when the official overhaul of the previous parallel system was started after independence. This struggle was staged between the social and mental engravings that remained as detached and real common sense conceptions, and the new ideas that were expressed in the reform policy. When the BETD pre-service programme started in 1993 teacher education was placed in a prominent reform position as being the only part of the education system that started off on

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Storeng (2001) op. cit; Shinyemba (1999) op. cit; A major research project started recently with funds from the US-based Spencer Foundation to look into how the counter-hegemonic reform policy landed in the classrooms of basic education with the work of BETD graduates. Zeichner, K. (2000) Action Research and the Reform of Teaching and Teacher Education in Namibia. A proposal to the Spencer Foundation. Madison: School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

a totally new footing. As from the beginning of 1993 all previous programmes aiming at teachers for grade 1-10 were replaced by the BETD pre-service programme. Other parts of the system, like basic education, went through a more prolonged and phased reform process that started at junior secondary level and expanded downward as well as upward in the system. Teacher education got a prominent position on the national reform arena. It took the lead in the struggle for a different educational experience within the framework created by the reform policy as a counter-hegemonic force against the prevailing hegemonic views on education with their attached engravings into common sense.

The national teacher education reform engaged all teacher educators in the country during a period of six years and more. Among these and the invited outsiders a number of identities developed, i.e. intellectual positions in relation to the reform policy. These identities reflected the competing engravings in the war of position. To illustrate these positions an extrapolation of a representative gallery of identities is offered within two major and competing blocs: the traditional hegemonic bloc and the counter-hegemonic reform bloc.<sup>2</sup> The identities are a retrospective and explanatory construction and not necessarily identities that were carried consciously by the actors in the reform process.

In the traditional hegemonic bloc three major types of traditional identities were identified.

The *subaltern traditional identity* supported the new political order and people who adhered to it felt that the reform was part of the needed shifts with replacement of white by black rather than an actual restructuring process. The carriers of the subaltern traditional identity saw themselves as important actors in this regard and were suspicious of new foreign influences. They were not always comfortable with the parts of

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<sup>2</sup> *Organic* and *good sense* are concepts restricted to the official reform policy while *traditional* represents the prevailing ideas that were related to *common sense*.

the reform that called for participatory democracy as it sometimes created threats against their own position and common sense.

Individuals with the *traditional intellectual identity* had served the system for years before and after independence. They had strong beliefs in their own individual capacity and cultural capital backed up by the remains of the administrative culture from the pre-reform situation. They did not consider their capacity or capital misplaced but as an under-utilised resource. They had strong doubts about the reform, which they saw as a lowering of standards. Their engraved self-confidence was their strongest asset as it created the necessary basis for being able to stay in the system and at the same time being able to oppose it.

The *traditional intellectual with an outside identity* was found in the group of foreign advisers who saw their work in Namibia as rather unproblematic if it was not for the lack of understanding that they often met. The traditional intellectuals with an outside identity originated either from the affluent countries in the North or from other African countries. They carried out their duties strictly according to their job description. They were usually well educated and did not worry much if their knowledge and skills were needed or relevant to the reform policy. Through their position as prominent advisers and scholars they usually delivered their goods without much worry about policies as long as their work was acknowledged from a technical point of view.

In the counter-hegemonic reform bloc three types of organic identities were identified. These identities corresponded to the opposite identities in the hegemonic bloc.

Carriers of the *subaltern organic identity* had usually worked for long inside the system as subaltern professionals who saw the opportunity created by the reform. They believed that they had very little capital through which they could contribute to the reform, thus trusting that most if not everything needed to be initiated from outside. In reality, they actually contributed a lot as concerned practitioners loyal to the reform policy.

Individuals with the *organic intellectual identity* were the official carriers of the reform policy because of their position, background and commitment to the reform. They stood by the reform even when the hegemonic pack counter-attacked. They did not mind the foreign influence as long as it carried the reform further. They had a concerned critical view on the reform that it would take time to accomplish real changes and that it was a matter of changing people's fundamental views about education that could take generations to accomplish.

The foreign advisers in this bloc were *intellectuals with an outsider-within identity*. They had in most cases worked in Africa before, even though not always within mainstream development co-operation. They considered themselves to be committed educators who based their ideas on solidarity and tendencies in education that were aiming at social justice. They belonged to a rare species and had a strong commitment to the reform process as intellectual defectors. They also had strong ideas about how this process should be carried out. Part of that was the need to introduce new structures and new ideas that had to be initiated with outside involvement and further developed from inside.

The two blocs of identities had also principled relations to two other concepts from Gramsci, namely common sense and good sense. The hegemonic bloc was permeated with common sense while the counter-hegemonic reform bloc was influenced by the good sense of the reform policy. However, this dichotomy was not complete. The transfer of good sense into the hegemonic bloc created a possibility for change. The corresponding transfer of common sense into the counter-hegemonic reform bloc created an internal inertia amongst the people who were carriers of the organic identities. These overlapping influences contribute to the complexity of the change process and complicate the deconstruction of common sense and the reconstruction of good sense even at instances when it was facilitated by categories and frameworks from critical theories. Further on, the prefigurative role of the counter-

hegemonic reform policy was also affected by this constrained conversion of common sense into good sense.

The identities appeared on the reform arena as multiple variations of the main positions expressed here. These identities were not restricted to certain institutions but appeared across the institutions involved in the reform and certainly both at the colleges and at NIED. It also happened on an individual level that borders were crossed in the sense that somebody from the hegemonic bloc moved over to the counter-hegemonic side and vice versa as a result of the war of position. The carriers of these identities had a function in the intellectual war of position either as active participants who positioned themselves on the reform arena or as participants who marked their position by more subtle means in the process that led to a transposed reform.

### **A transposed reform in a layered society**

Education takes place in social and political contexts. A reform is officially supposed to reflect the political will to accomplish certain changes in the social structural basis of society. For example, by emphasising Maths and Science in schools you might want to meet the need for engineers and computer technicians. By emphasising a participatory and democratic education you might want to create active citizens who are able to contribute to the future society. However, educational systems are seldom what they portray themselves to be if seen from a critical perspective. This makes real change a problematic struggle that includes an intellectual war of position even beyond the educational arena. At times it is a partisan activity whose struggle over common sense can be apprehended as subversive by its opponents.

Teacher education reform in Namibia took place within the framework created by the structural basis of a layered society as illustrated in Figure 1. People entered the reform arena, i.e. the social and intellectual space where the reform took place, with residual engravings

from the layered society carried as identities of traditional or organic origin. Traditional engravings from historical and parallel layers met the reform engravings based on the counter-hegemonic reform policy and the conceptual basis of a visionary society. As a consequence, a war of position was staged over the preferential right of interpretation in teacher education reform between carriers of good sense as an expression of the reform engravings, i.e. the implicit intellectual emancipatory visions in relation to the structural basis of the layered society, and carriers of common sense with enduring historical and parallel engravings.

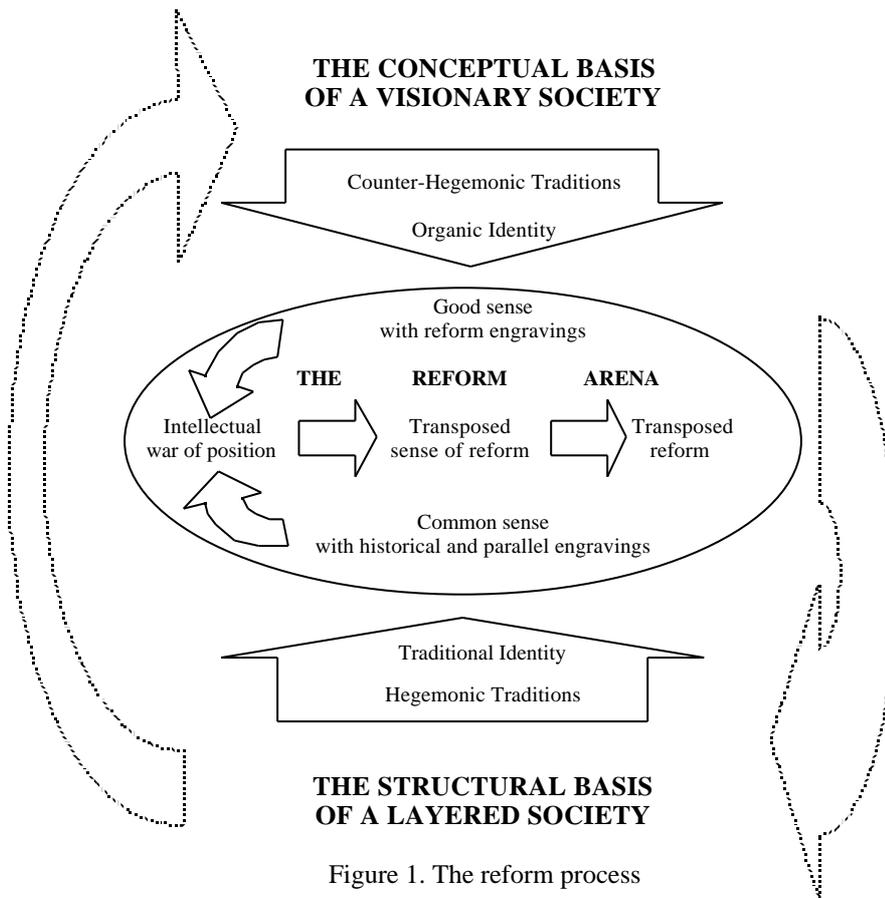


Figure 1. The reform process

The result from the intellectual war of position was a *transposed sense of reform*. The counter-hegemonic reform ideas influenced the common sense notions about education in a transposed way. Common sense did not remain the same nor did it adapt totally to the good sense of the reform policy. A similar transposition process took place with the good sense that was affected by the common sense engravings in the war of position. Thus, new conceptual positions with stronger or weaker reform engravings were created. This was an effect of the situational strength of the competing engravings carried over from the layered society and the conceptual basis of the counter-hegemonic tradition.

The transposed sense of reform created reform practices with traits from both the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic traditions played out as a *transposed reform*. This continuously fed back into the competing blocs from instances when it affected the structural basis of the layered society. This feedback manifested the transposed reform through practices in line with the hegemonic tradition that drew the reform closer to status quo. The feedback also influenced the conceptual basis of the counter-hegemonic tradition at instances when the practices were interpreted as expressions of a counter-hegemonic reform effort. At other instances did the carriers of organic identities recognise the transpositions of the reform. This further fed the intellectual war of position. The reform became neither a paradigm shift as some hoped for nor an improvement of what had been in place as others wanted, but created - if presented in musical terms - a sampled composition with an adapted keynote beat. This was the result of the transpositions that took place in the passages of distortion created by the war of position. As one of the respondents in retrospect expressed it: "The reform did not take root at systemic level".<sup>3</sup>

The reform created a new situation where counter-hegemonic reform ideas became part of the official knowledge through the changed political power. However, these reform deposits into official knowledge were

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<sup>3</sup> Interview F1, 2001.

vulnerable because of the hegemonic engravings that still existed at this level through the derived power.<sup>4</sup> Because of the enduring power of the historical engravings the reform policy had its strongest effects on the discursive level, i.e. in the way people talked about education. The hegemonic common sense about education continued to reign but with a modified labelling at conceptual and practical levels as expressions of a transposed reform.

A few explanatory examples will be given from the contested reform imprints of how the reform intentions were reinterpreted in the transposing reform process that is illustrated in figure 1. This figure is an instant picture of a fluid process, including the problems of representation that comes with such pictures.

In the attempts to create an imperative reform framework a balance between a critical literacy of pedagogy and conventional subject knowledge was aimed at. This could be observed in the original weighting between the two blocks in the programme, the foundation and specialisation blocks. These blocks corresponded to the foundation and specialisation subjects, while the core subjects were taught in parallel through the whole programme. From a reform perspective the foundation block was seen as a way to introduce students to a critical literacy of pedagogy related to the teacher profession as an integrated part of good sense. However, many tended to see the foundation block as a possibility to remedy what they perceived as students' subject knowledge deficiencies. This was an effect of the common sense that (teacher) education was a matter of transferring subject content. The sincere understanding and common sense was that before anything else could be taught, i.e. more advanced subject content to create a subject content cushion, the basics had to be known. The view that subject content could be treated from a different perspective that was concerned with a critical literacy of pedagogy on how the learning of school subjects takes place as

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<sup>4</sup> See p. 254 - 256.

an alternative to more of the same, was sidelined in the reform process.<sup>5</sup> As a result the common sense about subject knowledge changed the balance between the foundation and specialisation blocks because of the worries about the learning of school subjects, in spite of the fact that the BETD syllabi were packed with subject content.<sup>6</sup> One of the respondents, who in retrospect is placed in the group of organic intellectuals, expressed the following view:

At the beginning we were able to face the resistance we received from some quarters of the Namibian public, but it seems now that we have failed to educate people [teacher educators] over time.... A lot of strange ideas were proposed in the BETD Forum in January [2001].... You heard people suggesting: the specialisation block should start from the first term, the foundation block should go, there should be more content in the programme, and we should have more examinations.<sup>7</sup>

Another issue related to the reform policy was the conceptions about learner-centred education. It was part of common sense that everything had to be defined in definite terms. The rule in the ritualised coulisse-school was to use the mechanical learning of definitions as a substitute for understanding.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, when learner-centred education arrived, people started to look for its definition. Group work started soon to develop into an accepted operational definition.<sup>9</sup> This had the effect that you only needed to organise the learners in groups to accomplish learner-centred education. As one of the respondents who was a carrier of a subordinate organic identity expressed it:

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<sup>5</sup> A critical literacy of pedagogy is broader than subject didactics as it is based on the critical dyads of why-to, why –how, and why-that. See p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> van Harmelen (1999) op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> Interview M2, 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Swarts, P., Dahlström, L. & Zeichner, K. (1999) A Luta Continua: The struggle Continues. In Zeichner & Dahlström (ed) op. cit. 248-256.

<sup>9</sup> See also Shinyemba op. cit.; Storeng op. cit.

When the reform started I misunderstood it. I thought group work was learner-centred education. I put them [students] in groups and then what else? You discussed. Gradually I started to understand that I did not need to put the students in groups.<sup>10</sup>

The reduction of learner-centred education into group work even hindered its implementation in other ways. The overcrowded classrooms together with the misinterpretation of learner-centred education as equal to child-centred education became a reason to challenge learner-centred education as an unrealistic reform policy as overcrowded classrooms did not allow for the rearrangements of desks or individualised instruction unless learner-centred education was reduced to neo-behavioural programmed learning.

Another example comes from the programme imprints where the reform policy challenged the common sense that practice is applied theory. The introduction of critical practitioner inquiry was an attempt in this direction that introduced inquiry-oriented practices in the BETD. Many students developed their way of thinking about education beyond deficiency explanations. However, certain aspects of critical practitioner inquiry were drawn back into the theory-into-practice domain for example through the use of hypothesis testing. By that, the common sense about education as a handing over of true answers at times transposed the intentions of critical practitioner inquiry into an expression of traditional hegemonic intellectualism.

The shaping of institutional agency was a way to create support for the reform in an indirect way through the fostering of a collective material and intellectual basis for the reform policy. For example, a practice-related good sense of the reform policy was aimed at by placing teacher educators in staff development situations where they participated in creating the conditions for their own practice and to make inquiries into this practice. These attempts were challenged in many ways. The residual common

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<sup>10</sup> Interview F3, 2001.

sense about expertise as something distanced from practice threatened the participatory agenda. This view could be traced back to the common sense about hierarchy that made the majority of Namibians think that they themselves did not have much to contribute with in the reform. The common sense that position overrules performance was well established during the apartheid period and played general havoc in the reform process, as a signal for passivity in waiting for instruction.

There were other and more general conditions in the structural basis for the layered society that all along influenced the development of a transposed reform in a broad and political sense. These conditions have been intimated all along in this thesis and are related to derived power and constrained modernity.

The exercising of derived power has a long history in Namibia that goes back to the traditional societies and has been further engraved into common sense in all other historical and parallel layers. The power structure of the traditional African society put the chief in the highest position. His power (the chief is usually a man) is derived from the previous generations and the Gods in Heaven.<sup>11</sup> Colonialism arrived through the missionaries. Their power was also handed down from above, but from a singular God. The apartheid system became the ultimate version of a derived power that even allowed for serfdom and human oppression in His name and executed by a chosen people. Under this system people were taught that the power exercised in education was also a derived one. The power of teachers over learners, principals over teachers, and departments over schools, was derived from elsewhere. The assumption was that nobody was to challenge this power, even when they were excluded from the system.<sup>12</sup> Eventually, the heavenly-sent power was soon joined by a secular financial power from an askew

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<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that the chief is usually not seen as an authoritarian leader and that a good chief listens to his people. However, the authority of the chieftomship is seldom questioned.

<sup>12</sup> Swarts & Dahlström (1998) op .cit.

modernisation that together created a strong hegemonic bloc with similarities to Apple's conception of authoritarian populism.<sup>13</sup>

In the attempts to fight this system a different derived power developed that was exercised through military rule and handed over to the Leader by the legitimate Cause of the liberation struggle. Scholars who originate from a supporting position to the liberation struggle have recently forwarded their critical analyses of the relationship between the derived power in a liberation struggle and the power of political office bearers after the liberation.<sup>14</sup> In combination, Abrahams' and Melber's analyses question the relevance of experiences, based on discrimination and exploitation together with the staging of a liberation struggle against such experiences, for changes in pursuit of democratic reforms.

Suffering, exploitation, discrimination do not confer special wisdom and understanding. They only teach how to do it to others; how to be racist; how to brutalise the weak and the vulnerable. In the same way, beating a child or a spouse only teaches the victim how to become a child or spouse abuser when he/she becomes a husband, a wife, a parent, a policeman, a teacher or an occupation soldier. Brutalisation of any kind is a 'How to' lesson. It does not deepen anybody's humanity.<sup>15</sup>

If Abrahams' analysis holds true and if it is combined with a military rule of a liberation struggle we should not be surprised about the results.

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<sup>13</sup> See p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> Abrahams, P. (2000) *The Coyaba Chronicles, Reflections on the black experience in the 20<sup>th</sup> century*. Kingston & Cape Town: Ian Randle Publishers & David Philip Publishers; Melber, H. (2001) *Liberation and Democracy*. In *News from the Nordic African Institute*, No. 1. Uppsala: Nordic African Institute. 24-25.

<sup>15</sup> Abrahams (2000) op .cit., pp. 21-22.

...the anti-colonial war was hardly a suitable environment to instil and cultivate the internalisation and implementation of democratic values and norms. The organisation of a serious liberation struggle had much in common with the authoritarianism and hierarchical organisation reflecting the totalitarian structures inherent to the colonial system opposed.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, the remnants of derived powers in the layered society as analysed here, became another constraining factor on a more general level for a reform policy building on participatory and democratic notions of social justice.

Modernisation was heavily constrained before independence by the political system of exclusion exercised by the colonisers.<sup>17</sup> After independence, modernisation was promised and became the main strive for upward movement and a symbol for prosperity and success. Education became the first step on this newly hoisted social ladder for all. Promises of opportunity were created by the reforms but worked out as transposed promises in a competitive fashion. It was not on a par with a reform policy that emphasised participation and inclusion. All in all, the slanted reality of opportunity disallowed personal growth that could not be measured or translated to figures on a test with a competitive value. Therefore, the competitive race for position and the attached prosperity accelerated the calls for a hierarchical view on education that worked in favour of highly selective systems. As a consequence, the BETD was among other things criticised for being of low quality as too many students succeeded in their studies.

With these constraining factors at hand it became almost self-evident that the reform did not follow the anticipated score. Occasionally, with a good ensemble it did sound close to the original tune. At other

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<sup>16</sup> Melber (2001) op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> A related historical fact is that big business in South Africa/Namibia at an early stage opposed the apartheid system, not because of its inhumanity, but because of its restrictions on the commercial markets.

occasions the sampled melody could resemble the original score when conditions were favourable. At other times it was almost unidentifiable. This was the transposed result of a war of position staged between common sense and good sense over the preferential right of interpretation of the reform policy. This transposition was neither a defeat nor a victory, but a result of human agency played out in the intellectual war of position.

It is very difficult to change habits. Old habits remain. At least we have been able to uproot the past kind of thinking and to come up with things that are closer to promote a society with democratic participation. In that regard we have made some progress.<sup>18</sup>

### **In summary**

When the teacher education reform started in the beginning of the 1990s it was part of an expected and general change process in the Namibian nation state that was based on perceptions of liberation from colonial rule. The official reform policy in education was based on cornerstones of democracy, access, equity, and quality that were to be strengthened through learner-centred education. These aims were extensions of the perceptions of liberation expressed through educational reform policies. The teacher education reform policy received massive support at the outset, especially from the majority of blacks who saw the BETD as the first qualifying teacher education programme for black teachers. Together with the broader political policies of independence it signalled a new type of life that was both beyond what the majority was used to and beyond a life based on white exclusiveness. It signalled an egalitarian society for all brought inside Namibia by a victory in the liberation struggle.

However, things did not work out as expected due to a number of reasons that moved Namibian society and its education reform along a

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<sup>18</sup> Interview M0.

different route. The combined effects of historical and parallel engravings in the Namibian society, played out as specific conditions in education and beyond, affected the reform process. They resulted in a transposed reform in a layered society.

In this analysis the teacher education reform in Namibia has been portrayed as an intellectual war of position over the preferential right of interpretation. This intellectual war of position was staged in the reform arena as a struggle between different reform identities. Competition among hegemonic and counter-hegemonic blocs led to a transposed reform that was neither a defeat nor a victory. The transposed reform had elements of a counter-hegemonic reform policy that, with further nourishment, can place teacher education in Namibia within an even stronger position in a critical and transformative field of education in pursuit of social justice.