

SECTION THREE RECUPERATION



The reason I have used the term “recuperation” rather than recovery in reference to culture is because recovery implies the existence of a definitive loss which has been replaced. As has already been highlighted, culture cannot be “lost”, even though there is a sense of loss associated with the discontinuation of certain practices, therefore to imply that an unchanged culture is restored or reinstated is incorrect. Recuperation in this section refers to the process of obtaining an equivalent for, compensating for, regaining or replacing that which was considered lost. The section on Change illustrated that the binary oppositions and fundamentally static notions of identity which traditionally accompanied imperialist thought are no longer applicable as contemporary Namibians have a multiplicity of social and cultural layers often resulting from contact with the West. Non-government organisations, development organisations and the state are some of the new agents of change, which confront such complexities and are, in various ways, involved in the process of post-colonial recuperation. Cultural recuperation, refers to the state of ongoing identity negotiation – those processes and practices which address these issues and agents of change, and help to determine cultural futures and terms of exchange and interaction. As was addressed in the previous section on Change, Ovambo identity is a process of constant transformation which involves using the resources of history and culture, along with often nostalgic associations with practices and traditions of the past, as well as awareness of the present and global contextualisation. This section is concerned with the activities and principle protagonists which are associated with such a process, particularly in reference to engagement with traditional practices, as “nostalgia” continues to be a powerful tool of self-definition in contemporary Ovamboland. I will investigate the concept, ideologies, motivations and methodologies of “development” as well as the role of organisations involved in development, including government bodies, NGOs and the community, as these all represent agents of cultural transformation in the region which are seen as assisting or impeding cultural recuperation. The differing agendas of donors and NGOs and their impact on cultural considerations will be situated in the wider issue of the dual mandate of development – that of conservation versus transformation. Also, commodification of culture will be examined to illustrate the

problems of measurable outcomes based on Western indicators which inevitably promote neo-liberalism and market capitalism.

I will present the argument that culture is an important area of development which has not traditionally been considered in projects taking place in Namibia. Also, that specific community based cultural development is important in addressing issues of identity, pride and purpose in post-independent Ovamboland. Community cultural development is an important tool in self-determinism and empowerment because it presents a counter-attack on the socio-cultural influences of globalisation through exploring terms of cultural negotiation. It is also seen as a contentious area for involvement by development organisations and the government alike, as it challenges the “deculturation”⁸⁴ of modernisation.

In this section, I will address three main questions which are connected to the idea of recuperation by investigating issues of development and intervention: how/why should culture be an area or consideration of development; what are some of the effects of international development activity; what are the motivations behind the presence or absence of cultural development?

As with previous sections, this section on “Recuperation” is divided into three sub-sections, each relating to the theme of cultural recuperation: Identity; Power and Politics; Globalisation.

In the first sub-section, “Identity” I will address the concept of identity recuperation and look at the community based model of cultural development and how this assists in such a process. I will discuss questions surrounding the justifications for such work, as well as some of the inherent problems in cultural identity recuperation in the context of modernisation and development. I will address the post-modernisation consciousness or “enlightenment” which is emerging in Namibia, which allows for such considerations of

⁸⁴ Latouche (1996) refers to deculturation as the situation where two cultures come into contact which leads to a massive flow in one direction – the receiving culture is invaded, threatened in its very being, and can be seen as the victim of actual aggression.

identity and proactive cultural remembrance to take place in a climate of dramatic Westernisation. I will illustrate, in the form of case studies, local examples of community based cultural development activities whose design purpose was cultural recuperation and expression.

In the next sub-section, “Power and Politics”, I will address the subject of development work and some of the current issues facing such work in north central Namibia. The presence and impact of foreign intervention in the process of recuperation is of great significance, and I will investigate the absence of cultural considerations and specific cultural activities and projects in such work. I will address issues relating to the cultural and ideological influences of such intervention, as well as investigating the cultural complexities of engagement in development work and how these often inhibit active participation in the cultural recuperation process by organisations in the field. This section further develops some of the complexities associated with working with “culture” in the process of recuperation, whilst having to reconcile often qualitative community impact with outcomes-focused agencies. I will discuss how the development goal of community cultural empowerment and causality, which in Ovamboland is very much tied up with nostalgic cultural recuperation, is often at odds with contemporary neo-liberal Western development ideologies, motivated by democratisation and modernisation. In addressing issues of responsibility and accountability for cultural recuperation, I will also address the consequentiality of local intervention, or lack of intervention, including the role and expectations of the SWAPO Government’s Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, as well as investigating residual cultural dilemmas following the end of apartheid.

In the final sub-section, “Globalisation”, I will look at the history of development work as part of the continuum of modernisation, and the impacts of this process on north central Namibia. I will investigate the political nature of such work and the overt and covert influences inherent in the promotion of Western-style neo-liberal democracy. Since most Ovambos encounter foreign nationals as the human and socio-cultural side of this, I will present the motivations and modus operandi of three major international sending

organisations. The presence of such organisations significantly impacts upon considerations of cultural identity, terms of cultural negotiation and recuperation. In this sub-section, I will further develop the issue of cultural commodification and commercialisation, which the process of globalisation has affected. In the section on “Loss”, aspects of this issue which produced an associated psychology of cultural loss were presented. In this section, however, cultural commodification and commercialisation, along with tourism, will be presented as a form of cultural recuperation. Perhaps the antithesis of the community based model presented earlier is culture produced for consumption, but it is a legitimate and popular form of recuperation nonetheless, which benefits individuals who participate in the exchange of culture and capital.

IDENTITY

Enlightenment

Epapudhuka – to wake up

Contemporary Ovambos are extremely articulate about the importance of their identities, in a personal, local and national sense. The process of Ovambo identity formation

... is an active process for all... in which the participants selectively forget some details, whilst they appropriate other memories. In doing so, they deliberately aim to resolve ambiguities and tensions arising from the current pace of social change in Northern Namibia. (Fairweather 2001:34)

The assertion of this importance shows not only a deep respect for their ancestry, but also an understanding of the cultural impact inherent in the globalisation process and its potential threats to *Ovambo-ness*. With the breakdown of national economic, cultural and social barriers through the process of globalisation, there is increasing awareness of the impact on Namibia of greater access to international cultural influences. Ovambos demonstrate their knowledge and cosmopolitan fluency in such issues, and in so doing assert their identity through the understanding and articulation of such threats and cultural possibilities that globalisation presents. Threats often refer to the possibility of homogenisation, a perception that a cultural sameness may develop as a result of the influx of Western popular culture which is enormously popular in Namibia. An opposing argument, which is somewhat more essentialist in its premise, is that the influx of Western popular culture as well as access to other global cultural influences, threatens to eventually deny cultures their uniqueness as features are appropriated and indigenised, resulting in cultural amalgams rather than distinct, separate cultural identities. Both of these processes were expressed to me as very real threats, as well as contributing agents to Ovambo identity.

Identity is very very important. It's the only thing that can make us be seen as Namibians or Ovambos. You might be a rich country, like if you have got a lot of sea products, a lot of agricultural products, but if you don't have culture – as a nation or as a community or as a person – you are lost. It's very very much important. People say that a nation without culture is like a tree without roots. So it's really very important. Globalisation to me means that the people in Ovamboland must also know what is happening in our world. And I think it's an opportunity to learn from those that we did not know before and then planning from there. And if you seem to be a person, for instance recognized as an Ovambo person by somebody coming as far as Russia – how do you feel? You feel that you are also somebody. (Ervast Mtota, interview 11/7/00)

I will address the cultural effects of the globalisation process in greater detail later in this section, however it is important at this point to investigate what drives individuals and communities to involve themselves in the process of cultural identity “recuperation” particularly – as I will demonstrate – when other agencies such as the government and non-government sectors seem reluctant to be involved in such issues.

The term *epapudhuka* or “to wake up” was once used by Ovambos to refer to the spiritual awakening which came with Christian conversion. As Ervast Mtota states of his mother's encounter with missionaries in the 1930s:

I remember my mother telling me about this thing, “epapudhuka”. Literally it would be that you were asleep and you suddenly just woke up. So you woke up from ... whether it was passivity, whether it was backwardness as you were seen to be backward if you practised your traditional culture. (Ervast Mtota, interview 11/7/00)

However, I suggest that the term could also be used to refer to the “enlightened” consciousness which accompanies post-colonial considerations of identity. In my

research I was often confronted with the discursive problems associated with the naming of phenomena which, whilst observed and acknowledged in Ovamboland, had not necessarily been named. My friend and former colleague Mbockoma Mungandjera used the word “enlightened” in this sense, to refer to his new reflections on identity following his disillusionment with the promises offered by missionaries, in the form of salvation and civilisation, SWAPO, in the form of equality and prosperity, and even the promises of modernity itself⁸⁵.

I’m a little bit enlightened, I can reflect, I can think about this tradition, culture, modern way of thinking, and try to balance it. ... When you do that, you can find your own philosophy or way of thinking. I have stopped and reflected on these things and now can put everything in context.
(Mbockoma Mungundjera, interview 25/11/02)

Such a process implies a personal and empowering journey towards a multiplex cultural identity in contemporary Ovamboland, which equips Mbockoma with the ability to negotiate the terms of cultural change he and his children choose to adopt. As Goldstein and Rayner suggest, such consideration could not have happened in isolation.

... [there is] the possibility that collective identity in late modern society might often be strengthened through a process of continuous interaction with other collectivities – a process that requires each community to see itself from the perspective of others, and incorporate those perspectives through the prism of its own consciousness in a continuous reflexive process. Collective identity would be recognized as selectively *chosen* (within certain parameters) rather than merely given. (Goldstein and Rayner 1994:382)

⁸⁵ When I asked Mbockoma what the Oshiwambo word for such consideration would be, he was flummoxed as he said he had not named such a practice, nor heard it named. After some deliberation, he said that such a practice could be referred to as “oshinanena” which means “to speak of contemporary thought.” It is interesting, however, that the practice of considering ones’ identity in the context of post-colonial, post-independence modernity, precedes appropriate discourse.

Mbockoma's description of his experience of "enlightenment" is reminiscent of Immanuel Kant's argument, that Enlightenment is the possibility whereby man philosophically acquires the status and capacities of a rational and adult being, through "emergence from his self-imposed immaturity." (Payne 1996:175) In this sense, immaturity, ironically, is far from the model of savagery which justified colonialism. Rather, immaturity in a post-colonial sense refers to the unquestioning acceptance that West is best. Enlightenment, therefore, reassesses and challenges this notion. In its most extreme form, such reassessment could result in a total rejection of imposed Westernisation, as Serge Latouche writes, "Those who have been disappointed by or taken in by myths turn towards aggressive forms of cultural affirmation reconstructed on an anti-Western basis." (1996:75). This is not the case in Ovamboland, where – as has been demonstrated in the section on Change - the cultural influences of the West have largely been incorporated and indigenised into Ovambo identity. Mbockoma's attitude represents not an aggressive rejection of Western influences, but most assuredly a questioning of its authority, and a desire to balance its effects by proactively engaging in activities of cultural remembering.

Such a process is not common to all Ovambos, and I do not believe that Mbockoma was implying that his ideas were something to which all Ovambos subscribed. He explained the process of enlightenment in very personal terms, as a result of the shifting dominant power structures in his life. Fairweather (2001:114) suggests that such philosophy and reconsideration of tradition is more commonly found in "urbanites", or modern Namibians, for whom having roots is an expression of membership in the modern nation. He cites Tate Frans Ihuhwa who stated:

Your past is your past, it remains yours wherever you find yourself. In the modern world it is better to know where you come from. Culture, tradition and ethnicity must be preserved at all costs ... Let the modern world go on but the culture is the root of any nation. (Ihuhwa in Fairweather 2001:114)

Although Tate Ihuhwa chose to live in a traditional style house, drink traditional beer, and eat traditional food, he was a well-travelled and multilingual “cosmopolitan”. Tobias Kandanga does not see this empowering return to roots and construction of identity as the counter to the effects of modernisation in ordinary people:

An average Ovambo, I don't think that they would understand about globalisation. They will just embrace the Western influence without knowing what they are doing. Normally people are doing it without knowing. People are unconsciously embracing these new Western influences but not realising it's at the expense of their tradition and traditional identity. But there is no other option. (Tobias Kandanga, interview 12/9/00)

Foucault challenged the universality of Kant's Enlightenment argument, interrogating and historicising “the contingency that has made us what we are”. (Foucault 1984:46) In Ovamboland, this may involve shared historical experiences, which may simultaneously be unique to each Ovambo and form diverse and multifaceted identities and responses to modernisation. Paul Gilroy, in *The Black Atlantic* writes

The enthusiasm for tradition therefore expresses not so much the ambivalence of blacks towards modernity, but the fallout from modernity's protracted ambivalence towards the blacks who haunt its dreams of ordered civilisation. (Gilroy 1993:191)

However, there exists in the minds of Mbockoma, Tate Ihuhwa, and many of my informants, a moral imperative to consider and preserve one's *Ovambo-ness*.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, nostalgia through performance is one method of negotiating cultural identity and self-definition. Ovambos demonstrate an engagement with the wider world and the possible outcomes of such engagement by representing their culture as being under threat. To illustrate this, Fairweather uses the example of attending

a “traditional” wedding, where an urban couple returned to Ovamboland for the ceremony, which was important to their identities, despite their long separation from traditional rural life. At the ceremony, despite the “nostalgia” of the couple, the rural villagers in attendance were eager to display their cosmopolitanism via “modern” status symbols such as video cameras and Western clothes. Fairweather writes,

This performance expressed ... the villagers’ interest in presenting themselves as cosmopolitan citizens of a modern world ... By representing ‘tradition’ as vanishing, they successfully resist the stereotype of the traditional rural villager that the hegemonic narratives of nation-building and cultural tourism threaten to impose. (Fairweather, 2001:20)

This attitude is reinforced by interviewee Rita Louise Hofmeyr:

Many of us have absorbed so many different things through the years that we’ve almost become universal in the sense that we are part of a global world – we are constantly interacting with things that are applicable all over the world. The way we dress, we drive cars, we watch DSTV, we go on the internet, so in a sense a lot of us have become citizens of the world. That doesn’t mean you don’t know who you are and where you come from and that you have a mother tongue somewhere and you have a resource of stories that you were told. But then people also have the right to uproot, to change, to adapt. (Rita-Louise Hofmeyr, interview 12/7/00)

SWAPO, in seeking to encourage appreciation of diversity whilst maintaining unity made a significant theoretical departure from the unifying influences of Marxist nationalism which motivated their Independence Struggle and created a united national front against apartheid. As Fairweather writes,

This early nationalism was unashamedly assimilationist, denying differences between Namibians, but after independence SWAPO’s

rhetoric shifted towards the appreciation of Namibia's different cultures and the right of all Namibians to their 'cultural heritage'. (Fairweather 2001:36)

The issue of unity in diversity is particularly difficult in post-apartheid Namibia, due to the many and varied ethnic groups living there. The policy of national unity which the SWAPO Government chose to adopt upon independence, was absolutely essential to address the issues of racial difference which had been the *raison d'être* of the apartheid regime. National unity, as a policy, sought to promote equality in diversity in order to begin the reconciliation process of a country torn apart by difference. However this policy, as in other culturally multiplex societies, presented problems of "national identity", since Namibia comprises so many diverse ethnic groups. Hofmeyr states that

We believe that a national identity is made up out of a sense of unity, but in that you've also got to respect diversity, and it's always much easier to develop or to have diversity than to have unity – it's much easier because it's in human nature to live in groups. (Rita-Louise Hofmeyr, interview 12/7/00)

Not surprisingly, Ovambos are also attempting to reconcile their local and national identities in light of government policies, tribal, familial, regional ties, and now global awareness.

Personally you want to be identified by your tribe, but not to look at it as though that is all that is important, because you need to develop your personal identity as well as your local and national one. There is a certain amount of cultural pride which goes along with identifying with certain ethnic groups or tribes. Within those ethnic groups and that identity, it is also important to accommodate for different groups and tribes, to celebrate diversity as we are all Namibians and that is the most important fact. We

have to harmonise that diversity. (Bernadette Mojekwu, interview 13/10/00)

Why Cultural Development?

In this section, I will present two forms of cultural development – the first being community based, which I will refer to as cultural development, the second being commercially based. This second form, or commercially based cultural development, was mentioned earlier in this thesis in relation to the perceived “losses” which accompany such practices. Commercially based cultural development will again be addressed in the section on globalisation in relation to the exchange of culture and capital. However, I now wish to address some of the motivations behind the community based model of cultural development as they relate to the theme of recuperation.

In the introduction to this thesis, I presented one definition of cultural development as being community based arts practices which involve collaborations between artists and communities to creatively reflect identity. I mentioned that, as a practice, it incorporates all aspects of creative visual and performing arts and can take the form of projects, activities, research, exhibitions, festivals, events etc which provide opportunities for individuals to access, participate in and manage their own arts and cultural activities. It also encourages cultural expressions of diversity and a sense of community identity. As such, cultural development is an effective vehicle for addressing social issues and community problems through the arts and cultural activities. In Namibia, arts and culture are seen as one of the vehicles to address the challenges which the region faces such as community responses to AIDS, particularly as there remains a reluctance to openly discuss the issues at stake in a straightforward manner. Creative approaches are seen as a way to both articulate sensitive information and educate the community, through drama, visual art and so on.

What can we do as artists to notify the world about the problem of AIDS, how can we use the arts to alert people in Namibia, how can we use arts to raise funds, to be of benefit? There’s an enormous role that we can play as

artists in helping Namibia through what is beginning to show it's real signs of impact. (Rita Louise Hofmeyr, interview 12/7/00)

As you know, there is AIDS which is now rife in Namibia, which needs people to care for each other now. Then culture would be the best to solve that issue. (Tobias Kandanga, interview 12/9/00)

In considering cultural recuperation, cultural development activities which are community based contribute to the enrichment of individual and community cultural life, and the creative expression of local identity. Such activity also presents opportunities for proactive community engagement with social problems, as the arts are seen as a non-threatening, creative conduit for creative expression and change.

As this thesis has been largely concerned with the *terms* of cultural change, and the negotiation of cultural identity in an age of modernisation, cultural development is an integral means for such considerations. I propose that cultural development provides people with the tools to consider their cultural identities, their place in the world and subsequently their ability to negotiate the terms of cultural change brought about by modernisation and the socio-cultural effects of globalisation.

Cultural identity as a living force will eventually prove itself as a powerful countertrend against the global cultural domination of the West and the cultural uniformity it brings with it. Cultural identity represents the wish to protect the uniqueness of one's own culture, language and identity – and their attached value-systems – from foreign influence. Our roots are becoming increasingly important, to quote Naisbitt (1990): “The more homogenous our lifestyles become, the more steadfastly we cling to deeper values. We all seek to preserve our identities, be they religious, cultural, national, linguistic or racial. The more worlds grow more similar, we shall increasingly treasure the traditions that spring from within”. (Schouten 1996: 54)

Through consideration of identity, people are informed about the significance of self and place, and that equips them with wisdom and awareness about perceived threats to self and place. As with Fairweather's research and Mbockoma's appreciation of "enlightenment", Strathern believes that a strong sense of one's roots is essential for the negotiation of one's place in modernity.

... the most successful pursuits of modernity have been found in those modernist regimes (I refer to cultural regimes) that have negotiated tradition as a source of special values. Such values may be protected as the kind of raw material on which moderns build – like the traditional family that is also the basis upon which the individual citizen goes out into the enterprising world. The citizen must of course do his or her bit to ensure that those traditional values are also there as a future resource for others. (Strathern 1996:41)

Also, as identified in the previous section on Change, there is a renewed interest in Ovambo cultural identity within the community. Ideally, development work should focus on the needs and desires of the people who have most to gain or lose from the process. In the case of cultural development, in my personal experience, Ovambo people have expressed in no uncertain terms their view that an interest in the revitalisation of cultural identity is both a moral imperative and a practical necessity in negotiating their place in the global community. As Ovambos largely associate "culture" with tradition, and because retrospection plays an important role in cultural definition, the recuperation of Ovambo cultural identity involves drawing on the well of culture, tradition, history, place and community for social empowerment. The survival of cultural practices such as traditional customs, dances, songs, stories and artefacts throughout the tremendous adversities of apartheid and war, is a testament to the importance placed on these aspects of Ovambo identity by the community itself.

Community based Cultural Development – NCCI

I will now present some practical and organisational case study examples of community based cultural development activities in north central Namibia.

Development projects must involve the full participation and approval of local people, and be designed to meet local needs. They should build on ‘common’ knowledge about the environment and social requirements. And they should be small-scale and sustainable in terms of resources available. Good projects are often modest in their expenditure and fit naturally into local ways of doing things. In general the voluntary agencies are much better at doing this than government departments ... Foreign aid is usually best spent funding local people to solve their own problems, rather than employing foreigners who have little understanding of the African situation. (Woods 1990:4)

With these sorts of warnings in mind, in June 1999 a group of individuals with an interest in the promotion and development of arts and culture, representing various government and non-government organisations, met at the University of Namibia’s Northern Campus to discuss the current state of cultural development in the north central region. These stakeholders came from various backgrounds, but had a common interest in revitalising and energising the culture of the region, and according it social and, in some cases, economic significance. Government and non-government organisations were represented at the meeting, and representatives from the churches, the tourism industry, the University of Namibia, the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, the Northern Namibia Environmental Project, the Ford Foundation, regional constituencies and councils, Nakambale Museum and various other organisations were also present. The group was driven by the need for cultural promotion, heritage conservation, awareness raising and economic development in the area. This group came to be known as the **North Central Cultural Initiative (NCCI)**, and a sub-committee was formed which met regularly to discuss the aims of the initiative and how to facilitate them in the community. I was elected to the sub-committee of the NCCI, and my role soon developed into the

position of co-ordinator after I wrote a proposal to one of the major donor organisations in the country, the Ford Foundation, to formally undertake the facilitation of the development of culture with a view to promoting civic vitality and cultural pride in the region. One of the first activities undertaken by the North Central Cultural Initiative, was to organise a Cultural Development Workshop. The findings, outcomes, and recommendations of this workshop gave considerable insight into the arts and cultural priorities of the region, and largely dictated subsequent activities.

CASE STUDY:

University of Namibia Cultural Development Workshop, 1-2 October 1999

Organised by the North Central Cultural Initiative (NCCI), the Cultural Development Workshop in October 1999 was designed to provide a forum for discussion, an opportunity for display, presentations, performances and keynote speakers, and general sensitisation to the arts and culture of the north central district. The forum was seen as a necessary way of bringing stakeholders in the community together to look at arts and cultural issues which had previously been discussed only by those involved in NCCI. It was attended by artists, government and non-government officials, community leaders, and representatives from organisations involved in and interested in the development of culture in the region. Invitations went to both regional ministerial cultural offices (Ondangwa East and Ondangwa West) as it was hoped that the findings and subsequent actions to come out of the workshop would encompass the whole north central region, and build on the social and cultural capital which exists in the region.

Culture is identity. Art and culture reflect the values, beliefs, heritage, creativity and tradition of a society. The art and culture of the north central region of Namibia is as rich as it is diverse, yet it has historically been fragmented, and perhaps shaped by colonialism, apartheid and war. As culture is not a static phenomenon, the threat to its extinction is very real with the influx of popular culture through globalisation. There is a need to maintain, develop and preserve the heritage of the arts and culture of this

region of Namibia through education, promotion, co-ordination, research, training, liaison and encouragement. There is a certain amount of urgency for the arts and culture to be seen as valid, relevant and important enough to be taken seriously – academically, socially and commercially – to generate cultural awareness, pride and identity. (Introduction to Cultural Development Workshop Report)

This was a significant event as it was the first time that a workshop had ever been held in the region to celebrate cultural output and establish future directions and support of the arts and culture of the region. It was seen by many to legitimise the activities and work of individuals in the community who had never been accorded economic or academic significance. Similarly, bringing together stakeholders from so many different areas of interest and backgrounds was quite a task. A certain amount of sensitivity and antagonism existed between different government ministries, regional offices, tribes, commercial interests etc, and to bring them all together over a number of days, to focus on arts and culture – practices which in themselves involve competition for opportunities, funding and recognition - was a significant task. Planning for the workshop was undertaken collaboratively by the sub-committee, with all findings gathered and collated into a report which I wrote and presented to all participants as well as senior government officials, interested stakeholders and so on. This document was important as it was the first time the cultural needs and desires of Ovambos were articulated and published.

The workshop had two main objectives:

- i) to look at the current state of the arts
- ii) to establish possible future directions

In looking at the current state of the arts, the organisers hoped that a type of inventory could be formed, identifying the activities, resources, key people, archival and research activity, and other information, which were happening in schools, as well as in the community at a local and regional level. Groups were formed according to particular disciplines of art and culture, and these groups were asked specific questions in order to establish what was already happening in the fields of:

- music
- dance
- poetry/story-telling/drama
- art and craft
- traditional customs.

For the second objective – to establish possible future directions - these same groups were asked to note down and present opportunities and constraints for their particular art form, as well as thinking about future directions, goals, and who could be responsible for achieving these goals. It was from these visions that an action plan was drawn up which the NCCI would facilitate. The common concerns and proposals are highlighted below.

Each group met twice and the following questions were put to the groups:

Current State of the Arts:

- *What, where and when are the current activities taking place? (eg community, schools, festivals etc)*
- *Who could tell us more?*
- *How could we gather more information?*
- *Who collates, manages and updates information?*
- *How can you maintain ownership?*

Visions and Constraints:

- *What would you like to happen by the year 2005?*
- *What are the constraints to achieving this?*
- *What do you want to happen in the next 12 months? (5 examples)*
- *Who will be responsible for each of these achievements?*

A full description of each group's responses is provided as Appendix F, with a summary of the common concerns and common proposals presented below:

Common Concerns:

Concerns which were common to all of the groups are summarised as:

- Recognition – little interest shown in the arts at an academic, social or commercial level by government and community;
- Resources – lack of human, material and financial resources available for the development of arts and culture;
- Communication – lack of communication and co-operation between artists, the community, government and non-government organisations resulting in lack of co-ordination, confusion and duplication;
- Performance opportunities – lack of performance, presentation and display spaces and opportunities.

Common Proposals:

Proposals common to all groups are summarised as:

- Education/Training – primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities should be available in arts and culture, both formal and informal education needed, and resourcing for teachers.
- Performance/Presentation opportunities – greater opportunities for presentation of arts and culture at existing facilities in the community, both public and private venues. Also broadcasting opportunities should be explored.
- Cultural Centre – a multi-purpose space specifically for the promotion and development of arts and culture.
- Research/Documentation/Archiving – greater recording of local arts and cultural practices in various forms of media.

Conclusion and Personal Observations

The Cultural Development Workshop was an important first step in establishing the arts and cultural needs and resources of Ovamboland. Many of the outcomes of the group sessions provided valuable information about individual art forms. Over 100 people

attended the workshop, and all were very positive and excited that such a workshop was taking place especially because Ovambo arts and culture had never before been accorded such significance. Particularly positive were the grassroots organisations and individuals – women who made baskets and taught traditional dance to children in villages and so on. The presence of traditional authorities, local councillors, academics, and government directors who are held in high esteem by the community ensured that the workshop was taken seriously by all who attended.

One of the difficulties in the workshop having been organised by a collective such as NCCI was that many of the issues raised (particularly those to do with insufficient services and resources provided by the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture), were outside their control. Therefore none of the suggestions which involved the Ministry were necessarily going to be further addressed without the mandate coming from inside the Ministry, despite strong ministerial presence at the workshop. Also, although the workshop attempted political neutrality, old sensitivities still existed between the two regional offices of Ondangwa East and Ondangwa West, which often affected discussion forums. As mentioned, copies of the report (which included all findings and suggestions from group work sessions as well as conclusions and future directions) were sent to attendees, and personally given to government officials at both a regional and national level. This report appeared to be more positively received and thoughtfully read by government officials at a national level such as the Under Secretary for Culture and the Director of Arts, than those at a regional level who were in a greater position to enact some of the recommendations outlined.

One of the disappointing outcomes was the lack of follow-up activities after the workshop. All participants agreed that the workshop had been an incredibly worthwhile venture and in no uncertain terms expressed an eager desire for another such workshop. However, a further workshop would only have been possible had there been follow up activity to the first one. Each small group (music, dance, etc) expressed the need and wish to meet regularly and report back on issues addressed, and actions followed, however in the six months following the workshop, attempts to facilitate these meetings in the

community were frustrating and largely unattended. What we, the organisers, had hoped for was for a sense of ownership to be generated, and for groups and individuals to realise their own potential for change and activity coming from them – individually and collectively. However this was not the case.

An interesting question which was addressed in the small groups was that of responsibility – who was responsible for carrying out the suggested activities and initiatives which would pave future directions for each art form. The suggestions in themselves were valuable and achievable, but the views on how these suggestions were to be achieved and who was responsible were interesting. As I was facilitating the small group for music, I found that the immediate response to the question of responsibility was almost a knee-jerk reaction by each member of the group. “The Government” was the only suggestion which was initially offered. Who is responsible for education and training? “The Government”. Who was responsible for creating performance opportunities? “The Government”. Research? “The Government”. And so it went, until it was pointed out that from what we knew to be true of our regional cultural officers, perhaps we should be thinking about other possibilities for the assumption of responsibility. People then started thinking much more laterally and realised overwhelmingly that the responsibility for a great number of their suggestions lay in the grassroots – parents, local practitioners, relatives, teachers, themselves! Obviously, activity *was* happening at this level already. However the articulated concern that such activity was not being adequately supported led to the conclusion that support had to come from external sources, such as government involvement, rather than coming from inside the community.

Ford Foundation and the Cultural Development Project

After the Cultural Development Workshop, using the findings of the workshop as the basis for proposed activities, I wrote a project proposal to the Ford Foundation⁸⁶ which came to be known as the CDP (Cultural Development Project). I hoped to continue the

⁸⁶ An American donor organisation with offices throughout Africa, the developing world and the United States. See www.fordfound.org

work of the North Central Cultural Initiative in a more formal way, incorporating capacity building measures for a sustainable approach to the development of Ovambo culture through education, promotion, co-ordination, research, training, liaison and support. The motivation of the cultural development activities of the CDP was to contribute to the generation of cultural awareness, pride and identity, and result in local Ovambo arts and culture being accorded academic, social, and, in some cases, commercial significance.

The CDP proposed a number of activities in collaboration with the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, University of Namibia, and the local community to be initiated by the NCCI so as to facilitate the needs and desires expressed by the community at the Cultural Development Workshop. These activities involved the five categories of art and culture as defined at the Cultural Development Workshop – art and craft, dance, music, traditional customs, oral culture. Each of these categories had a representative sub-committee responsible for identifying and prioritising activities, and disseminating information into the community.

The initial project proposal was for one year, and requested US\$20 000 with the majority of the funds going towards the co-ordination of the project, and the rest being used for logistical and administrative expenses. Initially, no funding was provided for material resources, and inkeeping with Ford Foundation policy, no money was provided for capital infrastructure. Conscious of sustainability, I insisted that one of the conditions of the project was that funding include the employment of a Namibian counterpart to continue the work when I left Namibia. Having the project run by a Namibian not only would ensure the continuation of the project in my absence, but would also establish community trust, overcome language difficulties, and ensure that the project was visibly run by an Ovambo, for the Ovambo people.

Until June 2000, the Cultural Development Project really only existed in an administrative sense as an individual grant to myself. In order for the project to continue to operate and grow, it was necessary to find an organisation or institution to administer

the project and provide it with the foundation or base required to increase its activities. After some investigation and discussion with the Assistant Representative Program Officer for the Ford Foundation in Namibia, it was decided that the Rössing Foundation should be approached about the possibility of being the future administrator of the project. I wrote a further 12 month proposal which was presented to the Director of the Rössing Foundation⁸⁷, which agreed to take on the project, as it was very much in line with the Foundation's goals and activities in community development, resource management, craft development and education. This was a significant development for the project as it now had an affiliation with a local well-established organisation active in community development and non-politically aligned. Funding for the Rössing Foundation Cultural Development Project (the continuation of the original one-year Ford Foundation grant) was approved and covered my counterpart's salary, a budget for activities for each particular area of the arts (music, dance, art and craft and so on), administrative costs, contract workers, computer equipment and a field trip.

Dual Mandate

Although I will address the role played by development NGOs in the process of "recuperation" later in this section, it is necessary at this point to investigate some of the cross-cultural implications of intervention, particularly in relation to cultural identity and cultural development. Conflicting agendas often exist within the politics of donor-funded NGO activities. Steven Robins highlights the ambiguity of the perceived dual mandate of NGOs working in the developing world. They seek to both promote the cultural survival of indigenous peoples *and* to socialise them into becoming virtuous modern citizens within a global civil society. (Robins 2001) These ambiguities invoke a repetition of stereotypes about 'pure' and 'detribalised' and have created an artificial divide which is of particular relevance in work involving the recuperation of culture. I will address the political ramifications of this and how it affects development policy in the next section on Power and Politics.

⁸⁷ Further information on the Rössing Foundation can be found later in this section.

In my capacity as Arts and Cultural Development Co-ordinator I was acutely aware of the evolutionary nature of culture, and sensitive to local concerns about both cultural homogeneity⁸⁸ and cultural heterogeneity. In the task of cultural revitalisation and development, I was faced with the dilemma of maintaining and preserving traditional culture, a priority which was identified in pre-project research, whilst not preventing the access to and appropriation of influences from other cultures. I was also constantly forced to confront and reconcile the enormous social importance given to Western culture.

If somebody has a choice – do I drink some *oshikundu*⁸⁹ or do I drink a coke, or do I listen to a recording of the Backstreet Boys or an old recording of Tate Iita⁹⁰, they will embrace the Western influence, without knowing what they are doing... Because most people who are drinking *oshicoca-cola*⁹¹ will think that they are more advanced than people who are drinking *oshikundu*. They will just think that they are primitive. It's also a sign of wealth. You cannot afford coca-cola, that's why you are drinking *oshikundu*. (Tobias Kandanga, interview 12/9/00)

An important consideration in my work was, therefore, facilitating and developing the image of Ovambo cultural identity which they, themselves, wished to promote. This meant that projects reflected a multi-faceted Ovambo identity which often displayed a fusion of tradition and modernity, provincial and cosmopolitan. As I will address in the section on Power and Politics, this culturally multiplex and plural identity does not sit comfortably with either development organisations, or governments attempting to create a “national identity”. In the methodology section of this thesis, I addressed some of the issues associated with personal engagement as it is important to acknowledge the

⁸⁸ Cultural homogeneity refers to the process of conformation resulting in perceived sameness, or global norms, often expressed in reference to the effects of U.S. cultural imperialism. Cultural heterogeneity also refers to the effects of transnational cultural penetration, this time resulting in a multitude of diverse, “watered-down” identities, culture being incommensurably influenced by outside.

⁸⁹ *Oshikundu* is a traditional fermented drink made from *mahangu*.

⁹⁰ Tate Iita is a very elderly, well known singer in the area, renowned for his knowledge of traditional songs.

⁹¹ Often Namibian's indigenise English (sometimes referred to as Namlish), in this case by adding the Oshiwambo prefix of “*oshi*” to the Western “coca-cola”.

enormous cultural significance of my skin colour in relation to the work in which I was involved, in cultural development and recuperation.

In the field of cultural development, a synergy between the world of traditional cultural practice and articulation and that of contemporary popular culture, technology and global communication in all its various forms need not necessarily water down cultural identity, indeed it may serve to facilitate the perpetuation of certain cultural practices particularly through education. An example of this in practice is the use of videos powered by generators to teach traditional dance in remote villages in Ovamboland in the absence of teachers. Such a project was initiated by NCCI. Another example is using the internet to teach learners about Namibian history, heritage, culture and tradition. Using available technology to facilitate access to information and participation in cultural activities was at the heart of the *Ongushu Yomithigululwakalo* radio program.

CASE STUDY:

***Ongushu Yomithigululwakalo* NBC Radio Program**

Radio is a very powerful medium in the north central region, being the main form of public communication in a region largely without electricity and telephones. As part of the CDP, I put forward a proposal to the Director of the NBC Oshiwambo Service, Mr Tobias Kandanga, to have an hour of air time every week dedicated to the arts and culture in the region. This hour of broadcasting would include interviews, guest speakers as well as reports and stories on different issues related to arts and culture, such as community cultural enterprises, coming events, guest artists, cultural oppression in the past etc. The proposal was accepted and in June 2000, the first program of *Ongushu Yomithigululwakalo* (“Our Culture”) was aired nationally. Due to its popularity, the program is now repeated, giving listeners another chance to hear the program which was aired that week. The program was designed to focus on the arts and culture of the Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Omusati and Oshana regions of northern Namibia. Through a series of programs, listeners would be given an insight into the history as well as the

current cultural activities in their local region. And Ovambo people living outside the area would be kept informed about the activities taking place in the north central region.

Each week, guest speakers and specialists in the topic area of each program are invited to speak on the subject. The program is conducted in Oshiwambo, and is presented on air by Vilho Shigwedha and Metusalem Ashipala.

Some of the topics under discussion have been:

- Christianity and culture – Guest speakers Dr Munyika, Tate Amakutuwa
- Ministry of Basic Education and Culture initiatives in culture – Guest speaker Bernadette Mojekwu
- Culture to bring about social change – Guest speaker Tate Nghifikwa
- Community cultural enterprises – APC Oshikuku Mission, Penduka
- The effects of Apartheid and the Liberation Struggle on culture – Guest speakers Chief Ankama, Dr Nambala
- Popular culture – what it means in Ovamboland
- Traditional Ovambo weddings and other customs
- A career in the arts in Namibia – Guest speaker Andre Strauss
- Funding and opportunities for arts projects in Namibia – UNESCO, Rössing, NCCI
- Story-telling hour – Guest speakers Chief Ankama, Tate Nghifikwa, Mwatala
- The importance of culture to the community – Guest speaker Ben Shikesho

The NBC's agreement to air a weekly program on culture was, in many ways, an experiment to test the community's interest in the development of local culture. At the time of writing the proposal, I was not sure whether the listeners would find the program entertaining or engaging enough for it to serve its ideal purpose – a focus for dialogue and involvement in cultural development.

The response of the Director of the NBC and the producers who assisted in the implementation of the program was very positive, in fact they decided to review their whole broadcasting schedule to fit the program in at a time when there would be the maximum audience. However the real response and measure of success came from the listeners themselves and was a testimony to the true desire and wish for more focus on the development of local culture. The Director of the NBC himself expressed how overwhelming the listeners' response was.

There are a number of factors affecting the transmission of information on traditional cultural practices and customs – the breakdown of the traditional family unit, the influence of popular culture, urbanisation, changing social and gender roles etc. This program plays an educational role as well as entertaining and informing listeners about issues surrounding culture. The significance of radio as a communication tool, and the authority which it is granted in the Ovambo community⁹², mean that “culture” is seen as something worthy of intellectual discussion and debate, as well as entertainment. Through the presentation on-air of well known people from the community such as Tate Amakatuwa, Tate Nhifikwa, Chief Ankama and Bernadette Mojekwu, listeners were drawn in by the familiarity of the names and thus engaged in the subjects discussed.

The radio program was also designed to address the issue of posterity which was brought to the attention of NCCI on a number of occasions by elders and members of the community concerned with poetry, story-telling, music and traditional customs. It was often felt that unless certain songs, stories, personal histories and information on traditional customs was recorded and shared with the Ovambo people, they would be lost. Each program was recorded and held at the NBC, with tapes available to the listening public upon request.

A considerable amount of old recordings exist from ethnomusicologists' recordings during the apartheid era, however these are on vinyl records, poorly catalogued, of

⁹² Radios in Ovamboland are largely battery operated. Therefore in the absence of electricity or phone lines, community messages, news and current affairs as well as music, talk-back etc are still accessible in even the most remote corners of Ovamboland.

dubious recording quality and have not had a specific place in NBC radio programming. Also, many of the elders today who are considered to be gifted musicians, story-tellers, historians etc by the community, were not recorded. The director of the NBC said that these vinyl recordings had unfortunate associations with the previous dispensation and its method of divide and rule. Mr Kandanga believed that the collection of this material was part of the apartheid regimes policy of emphasising tribal identity and therefore avoiding an Ovambo united front in the face of a common enemy. So the emphasis was on individual tribal identification rather than collective Ovambo identity. Regardless of the rationale behind the collection, the vinyl records are a valuable asset to the NBC and it is hoped that they will be re-recorded for posterity on cd in the future for greater sound quality. Theme music for the program was chosen from these records as the music was local and unique to Ovamboland. Currently there do not exist any cd recordings of traditional Ovambo music, such as dance music or music to be sung at *ohungis* or traditional ceremonies, or recordings of stories. Tobias Kandanga later observed:

The programs have been very successful. So far the outcome or the response that we've got from the program actually is that people are feeling great, because people who are being interviewed are people who are knowing about tradition. And the way the callers participate in the program is wonderful. (Tobias Kandanga, interview 12/9/00)

Ongushu Yomithigululwakalo presents a balance of traditional and contemporary cultural practices and issues to its listeners. This was most important to me as in the field of cultural development, as Steve Robins points out, there are often perceived advantages in promoting cultural “purity” at the expense of change and modernisation. Despite the importance of tradition in Ovambo identity, an essentialist view of cultural heritage conservation denies people the right to evolve and develop their own culture.

The methodology I employed was an important step in the avoidance of a one-sided approach to cultural development – that of preservation alone. The background research

undertaken, in the form of community consultation, workshops, interviews, questionnaires etc, was significant in assessing arts and cultural priorities which were not simply about preservation, but also about development and creating opportunities for contemporary practices, according to the desires, priorities and will of the local community. What followed was a combination of the development of contemporary cultures and traditional cultures, particularly in the area of music and dance where, for example, local rock bands were promoted and given further opportunities for exposure through local performances, and the same amount of financial resources were allocated to the development of contemporary dance (through performances, competitions, festivals etc) as to traditional dance. Similarly, the project combined the development of culture in the expression of local identity, cultural awareness and pride, as well as in economic development with the promotion of artists and art forms for commercial gain such as through the sale of baskets, or paid performances. Income generation was identified as an important part of cultural development in research undertaken prior to the establishment of the project, and the setting up of local co-operatives was seen as a potential community based option in order to achieve this; however, this was a minor aspect of the CDP. Cultural recuperation in the CDP allowed for creative exploration of cultural identity through a variety of media, genres and art forms, both traditional and contemporary. An example of one project which addressed such goals, and presented Ovambo identity as images embodying contemporary and traditional culture, was the *Otse Mbaka* poster campaign.

CASE STUDY:

***Otse Mbaka* Poster Campaign**

In consultation with the NCCI, I decided to begin a poster campaign in order to get visual images of Ovambo culture circulating in the community. This would also provide further focus for cultural sensitisation in the region, in conjunction with *Ongushu Yomithigululwakalo*, the weekly radio program on culture. Funding for the campaign came from the publishing budget of the Ford/ Rössing Foundation Cultural Development Project. I hoped that by clear, public visual representations of different aspects of their

culture, a sense of cultural pride and significance would be generated amongst the people of the north central communities. The name of the campaign was the expression “*Otse Mbaka*” which means “this is who we are”, as the images which were collected and chosen for display depicted both traditional and contemporary images of cultural expression. Each of the aforementioned categories the NCCI worked with in the Cultural Development Workshop were represented: dance, music, traditional customs, art and craft and poetry/story-telling/drama. These posters were distributed to the general community as well as to government and non-government organisations, resource centres, with a small portion of the posters to be sold at the Craft Centre in Windhoek, to generate some income towards future re-prints or new posters.

The collection of images used for the campaign proved to be extremely difficult and time consuming as no professional photographers had published or even endeavoured to photograph the contemporary cultural life of the Ovambo people. I contacted Gerald and Marc Hoberman in South Africa, who are probably amongst the best professional photographers in the region, and who have produced many exceptional books featuring photographs of Namibia, however they had no images at all of the areas of culture we were working in. Although images of Namibia – its landscape and natural resources - are bountiful, images of the people who make up the majority of the population and their cultural practices were nowhere to be found. This was quite significant as it indicated the lack of interest shown in the collection of social and cultural images from the most populated region in the country. With limited experience, I actually had to take some of the slides myself! However the end result was dramatic and quite spectacular, and provided a tangible and enduring visual representation of the culture of the north. Each of the representative images was chosen collaboratively (a very time consuming task as consensus on aesthetics is not always easy) and the text composed by myself, in consultation with the NCCI.

It was decided that the images should be vibrant and colourful, rather than in black and white or sepia tones as this subsumed culture into history, rather than celebrating its vitality. Three of the images feature Ovambos in traditional dress, while the other two

feature children in tracksuits and women in casual attire. All of the images were manipulated using a method of over-saturation of colour, designed to give them a contemporary feel, which was important in presenting images of culture as both traditional and modern at once.

The images are as follows:

- Dance - Young woman dancing in traditional clothes and adornments
- Music - Two boys playing large *ngoma*⁹³ drums
- Traditional customs - *Meekulu* performing traditional wedding dance
- Art and craft - Two women seated, making baskets
- Oral culture - children seated around a fire at an *ohungi*

These images can be found in the attached CD as Appendix G (1-5)

Community response to the posters was very positive, and when I returned to Namibia two years later, there were still many posters hanging in public places, libraries, offices etc.

⁹³ Tom-tom drums played by hand

POWER AND POLITICS

If culture is important and people have studied culture for a century or more, why don't we have well-developed theories, practical guidelines, close professional links between those who study culture and those who make and manage development policy? (Klitgaard in Harrison 2000:xvi)

NGO Work and the Absence of Cultural Content

Following independence, the Namibian Government has, through a series of bilateral and multilateral diplomatic agreements, established a situation where a number of international government agencies and NGOs are currently active in Namibia. These organisations are involved in development work in a wide range of areas such as the environment (DRFN, NACOBTA, NNF), the economy (NEPRU, World Bank), education (USAID, World Teach, VSO, AVI, UNESCO, SIDA), health (MSF, Catholic AIDS Action), agriculture (DFID, UNDP), human rights (NSHR), and community development (Oxfam, UNDP, NORAD). Many of these international non-government organisations have offices in Namibia, and enlist expatriates from their countries of origin to work in partnership with Namibians in establishing projects and activities in specific fields. As well as the development organisations currently in Namibia, there also exist donor agencies, which financially support projects undertaken by organisations within Namibia in the field of development, in similar areas as mentioned above. The relationship between the Government of Namibia and the NGOs and development organisations working in Namibia has generally been one of mutual respect, collaboration and partnership, with the Namibian Government's Ministry for Foreign Affairs providing visas for nationals of other countries entering Namibia to work on contracts of usually upward of two years. However, recently this attitude has begun to deteriorate because of the influence of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's vocal "anti-colonialist" sentiment over the issue of land redistribution which is widely supported in the region. Further details on the antagonistic relationship between the Namibian Government and foreign aid organisations active in Namibia were addressed in the section on Change.

Despite the wide-ranging areas of NGO involvement in development work in north central Namibia, the area of cultural development has seemingly been overlooked, except where commercial possibilities exist. Even the United Nations cultural arm, UNESCO, has no active projects in Ovamboland, nor any plans to initiate any⁹⁴. This situation reflects current Namibian Government and active non-government organisation priorities – the building up of a healthy and sustainable education system, environment and health care system with a view to poverty alleviation. What is neglected, however, is the important role that culture and identity play in establishing appropriate projects and considerations in the task of nation-building. At this most important time in Namibia's development, having been an independent country for only 13 years (and with the vulnerability people have expressed about the socio-cultural effects of globalisation, which were addressed in the section on Change) cultural considerations and notions of what it means to be Namibian are yet to be an integral part of development work, or an area of development in its own right.

We feel that arts and culture are indispensable to a person's life. We feel that it is something that can in the end contribute to the alleviation of unemployment, poverty, and that it contributes to a person having a self-realisation. Arts is very crucial to nation-building and self-realisation.
(Ervast Mtota, interview 11/7/00)

This absence is curious, as nationalism played an important psychological and cultural role in the liberation of Namibia – the liberation of a people consigned to “barbarism, degradation and bestiality by the harsh rhetoric of the colonial civilizing mission”. (Fanon 1990:171) Much consideration was given to issues of national identity, solidarity and pride in fighting for Namibian independence. However, the situation after independence and the realities of the global market have necessitated a far more outward, international focus. Along with the pressures of competing in the global economic market come the unavoidable cultural implications which follow such global connectedness. Said (1993:xxviii), conscious of inherited and evolving post-colonial identities and post-

⁹⁴ Information received from UNESCO Field Office 4/12/02

nationalist government lines, states that “the ideological concern over identity is understandably entangled with the interests and agendas of various groups that wish to set priorities reflecting these interests.” The pressure for international economic relevance is inescapable in contemporary global society, creating an interesting arena for the consideration of personal, local, national and international identity. As Gandhi (1998:130) writes of Fanon,

It is Fanon’s contention ... that the unpredictable exigencies of the decolonising project radically unsettle centuries-old cultural patterns in colonised societies. The shifting strategies of anti-colonial struggle, combined with the task of imagining a new and liberated postcolonial future, generate a crisis within the social fabric. As old habits give way to the unpredictable improvisations of revolutionary fervour, the colonised world submits to the momentum of political renovation and cultural transformation.

Such ‘cultural transformation’ and its ramifications, which independent Namibia faces, have not been reflected in the development and adoption of concrete cultural policies by the Namibian Government. Non-government organisations have also been largely silent on this issue. I will address possible reasons for this.

Donor vs NGO Agendas

There is essential agreement that ‘development’ is above all an economic matter of production and accumulation, based on private investment and external assistance. (Rist 1997:85)

I will now outline why economic and ideological reasons have so far proven to be significant barriers to extensive work in the field of cultural development. Fisher (1997) observes that in recent years, NGOs have come to be seen by policy makers, development practitioners, donors, politicians and social scientists as conduits for the dissemination of the ideas and practices of “civil society”. However, the agenda of undertaking such a

significant responsibility is called into question when NGOs are increasingly dependent on the “whims and fancies” of international donors, state aid agencies and corporate patrons and their ideological paradigms. This is of particular significance in the area of cultural development as donors also perceive NGOs as effective brokers of Western liberal democracy and neo-liberalism, which contribute to competitive economic market policies. In cultural development, economic outcomes are not the specific motivation of such work, nor are they easily measured. Therefore support is not easily justified by donors. In such a climate, donors would be correct in asking “how and why cultural development?” – particularly in the form of the community based model presented earlier in this section. This is perhaps the major logistical reason for the lack of development activity in the area of culture in projects undertaken by NGOs due to the significant difficulty in measuring and quantifying outcomes. Community cultural development, which is essentially concerned with the enrichment of individual and community cultural life and the creative expression of local identity, does not always offer tangible indicators of effectiveness which are required by donors who must justify financial involvement in projects according to priorities and agendas. Karina Constantino-David (1995) observes that it is easier for donors to support quantifiable interventions, for example income generating projects, infrastructure, or high visibility achievements, than community organisations involved in non-quantifiable process driven projects such as cultural development work, although donors and NGOs are both caught up in the same rhetoric of development. Until a direct link can be made between economic development and self-sustainability and cultural development work, it will remain a difficult area to justify especially as more “immediate” areas of need are so desperately apparent. Poverty, conflict, social fragmentation and material needs must be addressed; however local knowledge and the historical narratives of elders could be a valuable source of social capital in the quest to forge a collective sense of belonging, psychological well-being and social cohesion.

How are we going to build programs for young people who don't have a secure home base? What can we do as artists to notify the world about the problems of AIDS? How can we use the arts to alert people in Namibia?

How can we use arts to raise funds, to be of benefit? There's an enormous role that we can play as artists in helping Namibia through the problems of AIDS which are now beginning to show their real signs of impact. (Rita-Louise Hofmeyr, interview 12/7/00)

This could also, as Steve Robins argues, facilitate the development of viable livelihood strategies. In regions such as Ovamboland,

There need not be an artificial dichotomy between the more materialistic rural development strategies of NGOs ... and cultural projects aimed at stimulating social capital formation through inter-generational knowledge transfer. However it remains to be seen to what degree these indigenous knowledge and cultural practices can be used as a basis for 'cultural survival' and economic sustainability for present and future generations... (Robins 2001:849)

Self-sustainable development strategies, as Oommen (1997:52) points out, have income generation as their major agenda, which is seen to lead countries on the path of economic self-sufficiency and autonomy. This defines development as a function of capital and technology with goals conceptualised in terms of urban middle class aspirations. This presents a problem for the participatory aspect of development work, as it demands that the ideologies, ethics and expectations of the receiver of aid reflect those of the giver of aid, regardless of cultural, social, historical and environmental differences. As Raghuram (1999:45) states, "one of the crucial factors of aid coming under pressure of markets is that the ethics of receiving is often forced to conform to the ethics of aid-giving institutions." As "development" continues to be seen largely as a process of capital growth, international assistance or investment under the guise of solidarity and social responsibility usually holds some self-interest. As will be highlighted later in investigating cultural commodification, funding is often only possible when projects can be measured by the standard Western indicators of economic development and income generation. Cultural development work, however, suggests that growth need not be

singularly concerned with increased capital, levels of production, trade and consumption, rather it can occur through the freedom of cultural expression and the determination to negotiate the terms of cultural change.

Donors are perhaps also cautious of involvement in cultural development because of the seemingly contradictory implications of promoting cultural survival, the revitalisation of traditional practices, and heritage conservation whilst at the same time inculcating the values and virtues of progress, modernity, liberal individualism, development and democracy. This would seem to further draw attention to the dichotomy between colonialist notions of “modernity” and “tradition”. In this framework, “modernity”, or Western ideas on democratic decision making, proceduralism, accountability and self-determinism, continues to be associated with progress, development, rationality and order.

One of the most controversial issues ... [is] the extent to which cultural change should be integrated into the conceptualizing, strategizing, planning and programming of political and economic development. The issue becomes highly controversial when the initiative for such changes comes from the West. (Harrison 2000:xxx)

“Tradition” is therefore associated with stasis, stagnation, underdevelopment, poverty, superstition, tribalism and disorder. In the case of contemporary Ovamboland, people do not fit neatly into this dichotomy, with hybridisation⁹⁵ evident in all aspects of everyday life, from clothing to crop cultivation to governance. Ovambo people exist in a “democratic” country and largely survive through subsistence farming yet have access to (though not necessarily the ability to afford) mobile telephones, cable television and the internet.

⁹⁵ Hybridisation in this sense refers to the complex, multi-faceted identities and practices of contemporary Ovambos.

However, donors supposedly have a “strong interest ... in the ‘cultural survival’ of vanishing cultures and languages”. (Robins 2001:849) Therefore, strategies which emphasise traditional essentialism and, in turn, generate the production of cultural commodities which can attract tourism are more likely to meet the requirements of economic self-sustainability. Apart from the commodification of culture and the contradictory agenda which this sets up against the original agendas of promoting community identity, pride and cultural awareness in community based cultural development, the danger of such strategic essentialism is that it can obscure intra-community differences. As Spivak points out, these “ethnic” strategies of mobilisation also tend to ignore and degrade cultural hybridities in the name of “pure essences” and cultural continuity, thereby encouraging tensions between the “pure” and “westernised” elements of local indigenous community. (Spivak in Robins 2001:850)

Perhaps the answer lies somewhere in between – in communities engaging with “modern” means of production without “being swallowed up by the homogenising forces of modernity and globalisation”. (Robins 2001:843) Essentially, this is where the conditions of cultural change should be contested. This would require communities to adapt and recast their reliance on Western institutions in order to reconstitute and reproduce their own cultural ideas and practices. And through participation in NGO or donor-driven cultural development projects, should they be available, indigenous groups could draw on the resources of a global civil society to reconstitute themselves as a culturally vibrant, proud and distinct community, in touch with their traditional cultures. As well as cultural survival, engagements of this kind are then merely instrumental manipulations of culture and identity in order to gain access to material resources. “They are also cultural practices aimed at the recuperation of social memory and identity to other cultural reclamations taking place throughout post-apartheid ...[southern] Africa”. (Robins 2001:850) Rita-Louise Hofmeyr strongly believes in the creative value of arts and culture in order to negotiate modernity:

In a rapidly changing environment, like we do have in Namibia, internally and also with pressure from outside, you can't keep people in isolation so

people change and circumstances change and I think art is a fantastic vehicle for any society to express that change. (Rita-Louise Hofmeyr, interview 12/7/00)

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Issues of accountability and reconciliation are of great importance when considering notions of politics and power in the process of nation building and cultural recuperation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa was established in 1995 following the fall of the apartheid regime and democratic election of Nelson Mandela as President in 1994.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set up by the Government of National Unity to help deal with what happened under apartheid. The conflict during this period resulted in violence and human rights abuses from all sides. No section of society escaped these abuses. The TRC is based on the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, No 34 of 1995. "... a commission is a necessary exercise to enable South Africans to come to terms with their past on a morally accepted basis and to advance the cause of reconciliation." Mr Dullah Omar, former Minister of Justice.⁹⁶

The TRC was given the task of examining the context in which the conflicts of the past had occurred, both within and outside South Africa. This is of particular significance to Namibia, where, despite a national policy of reconciliation being adopted upon independence, a country-specific TRC has not been established. Therefore many of the atrocities perpetrated in Namibia by South African Defence Force soldiers acting under the mandate of the apartheid South African Government have not been investigated. As Christopher Saunders discovered, access to information relating to Namibia in TRC archives or the TRC Report itself is limited, and the material is grossly inadequate and incomplete.

⁹⁶ Source: www.doj.gov.za/trc/

...the focus is very much on high-profile incidents, which are not adequately contextualised, and there is no attempt to be comprehensive. There is no detailed account, say, of the human rights violations inflicted on the people of northern Namibia over many decades. ...Overall it can be said that for researchers on the recent history of Namibia, the TRC has turned out – for all its value as an essential part of South Africa’s emergence from apartheid – to be another disappointment, though it was, perhaps, not to be expected that any dramatic revelations relating to Namibia’s liberation struggle would be revealed. (Saunders 2000:5)

The TRC Report states clearly that “South Africa’s occupation of South West Africa would merit a separate truth commission of its own”, (Saunders 2000:2) although this would open up both sides of the struggle to investigation, and SWAPO would not be exempt from scrutiny of crimes committed during the apartheid years. It is perhaps for this reason that such an event has not taken place.

Saunders believes this absence of significant findings and reportage on Namibia in the TRC is because those who appeared before the TRC were not compelled to talk openly about what they had done in Namibia. This was based on legal grounds, as the Namibian Government had not specifically agreed to respect any amnesty granted in South Africa to those who appeared before the commission. It is unclear whether the Namibian Government was approached by the South African Government and refused to agree to a bilateral amnesty; however the failure to secure such an agreement robbed the TRC of much potential evidence relating to Namibia, as only 13 members of the South African security forces applied to the TRC for amnesty relating to incidents in Namibia.

The absence of a formal investigation into the atrocities and events of the apartheid years in Namibia, which had a devastating effect on psychological, social and cultural life in Namibia, leaves a wide gap in the attempts to research the effects of such events on cultural development and identity. Stories and anecdotes about the effects of the war and the oppressive practices of the apartheid regime serve as powerful narratives in the

absence of formal evidence and investigation, and serve as powerful forms of relating experience. The refusal to hold such a commission in Namibia shows a reluctance to proactively address the cultural and psycho-social impact of the apartheid regime and the denial of the importance of acknowledging and engaging with these effects. With the darkest secrets of apartheid as yet un-addressed, Namibians have been denied the opportunity for a recuperative conciliation of the past.

*Like the fish
escaping the tide,
the refugee fled the land.*

*When he crept away
his heart was a kraal
full of hopelessness.*

*Good fortune, he crept
under the bush,
bothered by
whispering bullets.*

*There, he hid until they
raised the last net and fish basket.
Then he wriggled home.*

(Shipena Pinehas Panduleni 1997)

Clearly, from the rich volume of poems and songs written about the events and effects of apartheid, articulating themes of dispossession, exile, oppression, violence, disempowerment etc, there are many traumatic experiences which are relieved through such creative outpouring. Arts and cultural activities provide powerful vehicles for creative expression which assists in the healing process.

SWAPO, Education and the Role of MBEC in Cultural Recuperation.

Mbockoma Mungandjera is a local school teacher in Oshikuku, a staunch SWAPO supporter and prime example of an Ovambo man living comfortably between two worlds – the traditional rural Ovambo life and the modern, Westernised life of a professional. Educated in Sweden whilst in exile for eight years during the Liberation Struggle, Mbockoma has experienced life in the West first hand. He is in many ways a Westernised Ovambo, yet one who is strongly in touch with his tradition and culture. Like many professional Ovambos, he lives in a house, yet also owns several goats, cattle and a homestead to which he goes on weekends or more often during the cultivating season. Expanding on Mbockoma Mungandjera's previous comments on being "enlightened", the following statement shows the shifting priorities which have eventuated in his current considerations of identity as he speaks of the political journey which has brought him to this state:

Before 1970 I was not very much enlightened, like the way I am now. (Though still on a small, small scale!) Maybe in the 1970s I never thought of culture, I was only thinking of freedom and independence. That's why I participated in a lot of demonstrations, strikes, etc. We had to wait until now to talk about these things. We had to wait until independence. Now I am enlightened. I have stopped and reflected on these things and can put everything in context. I'm a little bit enlightened, I can think about tradition, culture, modern ways of thinking, and try to balance it. (Mbockoma Mungandjera, interview 25/11/02)

These comments give a dramatic insight into post-independence Ovambo thinking. The priorities of the past, notably the overthrowing of oppression and gaining of freedom and independence, have now evolved into a more reflective and contemplative consideration of the impact of outside influences on life in Ovamboland. But the belief exists that such consideration is only possible as a result of political independence and freedom. And such freedom was only possible through the resistance and leadership of SWAPO. The

power of political nationalism has been addressed previously in the section on Change, but a consideration of the connectedness of identity consideration, freedom and politics is important in addressing issues of recuperation. This interconnectedness is one possible reason behind pockets of the community being reluctant to proactively participate in cultural activities which they feel are the responsibility of the government, as shown in the reflections following the UNAM Cultural Development Workshop. I will now investigate the enormous responsibility placed by the community on the SWAPO Government's Ministry of Basic Education and Culture in the area of cultural recuperation.

A national policy on arts and arts education can protect, enhance and empower artists and arts education. This is vital in modern technocratic society. Without some effective legislation, the arts in Namibia are in a precarious position. (Mans 2000:1)

The section on Change in this thesis examined the history and role of the government in Namibian society. In that section, I outlined some of the reasons behind community deference to government on issues which could be more effectively addressed elsewhere, such as arts and cultural activities and education. It also examined whether neo-colonialism and government priorities of modernisation were often at odds with the philosophies behind community based cultural development. This section looks at community and organisational expectations of the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture in arts and cultural development, and why these are not being met.

Education, if you look at the broad term "education", I think there's a lot of misconception and we're trying very hard in every single meeting that education should be seen as a broader thing that embraces culture. Because people tend to think of education really as reading, writing and arithmetic. And education of people implies that you're educating people to have certain values and ethics and the way they're going to look after the environment and the way they're going to interact with people. So in

that way, it's essential that education is seen as a much broader thing that also embraces creativity and people's right to be creative and have an outlet for that. (Rita-Louise Hofmeyr, interview 12/7/00)

In my research, a number of significant themes emerged in responses from interviewees. All who were interviewed, regardless of social or professional background, believed that arts and culture should be taught in schools. It was believed that this should occur either holistically through the understanding of education as having a cultural element, an attitude expressed above by the MBEC Director of Arts, Rita-Louise Hofmeyr, or specifically taught as a separate promotional subject⁹⁷ in its own right. The importance of informal educational opportunities in arts and culture was also strongly stated, with most believing that broader concepts of teaching should be developed, to encourage more community participation and collaboration in classrooms.

Education is a tremendous, powerful vehicle if used properly, to promote cultural identity, cultural diversity, cultural tolerance, appreciation of culture ... by that I don't just mean artistic expression but certainly that. But culture is understood as what any community is – where they've come from, where they're going. But to do that you have to have qualified people teaching something about arts, something about cultural identity. And schools also have to be a place where it's not just teachers teaching and learners learning, but where students and their parents and their community members can feel that it's a place where they can go to, to express themselves, and where they can share their experiences and they can enjoy the authority that goes with standing up before a class. (David Chiel, interview 4/10/00)

⁹⁷ Subjects are divided into promotional and non-promotional categories, which determines how many hours per week are committed, to what level the subject can be taken, resource allocation etc. These categories are determined by the Ministry.

Formal education and informal education should work together. We shouldn't be working alone, as we are working for the same goal. We need to co-ordinate and co-operate. (Bernadette Mojekwu, interview 13/10/00)

Nothing will improve until principals are fairly sensitised to the fact that arts should be on the curriculum. Provision has been made for it, there are curricula in place. But because of various reasons, principals don't always implement those subjects. They say people aren't educated, they don't have trained teachers, which is not really the case because any person who has gone through the recent BETD training can teach the core arts and can take it right through to grade ten. My feeling is that there's lots of pressure on principals to show results in the hard sciences and in the languages and that people are under immense pressure because the curriculum is very broad and there are many subjects that are offered. And I think that if they can't cope with that then they often use the arts period or the information science period to deal with the rest of the curriculum. Most times when I have asked principals why arts is not being offered at the school they'll say simply because they are over-stretched with the curriculum. (Rita-Louis Hofmeyr, interview 12/7/00)

I think part of the education will be the most important one, for people to understand that culture can change as times go on. It's not static. So I feel that in accepting of that, people should promote culture in the syllabus, education syllabus, because art and culture should be taught in schools. (Tobias Kandanga, interview 12/9/00)

There also exists a strong feeling that the government is not doing enough to adequately address the teaching of arts and culture in schools. Presently, no attempts are being made by the government for teachers to try to retrieve cultural practices which have been marginalised.

Although the president and other politicians always look to singers and dancers to entertain and enlighten official visitors to the country, this does not necessarily translate into financial or moral support for cultural heritage or contemporary art forms. (Mans 2000:4)

Although arts and culture is either not taught at all, or taught in a small selection of affluent schools in the south of the country as a non-promotional subject, and despite the previously addressed psychological dependence on government initiatives, there exists government expectation that people will independently practice and develop their culture.

Since independence, Namibians have been encouraged to rediscover and celebrate their own cultures. (Mans 2000:5)

Although this does indeed happen in the remote villages and homesteads of Ovamboland, it does not translate as government support of culture. As highlighted earlier, the Namibian Government's principal objectives upon independence were national reconciliation, the socio-economic development of the country and its population, and the integration of Namibia in the international economy and community of nations. In order to achieve this, an educated population was seen as a crucial requirement, as it was believed that only with a healthy, self-sustaining, and educated population and labour force would Namibia eventually be in a position to overcome external dependency, efficiently operate its capital infrastructure, develop industries and promote economic growth. Investing in human capital was the first step in promoting socio-economic development, and the newly elected government set out to reverse the effects and practices of state sanctioned inequality and minority privilege through education reform. Although many Namibians had received training and teaching qualifications whilst living abroad in exile during the war, there were far too few qualified teachers upon independence to adequately facilitate the education reform, which was prioritised by the Government, therefore outside assistance was sought.

Attracting support for these goals from non-government organisations was not difficult, as Gonzales writes, “Given the international attention which the country’s struggle for independence drew, the government’s objectives of reconciliation and development, and the democratic zeal of the population, development agencies and organisations from around the world eagerly established projects to assist the state in its transformation efforts.” (Gonzales 2000:27) Namibia was seen by development organisations as an exciting and politically stable focus country for innovative educational development projects and a site to send teachers as development workers whilst Namibian nationals undertook the task of upgrading their skills and competencies to meet the new syllabus and language requirements. New educational ideologies and philosophies based on Western styles and learner-centered techniques were to be implemented. After years of rote learning and indoctrination in classroom teaching, this radically new methodology was a significant shift in the educational paradigm and required new understanding as well as material and human resources to carry out. Of particular significance in this process was the government’s decision to adopt the Cambridge system of education, which had syllabi and exam question papers written in the U.K. As such, there was no specific Namibian cultural context in the syllabi.

Education reform is not uncommon in any society, however in a newly independent country which has endured years of oppression and division, the reforms were particularly significant. Education was seen as liberating and empowering. “For learning to be liberating,” states the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, “it must involve developing both a critical consciousness and a solid sense of self-confidence.” (Gonzales 2000:15) Such self-confidence had been radically undermined in the previous dispensation, and would take significant effort to develop in the new system. “Liberation” in the education system chosen, however, created a dependence on external teachers, externally written and designed syllabi, and subject priorities which would suit the post-independent priorities of liberal democracy, specifically economic development. It was constantly reinforced to learners at school that if they did not study hard in subjects such as mathematics, economics and science, that they would end up “back in the

village”⁹⁸, reinforcing a feature of modernity – that urban life should, (with the assistance of Western-style education) take off from village communal life. It is not surprising given such an affiliation with the philosophies of modernisation in the ideology of the education system, that subjects such as arts and culture were not considered as both independent and integrated areas of formal education. This absence was a continuation of culturally repressive policies of the past.

During colonial occupations (due to wars and transfers among European powers, Namibia had 3 separate ones) the music, dance, and visual arts of Namibians were considered second rate and primitive. Such arts were not taught in schools. They were not brought into the public arena in any way. Cultural music and dance were confined to isolated rural areas, political rallies and guerrilla camps. (Mans 2000:5)

The ministry also saw social relevance as a crucial part in recognising its need to “reconsider what we mean by high quality education to be sure that we do not unthinkingly carry the values of education for the few into the era of education for all.” (Namibia 2000:38) This was a significant task, in a country with at least 12 ethnic groups⁹⁹ and in order to achieve this, the actual material taught to learners needed to be inclusive and appropriate for each different group. This formidable task was most certainly not adequately met in the text books and syllabi I taught, in Year 11 and 12 IGCSE English, which were extremely Eurocentric in their content and design¹⁰⁰. Material previously taught under the apartheid system had been both disempowering and held little relation to the learners’ experiences and everyday lives. Post-independence syllabus development was rushed in order to produce text books, therefore few attempts

⁹⁸ Despite this threat, in my experience as a high school teacher at Nuuyoma Senior Secondary School, agriculture was always nominated as learners’ favourite subject when asked.

⁹⁹ Identified as Ovambo, Kavamngo, Herero, Himba, Damara, Europeans, Caprivians, San, Nama, Topnaar, Basters, Tswana. Many sub-groups exist in each of these identified groups.

¹⁰⁰ In 1999, the IGCSE Year 11 English listening exam asked students, for many of whom English was their third language, questions relating to the London Underground system, referring to it as “the tube”. Another exam was about a trip to the Opera. I often observed that in exams, students were greatly distressed as they could not contextualise Western names, settings, or examples used in such exams. Many concepts were completely unfamiliar to them.

were made to make material “inclusive” of all ethnic groups and these attempts were quite superficial, usually simply allowing for culturally diverse contextualisation, rather than educating on diversity. Such an example comes from a 4th grade social studies textbook, published in 1995 and based on the “new” syllabus, which asked questions such as “What happens in your family when a baby is born? ... Find out what your parents did when you were born”. (Gonzales 2000:12)

A significant impediment to rapid educational transformation in post-independence policy reform, was the introduction of English as the medium of instruction from Year 4 onwards. This severely disadvantaged learners in the higher levels of primary and secondary schools, and caused significant difficulty and anxiety to teachers who were not adept at teaching in the new language.

Personal experience gained in my two years of teaching English at Nuuyoma Senior Secondary school in Oshikuku, gave me insight into the generational difference between learners in Year 11, aged 18 and learners in Year 5, aged 11. Due to the war, and the devastating effects it had on education in Ovamboland¹⁰¹, many learners did not complete high school until the age of 25. The English spoken by the primary school aged learners in Oshikuku, who had enjoyed the benefits of English as the medium of instruction, was often better than that of graduating Year 12 students.

Accountability and Responsibility

The government institution responsible for the development of primary and secondary school curricula, the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) established panels for the development of curricula and policies for a number of subjects, both promotional and non-promotional, including arts and culture. The arts and culture panel however is now disbanded, so much of the advocacy work and academic input have been lost. The draft syllabi for integrated performing arts and art and craft have not been

¹⁰¹ Many schools in Ovamboland were used as South African military bases during the Independence Struggle. The legacy of this exists today with some schools still having active landmines around them. Similarly, recruitment raids of senior secondary schools were not uncommon, where Ovambo learners would be kidnapped and trained as *koeffot* for the SADF. Not surprisingly, learners were too afraid to attempt to walk to or stay at school under such conditions.

implemented in schools other than by those which have initiated them as non-promotional subjects of their own volition, and often by schools in Windhoek with access to resources and extra-curricula support, or schools where teachers have been members of the curriculum development panel. Namibian academic and arts advocate, Minette Mans, in her article entitled *Creating a Cultural Policy for Namibia* makes the following recommendations:

...arts education needs to be more clearly defined within the Namibian context, and its needs more emphatically articulated in [a] policy document. Arts education should be located within Namibian cultural traditions ... many incumbent teachers resist this as they lack confidence to facilitate learning experiences ... the task of re-educating teachers in terms of arts practices in different cultures resides with the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture. (Mans 2000:16)

Despite Ministry of Basic Education and Culture officials being included at every stage of the cultural development work I was involved in between 1998 – 2000, cultural activities undertaken by non-government organisations aroused considerable suspicion within the Regional Offices because work in this area was seen as the government's responsibility. I was told in no uncertain terms by cultural officers that "no cultural activity could take place without the government being involved". This view of culture and of freedom of cultural practice and expression demonstrates the attitude that exists in Namibia about government authority and indicates people's reluctance to operate autonomously outside of the government. The transference of power from colonial rule to national rule, whilst having massive political implications, did not entail a complete change in ideology or greater confidence in questioning of governance and existing hegemony that had existed in the colonial period. Minette Mans writes,

... it is vital that governmental structures and procedures enhance, not hamper, efficient functioning. An arts policy should not enhance bureaucratic control. (Mans 2000:15)

The notion expressed by the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, that cultural activity cannot take place without government involvement, implies that the activities which are taking place in homesteads, around camp fires, in playgrounds etc are not sanctioned by government. Activity still happens in such contexts, however and people emphatically told me that the concept of “education” needed to be promoted to extend beyond formal classroom learning and that the informal learning possibilities provided by parents, neighbours, relatives and so on could play a valuable role in the teaching of culture. In the absence of a syllabus-based promotion of arts/cultural subjects at schools in the region, these informal learning possibilities comprised the only opportunities to develop skills in the creative arts.

The notion that only teachers can teach, especially in the realm of culture is absurd. Anyone can teach ... many people can teach about culture, probably they know a great deal more than teachers know about culture. So I think to make it the sole reserve of teachers who have graduated from teaching academies or have somehow filled the requisite requirements that enable them to have a teaching certificate is ludicrous. (David Chiel, interview 4/10/00)

“Loss” or Preservation?

In investigating power and politics, some reference must be made to the role of the previous dispensation in cultural recuperation. Ironically, while apartheid and South African rule are perceived by many as responsible for cultural “loss”, various cultural activities and initiatives which sought to preserve and promote culture in the region also took place during this time. Although people sceptically regarded such activities as subversive measures which were designed to reinforce essentialist attitudes, promote tribalism and therefore support theories of “divide and rule”, the legacy which exists as a result of such activities is undeniably seen as a positive thing by the communities of the north. Examples of such initiatives are the Regional Cultural Festivals, NBC recordings and the collection of archival artefacts.

The Regional Cultural Festival is an annual display of music, craft and dance, which is held in each political constituency in Namibia and culminates in a National Cultural Festival with considerable prize money and prestige associated with attendance at the event. The festival is now organised and run by the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, and is the main cultural activity of the Ministry each year. Cultural groups compete and perform in traditional dance, and certain regions are renowned for their consistently strong performances. Winning groups are often enlisted to perform for presidential and diplomatic events.

I can remember that before independence, there used to be cultural festivals and that was really just traditional dances. And whether it was with a good intention or not, people did look at it in a different light because it was organized by people who were in the regional government, and you know then the regional government was seen to be a white South African imposed government. So they thought it was something that was imposed upon them. But I think it was a good project. Sometimes, the people who were putting on the festivals, you could see them in their camouflage gear – and at the same time you could see the parachutes. You know they mainly used the Oshakati Soccer Stadium, and while you are there dancing, your attention will be drawn to some soldiers jumping out of the plane high up in the sky! I don't know whether the festivals were to draw the attention of the population there away from the political situation, but they were still cultural festivals. One would have thought that this was propaganda, to show the world that they were there to develop the culture and not just in the region because of the war. I think it was to keep people busy so that they forget any political thoughts. (Ervast Mtota, interview 11/7/00)

Regardless of its original intent, or the past suspicions of the Ovambo people, the Regional Cultural Festival is whole-heartedly embraced throughout the country and has

grown to be one of, if not the most popular large annual regional community event¹⁰². The irony of this is evident on a number of levels, particularly that such a culturally destructive and oppressive regime could generate a popular celebration of Ovambo identity, which is extremely well supported and attended by the community. (See *Fig. 4.1 – 4.2*)



Fig.4.1 – Women at Regional Cultural Festival



Fig. 4.2 – Men at Regional Cultural Festival

Also ironic, however, is the festival’s emphasis on “tradition” in an era, and a country which denounces tribal autonomy and instead promotes national unity. Post-independence, emphasis on ethnic difference is regarded as highly inappropriate, even offensive. SWAPO is supposed to be representative of all Namibian people, effecting political policies and promoting a new government sanctioned ideology of unity. “...unity and the transcending of traditional divisions was a principle constantly reiterated by the [SWAPO] leadership.” (Leys and Saul 1995:13) The National Cultural Festival, in which the winners of each regional festival compete, is a dramatic display of cultural essentialism, with regional groups being defined by their pre-colonial

¹⁰² Soccer also rates pretty highly!

appearance, dance style and music. Also, the use of the term “cultural festival” for what is essentially a dance festival featuring traditional dances from each region in the country, has been questioned by academics such as Minette Mans. Having been associated with the organisation of the Regional Cultural Festivals of 1999 and 2000, I suggested the possibility of incorporating new categories into the competition, such as local jewellery making, basketry, cooking, pottery, carving, story-telling etc. These new categories were accepted at a regional level and proved popular on the day of the festival. (See *Fig.4.3*) They were rewarded with ample prize money provided by the Ministry which prior to the inclusion of further categories, had only been awarded to dance groups. Such limited prize categories had often resulted in a large surplus being given back to the Ministry each year. However, although regional changes could be made to the festival, the national festival provided no opportunities for more broad interpretations of “culture”, nor the opportunity for the display of any form of cultural expression which was contemporary or post-colonial. There was, for instance, no opportunity for hip hop, R&B or rap performances, despite the popularity of such genres in the community. (See *Fig. 4.4*) It seemed as though the presentation of traditional dance and appearance, which have already been identified as having associations of “loss”, were more important and the event was seen to be more about the preservation of heritage and pre-colonial traditions than a more broad representation and celebration of contemporary culture.



Fig. 4.3 – Cultural artefact displays – a new category at the festival



Fig.4.4 – R&B group at Nuuyoma Senior Secondary School Talent Quest, 1999

Another area where effort was put into the preservation and presentation of Ovambo culture under the apartheid regime was in the recording and broadcasting of local music. In a region as vast and isolated as Ovamboland, radio was and, in the absence of electricity in most of the region, continues to be an extremely important tool of communication.

The NBC, or the former SWABC used to showcase a lot of local home grown music, so I think the music part of it was probably kept alive via the radio, but not via the education system, certainly not! I know because I was working in radio in those days and we recorded a wealth of music and that's all in the archives. (Rita-Louise Hofmeyr, interview 12/7/00)

Indeed, almost all traditional Ovambo music and songs which are broadcast on the NBC today come from vinyl recordings which were produced during the apartheid era. Again, the practice of recording and broadcasting local traditional music was treated with suspicion, but regardless of the intention, the outcome and public response were positive. As Tobias Kandanga states,

The situation pre-independence was based on the policy of segregation, and each radio station was concentrating mostly on its ethnic province. And the music which they were playing on the station was only of that ethnic group. A long time ago, the Oshiwambo service in particular, most of the music which was played on air was Oshiwambo music. And in 1967 when they launched the SWABC in Oshakati, the only music which was broadcast was Oshiwambo music because it was the first time for people to hear the radio and all those sort of things, so they were very pleased to listen to their traditional music. Then in the 1970s, things started to change when Western music started to come in, but mostly it was not Western music, it was South African music. (Tobias Kandanga, interview 12/9/00)

The Church's Role in the Struggle

Another interesting outcome in the process of post-colonial cultural recuperation in Namibia, can be seen in the church's role in the Independence Struggle. Ironically, after having played such a significant role in Europeanising Ovambo culture and contributing to perceived cultural "loss", churches played a crucial role in the liberation and independence of Namibia by providing support to SWAPO and publicly speaking out

against the oppressive practices of apartheid. Many church leaders were imprisoned or forced into exile for their solidarity with the Namibian people. The ambiguity of the churches' role in Namibia's history is evident in the comparison between the early complicity and co-operation with the colonial powers, and the eventual rejection, open criticism and opposition to South African domination. Ervast Mtota, the principal of the College for the Arts, sees the Independence Struggle as being a significant turning point, when issues such as independence, political liberation and freedom from oppression, became more important than the legalistic naming requirements for baptism. Names began to emerge which once again represented wider events yet also incorporated Christianity, such as "Tuyakula" which means "God assist us". The church underwent a dramatic change in its role in the community in its commitment to the freedom and liberation of the people. The church also began to encourage expressions of local culture in church proceedings, such as traditional dress, ululation¹⁰³, and traditional songs and dances.

I think it was towards the end of the 1980s that the church started to review their stance on names and such, and began fighting for human rights and fighting for the Independence Struggle. The church really, really started changing completely and it began serving the objective of independence. I think it was in the middle of the 1970s that the church started becoming the enemy of the South African authorities. (Ervast Mtota, interview 11/7/00)

The active role played by the church in Namibia's Independence Struggle was also helped by the establishment of independent Namibian churches, such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) and the Council of Churches in Namibia – an ecumenical body which worked towards the liberation of the country, for the human dignity of the Namibian people and for Namibians to be the masters of their own lives. (Hunke 1988:628) Following somewhat discrete statements by the Lutheran church to the

¹⁰³ Ululating is a traditional Ovambo form of appreciation, recognition and thanks, much like the Western tradition of clapping/applause. It is a high-pitched noise made by women involving the rolling of the tongue.

South African Government denouncing torture, police brutality, Bantustan policy¹⁰⁴ with the consequent inhumane forced migration and the intolerable housing policy on the locations, the Black Lutheran Church leadership came out with an open letter in 1971. (Included as Appendix H). This came after the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice which validated the United Nations' decision of 1966 and 1969 to terminate the mandate of South Africa over Namibia and called for an immediate withdrawal of its administration from the territory and for the granting of independence. Given the church's significant links with international institutions, it also offered its services as a mouthpiece for Namibians without a voice.

Hunke describes the role of the Black Namibian churches (Lutheran, Black Anglican and Black Roman Catholic) in the Independence Struggle as happening on three levels: institutional, ideological and operational. On the institutional level, churches allowed a sense of ownership through Namibian leadership, which gave a visible inclusiveness and representation to the Namibian people, and also gave a voice to the voiceless. On the ideological level, these churches began preaching liberation theology, using the Gospel event as evidence of God's fight against collective evils like oppression, exploitation, and his creation and redemption of every single person equally. This also rendered churches anti-authoritarian in the sense that they refused to recognise the illegal status quo of South African occupation and control of Namibia. On the operational level, the church published statements which informed people about their rights and how to proceed on a legal basis in cases of torture, and on the implications of certain events such as the sham elections in December 1978. (Hunke 1988:633) The church also publicly denounced the partiality of the courts, provided information to the international community using links to international bodies and institutions, and provided educational programs to empower people in subjects like English, literacy, community organising etc.

¹⁰⁴ South Africa's "Bantustan" policy, inaugurated in the early 1960s under the apartheid regime, called for moving existing Native Reserves, or portions of what was considered worthless land, towards independence. This would satisfy African demands for greater political power, increase racial isolation and leave the black population entirely dependent on whites for economic survival.

This massive turnaround in the relationship of the churches with the South African Government did not happen suddenly, and initially resulted in great division between the churches which supported colonial rule in Namibia and those which opposed it. (Haikali 1988:635) It also required a fundamental rethinking of Christian theology as the philosophy that Christianity was a religion of equality began to flounder because of some Christian churches' support of evil regimes which were exterminating their own people. This division threatened the existence of some churches in Namibia, and resulted in many priests and ministers being imprisoned or forced into exile. As Haikili writes: "The more churches supported the right to self-determination, the more they were defined as enemies by the South African regime. The Church had now also become a victim of the South African oppression." (Haikali 1988:636)

The perceived "losses" due to the activity of missionaries are still a source of sadness, regret and a sense of injustice. However the subsequent role which the churches played in the Independence Struggle, whilst not completely compensating the community for their "loss", at least showed a dramatic turnaround in priorities, for example solidarity with their congregations in matters as trivial¹⁰⁵ as names, dress, and social and cultural protocol, to the monumentally important issues of self-determinism, independence and freedom from oppression. However this too would have led to some issues of cultural identity as those who rejected Christianity as a form of white imperialism would have felt conflicted when the church essentially changed sides and became a champion of ordinary people. Also, as I have previously demonstrated, the churches' attempts at encouraging the free expression of traditional practices as part of Christian worship have been met with scepticism within the community.

Similarly, although the example of the apartheid government establishing regional cultural festivals shows how the previous regime, regardless of intentions, preserved some aspects of Ovambo cultural life, numerous examples exist of cultural genocide¹⁰⁶, in the sense of physical aggression causing the disappearance of culture. Latouche

¹⁰⁵ Trivial insofar as these changes, as I have previously shown, were not doctrinally based.

¹⁰⁶ A term used by Latouche to refer to the disappearance of culture through the aggressive one-way push of deculturation.

(1996:55) refers to this as the final stage of deculturation. The destruction of cultural artefacts and records as well as forced cessation of practices and absence of written documentation make the process of recuperation challenging, as I will now demonstrate.

The Writing of Culture

Presently there exists little published research specifically on the culture of Ovamboland, before, during, or after colonialism and apartheid and their effects.

I see arts and culture as a wealth that can be explored, if one's going to look at publication. I think all over the world you're going to find that local languages are slightly endangered. They must be published for the future. I don't know if there's a market for that if a country doesn't put in place publishing machinery to get cheap, accessible publications in the local vernacular to its people, then that's something that's going to be very definitely endangered in the future. (Rita-Louise Hofmeyr, interview 12/7/00)

There are a number of historical resources, anthropologists, historians and other academics such as Jeremy Silvester, Patricia Hayes, Colin Leys, John Saul, Ian Fairweather, and Peter Kajivivi have made valuable contributions to the study of Namibia. But specific texts on culture and cultural change in the country are scarce. Sources such as missionary reports are products of their bias, ideology and era and have to be interpreted accordingly. One such source is *Ovamboland*, a quasi-anthropological account of life in Ovamboland in 1911 by German missionary Hermann Tonjes. This publication is of great interest, not only for its descriptions of the traditions and customs still practised in Namibia in 1911, but also because it includes some anecdotal evidence of the social and cultural impact of missionaries and white people in the area. The book reads as an extended personal journal and was designed to be published in Germany to rally support for the missionary cause in the region. Examples of this work can be found in the section on "Loss" in this thesis.

Despite their detailed reportage of landscape, custom, and language, they inevitably privilege the centre, emphasising the ‘home’ over the ‘native’, the ‘metropolitan’ over the ‘provincial’ or ‘colonial’, and so forth. At a deeper level their claim to objectivity simply serves to hide the imperial discourse within which they are created. (Ashcroft 1989:5)

Other such examples of Euro-centric presentations of Namibia can be found in fascinating publications such as the *South West Africa Annual (S.W.A. Annual)*, which existed ostensibly to report on the “progress” of the colony of “South West Africa”. Articles reflected on business ventures, local (usually white) stories of adventure in the country, and occasional cultural and socio-anthropological tales about some of the Namibian people. What is particularly interesting in the *S.W.A. Annual* is the historical backdrop of each annual publication. Significant mention is given to the Second World War, and its effects on trade and access to European goods in the country, for example in the Administrator, P.I. Hoogengenhout’s preface:

When I wrote a foreword to the S.W.A. Annual last year no one was able to prophesy that the end of the war was in sight ... and yet it has come to pass. The reaction in South West Africa was one of relief and thankfulness and the machinery for reconstruction work was set in motion without undue delay. (*S.W.A. Annual* 1946:7)

There is a complete absence of any mention of the anti-colonial resistance, or the Independence Struggle which took place in the north of the country between 1966 – 1990. Instead, in the 1968 edition of *S.W.A. Annual*, there is an article entitled *The March of Progress*, which describes the building and development of infrastructure in Ovamboland and shows photographs with captions such as “heavy machinery operated by Ovambos”; “laying pipelines between Oshakati and Ondangwa”.

Tremendous developments are taking place in Ovamboland under a comprehensive plan involving expenditure of R30-million during the

coming five years on cattle breeding, fencing, water affairs, electricity, townships, buildings, roads, airports, economic affairs... (*S.W.A. Annual* 1968:111)

Ovamboland is represented as a place of great progress and development, rather than a rural war zone. This is not surprising because this propaganda was important not only to further consolidate South African control by showing the prosperity of the region, but also to attract investment despite the war being fought in the region. Such texts can be perceived as representations of Europe to itself and of others to Europe, rather than accounts of different peoples and societies, a projection of European fears and desires masquerading as scientific/ “objective” knowledges. Said examines the process by which this discursive formation emerges, in *Orientalism*. As Said writes, “In a quite constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible, *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand. ... The scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader or the soldier was in, or thought about, the Orient because he *could be there*, or he could think about it, with very little resistance on the Orient’s part.” (Said in Ashcroft 1989:90) The complete absence of a body of literature examining the cultural effects of former imperialist regimes in Namibia is also significant because the writing down or documentation of history is legitimisation of its subject. The absence of narratives on this subject implies the disappearance of the colonised. As Said writes,

The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them. (Said 1993:xii)

During my time in Namibia, people reiterated constantly the importance of writing down, recording and otherwise documenting local culture, as literacy is highly valued in the country. “To be literate and educated is an important marker of status for Oshiwambo-speakers today.” (Fairweather 2001:46)

Where do you come from? You must remember these things and you can only remember if you have some certain written, documented events. (Mbockoma Mungandjera, interview 25/11/02)

At the Cultural Development Workshop held at the University of Namibia's Northern Campus at Oshakati in 1999, all of the participants, practitioners of various arts forms, traditional authorities, Ministry and NGO representatives agreed on the need for significant recording of local cultures, particularly oral history, poetry and story-telling.

Many arts and cultural groups are concerned about their particular traditional art form becoming extinct through lack of documentation and archiving. Some suggestions have been made regarding ways to keep a record of each art form through research, documentation and archiving. This documentation and research would be available to the general public and would be stored in museums, libraries etc. (UNAM Cultural Development Workshop Report 1999)

The need for written preservation of history was expressed explicitly throughout my time in Namibia, as key resources such as elders are dying and taking their memories and history with them. Namhila (2003:6) writes,

...apart from scattered international resources, we are struggling to preserve what we have at home, but is vanishing every day with the death of our old people – or even, in these times of AIDS, our not-so-old people. Their memories, their rich history runs the danger of getting lost, because many significant and important historical events are NOT recorded.

There is a need for indigenous reportage on local culture, rather than purely academic, theoretical writing. The University of Namibia appointed an Oral History Research Facilitator in 2000 to collect, research and document stories and artefacts from the north central region. It is hoped that this appointment will address some of the community

concern at the lack of research taking place at a local level. Published in 1992, *Speak For Yourself* by Patricia Hayes, encourages Namibian students to research, collect and present oral history. Sadly, however, this book does not fit within the current IGCSE school syllabus.

In late 2000, the National Archives of Namibia, a valuable resource of historical artefacts, documents, publications, reports, journals and photographs of Namibia, moved to a new location in Windhoek. However public access to the information stored there is problematic. Many Namibians have never been to the capital and it is situated 800kms from Ovamboland. None of my former colleagues, friends or associates from Ovamboland had ever visited the National Archives, or indeed knew where the building was located or what information was held there. This raises an important question regarding public access and ownership of knowledge and history. At the moment, the archival section is extremely poorly organised, with no public access to databases for checking reference and archival material. When I visited the National Archives in December 2002, the computers were down and I was told that they had been down for over two weeks, and that it was unlikely they would be fixed before the date of my departure from Namibia. Such logistical problems limit the effectiveness of this otherwise extremely significant and valuable national resource. Another significant limitation which the National Archives faces is in the accessioning and collection of material. Many key documents from the South African regime in Namibia, including records of the office of the Administrator General, were transferred from Namibia to South Africa upon the closing of this office on the eve of Namibian independence. According to international law regarding rules of state succession, this transfer was illegal. (Namhila 2003) As I mentioned previously, the absence of a formal Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Namibia has resulted in many of the wounds of apartheid not being addressed. Such an investigation could piece together and determine personal histories by locating relevant evidence from the many decades of South African rule. However the collection of such material is not easy. As Namhila (2003:4) writes,

The recording of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa reveals that, during the period between 1990 – 1994, huge volumes of public records were destroyed in an attempt to keep the apartheid state's darkest secrets hidden. The records of police surveillance activities and large quantities of documents confiscated from individuals and organisations opposed to apartheid were equally destroyed. This also refers to the South African secret police records. And, unlike in some sudden revolutions, where the secret police of the old regime did not have time to destroy their records, the one-year-long UN-supervised Namibian transition process and the half decade between Nelson Mandela's release from prison and the first free elections in South Africa left the apartheid state machinery with plenty of time and opportunity to cover its tracks.

Attempts to address the lacunae in historical evidence providing vital keys to identity recuperation are being made by the National Archives. The German Government funded "Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and the Liberation Struggle Project" (AACRLS) is appealing to international sources for the return of material which can help in the process of recuperation through "filling apartheid gaps in the public memory".

GLOBALISATION

Development Work: Moral Imperative or Economic Strategy?

Achebe (1988:57) writes,

Let every people bring their gifts to the great festival of the world's cultural harvest and mankind will be all the richer for the variety and distinctiveness of the offerings.

Robert Woods (1990:3) writes,

Western aid is frequently tied to the construction of unwieldy and useless projects designed by foreign 'experts' who don't understand the African predicament or environment. These people are imported at great cost to do jobs they are often ill qualified to do at home. They rarely speak the local language or ask local people what they want. And they design projects with more regard to how they appear on paper than to whether they meet local needs or capitalise on local knowledge. The result is frequently irrelevant to local requirements, relying on costly Western technology and great technological expertise.

I will now look at the history of development work as part of the continuum of modernisation, and further ways that this process has impacted on "recuperation" in north central Namibia. I will do this by investigating the political nature of such work and the overt and covert influences inherent in the promotion of Western-style neo-liberal democracy on cultural recuperation. As the impact of foreign nationals is the human and socio-cultural side of this which most Ovambos encounter in the form of volunteers, I will present the motivations and modus operandi of three major international sending organisations. The presence of such organisations significantly impacts upon cultural identity consideration, terms of cultural negotiation and recuperation. In this sub-section,

I will further develop the issue of cultural commodification and commercialisation, on which the process of globalisation has greatly impacted. In the section on “Loss”, aspects of this issue were presented which produced an associated psychology of cultural loss. In this section, however, cultural commodification and commercialisation, along with tourism, will be presented as forms of cultural recuperation. This is perhaps the antithesis of the community based model presented earlier as culture is produced for consumption, but a legitimate and popular form of recuperation nonetheless, which benefits individuals who participate in the exchange of culture and capital.

Development is inextricably tied to the process of globalisation, as it is an enterprise pre-occupied with the ideology of progress largely modelled on the West. As Latouche writes, “... at the heart of all these synonymous enterprises [modernization, globalization, westernisation and development] is the idea of progress. The objective is pure mimicry.” (Latouche 1996:69) The history of development both as a term and as a policy can be traced to U.S. President Truman who first coined the terms “development” and “underdevelopment” in his inaugural address. Point four of this speech proposed

A bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. ...The old imperialism – exploitation for foreign profit – has no place in our plans.¹⁰⁷

However even before Truman’s time, leading up to the decolonisation process, colonisers began to define their agendas for the colonies in more positive terms and concepts. This represented a new, though thinly veiled, attempt at making the colonial endeavour more socially palatable, which in turn led to the concept of “development”. As Esteva writes,

To give the philosophy of the colonial protectorate a positive meaning, the British argued for the need to guarantee the natives minimum levels of nutrition, health and education. A ‘dual mandate’ started to be sketched:

¹⁰⁷ *Public Papers of the President 1949* (January 20), pp.114-115

the conqueror should be capable of economically developing the conquered region and at the same time accepting the responsibility of caring for the well-being of the natives. After the identification of the level of civilisation with the level of production, the dual mandate collapsed into one: development. (Esteva 1997:10)

Rist argues that the decolonisation process and the rise of U.S. hegemony are interlinked, as the United States had an evident interest in dismantling the colonial empires to gain access to new markets. This is hinted at later in Point 4 of Truman's speech:

What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair-dealing. ... Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. (Truman 1948:114)

Development, or intervention in this sense does not necessarily imply the transfer of values or a pedagogical program in which people from outside have the initiative, as in colonialism, but implies an increase in production and better use of the world's natural and human resources, to help everyone to produce more. The key to prosperity and happiness in this new form of development, as Rist points out, is increased production, not endless debate about the organisation of society, ownership of the means of production or the role of the state. (1997:76) Gross National Product became the basis of comparison, rather than levels of civilisation.

The term "development" is problematic, and has inevitable connotations of growth, evolution and maturation which again seem to reinforce centre-margin models and imply the process of making one part of the world more closely resemble another part of the world, namely Western liberal democratic countries which wield considerably more economic power. "Development" also implies a positive change, an advancement from simple to complex, from worse to better. However as cited earlier, Esteva (1997:10) points out that for two thirds of the world's population, the term "development" reinforces or reminds them of *what they are not*. Attempts have been made to categorise

countries' comparative levels of "development" and represent them in ways other than through the economic measurement of their GDP, for example the United Nations Human Development Indicator (HDI) measures levels of education, life expectancy and income. Although it attempts to give development a more human focus, the HDI does not take into account cultural diversity and the subsequent multiplicity of indicators, attitudes and values in measuring "growth". In the absence of an alternative term, however, and using parlance which is still widely accepted in reference to international aid programs, I will continue to use the term "development", but wish to highlight that I do so with caution. As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis in reference to terminology such as "developed" or "developing", these terms are in common usage amongst the protagonists of such dialogues, therefore despite the connotations implied by Western application, in my experience Namibians were quite comfortable with such words.

In this section I will examine issues relating to non-government activity including the different types of development which NGOs are involved in, the differences within the non-government sector between rights based and advocacy work, as well as the politics of the work undertaken by such organisations. This includes arguments surrounding ideological, moral and economic ramifications and the notion of aid delivery being driven by profits and neo-liberalism, and the push for self-sufficiency of sovereign nations following the end of colonialism and the Cold War. In order to illustrate this, I will compare the motivations and philosophies behind both large volunteer sending organisations, and the individuals involved in such work. The outcomes of the promotion of a unilateral style of "democracy" in nation-building will also be addressed. I will present the conflicting agendas of NGOs and donor organisations in order to establish why there is a continued lack of cultural content in NGO work and why so few specific cultural development projects are initiated despite culture being repeatedly identified in my research as an imperative area of development in Ovamboland. The complexities of the contradictory dual mandate of cultural survival and cultural change which is implicit in development work, and subsequent cultural hybridisation will be presented as possible explanations.

NGOs are often synonymous with “development” of some form. Before looking into the issues associated with development NGO activity in Namibia, it is first necessary to investigate the *concept* of development and possible definitions and applications, which often reflect the ideologies and motivations behind NGO work. Gilbert Rist, in attempting to find an adequate description of development, comes up with three distinct possible presuppositions, which affect the interpretation and application of development:

Social evolutionism – that is catching up with the industrialised countries of the West

Individualism – that is developing the personality of human beings

Economism – that is achieving growth and access to greater income.

However each of these positions is based upon the way in which one person, or set of persons pictures the ideal conditions of social existence. (Rist 1997:10) So is development the expression of a wish to live a better life, or the great mass of actions which are supposed eventually to bring greater happiness to the greatest possible number? And can this be separated, in contemporary society, from the economic expansion of the market system, since a significant aspect of sustainability in a mercantile world demands the production of commodities geared to effective demand? This seems to undermine the motivation of the vast majority of NGOs active in international development work, which essentially aim to alleviate poverty throughout the world. With this as the starting point, (particularly in relation to Western/non-Western relationships and in the field of culture) it can be said that “development” consists of a series of practices, sometimes contradictory, which aim to transform and contribute to a better life of those participants in the process.

Within the non-government sector, there exists different categories of aid delivery which fall into three basic areas of NGO activity:

(i) Development NGOs – those which promote the concept of development as the standard path to poverty alleviation through capacity building, the development of infrastructure, community empowerment and civic participation

(ii) Rights based NGOs – those which promote the rights of specific groups, often minorities or marginalised groups, such as women, youth, ex-combatants, the gay

community etc and address democratic expectations and the expectation of the respect of rights from governments and communities.

(iii) Advocacy NGOs – those which promote human rights, meaningful cross sector dialogue, education, and local community roles in self-determinism.

The lines between each of these areas are often blurred and do not always exist with mutual exclusivity. This section will primarily investigate the role of *development* NGOs, as these are the most prevalent in Namibia. It is the concept of “community empowerment” inherent in development NGOs, which would appear to accommodate and support the cultural needs of the people involved in such activity. However, as I will demonstrate, development NGOs have largely resisted work in culture and cultural development, as “empowerment” is usually reduced to terms of economics, production and sustainability.

Politics

NGOs are important players in the field of development and the delivery of aid, as they are often economically strong, have considerable influence on Government policies and activities, extensive geographical coverage and representation in many different sectors, and the power to change and interact with communities, making them a major player in the whole geopolitical climate. There are considerable differences between foreign and local NGOs, particularly in areas of organisational structure, accountability and funding. The significant presence and involvement of international NGOs in developing countries has generated considerable debate, criticism and varied responses by both observers and participants in current projects and activities. At worst, their presence is described as “dominance and control over civil society” and “recolonisation” (Abdul-Raheem 2000), and at best, as representing “long-time commitments to human welfare” and “offering activity as an antidote to despair.” (Boulding 1990:41) NGOs offer an alternative to government or state sponsored projects, although the money which supports these projects and agencies largely comprises funding from governments in the developed West, in the form of “contribution to foreign aid and development”. Not only does debate exist around the activities in which NGOs are involved, but also the economic

ramifications of government funding and money spent on overseas aid are hotly contested issues. A recent piece in the *Sydney Morning Herald* reflects one of the debates which surrounds the politics of NGO related activity in relation to covert support being given to subversive activism which the author, well-known for her right wing conservatism, believes may destabilise Australia's relationship with its neighbours:

NGO activism may or may not be in a noble cause. But since it is greatly funded by the Australian taxpayer, with repercussions for our foreign policy, we need to know what is being done in our name. (Devine 2002)

This reflects the unease that conservative governments and sections of society have with NGOs. However the sheer volume of international NGO activity means that it is virtually impossible for individual Australians to become familiar with the minutiae of each of the organisations, their ideological and philosophical agendas, financial support networks and the political leanings of each affiliated individual and organisation. In Australia, organisations such as AID/WATCH assume some of the responsibility of such investigation. AID/WATCH aims "To support people and communities in low-income countries to determine their own development futures; to ensure that aid money reaches the right people, communities and their environments, and that aid projects are implemented with stringent environmental, ethical, social and cultural guidelines."¹⁰⁸

The issue of development NGOs working internationally, yet based in and governed by the industrialised world, is an important one in the context of globalisation, as the historical role NGOs have played and the assumptions under which this involvement was established have changed dramatically. As Michael Edwards writes:

Globalisation integrates patterns of wealth creation, social exclusion, and environmental degradation around the globe, making traditional north-south, donor-recipient relationships increasingly redundant. Increasingly NGOs will confront a patchwork quilt of poverty, inequality, and violence

¹⁰⁸ Source: www.aidwatch.org.au

both within and between societies, rather than solid and geographically distinct blocs of rich and poor – a radically different picture to the one that greeted the architects of the post-World War II system in 1945. (Edwards 1999:26)

This is particularly important in the case of Namibia, where the distribution of income in the country is generally recognised as the most unequal in the world, with 70% of GDP received by the top 20% of earners. (Source: USAID) This indeed creates the patchwork quilt effect which Edwards refers to, with pockets of the country having specific development needs which are not being met by the government alone, hence the deployment of development NGOs. Similarly, although NGOs were originally founded as charities to channel money from rich countries to poor countries, some NGOs now find it increasingly difficult to adapt to a globalised world of more equal partnerships and non-financial relationships. However some NGOs have embraced this shift which suits their agendas of closer relationships with community and grass roots projects, particularly rights based and advocacy NGOs. This shift away from foreign aid and toward a wider agenda of international cooperation has led to the widespread decline in official aid budgets, and the call for greater accountability and financial reconciliation by NGOs. As Edwards writes, “Post cold war, there is no real political constituency for foreign aid in the industrialized world, and – although public opinion is generally sympathetic to humanitarian assistance – there is no sign that public pressure will be sufficient to reverse this trend.” (Edwards 1999:26) There is however an economic mandate as well as a growing concept of an anti-welfare state ideology and a greater push for self-sufficiency and empowerment, rather than dependency on foreign funds, with the idea being that countries should trade their way out of their predicaments. This has led to the establishment of multilateral trade agreements (via the World Trade Organisation), which are designed to curtail aid dependency. The capitalist ideology driving such thought is for developing countries to find what their comparative advantage is and work towards strategically developing that. In the case of culture, this trend will be addressed in the section on Commodification and Commercialisation. This is supposed to result in the emergence of free-trade zones, mass mono-cultural agribusiness zones and the attraction

of foreign investment, with countries structurally adjusting their economies to be capital friendly. Aid is generally moving away from funding NGOs to carrying out projects, and towards private corporations and contractors being employed, with the implication that aid delivery is driven by profits. In Australia, it appears that this is against the will of the people:

A Newpoll survey last year showed more than 85 per cent of voters support overseas aid spending for humanitarian and moral reasons, and because Australia is wealthy and can afford it. (Wade 2002:14)

Martin Khor believes that the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank and IMF) have eclipsed the United Nations in the power they wield in developing countries, with the UN's authority and influence in the social and economic areas depleting in recent years. This has accelerated with the influence of the World Trade Organisation and more recently US moves in bilateral trade agreements. As a result, in the process of globalisation, economic liberalisation and the high priority given to commercial interests have dominated policy-making above the United Nations approach in economic and social issues.

The UN and its agencies represent the principles of partnership, where the richer countries are expected to contribute to the development of the poorer countries and where the rights of people to development and fulfilment of social needs are highlighted. The kind of globalisation represented by the UN is not favoured by the powerful nations today, and the UN's influence has been curtailed. (Khor 2000:9)

The implication is that this type of "partnership" is impossible as social and cultural development take a back seat to economic development, free-trade and neo-liberal capitalism. From my observations, preoccupation with cultural identity is not as obvious in Australia as in Namibia, where people think about such issues often as they reconcile the worlds they exist in – largely traditional yet increasingly cosmopolitan. Therefore the

contact and influence of foreign intervention, both its ideologies and its participants, are extremely important in a region of conscious identity negotiation and cultural recuperation.

Motivations

Stringent monitoring of overseas development activities by donor agencies, field officers, fellow NGOs and governments in affected regions is necessary to avoid situations where foreign aid in fact has a detrimental effect on the community it was seeking to assist. There have been numerous examples of development follies in Africa, such as the Saharan Water-the-Desert¹⁰⁹ scheme, and the Village Fishponds Programme¹¹⁰ around Lake Victoria. The potentially devastating ecological and environmental effects of projects can be equally matched by social and cultural effects, when people are exposed to new methodologies, ideas, and supposedly more efficient and modern practices which are designed to improve the lives of people living in developing countries. The unavoidable promotion of Western neo-liberal ideology which accompanies the presence of international NGOs funded from outside the developing world carries enormous social and cultural influence. Sadly, too, the attitude that accompanies some projects has little to do with thinking of those individuals and communities as equals, rather it has hints of imperialism and reinforces hegemonic power relations between the parties who give and receive aid. This issue will be addressed through the example of volunteer sending organisations active in Namibia.

In investigating the motivations and modus operandi behind development work in practice and volunteer programs and some of the problematic issues which are inherent in

¹⁰⁹ In the spirit of community consultation, Westerners asked the Bedouin what they wanted. "Water for our camels" was the reply, resulting in the Europeans boring extensive wells, providing substantial water for the camels. The camel population grew, yet there was no extra available food to accompany the water. The result was hundreds of dead camels surrounding the new bore-holes. (Woods 1990:2)

¹¹⁰ Nile perch were introduced to Lake-region dwellers for ponds in their backyards. The result of these fish escaping into Lake Victoria has seen the biggest mass extinction of vertebrates in modern times. Soil erosion and desertification have also resulted from the locals having to cut down trees to smoke the fish which are too oily to be dried in the traditional way. (Woods 1990:2)

this area, I will focus on the United States Peace Corps program¹¹¹, and follow with a brief comparison to the two other major volunteer organisations at work in Namibia, Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) and Australian Volunteers International (AVI), looking at issues of ideology and nationalism in ambassadorial representation, sustainability, accountability and partnership. Although there were numerous other Western volunteer sending organisations in existence, the reason I have chosen to focus on these is because they have the largest presence in the north central region in Namibia, particularly in areas of social development such as education. Their presence also has significant ramifications in the negotiation of cultural identity, as individuals come to embody representations of Western liberal democracy, Western culture and ideology, which are a powerful influence on Ovambos who are actively considering their own cultural identities. Such presence of Western development workers has affected Ovambo cultural positioning which is integral in the process of recuperation.

Peace Corps

USAID, the American Government's main contribution to overseas aid, spent US\$275 million on the Peace Corps volunteer program worldwide in 2002¹¹². The Peace Corps has three goals:

1. To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women;
2. To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served;
3. To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

The implicit nationalism of Peace Corps, whilst not uncommon to American people in general, in the context of a development ethos appears to emphasise centre-margin models which often accompanied imperialist ideologies of the past, as investigated in the section on "Loss". Although the rationale behind the Peace Corps program is ostensibly

¹¹¹ Whilst Peace Corps is used here to illustrate the point, the issues raised are not unique to Peace Corps, with other Western development programs having similar ideological motivations eg Youth Ambassadors program through AusAID.

¹¹² Source: www.peacecorps.org

“understanding” rather than the domination or control which have accompanied foreign involvement in the colonial past, the focus on difference is reminiscent of orientalist fascination with the *other* in order to assert identity. There also exists in this type of philosophy an assumption that developing countries *want* to know more about and better understand Americans. The aim to assist interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women does not appear to involve capacity building within the country in question, rather to deploy trained American men and women to do the job for them, reinforcing Steve Hellinger’s criticism of NGO aid demand and supply.

A lot of NGOs – certainly in the United States – followed the aid establishment and its money, while continuing to focus on the quantity rather than the quality of aid. ... The policies of aid are being made from afar and creating an environment that makes local level development more difficult than ever. (Hellinger 1996:1)

Since 1961, more than 165 000 Americans have joined the Peace Corps (source: USAID), their alumni includes the current Senior Vice-President of Exxon Mobil Corp, Samuel Gillespie III (Kenya 1967 – 1969). There are currently more than 7000 Peace Corps volunteers working in the developing world and approximately 160 Peace Corps volunteers in Namibia at any one time. Unlike other volunteer organisations, whose policies of recruitment are based on qualifications and experience, and come from a specific request by the government of the country in question, Peace Corps volunteers are recruited for their “common spirit of service, dedication, and idealism”. This means that often Peace Corps volunteers find themselves working in professional capacities in which they often have no previous experience or training. I knew of a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) teaching Year 11 and 12 mathematics at a public high school in Ongwediva who was half way through a psychology degree in the States. Placements are for two years, and the pre-placement orientation comprises four months of in-country training prior to reaching their “site”. Placements vary greatly and are constantly monitored as to their effectiveness to the community, and generally Peace Corps volunteers are only allocated to a particular “site” once. However the emphasis on recruitment, which is unavoidable in

literature surrounding Peace Corps activity throughout the world, and the actual situation in the field and availability of skilled nationals, implies that rather than fostering accountability and responsibility on behalf of the Namibian Government in addressing issues of capacity building, Peace Corps are essentially doing the jobs for them¹¹³.

There also appears to be a much greater focus on the individualistic outcomes in becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer, with less emphasis on what the individual can contribute to the world, and more on what the experience will bring to the individual in terms of life experience, professional opportunities and even greater access to university graduate schools.

Serving in the Peace Corps gives Volunteers the chance to learn a new language, live in another culture, and develop career and leadership skills. The Peace Corps experience can enhance long-term career prospects whether you want to work for a corporation, a non-profit organisation, or a government agency. The Peace Corps can even open doors to graduate school.¹¹⁴

This is reminiscent of the erosion of the principles of partnerships with the rise of neo-liberal capitalism, referred to earlier by Khor. Although some mention is made in information material on the Peace Corps and its aims, of volunteers working with locals to develop self-determined outcomes, significantly more emphasis is put on what the experience will bring to the individual and to America. Indeed, when John F Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961, he manifested his vision “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” On the Peace Corps website, those considering signing up to Peace Corps can access links to a list of benefits

¹¹³ This is particularly significant when considering cultural recuperation in the area of education, where most PCVs are deployed. As I have previously outlined, education and the choices made regarding systems, teaching styles and syllabus priorities, reflect certain values which in turn affect identity negotiation. The absence of Namibian cultural content in syllabi, combined with the delivery of education by non-Namibian teachers who are largely unable to culturally contextualise Western teaching material, results in schools not necessarily being the fertile grounds for developing cultural identity that they could be.

¹¹⁴ Source: www.peacecorps.org

including: “Professional/Career Benefits”, “Educational Benefits”, “Loan Deferment”, and “Financial Benefits.”

An important consideration in all bilateral aid agreements which involve the deployment of nationals in the field, is that of presenting a public and political image and message about the country providing the aid. In the case of Peace Corps, a significant function of its work in newly independent and democratic countries is that of a major political public relations exercise which presents the United States message of liberal democracy and capitalism in a humanitarian way. Volunteers become ambassadors of their country and through their involvement with people from other cultures, they become the embodiment and a tangible human example of Western democratic ideals of rich helping poor, haves helping have nots. This promotes American style liberal-democracy as being palatable and desirable, and promotes the causes of capitalism, which in turn reaps significant economic benefit to the USA, although individual volunteers are not necessarily aware (or informed) of this side-effect of their presence. It is the process of such ideologies which perpetuates the economic agenda of this form of development. Aid results in trade. In looking at the emergence of welfare states and NGO strategies, Oomen states,

In fact, development itself was defined as a function of capital and technology; development goals were conceptualised in terms of urban middle-class aspirations... Understandably, this paradigm of development deprived the people of their participatory potential. (Oomen 1997:52)

In Namibia, Peace Corps volunteers who were part of the Teacher Training Scheme, which involved individuals working with a cluster group of “bush schools”¹¹⁵, (See *Fig.4.5*) were each given 4WD vehicles to use during their contracts. In 2000, the type of vehicle was upgraded from Double-cab Fords, to brand new Jeep Cherokee vehicles. Whilst the nature of the program and the distances involved in travelling between schools

¹¹⁵ “Bush schools” are junior primary schools which are extremely remote and isolated and often exist without basic infrastructure such as classrooms, or resources such as books, writing implements etc. Often classes in such schools are held under trees or in thatch huts with learners sitting on the sand during lessons.

obviously necessitated some form of transportation, the unambiguous excess which was displayed in the choice of vehicle, and the conditions of use certainly alienated the volunteers from their communities. Rather than utilise local transport or perhaps establish contacts with community members with vehicles, volunteers drove around huge air-conditioned 4WDs with American flags and “USAID” on the sides. Volunteers were not allowed under any circumstances to travel with a Namibian in their cars, for reasons of insurance and indemnity. Volunteers found to have done so were punished, having their vehicles confiscated, thus preventing them from being able to do their jobs for up to a month. The volunteers themselves felt considerable discomfort with the message that these vehicles sent out to the local communities in which they were attempting to assimilate, about American wealth and privilege. One of the ironies of this particular Peace Corps program was that volunteers who were employed as Teacher Trainers were required to live with Namibian families in traditional rural homesteads, as an important step in “integration”. Such homesteads were without electricity or running water, and it was not uncommon for volunteers to spend searingly hot summer nights sleeping in their air-conditioned Jeeps outside!

Most aid which is funded and resourced by government tends to reflect the Peace Corps concept – to benefit the country of origin and enhance their own interests. As the delivery of aid is becoming more privatised, so aid is essentially becoming more profit-driven and geared towards trade. Australia is no exception to this idea with the official Australian Government’s aid body, AusAID, sitting within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Therefore it has, by nature, a trade agenda. The benefits of this form of aid stretch far beyond the positive publicity of humanitarian propaganda, as they inspire the Western ideals of liberal democracy, capitalism and free-trade.



Fig. 4.5 – Example of a bush school where Peace Corps teacher-trainers worked

VSO

Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) is an international development “charity” which recruits volunteers from the UK, Canada and Holland. “We passionately believe we can make a difference in tackling poverty by helping people to realise their potential” (www.vso.org.uk). There are currently 2000 VSO volunteers engaged in placements in the developing world. In Namibia, there are approximately 80 VSO volunteers at any one time. Placements are for two years, and volunteers are sent by VSO to work towards the long-term objectives of the organisation – sustainable development rather than the short term relief of certain problems. Volunteers are recruited on the basis of tertiary qualifications and professional experience in their chosen field and undergo intensive pre-departure orientation and ongoing education in development issues throughout their placement. Despite the organisation’s philosophy of *sustainable development* which implies helping people to eventually help themselves, VSO has a rigorous recruitment campaign, and has a policy of generally replacing volunteers with volunteers. Rather than establishing counterpart situations of one-on-one partnerships with locals, and setting up mutually beneficial skill-share arrangements, volunteers - mainly recruited in the areas of education and health - generally fill vacant positions in schools/hospitals. This appears to undermine the idea of sustainable development as it fosters a dependency on foreign recruitment. An example of this in Namibia was at Nuuyoma Senior Secondary School, Oshikuku. This school had consistently had a VSO science and English teacher since independence, and despite each volunteer reporting that there was no further need for VSO teachers at the school as Namibian teachers were available for these positions, volunteers were continually replaced with volunteers. Not only did this foster dependency, but it allowed the school, and in turn the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture to save money on salaries for equally qualified Namibian teachers, as VSO volunteers were paid from Britain. Since independence, and with the improvements in access to secondary and tertiary education, the number of qualified teachers is increasing. Although not common to all learning areas, teacher shortages in certain subjects in the north of the country were often indicative of a lack of incentive for Namibian graduate teachers to work in the most economically disadvantaged part of the country. This situation seems to call for government initiatives in attracting local teachers to these

regions, rather than the deployment of foreign teachers for whom they do not have to take financial responsibility. In the same way as with the presence of Peace Corps volunteers, the covert influences of the presence of significant numbers of British volunteers includes the promotion of Western liberal democracy. In my three years in Namibia, the only places Ovambos expressed a desire to one day visit were the USA and the U.K. This is by no means a coincidence given the nationality of the majority of Westerners in the region with whom Ovambos came into contact. Again, this contact had a significant impact on the consideration of identity. At Nuuyoma Senior Secondary School in Oshikuku, the principal had been educated in the U.K whilst in exile during the Independence Struggle. Following this, constant references were made to her experiences in Britain, and in many ways she considered herself to be an Anglicised Namibian, aspiring to run her school as efficiently as she had witnessed in the U.K.

AVI

Australian Volunteers International provides opportunities for Australians to live and work in partnership with people in developing communities in order to foster cross-cultural relationships and international understanding, assist in the development of their own and other communities and contribute to a peaceful and just world. (*Guidebook for Australian Volunteers*)

Between 1998 and 2000, I was an Australian volunteer. The following information comes from my experiences as a volunteer, as well as official policies and literature on Australian Volunteers International (AVI). Australian Volunteers International began sending volunteers to the developing world in 1951, making it the oldest international volunteer organisation of the three under investigation. At the time of writing, there are 750 Australian volunteers working in the field, and 3 Australian volunteers in Namibia. This number, which is quite small in comparison to the number of Peace Corps and VSO volunteers, reflects the organisation's philosophy of success being measured by "working oneself out of a job" or not replacing volunteers with volunteers. When I arrived in Namibia in 1998 there were over 20 Australian volunteers employed. AVI is supposed to

be built on the following values: participation; learning through experience; respect; partnership; integrity; equity; cultural diversity; recognition of reciprocal benefit. (www.ozvol.org.au). Perhaps the most significant differences in the philosophy and practice articulated in AVI promotional material as compared to the other volunteer agencies mentioned are:

- the notion that “all people should have a right to make decisions about their own development and to participate in the development of their own society”.
- the recruitment of volunteers based on a bilateral agreement with the Government, or non-government organisation (NGO), of the country in question.

This second point is of significance, and is the main area of departure from other volunteer organisations’ philosophies and practices as it means that volunteers become the responsibility of the government of the country in which they are placed, rather than recruited by an agency with an office in a particular country. As such, volunteers are paid local wages, which vary according to position and country, and are very much employed as equal¹¹⁶ colleagues. In contrast, the responsibility of financial remuneration for Peace Corps and VSO volunteers lies with the organisations themselves, and indirect funding from the United States and British Governments. In the case of Namibia, there is no Australian diplomatic representation in the form of an embassy or high commission, and in the absence of AVI providing social, financial or logistical support in-country, Australian volunteers must establish their own support networks within the country, and rely more heavily on local systems. This situation, and the payment of AVI volunteers in local wages means that volunteers are integrated on a more equal basis in the community and better equipped to form closer links with employers, colleagues, and the community.

AVI volunteers are instructed prior to departure for their overseas placements, to remain politically neutral at all times and avoid any situations of public political comment. In essence, we were told to “keep our eyes open and our mouths shut.” Such a policy is important in avoiding the espousing or publication of individual political points of view which could be seen as indicative of the opinion of the government of the country one is

¹¹⁶ “Equal” in terms of salary and conditions of employment though, as explored in the section of this thesis on methodology and issues of personal engagement. Obvious inequalities exist such as covert support from Australia, a finite contract of two years and medical insurance.

representing. Ambassadorial responsibilities are, after all, an important aspect of the cross-cultural exchange of international volunteering. However what this policy also meant in practice, was that volunteers were effectively disabled from speaking out or effectively being involved in advocacy work in-country which could be seen to be in any way politically motivated. As much advocacy work involved working with marginalised and disaffected members of a community, region or country, volunteers were unable to engage fully in activities which were in areas other than those sanctioned by the governments in their countries of deployment. This was a particularly difficult aspect of work for volunteers who witnessed and opposed social injustices, human rights violations and so on which were exacerbated by government inactivity or indeed were the effects of government policy. The frustration of political neutrality meant that, personally as a volunteer, I felt as though often we were used to treat problems without being allowed to engage with the underlying reasons for such problems. A particular example of this was an incident of extreme racial injustice which I witnessed and wished to publicise as it involved a prominent business in the region. However my “political neutrality” as an AVI meant that I was unable to identify myself or my organisation in the ensuing media interest on the issue. The “silencing” of volunteers whilst in the field, as well as frustrating and disempowering supposed advocates for change, meant that genuine engagement with the ideological, social and political contributors to inequality and injustice was impossible.

Cultural Commodification, Commercialisation and “Sustainable” Development

I have addressed the issue of commercially based cultural development earlier in this thesis, in reference to the psychology of loss which accompanies the commodification of culture. In this section, however, it will be addressed as another form of cultural development which is contributing to recuperation in Ovamboland, and is viewed by Namibians as an important form of income generation.

I think when people look back, not only would their own identity have been promoted through arts and culture, but they can also generate income for their own community. I also think that the younger ones with an

interest in culture, if they see that this is happening, then they might even be able to employ themselves and have an interest in taking up arts and culture. Arts and culture will also help to develop their condition and their way of life, by benefiting the community through arts and culture, they are also benefiting their own local way of life. (Bernadette Mojekwu, interview 13/10/00)

In my time in Namibia, Mud Hut Trading was the only arts and cultural development project, other than the Ford Foundation Cultural Development Project, which was active in Ovamboland. Whilst it does not specifically fall under the traditional definition of community cultural development, due to its marketing drive and economic agenda, it is however an important NGO project to investigate because, as mentioned, the CDP was auspiced to the Rössing Foundation, therefore the philosophies of the organisation would affect the progress and direction of the project. It also opens up many issues regarding the production and sale of non-Western art for a Western market. This is a subject which has fascinated Marianna Torgovnick, who delves into the commodification of “the primitive” – in art, culture and lifestyle – and looks at various motivations, inspirations and exploitative practices from anthropologists to curators to profiteers.

In the deflationary era of post-modernism, the primitive often frankly loses any particular identity and even its sense of being “out there”; it merges into a generalized, marketable thing – a grab-bag primitive in which urban and rural, modern and traditional Africa and South America and Asia and the Middle East merge into a common locale called the third world which exports garments and accessories, music, ideologies and styles for Western, and especially urban Western, consumption. (Torgovnick 1990:37)

Despite Western, and indeed my own, misgivings about the complexities surrounding the exchange of culture for capital, which I addressed in the section on “Loss”, it is an extremely important aspect of cultural production for artists and practitioners in the field,

as it offers an opportunity to generate income and contributes to the alleviation of poverty in a country with extraordinarily high unemployment. Ovambos use their creative ingenuity in a number of ways, such as has been mentioned previously with the cutting down of telephone wire in order to make copper jewellery. The opportunity to make money from creative practice, performances, even homestead tours, is welcomed by Ovambos and seen not only as a way to make money, but also as a way to perpetuate cultural practice.

I see arts and culture being able to enhance the economy of the area, if tourism picks up. I see it being able to enhance a sense of identity. I see it being enhanced as a commodity that can be marketed if people do it properly and do it well. ... maybe we should have more people that are trained in the arts so that they can learn advertising and filming and promotion so that the images and the assets of Namibia can be more broadly exposed to the world. (Rita-Louise Hofmeyr, interview 12/7/00)

Such cultural production, however, relies on a Western audience, and the type of consumers who would be interested in such activity are more likely to be tourists, than Western business people visiting the region.

As both Mud Hut Trading and the CDP, which later became known as the NCCED, were part of the Rössing Foundation's community based natural resource management program, I will now look at some of the issues which arise from the involvement of the organisation. The Rössing Foundation's community based natural resource management program is run through training and outreach programs with the aim of increasing local capacity, both for local management structures and/or individuals. The program is part of a national Rössing Foundation strategy to "promote the sustainable development of rural livelihoods in Namibia, and is a partnership between Government and civil society".¹¹⁷ A Foundation which is working in natural resource management, and sustainable social and environmental development and which is based on profits from uranium mining raises

¹¹⁷ www.rf.org.na

interesting political, environmental and ethical questions. Despite significant Western opposition to uranium mining, due to its environmental, health and safety hazardousness and potential misuse in nuclear weaponry, it remains Namibia's largest export, after diamonds. Notwithstanding the apparent support for the mine from the current government, given the significant economic benefits it brings to Namibia, the Rössing Uranium Mine has a problematic past. Construction work began on the mine in 1974 and the mine plant (then owned by the Rio Tinto-Zinc Corporation [RTZ]) became operational in 1976. This was at the height of the Independence Struggle between Namibia and South Africa, and the collaboration between Rössing Uranium and the South African forces who were, at that time brutally occupying Namibia, was documented in 1980 by Alun Roberts in "The Rössing File". The establishment of the mine and uranium extraction were deemed as "illegal" and "theft" and dramatically opposed by SWAPO during the Independence Struggle. The United Nations decreed:

No person or entity, whether a body corporate or unincorporated may search for, prospect for, explore for, take, mine, process, refine, use, sell, export or distribute any natural resource, whether animal or mineral, situated or found to be situated within the territorial limits of Namibia without the consent and permission of the United Nations Council for Namibia¹¹⁸

Namibia is the fourth largest producer of uranium in the world, and uranium is therefore a significant export resource for the country. Regardless of negative historical, environmental and political connotations, it remains an important area of economic profit for Namibia. There is only limited public disclosure on the more sensitive issues relating to the Rössing Mine, however information on activities undertaken by the Rössing Foundation is much more easily accessed¹¹⁹. It can however be assumed that part of the rationale behind the establishment of the Rössing Foundation and its continued community activities are an important public relations strategy in presenting the mining

¹¹⁸ Decree No.1 of the United Nations Council for Namibia, passed by the UN General Assembly on 13/12/74

¹¹⁹ For example via their website: www.rf.org.na

and export of uranium by a large multinational organisation¹²⁰ as having benefits for the community in terms of education and development. As the Rössing Uranium Mine website states under the heading “Building Bridges of Sustainability”:

The Rössing Communities Policy sets out a business goal for excellent management of community issues, based upon three underpinning principles as articulated by the Rio Tinto Communities Policy, that of - mutual respect, active partnership and long-term commitment. This goal has been adopted in recognition of the fact that good relations with the Company's neighbours are fundamental to the long-term success of the business, both in ensuring that we continue to operate our existing site and also to qualify us undertake new developments when our record will be examined. Furthermore, Rössing's community programme reflects its commitment to social impact mitigation and community development to achieve a lasting legacy of sustainable development beyond the life of the Mine.¹²¹

Tourism in Ovamboland

Presently, tourism in Ovamboland is extremely small and generally limited to business people interested in investment in the region. As with many recently independent developing countries, Namibia has repeatedly identified participation in the global economy as a priority. Much of the international aid and development assistance Namibia receives is geared towards achieving this. Greater ease of international travel and availability of information have increased the ease and appeal of tourism in Namibia for international tourists interested in visiting Africa. Namibia has been described as “Africa for beginners” – a politically stable, relatively safe place to visit with good roads, hotels and infrastructure around the main tourist sites. Tourism provides a significant percentage of the country's GDP, and possibilities abound for economic development through

¹²⁰ Rio Tinto own 69% of the Rössing Uranium Mine.

¹²¹ Source: www.Rössing.com/communities

cultural and eco-tourism. Rita-Louise Hofmeyr believes strongly in the opportunities which exist for culture in the development of tourism:

The biggest challenge is to give people appropriate skills that are market related, to give people the right kind of technology that they can use to enhance their lifestyle and there I think our work with the youth is very important. Because I have enormous belief in the arts as an income generating skill. Especially if tourism can be enhanced and if you're going specifically to Ovamboland I think it's being very underdeveloped – I think there are certain initiatives which show great potential. The artists should really also capture that market and that opportunity. (Rita-Louise Hofmeyr, interview 12/7/00)

A new policy of community based resource management is being introduced in rural communities and this empowers members of those communities to use the natural resources of their environment to develop their own economy. Although Namibia has spectacular tourist attractions such as sand dunes, canyons, waterfalls and game reserves, there is now also an increased interest in cultural tourism – in seeing how people live. This is the market niche which the people of Ovamboland hope to cultivate, as Ovamboland is generally considered to be the cultural heartland of Namibia, with a large majority of its population in the region, and still living what tourists would consider a “traditional life.”

Over the past five years, a number of feasibility studies have been undertaken by non-government organisations to assess the interest, impact and opportunity for sustainable economic growth through cultural tourism in Ovamboland. To the south of Ovamboland lies the great salt pan of Etosha. Surrounding this pan is one of the most popular and populated game reserves in southern Africa. Etosha is Namibia's foremost tourist attraction, and being just 200kms – a small distance by Namibian standards – away from Ovamboland, is seen as a potential way to open up the north to tourists. Presently, the route between Etosha and Ovamboland is somewhat circuitous. Traditional authorities

and the community at large approved a proposal to open the disused northern gate of Etosha, and improve the road to Ovamboland. Despite construction having been completed, negotiations are presently underway with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism regarding the official opening of the gate, to be named the *King Nahale* gate. This project has been fraught with difficulty, with much of the funding for it coming from Department for International Development, the British Government's overseas development fund attempting to work in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

The reason the proposed community based and natural resource management tourism plan is of significance is because consensus was reached through discussions about the nature of local resources and ways to explore cultural development in the region. It emerged from these discussions that the members of the community did not see the philosophy of developing the resources and culture of the region primarily for economic development through tourism, but to revitalise and support local cultural practice and expression. Also, such discussions showed that the community was quite comfortable with the idea of cultural tourism in the area, despite having expressed concerns about the cultural changes resulting from outside influences and other cultural impacts of globalisation. This was possibly due to the feeling that cultural tourism, particularly based on the natural resource management model, would take place *on their terms* with profits going to communities. As Fairweather writes, “... the importance to the villagers of performing cosmopolitan or local styles was related to the potential they had for asserting a degree of control over the production of locality in the post-colonial environment in which they operated.” (2001:116)

Sensitivity regarding the production of culture for profit surrounds both cultural change, when driven by Western market demand, and cultural stasis, also driven by Western demand for what is considered essential and untouched.

Tourism has the tendency of commercializing the host culture – commoditising, deodorizing, and sanitizing for the consumption of

tourists rushing in and out of their lives and turf... How would this manipulation of the host culture influence its integrity, its very structure and existence? To what extent can its contents and boundaries be defined and redefined? Should people and their culture be “frozen” in time and space for the sake of tourists? (Jafari 1996:45)

Cultural tourism is a sensitive, diverse and multi-faceted topic area, and to adequately address it is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis. However it is mentioned here to represent one aspect of commercially based cultural development, which has significant ramifications for cultural recuperation in Ovamboland, as whether the production of culture changes or remains in a form of stasis, the terms of production are dictated by the West.

Interestingly, although the project which I was involved in adhered to the principles of community based cultural development, which have been illustrated as being activities of and for the community, under the auspices of the Rössing Foundation, it subsequently followed a very different path. This new path was far more commercially-driven, and the emphasis was on cultural production and consumption, as I will now address.

Return Trip and how CDP had Changed

As mentioned previously, I returned to Namibia in November 2002. I was particularly interested in seeing what had happened to the project I had established, and how my former counterpart Metusalem Ashipala was finding the co-ordination of the project, after its affiliation with the Rössing Foundation in 2000. I was to discover that significant changes had taken place. The Rössing Foundation had established a partnership with the Namibian Community Based Tourism Association (NACOBTA), and begun a project funded by DFID called the North Central Community Based Natural Resource Management and Enterprise Development Project. The latter part of this scheme (the “Enterprise Development” project), or NCCED, was what Metusalem was now primarily involved in, and it was a significant departure from the cultural development project which I had left.

The goal of NCCED is to see rural poverty reduced through increased income and employment from crafts, tourism and sustainable community based natural resource management in the North Central Regions. (Project Brochure)

Amongst its identified activities was the objective to “provide the support and development of product ranges for sale on the export and local market” and “develop a commercially viable and sustainable craft marketing structure for at least 10 community based craft enterprises.” This shift, which placed all emphasis in “craft development” on income generation, marketing and export, showed a dramatic change in direction from the CDP, which followed a more traditional definition of community based cultural development.

Metusalem, who was now using marketing terminology quite comfortably, told me that the “target market” were tourists, and these were mainly accessed via the Craft Centre in Windhoek, which was discussed in the previous section of this thesis regarding Mud Hut Trading. Metusalem also told me he had learnt much about “product development”, but the project was waiting on a “consultant” who would work specifically on this aspect of the project. I was most interested to learn more about the background such a person would have, assuming he/she would be an African, with strong local connections with craft producers and networks in the community. However, I learnt from staff from the Rössing Foundation, that it was intended that this position be filled by someone from outside, with a business background. When I expressed my thoughts on the power such a position could hold in terms of representation of culture, levels and conditions of productivity and other issues associated with forces of cultural change, I was reminded that the project was about culture being an economic resource. “If it’s a means to an economic end, then the resource has been used.” (Karin LeRoux, interview 2/12/02)

Another significant, though not unexpected change which had occurred with the project, was the breakdown in relations with the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture. The

project now operated autonomously from the MBEC, after significant frustrations caused the participants in the project to disassociate themselves from the Ministry. These included inter-regional political sensitivities and misunderstandings regarding responsibility for cultural projects and activities in the area, as addressed in the section on Change. “Ministry co-operation was impossible”. (Metusalem Ashipala, interview 18/11/02) The project was now more closely affiliated with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. This effectively meant that the previous agenda of cultural advocacy with the most appropriate¹²² governmental ministry had been dropped. This also precluded access to schools and educational institutions as sites of cultural development.

The changes to the project indicated a significant shift away from cultural development of and for the community, with emphasis on community participation and the creative expression of local identity, towards a much more economic focus with emphasis on economically benefiting individuals who produced marketable products for export. Rather than cultural development becoming a community issue, it has become a commercial enterprise which benefits only those who are immediately involved in the exchange, and does not necessarily incorporate inter-generational or other forms of skill sharing in the practices which are being marketed. Community concerns regarding the discontinuation of practices are not being addressed except with regard to individual practitioners, who participate in the economic exchange. Even then, however, it appears these practitioners are given little or no say in the creative process and artistic design of material. This direction of cultural development illustrates some of the issues addressed earlier regarding the difficulties with the qualitative outcomes of cultural development as insufficient for donors, and the economic appeal of quantifiable intervention such as income-generating projects.

As NGOs have expanded the range of their activities, it has become apparent that many donor agencies have found it easier to support quantifiable interventions. This shift was first noticeable in donor policies

¹²² Powerful in relation to culture, in the minds of the people of Ovamboland – as has been addressed in the previous section on Power and Politics.

that emphasised income-generating projects. (Constantino-David 1995:165)

In looking at the *terms* of cultural development in the direction taken by the NCCED project, the control over cultural production, aesthetics and representation does not appear to lie with the producers of baskets, but rather with market demand by foreign tourists, potentially soon to be mediated by a foreign business-savvy consultant. The significance of this is that this form of cultural development is designed, operated, and largely controlled by Western taste and values.

CONCLUSION

Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness, and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we're being brainwashed to believe. (Roy 2003:3)

The Ovambo people of North Central Namibia have endured enormous cultural upheaval since the late 19th century. From the historical agents of change such as missionaries, colonialists and the South African administration to contemporary agents of change such as the socio-cultural impacts of the globalisation process and the rise of Western style neo-liberal capitalism, Ovambos have traditionally had the terms of cultural change determined on their behalf. The absence of adequate engagement with the cultural effects of the modernising process, which began with colonialism and persists today with geopolitical internationalism, has continued to challenge Ovambo peoples access to the cultural tools necessary for considering the impacts on identity development. Despite these challenges, expressions of cultural articulation have continued both out of defiance, as well as through methods of resistance and appropriation. Aspects of traditional and contemporary cultural practices which reflect the multiplex Ovambo identity are evident throughout Ovamboland today.

In this thesis, I have proposed that the cultural fallout of the modernisation process must be considered in development practices. I have also presented through case-studies, community based cultural development activities which allow for the creative expression of identity, as a means of addressing such issues. As Ovambos negotiate the two worlds in which they exist, living lives which have features of both tradition and modernity, they are increasingly aware of the impact which external agents of change continue to have on them.

In reaching the conclusion of this thesis, and reflecting on the themes of “Loss”, Change and Recuperation, I find myself in the position of having a number of certainties, yet also some lingering uncertainties as a result of issues I have investigated. This no doubt comes from having had the opportunity to step back from the work I was professionally engaged in whilst in the field, and consider it within a larger theoretical context after some time. As mentioned in my thesis, in November 2002 I returned to Ovamboland in order to undertake further research, and also find out how the cultural development project with which I had been involved was going. The changes which had occurred provide a useful illustration of some of the uncertainties which have arisen in my mind regarding cultural development work in Namibia.

Upon returning to Namibia, I learnt that the cultural development project had taken a more “strategic” turn through the development of “a commercially viable and sustainable craft marketing structure”. I found this change in direction quite significant, as previously the project had much more closely followed a community based cultural development model. This departure is indicative of the important role which income generation plays in Ovamboland, even within the realm of arts and culture. Whilst I had always acknowledged that income generation had been a priority in cultural development, it now seems to be the only arena in which cultural development activities are practiced. I find myself having lingering reservations about the benefits to the community, other than the circulation of capital, of such cultural exchange, and who and what become commodified in the process. This change in direction is also indicative of the vulnerable position in which community based cultural development exists, where quantifiable outcomes, usually measured through economic development and production levels, increasingly dictate development activity.

Another question which remains for me is the issue of culture in Ovamboland being strongly associated with past practices and activities, and the notion – particularly with the older generation – of the old way of life representing good and the new way of life representing bad. This appears to stifle cultural dynamism and deny the incredibly diverse display of traditional and contemporary Ovambo identities which exist in the

region. Ovambos actively appropriate and indigenise Western culture, yet continue to associate features of *Ovamboness* as being firmly rooted in past practices which were threatened by missionaries, colonialists, apartheid and so on. Until significantly more support is given to the development of arts and culture in the region and it is seen as a priority by the government, culture will continue to be regarded in such static terms.

This prioritising of arts and culture in policy development extends internationally, and the final concern I wish to present is regarding the participation and support given to community based cultural development work by international NGOs. With the increasing rationalisation of development activity, and the constant pressure put on NGOs for quantifiable outcomes and strategic benefits for donor countries, investment in cultural capital will continue to be problematic. Similarly, as international development activity often serves the additional agenda of promoting Western style neo-liberal democracy, then encouraging local culturally determined outcomes for the community could present too much of a risk.

However, after presenting some of the reservations which my research leaves me with, there are a number of certainties which my work has confirmed. I continue to believe that culture is an imperative consideration in international development work, both in policy formation and practice, as such consideration determines the success, failure and relevance of development activity. It is encouraging that reconsiderations of traditional modernisation and development theory are beginning to result in more ecological strategies, with the socio-cultural aspects of such theories and practices to follow.

My research and experience in the field has confirmed the importance of the terms of cultural change being negotiated by the people most affected. Only through greater agency and control by the people of Ovamboland themselves, by determining the costs and benefits of cultural change can people be adequately empowered in the decisions regarding losses and gains which are an inevitability in the process of globalisation. In Namibia, I believe that the government holds extraordinary power in prioritising and developing policies, which can support culture and in turn determine local engagement

with the issues of what is critically at stake as Namibia actively seeks a place within the global economic community. My research has left me certain that arts and culture are valuable vehicles with which to negotiate identity, and that such identity negotiation is imperative for determining socio-cultural, economic and political futures.

Throughout my consideration of cultural change in this thesis, and as a result of engaging with the Ovambo people in the field, the importance of building cultural capital within the community has been confirmed. Cultural capital is an essential element in strengthening communities which have become fragmented as a result of the modernisation process, and the generating of cultural capital which contributes to greater awareness of cultural identity is an effective and empowering tool with which to confront the individualism inherent in modernity.

Esteva writes:

One of the most interesting facets of the ongoing regeneration in the new commons being created by ordinary men and women is precisely the recovery of their own definition of needs, dismantled by development in perception or in practice. By strengthening forms of interaction embedded in the social fabric and by breaking the economic principle of the exchange of equivalents, they are recovering their autonomous ways of living. (Esteva 1997:21)

Although my thesis has used the region of Ovamboland in Namibia as the lens through which to address issues of cultural loss, change and recuperation, the principles of investigating creative ways to address the cultural side-effects of the modernisation process lends itself to a much wider and more diverse application. Through the encouragement and nurturing of cultural practices, an understanding of the importance of identity is promoted, and the terms of cultural change are more equitably negotiated. This in turn allows those most affected by cultural change to actively participate in the determination of cultural futures. Arundhati

Roy's quote at the beginning of this conclusion suggests laying siege to empire through creativity. In Ovamboland, empire can be confronted, identity can be considered, and the terms of modernity can be contested with a resounding "*Otse Mbaka*" – This is who we are.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A : LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Key Informants:

Ervast Mtota

Principal, College for the Arts – Windhoek. A visual artist himself, Ervast has long been involved in arts and cultural world of Namibia. Ervast grew up in Ovamboland during the Independence struggle.

Tobias Kandanga

Director, Namibian Broadcasting Corporation – Oshakati. Tobias is responsible for the Oshiwambo service of the national public radio station, the NBC. Tobias is also responsible for the collection and archiving of Ovambo musical and oral culture which the NBC have.

Rita-Louise Hofmeyr

Director, Arts – Ministry of Basic Education and Culture. Based in Windhoek, Rita-Louise is responsible for the Ministry's outreach programs, as well as arts activities involving both educational and arts institutions in Namibia.

King Munkundi

King – Ongandjera tribe. King Munkundi is responsible for “traditional law” amongst the Ongandjera people and is a highly respected authority within the community, whose counsel is sought regarding community decisions of a diverse nature.

King Kauluma

King – Ondonga tribe. King Kauluma is responsible for “traditional law” amongst the Ondonga people, and is a highly respected authority within the community, whose counsel is sought regarding community decisions. He is also a key resource in the local history of the region, and has a close affiliation with the Nakambale museum.

David Chiel

Assistant Representative Program Officer – Ford Foundation Southern Africa. David was responsible for the administration and progress of projects and activities which were funded by the Ford Foundation in Namibia.

Bernadette Mojekwu

Director, Culture and Lifelong Learning – Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (Ondangwa West). Bernadette is responsible for the administration of cultural groups and activities which are part of the Ministry's program with culture. She is also instrumental in co-ordinating the annual Regional Cultural Festival.

Mbockoma Mungandjera

Teacher, Mathematics and Agriculture – Nuuyoma Senior Secondary School, Oshikuku. As well as teaching and hostel co-ordination duties at the local senior secondary school, Mbockoma is a highly esteemed and valued member of the community.

Secondary informants:

Haaveshe Nekongo Nielsen

Chief Ankama

Stuart Keane

Francois de Necker

Karen Le Roux

Jane Moeller

Maria Enjambi

Verena Endjambi

Enos Nampala

Methusalem Ashipala

Father Stephen Okeke

Ben Boys

Job Tjiho

Father Frans Houber

Normon Jobb

Giovanni Fontana Antonelli

Rachel Malone

APPENDIX B : ETHICS AND ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGIES IN INTERVIEW PROCESS

With the exception of some traditional authorities and organisational representatives, each of the interviewees were known to me, and I believe adequately represented the aspect of their work, or place in the community, which was relevant to my research.

Interview participants were approached through the appropriate channels, and their participation was requested prior to arrangements being made. This request included details of the motivation for the research, and a copy of questions and consent form (translated into Oshiwambo where necessary). The request for participation usually took place by telephone, however due to the remoteness of certain locations, also had to be through word of mouth via key people at traditional authority offices/ post offices etc.

Where appropriate, participants were remunerated. Such remuneration was not discussed prior to the interview taking place, as this may have been interpreted as some sort of bribe technique, which would not have ensured an objective interview, and would have jeopardised the notion of free and informed, legitimate “consent”. Where large excerpts of participant contribution are used, a copy of the final dissertation will also be sent to the individual/s.

Ethical Clearance from the University of Technology was granted for this research to take place. Every effort was made to ensure an ethical approach to the collection and collation of research including issues surrounding informed consent, privacy and confidentiality. Questions were generally phenomenological therefore required the participant to reflect on what he or she has observed or believes to be true of their community or organisation, thus avoiding personal sensitivities. Personal questions, such as “what effect do you anticipate globalisation will have on the arts and culture of the region”, do not specifically require the participants to disclose personal ideology or private information.

Consent forms were translated, where applicable, into the appropriate languages, so that there was possibility of deception or misconception about the nature and area of research. All of the interviews were undertaken by me. Where a translator was necessary, I had the assistance of either my Namibian counterpart, Mr Metusalem Ashipala, or friend Mr Mbockoma Mungandjera who are both well known and respected in the community, where a translator was required.

Power relationships were acknowledged and respected, particularly with reference to traditional authorities. In such instances, traditional customs and practices required when dealing with such figures was observed. These included the method in which participants are contacted, the place of the interview, appropriate respect in conduct and questioning, and remuneration.

At the commencement of each interview, participants were invited to intercede if at any point they felt that their position was being compromised by the line of questioning, or method employed. Should the participant wish for his or her identity not to be disclosed in my final dissertation, or for complete anonymity, this request will be respected.

The purpose of these interviews was to determine issues for further investigation by establishing what Ovambo culture was understood to be; what had affected it in the past; what effected it presently; who was responsible for its development; what challenges exist; how should cultural development be planned, conducted and implemented and by whom. It should be noted that the interviews were not intended to cover the entire breadth of information required for the topic of my research.

This was an interesting learning experience as some of the issues which arose will effect the methodologies employed in future investigation. For example I learnt how important it is to brief interpreters on the imperatives of objectivity during an interview. Unfortunately some of the interviews were not “clean” as the interpreter unintentionally directed answers of the interviewees. This was as a result of giving too much information

and using examples to prompt answers. Having only very basic understanding of Oshiwambo, at the time I didn't realise this was happening, however on transcribing the answers it soon became apparent. This is a significant problem to consider in this particular area of research as many of the concepts involved in notions of cultural identity and practice are difficult to articulate when there is not a discourse for such concepts in local language. Fortunately very few interviewees required an interpreter.

Another issue which arose was that of political and personal agendas coming out in interviews. Obviously bias is unavoidable, however I am now more sensitive to certain issues and approaches involved in the area of research. For example, people representing the Ministry spoke of numerous cultural activities organised in the community. People in the community, however, spoke of great disappointment at the lack of Ministry initiatives and activities in the community. The presence of Senior Headmen at interviews with Traditional Authorities was also quite unexpected and significantly changed the atmosphere of the interview. It was somewhat like being in the presence of the mafia instead of just the godfather.

Geographically, research was undertaken within the 7 tribes of Ovamboland, situated in the north of the country within an area of 400kms, as well as with various representatives of organisations in the capital city, Windhoek. Two areas of research were followed – the effects of cultural dislocation and current activities in Cultural Development

APPENDIX C – CLASS ROLE

Nuuyoma Senior Secondary School

Class List for Grade 12C 1999

Afunde	Pelagia
Aimbala	Gideon
Aiyambo	Priska
Alweendo	Mateus
Antonius	Joakina
Amafulu	Kornelia
Amalovu	Fillemon
Amoomo	Basilus
Amoomo	Melksedek
Eita	Hileni
Hailaula	Daniel
Hamufungu	Immanuel
Johannes	Selma
Kapewasha	Ruusa
Kashinduka	Sabina
Kwedhi	Gerhard
Markus	Simson
Nangolo	Letitia
Nauyala	Isdor
Nenkavu	Otaiteele
Nepolo	Johanna
Nkumbo	Paulus
Shatiwa	Henriette
Shikongo	Paulus
Shikulo	David
Shivute	Hilma
Shivute	Joseph
Shivute	Titus
Shoombe	Rosina
Titus	Maliseline
Ukonga	Joseph
Uugwanga	Leonard
Uutemo	Frans

APPENDIX F : UNAM CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP FINDINGS

COMMON CONCERNS

Concerns which were common to all of the small groups can be summarised as: recognition; resources; finances; communication and performance opportunities. Further detailed as:

Recognition

Each of the groups expressed a common concern about the lack of recognition their particular art form was given. This lack of recognition is manifest in little or no interest being shown in the arts at an academic, social or commercial level. This lack of recognition was articulated in different ways by each of the groups.

The Music group expressed that there exists a lack of recognition of the importance and value of music, and a lack of autonomy given to culture at a Ministry level, as it is combined with the Ministry of Basic Education.

The dance group also expressed that community members do not understand the importance of sharing information, and the importance of the arts in a society needed to be highlighted. The dance group echoed the music group in their concern about the arts being given “second rate status” by the government and community.

The poetry/stories/drama group also expressed a lack of interest and co-operation among people in the community. They attributed this to the culture of drinking and other destructive activities. They also noted that Western culture has influenced a lot of people, which could be at the cost of their own traditional culture.

The traditional customs group similarly expressed concern about the apparent lack of interest in traditional cultural activities.

Resources

There was a common theme of the lack of resources available to each discipline. These resources are in the form of human resources, material resources and financial resources. A common concern in the area of human resources was the age of the skilled elders in particular fields, and the necessity to make use of their knowledge before it was too late.

The music group expressed that there were no teachers, instruments, performance/practice space, training, books or information available to people interested in music.

The dance group also expressed concern about the lack of qualified teachers in the area.

The arts and crafts group expressed that the lack of financial resources combined with their small incomes resulted in a lack of sustainable development. They also expressed concern about the lack of trained personnel who are able to train and develop the skills of others.

The traditional customs group expressed concern about the lack of available resources for some traditional practices.

Finances

Each group recognised a need for financial support, in order to promote and develop their particular art form.

This was expressed generally by the music, arts and crafts, traditional customs and poetry/stories/drama groups, as the resources mentioned all involve considerable cost.

The dance group expressed the absence of scholarships in the field of dance, to motivate artists in that area.

Communication

Each group was concerned about the lack of communication and co-operation amongst artists, the community and various government and non-government organisations, resulting often in duplication of activities, or misunderstanding about activities which are taking place.

The music group expressed concern about the lack of communication between the community and resource people, and were worried about the elders being too old to pass on information.

The arts and crafts group said there was a lack of co-operation among people and organisations involved in arts and crafts.

Performance Opportunities

Both the dance and music groups expressed concern about the lack of performance opportunities made available to them.

The arts and crafts group also expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of display or presentation opportunities they had as well as a lack of commercial opportunities for their crafts in the region.

COMMON PROPOSALS

Education/Training

Each group emphasised the need for education and training, and had a number of proposals in this area. The most common theme was the proposal that each discipline be

taught as a promotional subject right through school, to raise the profile of that art form and provide an opportunity for learners to nurture their talents in each particular field.

The music group suggested that music be taught in schools as a promotional subject, and that there be more training of music teachers. They also suggested that there be tertiary opportunities available for studying music at UNAM. The suggestion was made that there be more training for musicians, interested people and youth to develop their skills.

The dance group again echoed the sentiments of the music group in promoting dance in schools, and providing scholarships for further study. They also suggested the possibility of inviting cultural groups from other regions to collaborate with them.

The poetry/stories/drama group similarly believed that each of these literary disciplines should be taught in schools up to Grade 12. They articulated that school children should be encouraged to recite stories, poems and plays at the end of the school year parties. They believe that people in villages should be taught how to read, and a cultural group should be established at each school to promote oral tradition.

The arts and crafts group believe that handiwork, arts and craft subjects should be included in the school curricula as a promotional subject.

The traditional customs group expressed a need for people to be trained in order to train other people in the region

Performance/Presentation opportunities

A number of groups expressed the need for performance or presentation opportunities in and around their community.

The music group suggested performances at community facilities and school facilities. They also suggested the idea of culture fairs, where skilled elders pass on their knowledge to younger artists, and musicians are given an opportunity to perform. There was a proposal that to promote local music, regular performances could be organised at venues such as the Ministry of Youth and Sport, UNAM stadium, Multipurpose Centre, Club Fantasy etc. It was suggested that every Friday night there be a performance of traditional music, and every Saturday night a performance of contemporary music.

The dance group suggested a plan where the 5 constituencies perform a dance presentation or demonstration, in order to get more active participation from the communities in dance development.

The poetry/stories/drama group suggested that villages should initiate and carry out writing competitions. They also suggested that night time story-telling should be encouraged and reinstated in every house.

The arts and crafts group proposed that the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation should introduce a local radio discussion program about traditional arts and crafts topics.

Cultural Centre

Each of the groups proposed a centre or space which would be utilised for their particular art form, providing opportunities for presentations, displays, performances, archival material, storage of resources, training and rehearsal space etc. The form that such a centre would take varied between groups, but there was a common desire for a specific area to be made available for the promotion of arts and culture.

The music group suggested establishing a music library/museum/performance space for traditional and contemporary music for young people to watch and listen to. It was hoped that such a space would provide training facilities and other resources which are of value to music.

The arts and crafts group suggested the building of a community arts and crafts centre, as well as a museum or display room for traditional items.

The traditional customs group suggested that a museum should be built as soon as possible. They also suggested a cultural centre should be built so that people can have a place in the community for practicing and entertainment. They believed that a facility pertaining to the development of their culture should be established.

Research/Documentation/Archiving

Many groups were concerned about their particular traditional art form becoming extinct through lack of documentation and archiving. Some suggestions were made regarding ways to keep a record of each art form through research, documentation and archiving. This documentation and research would be available to the general public, and would be stored in the proposed museum, libraries etc.

The music group suggested that professional recordings (videos, cassettes, CDs) be made of local traditional music for young people and the community at large to watch and listen to, and to conserve music and culture.

The dance group suggested that research could provide a way to gather and exchange information about local traditional dance.

The arts and crafts group proposed that any discussion, research findings etc should be recorded and made available in book form to the community at large.

Establishing Committees

Some of the groups expressed an interest in further establishing committees in their field of art.

The poetry/stories/drama group suggested the formation of a regional/village writing committee, which would be the responsibility of the regional councillors.

The arts and crafts group proposed the formation of a Cultural Information and Advisory Committee. They suggested that this committee be responsible for training and skill-share development, as well as facilitating workshops.

Some of the concluding comments were that the Cultural Officers need to be more proactive with their resources, and to think through how to use them, in order to have the most effective impact in terms of awareness raising.

The role and function of NCCI was further highlighted at the end of the workshop. And the point was emphasised that NCCI would act as a resource, or as a channel to the different sources of support which each particular area of the arts required. It should be seen as an umbrella body, which would assist in the facilitation of cultural projects. The success of any future endeavours depended greatly on the initiative coming from each of the groups, representative groups being formed, and community support.

APPENDIX H: OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF SOUTH AFRICA

(Source: National Archives of Namibia)

The Church Boards of:
Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church
Ondangwa, Ovamboland

and

Evangelical Mission Church in SWA
(Rhenish Mission Church)
Windhoek

His Honor
The Prime Minister,
Mr B.J. Vorster
Pretoria

His Honor,

After the decision of the World Court and the Hague was made known on 21st June 1971, several leaders and officials of our Lutheran churches were individually approached by representatives of the authorities with a view to making known their views. This indicates to us that public institutions are interested in hearing the opinions of the churches in this connection. Therefore we would like to make use to the opportunity of informing your Honor of the opinion of the Church Boards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA and the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church which represents the majority of the indigenous population of South West Africa.

We believe that South Africa in its attempts to develop South West Africa has failed to take cognisance of Human Rights as declared by the UNO in the year 1948 with respect to the non-white population. Allow us to put forward the following examples in this connection:

1. The government maintains that by the race policy it implements in our country, it promotes and preserves the life and freedom of the population. But in fact the non-white population is continuously being slighted and intimidated in their daily lives. Our people are not free and by the way they are treated they do not feel safe. In this regard we wish to refer to Section 3 of Human Rights.
2. We cannot do otherwise than regard South West Africa, with all its racial groups, as a unit. By the Group Areas Legislation the people are denied the right of free movement and accommodation within the borders of the country. This cannot be reconciled with Section 13 of the Human Rights.

3. People are not free to express or publish their thoughts or opinions openly. Many experience humiliating espionage and intimidation which has as its goal that a public and accepted opinion must be expressed, but not one held at heart and of which they are convinced. How can sections 18 and 19 of the Human Rights be realised under such circumstances?
4. The implementation of the policy of the government makes it impossible for the political parties of the indigenous people to work together in a really responsible and democratic manner to build the future of the whole of South West Africa. We believe that it is important in the connection that the use of voting rights should also be allowed to the non-white population. (Section 20 and 21 of the Human Rights)/
5. Through the application of Job Reservation the right to a free choice of profession is hindered and this causes low remuneration and unemployment. There can be no doubt that the contract system breaks up a healthy life because the prohibition of a person from living where he works hinders the cohabitation of families. This conflicts with section 23 and 25 of the Human Rights.

The Church Boards' urgent wish is that in terms of the declarations of the World Court and in cooperation with the UNO of which South Africa is a member, your government will seek a peaceful solution to the problems of our land and will see to it that Human Rights be put into operation and that South West Africa may become a self-sufficient and independent State.

With high esteem,

Bishop Dr. Auala
Chairman of the Church Board of the
Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church

Moderator Pastor P. Gowaseb
Chairman of the Church Board of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in S.W.A.
(Rhenish Mission Church)

Windhoek, 30 June 1971

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