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**Between Self and Other:
Anti-Colonial Nationalism Revisited**

By
Mirjam Künkler
Knkmir001

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Faculty of the Humanities
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Between Self and Other:
Anti-Colonial Nationalism Revisited

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Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

signature removed

Cape Town, March 30, 2000

Mirjam Künkler

University of Cape Town

Abstract

This dissertation has attempted to shed light on the character of anti-colonial nationalism. It particularly sought to elucidate why anti-colonial nationalisms, once the enemy is defeated, often fail to provide a sufficient basis for national identification. Why, the initial question posed, are nation-building projects necessary in states whose people have fought nationalist struggles for decades and should therefore be characterised by a high degree of social cohesion on a national level?

An examination of the concept of anti-colonial nationalism in the discourse of the Namibian Liberation Movement SWAPO served as a case study. A scrutiny of SWAPO's major publications revealed several distinct and contradictory contexts, in which the concept was used, and which could not be reconciled with prevalent definitions of nationalism, most prominently those by Gellner, Minogue and Emmett.

A more thorough analysis of nationalist identification explored the idiosyncratic character of anti-colonial nationalism and exposed the extent to which its discourse and its subject positions were dependent upon the discourse of colonialism.

A reading of both literature from social analysis, particularly by Max Weber and Frank Parkin, and literature from discourse analysis, most notably by Stuart Hall, Michel Pecheux and Norman Fairclough, exhibited that anti-colonial nationalism was not a sovereign discourse in its own right, but epistemologically dependent upon colonial discourse. In Gramscian terms, its structure of thought and the power it employed were autonomous while not *sovereign* from the power/knowledge of colonialism. As colonialism proved the *marked* discourse of a 'Self', anti-colonial discourse proved the *unmarked* counter-discourse of the 'Other', lacking an own essentiality and history. In Chatterjee's terminology, it tackled a different *problematique*, but remained within the same *thematique*, the same epistemological parameters.

In reference to anti-colonial nationalist subject positions, arrived at through 'usurpatory closure' (Parkin), this dependency entailed that they were predominantly defined by their *constitutive outside*. In this sense, the 'Other' was an 'Other' only as long as the 'Self' was a 'Self' and once the subject position of the 'Self' lost its puissance in the moment of colonial independence, the 'Other' had lost its basis for collective formation, resistance had become superfluous and so the need to identify as a nationalist subject.

The question, how the post-colonial state can generate social cohesion once liberation is achieved, has been answered in the thesis in reference to different models of nation-building. Namibia has arguably been following a common culture approach (Degenaar), failing to overcome both the nature of despotic power and the division of its social landscape into a "Self and Other" inherited from colonialism.

As a reading of both Mamdani and Chatterjee signalises, it is only a discourse of democracy that has the capacity to surpass the legacy which the structure of power of the colonial state and the structure of thought of colonialism exert on the post-colonial state in Africa.

To recognise and acknowledge the intertwined discursive and social processes that are involved in the formation of anti-colonial resistance has presented an attempt in this dissertation to go beyond the confining distinction between colonisation as a system of rule and exploitation, and colonisation as a system of knowledge and representation

Methodologically, the analysis draws on an interpretive framework developed by J. B. Thompson, which integrates both discourse and social analysis.

The thesis is structured into seven chapters. Chapter II examines the concept of "nationalism" in SWAPO discourse, Chapter III offers a discussion of prevalent concepts of nationalism, Chapter IV and V stage engagements with the processes of identification and nationalist identification respectively. Chapter VI scrutinizes possible post-independence discourses capable of providing a national sense of belonging other than a culturalist-nationalist discourse. Chapter VII concludes.

Mirjam Künkler
Hevenerstr. 40
58455 Witten
Germany

mimicri@gmx.de

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Between Self and Other: Anti-Colonial Nationalism Revisited

“With ‘colonisation’, and consequently with the ‘post-colonial’, we are irrevocably in a power-knowledge field of force. It is precisely the false and disabling distinction between colonisation as a system of rule and exploitation, and colonisation as a system of knowledge and representation, which is being refused. It is because the relations, which characterised the ‘colonial’ are no longer in the same place and relative position, that we are able not simply to oppose them but to critique, to deconstruct and try to go beyond them.”¹

I. Introduction

I. I. Anti-Colonial Nationalism

Why do states, which have gained independence from colonialism face a lack of national cohesion, if the struggle, which brought them this very independence, was essentially a nationalist one? Why are nation-building projects necessary where a people has fought under a nationalist cause for decades? What form of cohesion did anti-colonial nationalism generate if this cohesion is not conceived of as sufficient in the post-colonial context?

It is these issues which occupied my mind at the beginning of this dissertation and which guided my research interest.

As a case study, I chose to examine the anti-colonial nationalism of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) in Namibia. Looking at diverse documents issued by the Namibian liberation movement, I sought to analyse how SWAPO made use of the concept of “nationalism”, attempting to comprehend what this concept exactly signified.

Publications of all kinds, party programmes, journal articles, statements, public interviews, schoolbooks etc. served as a source of inquiry to understand what the concept of “nationalism” communicated to SWAPO followers, and which position it held in SWAPO discourse.

¹ Hall 1996b: 254.

For this purpose, drawing on the writings of Norman Fairclough, ‘discourse’ was understood as a systematic, internally consistent body of representations, the “language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view.”²

I detected seven distinct connotations with which the term “nationalism “ was used by SWAPO. If nationalism appeared to represent the struggle for independence in one context, it pursued to communicate a feeling of common culture – culture here defined in customary ethnic terms – for all Namibians in another.

Puzzled with the question of how to interpret the divergent connotations delineated, I turned to a review of prevalent definitions of nationalism.

How would these definitions capture the diverging connotations I had discerned in SWAPO discourse? Would they dissolve the tensions between them and, if so, how?

What several definitions suggested with different emphases was to conceptualise nationalism as a project, which attempts to make territorial boundaries and cultural boundaries coincide. Following from this, nationalism would be understood as either the ambition to adjust territorial boundaries to (perceived) cultural ones, or to create a culture within given state boundaries.

While the former was epitomised in the 19th century European nation-state project, the latter found its realisation in the 20th century state-nation or nation-building project.

As emerged from the inquiry, and as might have been expected, SWAPO’s anti-colonial nationalism was not occupied with the question of how to adjust territorial boundaries to cultural ones. This was rather the project of the apartheid state homeland and reserve policy, which attempted to define ‘culturally homogenous’ entities within the colonial state and to subsequently confine these cultural entities to assigned geographical territories. SWAPO strongly rejected this notion. Instead, it rather sought to foster a sense of unity among all the Namibian people (beyond cultural or territorial confinement) in resistance to colonial rule.

In terms of the above definition of nationalism then, SWAPO’s nationalism would have had to be understood as the attempt to create a common culture within given territorial boundaries. As the reading of SWAPO publications suggested, this was true to some extent. In this vein, SWAPO’s nationalism represented a cultural redefinition of the Namibian people, which sought to portray it as one homogenous entity, tied by a common cultural

² Fairclough 1995: 56. His and other definitions of discourse are discussed in greater detail in chapter

history and a common destiny. This redefinition put SWAPO in the place of a 'cultural entrepreneur' that attempted to 'reinvent' a historical communality among the Namibian people(s) and projected a common destiny into its future.

However, in a different vein, the cultural definition of nationalism did not apply to some of SWAPO's uses of the concept, especially when it highlighted the function of nationalism to achieve liberation, independence, social revolution and/or unity among the people for the sake of resistance. Here nationalism represented an essential element of *political* resistance rather than a *cultural* bond.

Confronted with the incongruity between prevalent definitions of nationalism in terms of achieving coincidence between culture and territory on the one hand, and the uses of the term 'nationalism' by SWAPO in the anti-colonial context, on the other, I turned to examine what a nationalist identity generally signifies, hoping that this inquiry might dissolve the detected discrepancy.

To examine nationalist identity, not only the concept of nationalism had to be revisited, but also the mechanism of identification, which a nationalist identity involves.

I thus embarked on an examination of the concept of identification and different modalities of interpellation in which identification generally, and nationalist identification specifically, may occur.

With the help of concepts of identification and group formation, I attempted to make sense of the mechanisms involved in anti-colonial nationalist identification. The inquiry was undertaken proceeding from a constructivist approach, that conceives nationalist identification, and indeed all forms of identification, be it political, cultural, social or other, as a sociological process which occurs in interaction between a subject and its environment.³ More precisely, I followed Stuart Hall's proposal to understand identification as a process, which chains the subject into a flow of subject positions made available by discourse.

One finding illustrated that subject positions are determined to a significant degree by what Laclau termed their 'constitutive outside', by particularly what they are not, by what they lack, by what they delimitate. In this sense, it became apparent that subject positions are negotiated not outside, but across difference.

IV.

³ For the implications of a constructivist approach and the different tendencies therein see Yeros' introduction in Yeros 1999.

In terms of anti-colonial identities this could mean that they were determined as much by what they represented as by what they sought to repudiate. This is well elucidated in the dichotomous pair of Self- and Other-subject positions where either exists substantially through its oppositional difference to the other, while neither can exist without the other – they stand in a mutually constructive relationship.

Crucially, Self and Other could represent (hierarchical) collectivities that formed in acts of what Max Weber called ‘closure’. If the Self raised itself as such in an act of ‘social closure’, through, for instance, the monopolisation of resources at the cost of excluded others, the excluded would often react with an act of ‘usurpatory closure’ to congregate their resistance against the negatively privileging act.

Both, the construction of oppositional subjectivities from a discursive perspective, and the formation of divergent collectivities from a sociological perspective, highlighted the relation in which coloniser and colonised found themselves. It could highlight both: the psychological and physical interdependence between the two, the mutual epistemological and ontological dependency.

Intrigued by these illuminations about the specific mechanisms at work in the process of identification and more precisely, the process of anti-colonial identification, I revisited the concept of nationalism, now through the lenses of closure mechanisms.

Evidently, the mobilisation of nationalist identities could occur along the lines of social closure, as an attempt to attain a privileged status on cultural grounds. Again the negatively privileged would possibly react with a mobilisation of nationalist identities in usurpatory closure to regain their lost status of equality – only that their nationalism would not be defined in cultural terms, but essentially in political ones.

Their communality would be induced by their subjugated status, not by their cultural distinctness!

This insight finally helped me answer the questions posed at the outset of this paper.

I caught a glimpse of the discursive and social mechanisms, in which colonialism served as a common denominator for the ruled and what implications this position exerted when the bells of independence rang.

Finally, I looked at possible methods to attain the cohesion within a subjugated group, which had been lost with the end of political subordination and the dissipation of the unifying subjugated status.

Alternative discourses present themselves as possible structures of thought to create a new sense of commonness and belonging among the people. The exploration suggested that only one of them may be capable of creating the very sense of commonness and solidarity – identification with one another across difference, identification on a *national* level – necessary for a post-independent society to subsist.

Methodologically, the analysis operated with concepts from two approaches: discourse analysis and social analysis. While it may be argued that discourse analysis precludes by virtue of its fundamental disposition a combination with different methodological registers, it has proven to be beneficial, if not necessary in this context, to recognise and acknowledge the intertwined discursive and social processes that are involved in the formation of anti-colonial resistance.

Due to an integration of concepts from both social and discursive analysis it was possible to illuminate the interdependency of identities of coloniser and colonised in all three thought, word and deed – and the implications this has for post-independence national identities. It is the writings of J.B. Thompson which have proved essential for this undertaking as he introduces an interpretive framework which integrates both discourse and social analysis.

Consistent with the themes introduced above, the thesis is structured into five chapters. In Chapter II I will examine the uses (and abuses) of the concept of “nationalism” in SWAPO discourse and delineate specific connotations with which it is endowed. Chapter III offers a discussion of prevalent concepts of nationalism and identifies their limitations in respect to the connotations of the concept detected in the previous chapter. The inquiry into the process of identification and the implications this has for nationalist identities and specifically anti-colonial nationalist identities are presented in Chapter IV and V respectively. Finally, Chapter VI examines possible alternatives to a nationalist discourse, which are nevertheless capable of providing a national sense of belonging essential for a state to subsist.

1. 2. Literature Review

Before embarking on the examination of the concept of “nationalism” in SWAPO discourse, let me briefly introduce the literature that has been of specific importance to this dissertation.

In respect to the particular history of SWAPO, six studies are, in my view, of major significance in providing a background understanding of the struggle and the issues surrounding SWAPO from 1960 to 1990. Two of them are produced in Germany, interestingly both written in what used to be West Germany, although the Democratic Republic of East Germany provided considerable academic, financial and technological resources to SWAPO and might thereby be expected to have generated more detailed accounts of the liberation movement. Both studies, the one by Franz Ansprenger (1984), the other by Axel Harneit-Sievers (1985) offer incisive analyses of SWAPO’s structures, programmatic and ideology, with less attention paid to the diplomatic strategies outside the country. In the anglophone realm, the studies of Serfontain (1976) and Töttemeyer (1977) both present elaborate discussions of the political landscape of the 1960s and 1970s in Namibia, which are all the more fascinating as both write from a perspective from within the country that reflects contemporary considerations and trends which might have elapsed the retrospective post-independence history writing.

Lauren Dobell’s analysis of the SWAPO liberation struggle (1998) has been the most comprehensive examination so far concerning SWAPO’s tactics and diplomatic progress leading to the final peace settlement. Finally, Leys’ and Saul’s collection of essays on the ‘two-edged sword’ of the Namibian struggle for independence (1995) submits ten detailed accounts of different dimensions of the struggle (inside the country, outside Namibia, military strategies, international networking, the role of the churches, the legacies of the struggle and their impact on the consolidation of democracy). For more general analyses of Namibian nationalism starting from the inter-war years, Tony Emmett’s recently published thesis on ‘African Nationalism in Namibia’ (1987/1999), Ngavirue’s account of interest groups in Namibia (1972) and Katjavivi’s thesis on ‘The Rise of Nationalism in Namibia’ (1989) offer very well researched studies. The analysis of the concept of ‘nationalism’ in SWAPO’s discourse has been informed by SWAPO publications of different formats (discussion papers, journals, party programmes, statements from specific bodies of the movement etc.) which will be introduced in more detail in Chapter II, preceding their concrete examination.

To understand the methodologies and different approaches of discourse analysis, the writings of Norman Fairclough (1989, 1992 and 1995) and J.B. Thompson (1982) served as bases. Fairclough's work on 'Discourse and Social Change' (1992) illuminates the link between the social world and its structuring in linguistic systems, and sensitises the reader for the recognition of underlying agendas in concrete speech situations. In his 'Foucault and the Analysis of Discourse' Fairclough outlines his own technique of discourse analysis, clarifies the relationship between structure and agency, and distances himself from what he perceives a Foucaultian 'determination of the world by discourse'. Foucault's own work on 'Language, counter-memory, practice' (1980), his exploration of manifestations of domination in his 'Überwachen und Strafen' (1994) as well as his 'Politics and the study of discourse' (1978) proved fundamental contributions that elucidate the power relations between discursive formations of memory and their counter-discourses.

Finally, J.B. Thompson's 'Theories of Ideology' provides incisive discussions of the theories of Ricoeur, Hirst, Gouldner and Pecheux, the latter whose writings have been of major interest for the study of identification in this dissertation. To methodically facilitate an analysis that works with concepts and relations from divergent methodological frameworks, Thompson develops a comprehensive interpretive approach, which involves distinct analytical registers to analyse distinct social phenomena.⁴ He depicts three phases of analysis, which should not be understood as (causally and analytically) discrete phases of inquiry but merely methodologically distinct categories: social analysis, discursive analysis and interpretation.

While social analysis draws significantly on concepts and theories developed in the field of sociology and its neighbouring disciplines, and takes the individual and its interaction with its environment as the subject of enquiry, discursive analysis in his framework focuses on the deconstruction of discourse as a phenomenon, which seeks to reflect a certain understanding of reality. Interpretation, finally, enables the author to make comprehensive judgements informed by the two preceding approaches, attempts to construct meaning around the explicit and implicit referential dimensions of both social and discourse analysis and seeks to analytically uncover their function, i.e. the relations of domination they serve to sustain. As we will see a situation of dominance significantly plays into the formation of identities and group formations generally, and more so in the colonial context.

⁴ Thompson 1984: 132 *f.* Exploring the relationship between discursive analysis and interpretation he notes, "however rigorous and systematic methods of discursive analysis may be, they can never abolish the need for a creative construction of meaning, that is for an interpretive explication for what is said." Ibid.

Concerning the assessment of the concept of identity and the mechanisms involved in the process of identification, my account is informed by a constructivist approach which understands identification as a historical and social process and conceives of identity as ever changing and fluid. A collection of essays on 'Constructivist Reflections and Contemporary Politics' by Yeros (1999) gives a keen overview over the benefits and drawbacks of constructivist versus instrumentalist and primordialist conceptions. Stuart Hall's theorising on the concept of identity (1992 and 1996) from the perspective of cultural studies has been decisive as well as Michel Pecheux's account of different 'Modalities of Identification' (1982) from a linguistic point of view. Riggins' work on 'The Language and Politics of Exclusion' (1997) offers profound insights into self and group formation in differentiation to Others and the manifestation of their relation in language. Finally, Max Weber's concept of 'closure' (1962) and its discussion and extension by Frank Parkin (1974) have facilitated a translation of the self-other dichotomy into the understanding of concrete group formations and their positioning in orders of stratification, which the colonial state hinges upon so significantly.

Stimulated by the constructivist view of culture, the concept of 'nationalism' enjoyed great academic attention in the 1980s which led to a revision of its formulation in chiefly cultural terms. The works of Benedikt Andersen (1983) and Ernest Gellner (1983) have underscored the extent to which nations are results of discernible sociological and economic processes and thereby subject to change, in contrast to being thought of as inevitable and determined processes bound to certain civilisational stages of evolution. In the colonial dimension, the early works of Fanon (1971), Mondlane (1969) and Kiljunen (1981) have illuminated the pivotal position of nationalism in the struggle against colonialism. Of equal interest has been the work of Partha Chatterjee (1996) who discerned and analysed three distinct stages in Indian nationalism (departure, manoeuvre and arrival), elucidated the demarcation between the spiritual and the material sphere in colonial life and the different extent of access either sphere presented to colonial intrusion.

As far as post-colonial theory is concerned, scholars of the subaltern studies provide a discussion of the crucial issues involved, namely, the intertwined relationship between anti-colonial and colonial thought and the question of 'a' history writing that acknowledges the continued dependencies, endeavours to go beyond elite writing and the singular representation of the victor's perception of 'History'. Important in this respect have been, again, the writings of Partha Chatterjee (1996, 1997), and two papers of Gyanendra Pandey

and Sumit Sarkar presented at the Seminar “Problematising History and Agency: From Nationalism to Subalternity” at the University of Cape Town in 1997.

In their collection on ‘The decolonisation of imagination’ Nederveen Pieterse and Bikhu Parekh (1995) offer a concise account of the dimensions of decolonisation in culture, knowledge and power. The cultural dimension of decolonisation has ably been elucidated by Homi Bhaba (1994). Stuart Hall (1996b) and Anne McClintock (1994) engage in a critical discussion of the term ‘post-colonialism’ and uncover some of its limitations while Benita Parry (1994) and Neil Lazarus (1994) examine facets of national versus nativist consciousness in a postcolonial state.

The entire examination has aimed at a better understanding of anti-colonial nationalism and the reason why its established cohesion disintegrates after liberation. It has focused on the momenta of identification and group formation in a Self-Other relationship, not to suggest that power and resistance can be conceptualised in distinct spheres or to present the actors one-dimensionally as either ruled or rulers, dominated or dominators. I have tried to keep in mind that “if power and resistance are conceptualised as being located in separate domains, each tends to get homogenised and unqualified.”⁵

My hope is that this study, with the insights it offers about particular mechanisms of anti-colonial nationalist identification, may serve as a contribution to future research that succeeds far better in delimiting and differentiating the contradictory moments at work in both power and resistance.

⁵ Sarkar 1997: 8.

II. The Concept of 'Nationalism' in SWAPO Discourse

*"To SWAPO ... labels of ideology have no meaning, Marxism-Leninism, socialism, even democracy. But one thing is important – nationalism. Nationalism is fact, the others are only labels."*⁶

1991: The First Congress of Swapo party in an Independent Namibia adopts a new party constitution. One of the proclaimed aims involves the launch of a comprehensive nation-building project "to foster a sense of common purpose and collective destiny among the Namibian people".⁷

Why, I wonder, why does this recently independent state, like so many other post-colonial states, embark on a nation-building project where its recent history of the past thirty years has been characterised by a "nationalist" liberation struggle? The fact that the liberation struggle is referred to as a 'nationalist' one, suggests, on first sight, that it has been fought country-wide and supported by the vast majority of the people. In contrast to ethnic struggles, a 'nationalist' struggle indicates an *inclusive* struggle, transcending boundaries of ethnicity, age, gender, class etc. and suggests the 'nation' as the highest instance of loyalty and the primary source of political and cultural identification. The involvement of a country in a project that has been 'nationalist' for more than thirty years evokes the image of high degrees of solidarity, unity and social cohesion.

Consequently, the reader of both the 1989 election manifesto and the 1991 party constitution is struck by the newly proclaimed goal of the governing party to engage in a nation-building project, a project that seeks to invoke social cohesion among the diverse strata and groups of the population and thereby acknowledges the need to do so. To clarify, nation-building is not only envisaged here as 'reconciliation between persecutor and victim of the struggle against colonialism' – surely that is one aspect of the nation-building project whose necessity is easily comprehensible. But significantly, nation-building here is also conceptualised in another aspect, namely that of fostering a sense of common identity among the Namibian people beyond the victim-perpetrator divide and thereby reach levels of the very social cohesion I would have assumed to find as a result of the 'nationalist' liberation struggle. This puzzle, for sure, is not a new one, as numerous other African states have gone along a similar trajectory. They created a continuity from their 'nationalist' liberation struggles to the

⁶ UN Official quoted in Dobell 1998: 59.

⁷ SWAPO 1991: "Aims and Objectives".

projects of post-independent nation-building – often portrayed as a necessary complement to ‘democratisation’ in the newly freed state.⁸

The question arises about what a ‘nationalist’ project actually signifies in each of the two contexts, in that of the liberation struggle and in that of the independent state? Which ‘meanings’ does the term carry? How do they coincide, how do they differ, which elements do present the continuity between these ‘meanings’ that endow them with the same representation: namely ‘nationalist’? What are the criteria for a political project to be considered ‘nationalist’?

To answer these questions I will take a look at the concept of ‘nationalism’ in SWAPO discourse through the lens of various SWAPO publications between 1960 and 1990.

For sure, to examine the concept of anti-colonial nationalism I could equally have inquired into discourses of other liberation movements. I have chosen SWAPO, however, because its claim to be the ‘sole and authentic representative of the people of Namibia’ (accepted first by the ‘Brussels International Conference on South West Africa’ in 1972,⁹ subsequently by the OAU and the UN since 1973 and other organisations) endows it with a special ‘nationalist’ anticipation and externally awarded nationalist ‘justification’.¹⁰

To acquaint the reader with the relevant context, a brief historical background shall precede the examination of the concept.

⁸ See Ansprenger 1998.

⁹ “Towards the end of the conference calls for the recognition of SWAPO as the true and legitimate representative of Namibia and demands it be accorded formal status in all international forums and institutions concerned with Namibia [prevailed].” *Namibia News*, Vol. 5, 6/7, 1972.

¹⁰ South West African People’s Organisation, since 1968 “SWAPO of Namibia”, after 1989 as a political party referred to as ‘Swapo’ in lowercase letters. Compare Dobell 1995. Where sources from before 1989 refer to SWAPO as ‘Swapo’ (as Serfontain and Töttemeyer do), I have maintained their spelling in lower case letters in quotations.

II. 1. Historical Background

It is only in the 1950s that numerous strands of anti-colonial actions from diverse movements of the Namibian¹¹ civil society (mostly ethnically based) found integration into a nation wide body, the South West African National Union (SWANU), whose task was to co-ordinate the activities of the diverse organisations of resistance that had mushroomed during the later part of the 1950s.¹²

In the inter-war years, three movements had predominantly been active in open campaign against the effects of the South African occupation: those were the Chiefs' Council, the African Independent Churches and the Labour Movement.¹³

After most African groups had suffered severe losses during the wars with the German colonial power (1904-1907), the inter-war years were characterised by recovery and restoration, especially for the Namas and Hereros. In 1922, after the League of Nations had granted South Africa the mandate to administer the territory, it soon embarked on implementing a reserve system within the Police Zone that constituted racial segregation and imposed political, economic and cultural demarcations where none had previously existed.¹⁴

The Herero Chiefs' Council played its role as the main representative of the African communities in opposition to the colonial state. Thus it was the chiefs, among them the Herero Chief Hosea Kutako who predominantly engaged in the attempt to unite the people for the sake of resistance and composed a first petition to the United Nations protesting against unlawful South African occupancy of the territory in 1941. In the 1950s the Herero Chiefs' Council, which had until then represented the major body of representation versus the colonial state, was joined by the establishment of numerous political organisations, however fractured around the distinct reserves.¹⁵

A second moment of resistance circled around the African independent churches. A flight into religiosity and spirituality characterised the reaction of those, predominately the Namas

¹¹ At that time officially 'South West African'. It was only in 1967 that the UN accepted a resolution, which proclaimed that 'in accordance with the desires of the people, the territory henceforth would be known as Namibia'. See Serfontain, 1976: 5f.

¹² See Emmett 1999: 283 ff.

¹³ See Ngavirue 1997: 181 ff. For the following see also Emmett 1999: 215 ff, Meber 1981, Nachtwei 1976, Serfontain 1976: 134 ff.

¹⁴ The northern areas of the country, including Ovamboland were excluded from the Police Zone. Here the government continued to administer the territory through Indirect Rule.

¹⁵ "Beginning in 1946 with a single petition from the Herero and Nama Chiefs, 120 petitions were sent to the Fourth Committee in 1960 alone. However, tribal rivalries and suspicions made the formation of a single national party impossible until the late Fifties." Serfontain 1976: 144.

and the Hereros, who had been completely subjugated in the 1904-1907 uprisings.¹⁶ Externalised forms of political expression were substituted by pure escapist inward looking modes of 'expression', which the colonial power did not consider particularly threatening to its sole political authority. Thus a common feature of group activity was Church attendance, not to the missionary churches which experienced a crisis, but rather to traditional churches that could form part of the homeward movement in a desperate attempt to regain one's identity.

A third strand of political anti-colonial formation was to be found in the independent organisations and trade union movement, which initially drew significantly on the émigré organisations. In the early 1920s, political activity was closely related to international political movements operating from South Africa, such as the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) that stood out for its promotion of Garveyism and the Industrial and Commercial Worker's Union (ICU). In 1958 the Ovamboland People's Congress (OPC) was launched to accommodate the needs and interests of migrant workers specifically, and the name changed into the 'Ovamboland People's Organisation' (OPO) in 1959. It is important to note here that the term 'Ovambo' did not signify an exclusively ethnic base. Thus in colonial circles contract workers in general were referred to as 'Ovambos', even though many contract workers might have been of alternative ethnic origin.¹⁷

These three major strands of anti-colonial resistance were integrated into a common body on 27 September 1959 in Windhoek, the South West Africa's National Union (SWANU). The body grew out of the urgent need to co-ordinate the independent actions of resistance into a common organisation in order to efficiently protest against the forced removals in Windhoek from the Old Location to the apartheid-designated township of Katutura.¹⁸

The integration of the Chiefs' Council into SWANU, however, was conflictual in so far as the former practised an accommodatory mode of communication whereas the latter sought an adversary confrontation with the colonial regime, coupled with a more general departure away from the customary constitution of authority.¹⁹ Thus the young intellectuals of SWANU

¹⁶ See Nachtwei 1976. "[...] ein durch überlegene Fremdkultur erschüttertes Gruppen-Selbstgefühl wieder herzustellen durch massives Demonstrieren eines 'eigenes Beitrags'." Ibid.: 130.

¹⁷ See Emmett 1999: 339. This is significant in respect to SWAPO's alleged disposition towards 'Ovambo' concerns.

¹⁸ Thus in December 1959, the Herero Chiefs' Council, SWANU and OPO organised a joint mass campaign against the forced removal from the "non-White" residential township by the South West African Administration. See Serfontain 1976: 145, Ngavirue 1997: 213 and Emmett 1999: 303.

¹⁹ Emmett 1999: 318 ff.

believed in a status hierarchy based on merit and education rather than tradition. At the same time, the Ovamboland Progressive Organisation (OPO), chiefly representing the interests of migrant workers and contract labourers, entered the national arena when it changed into the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and broadened its approach to national concerns.²⁰ OPO had played a constitutive part in the establishment of SWANU and many members of OPO enjoyed leading posts in SWANU. OPO's role, however, was not explicitly defined in SWANU's constitution and as a consequence OPO continued to exist as a separate body. When an agreement by exile leaders was reached to merge OPO into SWANU, the Namibian constituency of OPO, influenced by the Chiefs' Council's bias against SWANU, opposed the plan and insisted on an autonomous organisation. Thus OPO, which later nationalised into SWAPO, began to exist as an alternative national organisation that would later compete with SWANU for a nationalist constituency. That the two, SWANU and SWAPO, were at the time of their establishment not conceived as competing initiatives, however, is documented in the fact that many SWAPO leaders simultaneously held positions within SWANU. While SWANU represented the aggregate body of diverse ethnic resistance movements, SWAPO focused more on concrete land and labour issues.

The early 1960s were characterised by a struggle between the two bodies SWANU and SWAPO to gain a constituency on the national scale and preserve the support of the Chiefs' Council. The later part of the 60s, finally, saw SWAPO prevail in the attempt to establish itself as the strongest national organisation and in the launch of the armed struggle (1966). Although, relatively unsuccessful, the armed struggle helped SWAPO gain a bargaining position versus the South African government and eventually led to its international recognition as the 'sole and authentic representative of the people of Namibia'. Nationally, SWAPO gained a unique position when it withdrew from the Namibia National Convention (NNC) in 1976 (an umbrella body, which was aimed at the unification of all the different anti-colonial tendencies inside the country) and the majority of these groups subsequently announced their integration into SWAPO.²¹

²⁰ The Ovambo People's Congress and later Ovambo People's Organisation emerged specifically for the purpose of improving the situation of contract labourers. Only later in 1960 was it extended to a national level by the changing of its name and structures into the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO).

²¹ These were: the Namibian African People's Organisation (NAPDO), the Rehoboth Volksparty, the Witbooi group, the Hoachanas group, the Vaalgras group, the Demokratiese Party in Namibia, in 1977: the Association for the preservation of the Tjamahua/Maharero Royal House. See Emmett 1999: 337 and *SWAPO Information on SWAPO: A Historical Profile*, 1978.

II. 2. Nationalism in SWAPO Publications

While the majority of studies about SWAPO have focused on SWAPO's diplomatic strategies on the one hand, and its internal controversies and conflicts on the other, few have attempted to deconstruct SWAPO's programmes and ideology in greater depth, partly because in the context of the Cold War ideological categorisation was easy at hand. Those studies that did provide an analysis of SWAPO's ideology mainly focused on questions of economic policy and the promotion of a one versus a multi-party state. The meticulous studies of Serfontain, Töttemeyer, Ansprenger, Harneit-Sievers and Dobell all accept or characterise SWAPO as a chiefly nationalist organisation, but decline to discuss the term in such detail that would illuminate its implications and effects.

The claim that SWAPO proved ideologically very 'flexible' and pragmatic, a phenomenon which made it adopt a non-aligned outlook at one stage and a Marxist on another – and allowed it to profit from the support of donors as diverse as the Soviet Union, Sweden, China, social-democratic parties from Western Europe, the World Council of Churches and the UN²² – has been confirmed in numerous studies.²³ In the words of Dobell, "SWAPO never was more than a nationalist organisation, and never moved beyond a nationalist vision – its claims, and those of others, solidarity organisations, in particular, notwithstanding."²⁴ If, however, as the UN official contended in the quote introducing this chapter, nationalism proved the exception to SWAPO's otherwise effective ideological 'flexibility', what did this concept signify and why did it prove static throughout the entire struggle?

Contrary to concepts of 'liberation', 'resistance' and concrete visions of how these could be achieved, no work studied – apart from Emmett's – provided a closer look at the concept of nationalism. Was it a self-explanatory term?

The reader is left to a discernment of its meaning in context.

²² Dobell strongly argues that SWAPO adopted certain ideological positions for the sole purpose of attracting material and military support from diverse states and organisations (1998: 103, for instance). Töttemeyer echoes this assumption when contending "[...] the movement has communist and socialist affiliations for the purpose of assistance." 1977: 65. Memmi partly explains this phenomenon not unique to SWAPO when he states in a different context, "the only task of the moment is that of freeing people. As for the future, there will be plenty of time to deal with [the political and economic system envisioned for the time after independence] when it becomes present." 1965: 35.

²³ See for instance Serfontain 1976, Töttemeyer 1977, Ansprenger 1984, Harneit-Sievers 1985, Leys and Saul 1995, Ngavirue 1997, Dobell 1998 and Emmett 1999.

²⁴ Dobell 1995: 67.

I have tried to look at how and when nationalism is used in which context in SWAPO publications, which connotations the reader may assume when confronted with the term and finally, in which contexts it is suspiciously left out. For that purpose, I had to read the documents as ‘texts’, trying to understand in which frame of reference the concept of nationalism was respectively used and what this context tells us about the *life-world* in which it is thought.²⁵

Not surprisingly, I deduced several meanings, in which SWAPO utilises the term ‘nationalism’, when I studied all its major publications. While the concept is not embedded in one particular context, but rather several different and also contradictory contexts, this corroborates LaCapra’s argument that “an appeal to *the* context is deceptive: one never has – at least in the case of complex texts – *the* context. The assumption that one does relies on a hypostatisation of context often in the service of misleading or other overly reductive analogies. For complex texts, one has a set of interacting contexts whose relations to one another are variable and problematic and to whose relation to the text being investigated raises difficult issues of interpretation. Indeed, what may be most insistent in a modern text is the way it challenges one or more of its contexts.”²⁶

While I cannot, for sure, claim completeness for those contexts identified, I can neither claim to have explored them thoroughly, for contexts ‘cannot be entirely objectified’ and fully known.

They may indicate, however, which assumptions underlie the concept in each instance.

In detail, the documents investigated comprised:

- all issues of the journals published by SWAPO:
 - *Namibia News* issued by the London Bureau
 - *Namibia Today* (SWAPO news bulletin issued in Dar-es-Salaam, Lusaka and Erfurt subsequently)
 - *Ombuze ya Namibia* (multilingual SWAPO bulletin inside Namibia)

²⁵ A passage from LaCapra on Intellectual History eloquently elucidates the implications of such reading: “[...] a fact is a pertinent fact only with respect to a frame of reference involving questions that we pose to the past, and it is the ability to pose the “right” questions that distinguishes productive scholarship. Heidegger has emphasised that these questions are themselves situated in a “context” or a “life-world” [...]. For Heidegger, moreover, it is only by investigating what a thinker did not explicitly or intentionally think, but what constitutes his still question-worthy “unthought” that a conversation with the past enters into dimensions of his thinking which bear most forcefully on the present and future.” LaCapra 1983: 31.

²⁶ “[...] in treating the relation of texts to contexts, what is often taken as a solution to the problem should be reformulated and investigated as a real problem itself. An appeal to the context does not *eo ipso* answer all questions in reading and interpretation.” LaCapra 1983: 35.

- *The Namibian Woman* (publication of SWAPO's Women's League in Lusaka)
- *Namibian Youth* (official organ of the SWAPO Youth League)
- *SWAPO Information Bulletin*
- SWAPO official programmes:
 - *The 1975 Discussion Paper on the Constitution of Independent Namibia*
 - *The 1976 National Programme*
 - *The 1976 Constitution of SWAPO*
 - *The 1976 Political Programme*
 - *The 1989 Election Manifesto*
 - *The 1991 Party Constitution*
 - *The 1999 Election Manifesto*
 - *The 1991 Reconstruction and Development of Namibia. A General Policy Statement.*
- Other SWAPO publications:
 - Selected statements from published interviews
 - *Address to the Nation by the President, 12 March 1990.*
 - *SWAPO Information on the People's Resistance*
 - *SWAPO Information on SWAPO (A Historical Profile)*
 - The Children's School Book issued by SWAPO
 - SWAPO's self written Namibian history: *To Be Born a Nation.*

Nationalism and Liberation

When reading the political programmes of SWAPO, nationalism is somewhat treated as a 'given', a constant variable that is somehow inherent in the resistance struggle and does not need further elaboration. Nationalism is often used in the same context as liberation, which suggests that the two represented two inseparable concepts in official SWAPO thinking. While the need for liberation is often explained through in depth analyses of the political and socio-economic situation inside the country, the concept of nationalism is not, but instead dealt with as if it was an inherent side effect of the liberation struggle.

Sam Nujoma, long-time SWAPO president and since 1990 president of post-independent Namibia acclaimed in an interview: "My Philosophy is simple: Namibia must be free. We are nationalists first and last... Nationalism and freedom for my country – that is my philosophy."²⁷ At another opportunity he characterised SWAPO as follows "We are first and foremost Namibian patriots fighting for the liberation of our country."²⁸

Nationalism, in other words, was juxtaposed by Nujoma with the struggle for *independence* and *freedom* of Namibia reflecting an understanding of nationalism, which Essien-Udom captured essentially when he argued, "nationalists believe that they ought to rule themselves and shape their own destinies, and that they should therefore be in control of their social, economic and political institutions."²⁹ Implied in Nujoma's utterance is a moral obligation denoted in the term 'patriots': to be a Namibian is to wish for the country's liberation and to wish for the country's liberation is to be a nationalist.

Accordingly, SWAPO's 1976 Political Programme reads "SWAPO has resolved: [. . .] to mould and heighten, in the thick of the national liberation struggle, the bond of national and political consciousness amongst the Namibian people."³⁰ Nationalism is associated with 'the Namibian people' and coupled with a 'political consciousness', no doubt referring to a

²⁷ *Windhuk Observer*, 9.4. 1983. Quoted in Ansprenger 1984: 181.

²⁸ Sam Nujoma in an interview with New York Times Correspondent Joseph Lelyveld, *NYT* 18.1.1981, quoted in Ansprenger 1984: 181. Also reprinted in *Namibia Today*, Nr. 2/3, 1981, p. 6-10.

Ansprenger writes about SWAPO's ideology: "Das mit Abstand wichtigste Wort für die Selbsteinschätzung der SWAPO als politische Partei ist "Nationalismus" – ein Begriff, der bekanntlich nur im Westen fast automatisch mit dem rechten Flügel eines politischen Spektrums assoziiert wird, während er in der Dritten Welt als selbstverständliche Grundlage allen politischen Denkens und Handelns gilt, und der von sowjet-marxistischen Theoretikern ganz nach Bedarf und Opportunität als 'bürgerlicher' Nationalismus gebrandmarkt und als 'fortschrittlicher' gepriesen wird." 1984: 181.

²⁹ E. U. Essien-Udom quoted in Katjavivi 1988: 558.

³⁰ SWAPO 1976 Political Programme, 1976: 6. It continues, "SWAPO has resolved to persistently mobilise and organise the broad masses of the Namibian people so that they can actively participate in the national liberation struggle."

liberatory political consciousness, considering that all who truly consider themselves 'Namibian' must –according to the above statement – wish for the country to be free and independent. This is most drastically articulated in a *Namibia News* article from 1974: “The name of our country is more than just a name, it is the conception of a *free country* with loyal citizens. Those who are in the pay of the enemy are ‘against Namibia’ and, interestingly enough, do not identify with loyal Namibians, they are ‘Southwesters’. Namibia, therefore, is identical with freedom, the freedom struggle and with SWAPO.”³¹ Similarly, SWAPO contends “resistance can be seen in the growing Namibian rather than ethnic identity of the people.”³²

The very name ‘Namibia’ has proved an important symbol around which people have rallied. SWAPO ideologue Katjavivi reasoned in retrospect, “through the use of it people have found an identity and a land to be proud of, to make their own, and which bears promise for the future.”³³

Why, however, is it so important for SWAPO to emphasise ‘nationalism’ repeatedly in relation to ‘liberation’ while the two are portrayed as principally inseparable? Evidently, the repeated use serves to emphasise that SWAPO’s fight is aimed at the liberation of the entire Namibian territory instead of only a region. Although SWAPO had already ‘monopolised’ the anti-colonial struggle since 1973 when it was recognised as the ‘one and only authentic representative of the people’, allegations of its particularist interests confined to Ovambo matters had not quietened, but instead were intentionally promoted by the South African administration. SWAPO – born out of OPO – was said to represent predominantly the interests of the people from Ovamboland and the migrant workers rather than giving equal weight to the needs of people from the territory as a whole. Apart from SWAPO’s own assertions to the contrary however,³⁴ Serfontain confirms “since its beginnings, Swapo has received its most active support from the Wambo workers in the south of South West Africa. It now [1976] also has considerable support from modernising elite groups such as teachers, nurses, pupils, students, public servants and ministers of religion – Swapo emphasises its close co-operation with the churches.”³⁵ The attribute of ‘nationalist’ to SWAPO’s struggle

³¹ *Namibian News*, 1974, 7, 3-5, p. 2. My emphasis.

³² *SWAPO Information on SWAPO: A Historical Profile*, 1978: 28.

³³ Katjavivi 1988: 558.

³⁴ SWAPO always paid meticulous attention to emphasise its universal base. “SWAPO has strengthened its support from every sector of the Namibian population – workers, students, peasants, intellectuals – and from every so-called ethnic group.” *SWAPO Information on SWAPO: A Historical Profile*, 1978: 27. Similarly, “SWAPO has resolved to combat all manifestations and tendencies of tribalism, regionalism, ethnic orientation and racial discrimination.” *SWAPO Political Programme* 1976: 6.

³⁵ Serfontain 1976: 63.

was then to give it a universalist feature that would disassociate it from its Ovambo and labour movement origins.

Nationalism and Unity

SWAPO's self-characterisation reads, "SWAPO organises, unites, inspires, orients and leads [...] in the struggle for national and social liberation."³⁶ SWAPO acts as the body into which all nationalist aspirations are channelled and through which they find co-ordinated articulation. The observation pertaining to the correlation of nationalism and liberation in SWAPO's ideology is here somewhat extended in the sense that SWAPO does not only fight for liberation of the entire territory and thereby seeks to be the authentic representative of the Namibian people as a whole. Indeed, it tries not merely to liberate the Namibian people, but to truly unite it in that very struggle. Subtly reflected in the terms 'unites' and 'leads' (in the struggle...) is SWAPO's attempt to monopolise anti-colonial resistance and its claim to be not only the 'authentic', but also the 'sole' nationalist representative of the people (in spite of diverging assertions by SWANU, for instance). In this vein, it claims "SWAPO is the People: the People are SWAPO."³⁷

Unity is the key word for the nationalist organisation in this context: "National unity and territorial integrity are the corner-stone of our policy."³⁸ A major goal of SWAPO, so reads the 1976 Political Programme, is the "unification of all peoples of Namibia into a cohesive, representative national political organisation, irrespective of their race, ethnic origin, religion or creed."³⁹ As the sole representative of the Namibian people SWAPO here seeks to be culturally inclusive, underlining its policy of non-racism.⁴⁰ Moreover, if 'Namibia is identical with freedom and the freedom struggle and with SWAPO' [quoted above], it is in principle impossible to be a nationalist Namibian, i.e. to be for the liberation of the entire country, without being a supporter of SWAPO. If one does not support SWAPO, one is not a nationalist Namibian. As a matter of fact, if not supporting SWAPO, one can only be a traitor, for SWAPO and the nationalist cause are one. On the contrary, if one promotes the

³⁶ Cited in Harneit-Sievers 1985: 104, from the Political Programme 1976.

³⁷ *SWAPO Information on SWAPO: A Historical Profile*, 1978: 26.

³⁸ *Namibia Today*, 4, 7/8/, 1980, p. 4.

³⁹ Quoted in Harneit-Sievers 1985: 103.

⁴⁰ Interestingly, this is a policy SWAPO seems to have preserved until this very day. Even the strong development of elite formation that has characterised Namibia's experience with the process of democratisation during the past ten years does not occur along ethnic lines. Fosse notes that "contrary to popular beliefs and opposition rhetoric, the Ovambo are actually underrepresented among SWAPO members of parliament and in the government, compared to their share of the total population of the country." 1992:18.

fight for liberation, one must identify with SWAPO, and no other movement or institution other than SWAPO 'is identical with the liberation struggle'. To support an alternative liberation movement would be to weaken or defect the nationalist liberation struggle that is to defect one's brothers and sisters.

In respect to SWAPO's aim to unite all different political organisations under its wings, the movement contended "in 1972 SWAPO was instrumental in forming the National Convention of Namibia (NCN), with the express aim of uniting all the anti-colonial tendencies among the Namibian people in one national body."⁴¹ What SWAPO does not reveal here is that the NCN significantly failed, because SWAPO, seeing that it could not simply incorporate alternative anti-colonial tendencies into its structures, withdrew and founded a rival body, the Namibia National Convention (NNC). When it left and thus indirectly dissolved the latter body in 1976, SWAPO had indeed persuaded the majority of alternative anti-colonial organisations to integrate into the liberation movement.⁴² "By this time [1976] the need for a united front had long since passed: SWAPO had united all significant anti-colonial resistance under its leadership."⁴³

This situation and the above claim that SWAPO is identical with the liberation struggle leads to a situation where all who consider themselves 'Namibians' must by principle feel united in their state of oppression. In this sense, SWAPO has indeed resolved to mould and heighten 'the national and political consciousness among the Namibian people', as the Political Programme of 1976 asserts. To be Namibian is to be 'nationalist' and to be 'nationalist' is to feel or acknowledge the need for the liberation of Namibia – to acknowledge this need is to acknowledge one's state of oppression. Finally all those oppressed are united in their wish for liberation, and this struggle for liberation is – as SWAPO has established – led by SWAPO and by SWAPO only, and, it is a *nationalist* struggle.

Nationalism then results from the common experience of oppression and SWAPO can draw from this common experience and the feelings of solidarity, which result from it, as a source of both internal support and internationally recognised legitimacy.

⁴¹ *SWAPO Information on SWAPO: A Historical Profile*, 1978: 26 f.

⁴² See footnote 21.

⁴³ *SWAPO Information on SWAPO: A Historical Profile*, 1978: 27.

“SWAPO stands for one country, one destiny, one Namibia, one Africa – a policy for the destruction of fragmentation and compartmentalism.”⁴⁴ On the one hand, it is apparent that any united effort will in the long term prove more efficient and powerful in the struggle for liberation than any fragmented action; on the other hand, SWAPO’s claim to be *the* nationalist resistance movement [“the sole and authentic representative of the people of Namibia] coerces any anti-colonial intention to identify with SWAPO or to be a traitor of the nationalist cause.

Nationalism and Revolution

In a few rare occasions nationalism is used in a context which indicates its importance as a precursor for the envisioned social revolution. Thus most so in the latter part of the 1970s and the early 1980s SWAPO avows the people’s nationalism as a revolutionary consciousness and defines itself as a ‘nationalist vanguard party’ in the 1976 Political Programme. “The many thousands of Namibian men and women who have joined SWAPO over the years have truly made it their party – a united platform for all freedom-loving Namibians. SWAPO is the organised political vanguard of the people of Namibia; it is the expression and embodiment of national unity, of a whole people united and organised in the struggle for total independence and social liberation.”⁴⁵ The national revolutionary consciousness not only expresses the people’s objective of a social revolution, but also its transcendence of colonially enforced ethnicity. “But regardless of what coin the regime plays – whether it be the coin of tribalism or of regionalism or of racism – it cannot hide the fact of the truly revolutionary consciousness which is developing among the people. On every street, in every factory, within every reserve, one hears more and more people saying: ‘I’m not an Ovambo or a Nama. I’ m a Namibian.’”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ See Töttemeyer 1977: 70.

⁴⁵ *SWAPO Information on SWAPO: A Historical Profile*, 1978: 29.

⁴⁶ *SWAPO Information on the People’s Resistance 1976-1977*, 1978: 6.

Nationalism and Culture

When comparing the documents issued by internal SWAPO with those issued by the external branch, it is apparent that both embrace the principle of non-racism.⁴⁷ However, the two diverge on the question of culture and nationalism. While external SWAPO rejects any recognition of cultural diversity within the territory and insists on Namibia being one nation, unified by one tradition and one culture (with the notable exception of those opposing the liberation struggle whom SWAPO deprives of their right to a Namibian nationality, see below), internal SWAPO accepts the notion of different cultures within the country. Both for sure reject cultural diversity to serve as a legitimisation for segregationist policies that lead to anything else but a unified state.⁴⁸

The difference in the two approaches can probably be attributed to the difference in status SWAPO enjoys externally as the 'sole and authentic representative of the people' and the challenged status it holds within the territory (challenged by other resistance movements, most prominently SWANU, the autonomous role of the Youth League and the churches).

On the question of participating in the National Convention, an alliance of diverse internal resistance bodies, internal SWAPO writes: "Overseas, SWAPO is the sole recognised representative of the Namibian people. It has status with the UN, the OAU and close links with the governments of nearly 100 countries. These close political and diplomatic links have been built up over many years. Internally, SWAPO is overwhelmingly the strongest political organisation in Namibia, with members among all the oppressed people. But until free elections and the removal of the racist repression of South Africa, the National Convention, to which SWAPO has been glad to belong in common with other groups, could provide a useful forum. SWAPO which has fought for and suffered for 'One Namibia One Nation', has done and will do all in its power to counter the Whites' racial divisiveness and to create genuine national unity."⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Töttemeyer seems to confirm this when stating "SWAPO's policy foresees a place for everybody in a raceless society." 1977: 71.

⁴⁸ Töttemeyer observes that "conflicting attitudes are revealed in statements made by Swapo on the question of whether South West Africa consists of one people with different languages or of various ethnic groupings. This uncertainty", he suggests, "must be seen against the background of Swapo's proposals for a unitary state of Namibia in which all inhabitants irrespective of colour, could live in freedom as equals without any division for the various ethnic groups. This situation, [SWAPO] states, could be brought about by showing respect towards each other and thus promoting human dignity." Töttemeyer 1977: 71.

⁴⁹ Statement on "National Unity and National Disunity" issued by SWAPO secretary general Axel Johannes, 24.12.1974. Quoted in Serfontain 1976: 178.

It is a general observation that - no matter if in regard to the contemporary situation of the liberation struggle or if pertaining to a future independent Namibia – no single SWAPO document ever uses a plural for ‘the people’ of Namibia or ‘their culture’ and ‘their (political) identity’. This is no doubt as much an expression of SWAPO’s emphasis on an inclusive approach as of its rejection of any terminology that could recall or associate the language of the oppressor, the apartheid state and its segregationist policies with SWAPO’s publications. Thus it has proved impossible to find in SWAPO publications any example of pluralist reference to ‘cultures or peoples, or national identities’ rather than (an also homogenising reference to) *the* people of Namibia, *the* Namibian culture, *the* Namibian nation.

The Creation of a National History

One can discern a meaning of nationalism in which the term is used to construct a common history for all the ‘Namibian people’, which in this context appears to represent all the people who lived in the territory before European invasion.

SWAPO’s self-written book “To Be Born a Nation” tells the story of Namibian history as ‘a struggle for liberation’ starting in 1670 when the first Europeans landed at the Kuiseb River near Walvis Bay, followed by the first signs of occupation and conquest in the 19th century (by the expanding Dutch from the Cape and the invasion of German missions in the middle of the century, until it officially became a German colony in 1878). To rewrite Namibian history as one of resistance against foreign conquest undoubtedly serves to create a common denominator for the diverse groups in the territory and to construct a sense of cohesion and solidarity among them. There seems great care to consistently portray the particular groups discussed as part of the “Namibian people”, even though from a pragmatic point of view, the “Namibian people” certainly did not exist at that time, and without European invasion would never have evolved into the people it is today, confined by the idiosyncratic territorial boundaries it finds itself in. The resistance of the Orlams is discussed against the expansion of ‘Dutch Colonialism from the Cape’ in the early 19th century as an early manifestation of nationalist (!) resistance. Similarly, the lives of Nama leaders Jager and Jonker Afrikaner are portrayed as the lives of early ‘nationalist heroes’.⁵⁰ The resistances of these groups are hence presented as contributions to the country’s liberation as a whole. Because those struggles

⁵⁰ SWAPO 1981: 151 ff.

were struggles of liberation, SWAPO designates them 'nationalist' – a practice that confirms again SWAPO's correlation of liberation with 'nationalism'.

In retrospect, nearly each of the uprisings against conquest is evoked as an instance of 'nationalist resistance'. Thus the early uprisings of the Herero and Nama against the Germans at the beginning of the 20th century are described as "a national war to resist colonisation"⁵¹ – stating the highly questionable proposition that these groups initially fought for the freedom of all groups inhabiting the Namibian territory today.

The Herero leader Samuel Maharero's call for help to Nama leader Hendrik Witbooi is referred to as a "call for national unity".⁵² In a section on the resistance of the Bondelswarts it reads "this proud section of the Namibian people had risen three times in ten years against German Rule (1886, 1903 and 1904) and was one of the last to surrender in the *national* war of freedom."⁵³

The portrayal of these early signs of resistance as nationalist ones notwithstanding, SWAPO refers to the years after WWII as "the Formative Phase of Nationalist Resistance (1946-69)",⁵⁴ suddenly suggesting that nationalist resistance had not existed before, for it took shape only after WWII! Moreover, it holds, "the late 1940s and the 1950s were the formative phase in the building of *the* [!] modern national liberation movement in Namibia" – as if all historical development of resistance had necessarily lead to the creation of SWAPO as *the* resistance movement.⁵⁵ A similar claim is suggested in SWAPO's historical profile, where SWAPO considers itself the most recent expression of a national tradition of resistance: "For a century the Namibian people have fought the invading and occupying forces first of Germany and then South Africa. At each step they have been victims of the most brutal repression and suffering that colonialism itself has ever seen. In spite of this, and in spite of the many thousands who have lost their lives through the years, the Namibian people's spirit of resistance has not been crushed. *As the latest expression of that resistance, SWAPO is leading them to final victory.*"⁵⁶

⁵¹ SWAPO 1981: 13. Also "the War of National Liberation (1904-8)", *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 159.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 164. Emphasis added.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁵⁵ This historical determinism is echoed in Principle Nine of the 'Nine conditions to be met by South Africa before SWAPO will be prepared to enter meaningful discussions with South Africa aimed at the establishment of a truly independent, democratic unitary state of Namibia': "South Africa must accept 'the *historic* fact, otherwise *universally* acknowledged, that Swapo [SWAPO] of Namibia is *the sole authentic representative of the Namibian people.*" Töttemeyer 1977: 69. Emphasis added.

⁵⁶ *SWAPO Information on SWAPO: A Historical Profile*, 1978: 29. Emphasis added.

The title phrase “To Be Born a Nation. Namibia’s liberation struggle” signalises a social determinism in the history of Namibia. As if ‘nation’ referred to a primordialist phenomenon, the Namibian people are viewed as a ‘nation’ – ‘born to be a nation’ whose flourishing existence has been obstructed by colonial interference. The liberation struggle is then significantly aimed at the attainment of a (freed) state where the Namibian ‘nation’, which already exists and has always existed, may exist peacefully and be what it is destined to be.

There are in conclusion three determinist observations discernible from a reading of SWAPO’s self-written Namibian history:

1. All groups living within the present territory of Namibia are and always have been first and foremost Namibians. Their individual acts of resistance against colonisation are seen as early contributions towards the *nationalist* liberation struggle of the country.
2. All of these acts of resistance necessarily lead to the formation of one and *the* Namibian liberation movement, which is SWAPO.
3. The people of Namibia represent a nation, but are hampered to exert their natural nationhood by colonialism. The resistance against the colonial power is thus aimed to facilitate that the natural may be and that the necessary may come.

SWAPO’s Vision of the ‘Nation’ in Independent Namibia

Few SWAPO documents give a specific account of what SWAPO envisioned for a post-independent political system in Namibia. Programmatic statements that are found in the publications and discussion papers in the second half of the 70s (the Discussion Paper on a Constitution for Independent Namibia in 1975 (internal SWAPO), the Political Programme 1976 and the National Programme 1976 (both external SWAPO)) contradict each other in certain respects and, according to Dobell, should be read in the light of SWAPO’s diplomatic missions to attract the support of foreign powers rather than as nonnegotiable outlines of a future Namibia, especially pertaining to matters of economic policy.⁵⁷

When comparing the documents issued by internal SWAPO with those issued by the external branch, two divergent approaches to the question of nationhood in a future Namibia are discernible. Daniel Tjongarero, secretary general of SWAPO (internal) declared in an interview with the *Rand Daily Mail* in 1975: “The aim is one Namibia as a whole and the

⁵⁷ See Dobell 1998: 66 f, also 83: “As usual, the rhetoric varied with the intended audience.”

eradication of federation, multi-nationalism, separate development and any form of differentiation. We want one man, one vote in an undivided country.”⁵⁸ This coheres with SWAPO’s project of a nationalist liberation, freedom for the entire territory. Any form of federalism is suspected of providing a source for the legitimisation of some sort of separate development or segregation and is therefore principally rejected.

In the National Programme of 1976 (external) SWAPO lays out its objectives in a post-independent Namibia. One of the aims comprises “the recognition by all states of the right of *the Namibian people* to exist as a *nation*.”⁵⁹ It is not clearly discernible from the statement if SWAPO here includes all inhabitants of Namibia or only those involved in the liberation struggle and who identify with SWAPO. A further principle gives information on this matter: “People guilty of betraying the struggle or those who have been opposed to it will be deprived of any voting right and be condemned as traitors to our people and mankind.”⁶⁰ Apparently, the National Programme reserves prospective nationhood only to its supporters here. ‘Namibians’ are synonymous with SWAPO fighters. Not only those ‘Namibians’ opposing the struggle but also those freedom fighters critical of SWAPO’s approach can thereby be excluded from nationhood and their ‘Namibianism’.⁶¹ Pertaining to foreign policy in an independent Namibia, the movement proclaims its intention to “assist and protect the Namibians abroad to maintain their culture, tradition and their national identity.”⁶² Reading this statement against the background of SWAPO’s above definition of ‘Namibians’, SWAPO regards only those involved in the struggle as Namibians, as belonging to the one people, the one culture and the one nation – all others are not ‘Namibian nationals’.

In a similar vein, an article in *Namibia Today* from 1980 reads: “a tribalist apparently cannot be turned into a revolutionary patriot. [...] SWAPO means business. Anyone, who tempers with our unity by spreading reactionary propaganda will have to be dealt with, whatever position he might occupy in the Movement. Namibia is one, and the Namibian Nation is one. Anyone who wants to divide us in order to bring weakness within our movement in face of the racist enemy must be exposed and in fact, must be excluded from our ranks. [...] Namibia is a great country and has room for everyone. Those who think that they can dismember any

⁵⁸ Daniel Tjongarero, SWAPO (internal) Secretary for Information and Publicity of the NNC in an interview with the *Rand Daily Mail*, 27.2. 1975. Quoted in Serfontain 1976: 183.

⁵⁹ National Programme edited by SWAPO external, principle I b.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, principle II c.

⁶¹ This principle somewhat foreshadows SWAPO later detainees scandal, in which alleged dissidents within the movement were detained without trial, tortured and sometimes murdered. See Basson and Motinga 1989, Leys and Saul 1995, Groth 1996, Dobell 1997.

⁶² National Programme, principle IX d.

part of it will be resisted with force of arms in the same manner as we are resisting the present Boer occupation of Namibia.”⁶³

Those, on the other hand, that do qualify for nationhood, i.e. the SWAPO supporters, are obviously perceived as one culture, one nation bound by one tradition. They share one common nationality and are united in one Namibian national identity.

Dissimilar to the claims laid out in the National Programme by external SWAPO, internal SWAPO discusses Namibian nationalism and national identity in a post-independent state in quite a different light in the 1975 Discussion Paper on a Constitution of Independent Namibia. Here (internal) SWAPO does not deny the heterogeneous population structure, but believes that this fact should not serve as an excuse for the creation of separate political entities. Cultural diversity and the existence of minorities are recognised, but political and administrative unity favoured.

According to the 1975 Discussion Paper citizenship should be given to people born in Namibia or those who hold residence for at least five years prior to Independence. Sovereignty should lie with the people who send delegates to the National Assembly, which would inhibit all lawmaking power and control of public expenditure. All Namibians older than 18 would enjoy the franchise, and majority vote in 100 constituencies should decide over the delegation of Parliamentarians.⁶⁴

Nationality in the post-independent state would thus primarily be defined in terms of democratic rights – quite contrary to the claim in the 1976 National Programme of external SWAPO that ‘people guilty of betraying the struggle or those who have been opposed to it will be deprived of any voting right and be condemned as traitors to our people and mankind.’ As the criterion for nationality is envisioned as ‘to be born in Namibia or resident in the country for the past five years prior to independence’, it would also involve an inclusion of those who did not support the nationalist resistance struggle or SWAPO in particular.

In respect to ‘nationalism and unity’ we have seen earlier on that nationality during the struggle was in one context defined by the state of oppression – nationalism resulted from the common experience of oppression. The 1976 National Programme of external SWAPO

⁶³ Namibia Today, 7/8, 1980, p. 6 f.

confirms this approach when recognising only those as Namibians who supported SWAPO's liberation struggle. By contrast, the 1975 Discussion paper of internal SWAPO takes an alternative stand when proposing that nationalism in post-independent Namibia would be defined in terms of democratic concepts and its privileges, nationality, extended to all who lived in the country.

This shift in the ideology of internal SWAPO involves a noteworthy move from 'nationalism' in terms of 'unity of the excluded', to the combination of a) 'nationality' as the protection of the citizen by the state, and b) post-independent *nation-building* that enhances not a common culture in the customary/ethnic sense of it, but a democratic culture, where the privileges of a constitutional democracy shall serve as a common identifier.⁶⁵

Displacements of Nationalism

Finally, there is a context in which one might have assumed a usage of the concept of 'nationalism', but where it is surprisingly omitted.

In a 1980 issue of the SWAPO newspaper *Namibia Today* reads, "we call upon the entire Namibian population to rally behind SWAPO as the sole and authentic representative of the battling Namibian people in unity of purpose and action."⁶⁶ Similarly, the Central Committee declares its objective in 1980 "to strengthen unity of purpose and cohesiveness in SWAPO."⁶⁷ Isn't this a contradiction in terms? If SWAPO is truly the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people, the true nationalist movement, why does it need to call for a 'unity of purpose'? Regarding the cohesiveness within a nationalist liberation movement one would have assumed that this cohesiveness grounds on the nationalist identification of its members, not on a 'unity of purpose'. 'Unity of purpose' typically represents not a characteristic of nationalist resistant movements, but rather of united resistance movements, i.e. movements from separate backgrounds which co-ordinate their individual actions for the sole purpose of winning the struggle against a common enemy. Such an alliance typically lacks not only cohesion beyond the unification against the opponent, but also the vision for a common future of the diverse movements.

⁶⁴ Töttemeyer 1977: 72.

⁶⁵ The post-independence concept of 'nationalism' seems to reminisce the concept as laid out in the 1975 Discussion Paper, as a combination between the necessary endowment of citizens with nationality, and the attempt to enhance a national identity by ways of nation-building, which involves training in cultural understanding and appreciation, political/state education, reconciliation, etc. See Dobell 1995 and the 1991 Party Constitution.

⁶⁶ *Namibia Today*, 5/6, 1980, p. 11.

⁶⁷ *Namibia Today*, 5/6, 1980, p. 11.

Why does SWAPO call for a unity of purpose if, as it claims, the struggle for freedom equals nationalism and nationalism equals SWAPO? According to the same logic, to be Namibian is to be 'nationalist' and that should suffice to associate with SWAPO. If however, SWAPO calls here for a unity of purpose, this indicates that the above equations do not follow from a 'natural' logic to the extent that SWAPO otherwise suggests.

In 1977 the Central Committee expressed "its profound gratitude to the broad masses of the Namibian people for their impressive unity of purpose [!] and action against South Africa's illegal occupation of our country and calls on them to remain united..."⁶⁸

It appears that, SWAPO's attempt to create a common history and to monopolise the struggle and identify itself as a nationalist resistance movement notwithstanding, it feels significant uncertainty about its nationalist basis and therefore resorts to a 'unity of purpose', which indirectly proposes 'if we cannot unite on grounds of a common belief into our shared destiny, then please let us unite at least on grounds of a unity of purpose for it is only in unity that we will be able to counter the enemy powerfully.'

This again suggests that SWAPO members are more drawn to the struggle by the common enemy of oppression they seek to fight than any feelings of cultural likeness. In this vein, Ansprenger conceded in 1984: "loyalty to SWAPO is primarily a reflex of animosity against South Africa."⁶⁹ And Serfontain argues similarly "[...] SWAPO has attracted support especially because of the apartheid policy, the indignities and humiliations suffered and because it is the most militant and hard-line of all the organisations."⁷⁰

⁶⁸ *Namibia Today*, 1/2, 1977.

⁶⁹ Ansprenger 1984: 159 f. My translation. "Mein eigener Eindruck war 1983, dass Motiv (d) [SWAPO supporters are those who support SWAPO because it is the only group killing the Boers] die Hauptrolle im heutigen Windhuk spielt, so bitter das für einen grundsätzlichen Kriegsgegner sein mag. SWAPO Loyalität ist primär ein Reflex der südafrikanischen Feindschaft."

⁷⁰ Serfontain 1976: 187.

II. 3. Conclusions

I have discerned several contexts in which 'nationalism' assumed different connotations.

1. In one context, 'nationalism' is juxtaposed with the fight for liberation. To fight against the oppressor is to fight for national liberation. To be Namibian is to engage in anti-colonial resistance. The anti-colonial struggle is per se a nationalist struggle.
2. In another context, 'nationalism' serves as a call for unity. In this vein, SWAPO establishes the necessary connection between the 'nationhood' of (all) the people of Namibia and a necessary identification with SWAPO's struggle in particular.
3. 'Nationalism' is a precursor for Namibia's social revolution and indicates the people's revolutionary consciousness.
4. 'Nationalism' serves to present Namibians as one people with one culture, one tradition, one goal.
5. 'Nationalism' is projected into the past. The history of the Namibian people is portrayed as one of nationalist uprisings against foreign conquest and oppression. Past resistances are conceptualised in terms of early forms of nationalism and the destiny of the Namibian people, 'born to be a nation', is presented as one to fight for the natural right which foreign invasion has so far restrained.
6. 'Nationalism' represents a unity of the oppressed.
7. 'Nationalism' is projected into the future and, subject to the reigning interpretation, either conceptualised in terms of a common providence for all those who engaged in SWAPO's liberation struggle or more inclusively in terms of an independent Namibia which welcomes all residents of the territory to become nationals.
8. Finally, there is a context where one would expect a call for support of SWAPO in nationalist terms, but where instead an odd 'unity of purpose' is proclaimed.

How do we make sense of these particular usages?

What is involved in a nationalist identification? The belief into a common culture? The belief into a common enemy? The belief into SWAPO which proclaims to be nationalist? Here the nationalist identification would be mere side effect. Or is it the belief into a shared future?

Is there a common denominator to these differing significations of the phenomenon “nationalism”, of the attribute “nationalist”?

Let us see how nationalism has been conceptualised and defined in other contexts, and how those definitions capture the meanings implied in the concept here.

University of Cape Town

III. Interlude on Nationalism

*“Nationalism is not the awakening of a nation to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.”*⁷¹

“Nationalism,” Minogue states, “is an attempt to make the boundaries of the state and those of the nation coincide.”⁷²

With this definition Minogue highlights the two elements of nationalism which later authors have similarly identified as essential: a political dimension and a cultural dimension.

Nationalism aims at the congruence of political and cultural boundaries.

Gellner, Orridge and Emmett define nationalism in similar terms, although with a slightly different emphasis. Gellner sees nationalism as “primarily a political principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent”⁷³ – with ‘national unit’ I would interpret Gellner here as referring to a cultural entity.

With his definition of nationalism as the “notion that there is or should be some intimate connection between broad cultural similarities and political organisations”⁷⁴ Orridge defines the parameters in broader terms, but retains the explicit reference to the connection between cultural and political units.

Emmett, finally, adds another dimension when he depicts nationalism as “a form of *political legitimacy* which requires that communal or cultural boundaries coincide with political (principally state) boundaries” and, he adds, nationalism “is likely to arise in situations where there is an incongruence or tension between these two sets of boundaries.”⁷⁵

If nationalism refers to the ambition to let cultural and political boundaries coincide, we can deduce two scenarios where either variable is the independent, fixed one, and the other the dependent one, which is sought to be altered:

a) The cultural boundaries are identified. Within the cultural boundaries a nation self-identifies itself as such and seeks to establish a political unit within these ‘given’ boundaries or to adjust the boundaries of an already established political unit to the (perceived) cultural

⁷¹ Anderson 1983: 15. Italics in the original.

⁷² Minogue, cited in Katjavivi 1986: 15. For an excellent introduction to differing concepts of nationalism and their implications see Emmett’s introduction “Nationalism, State and Culture” in Emmett 1999: 1–35.

⁷³ Gellner 1983: 1.

⁷⁴ Orridge cited in Emmett 1987: 61.

⁷⁵ Emmett 1987: 2. Emphasis added.

demarcation lines. As a consequence the political boundaries will be congruent with the cultural ones. As we will see this is typified in the 19th century nation-state project.

b) The political boundaries are fixed. The people living in this given territory attempt to create a culture within the politically defined boundaries. This scenario is exemplified in the 20th century nation-building projects.

Obviously, the two scenarios involve two different understandings of the concept of 'culture'. If scenario a) proceeds from the assumption that cultural boundaries are identified, it relies on a rather static view of culture, as if the cultural unit concerned will not change geographically and probably has not changed in recent history. The culture in question is portrayed as a permanent element which accompanies generations and generations without great variation and incessantly serves as the primary source of identification to these generations. This is, no doubt, a primordial and anachronistic view of culture which implies that culture does not change with the people who identify with it and that it does not transport different messages over time. The conception of a culture, which one is born into, through which one is marked throughout one's lifetime, and which does not change in substance or form over space and time, seems atavistic today, where culture is recognised as a dynamic and constructed social phenomenon.

The 19th century European project of the nation-state is often portrayed as the essential expression of the attempt to make state boundaries coincide with cultural boundaries, as cultural demarcations serve to define territorial political (state) boundaries. It appears to be an obvious insight today that indeed the nation-state project represents the most puissant realised example for the endeavour to draw a cultural map onto the world, proceeding from the primordial concept of culture just alluded to.

Scenario b), by contrast, assumes a constructivist notion of culture in so far as it views culture as a fluid and changing phenomenon which may be actively fostered to give people within a given territory a feeling of common belonging and cohesion.

Gellner and Anderson have illustrated that the analytical distinction between the two concepts is not as clear as might appear on first sight.⁷⁶ As we have noted, the conception of the nation-state project proceeds from a static and primordial view of culture, a culture to whose constituential boundaries the state's boundaries are adjusted (through war or treaty).

⁷⁶ See Gellner 1983 and Andersen 1983.

Disputing the primordialist conception, Hall argues, “the ‘unities’ which identities proclaim [and this includes cultural unities] are, in fact, constructed within the play of power and exclusion, and are the result, not of a natural or inevitable or primordial totality, but of the naturalised, overdetermined process of ‘closure’.”⁷⁷

In this context, Anderson speaks of the ‘imagined community’. Beyond the local community and family level, he holds, *no* identification, including cultural identification is a natural or inevitable process. “All communities larger than primordial villages of face to face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined.”⁷⁸ Disputing the argument of cultural nationalism, Anderson holds that the nation, too, is an imagined, i.e. constructed community. “[A nation] is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. [...] Nationalism is not the awakening of a nation to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist.”⁷⁹

As Gellner claims, “nations can be defined only in terms of the age of nationalism. [...] It is nationalism which engenders nations and not the other way around.”⁸⁰

While attempting to define political boundaries that correspond to assumed cultural entities, the nation-state projects of 19th century Europe often enough involved constructivist elements that engendered a national culture, through, for instance, the emergence of an industrial culture (Gellner) that provided alternative opportunities for identification or by means of standardising policies in language, trade, education etc. (Andersen).

Similarly, the restriction of movement across political boundaries contributed to the generation of a national consciousness confined within state boundaries.⁸¹ In this sense, the nation-state project, too, involved elements of a state-nation project where internal divisions were transcended and alternative unifying identities generated.

Hobsbawm would moreover insist that the European nation-state projects of the 19th century consisted of unifying tendencies among diverse ethnicities to live under one common government rather than that it presented the endeavour of a culturally homogenous group to preserve its territory. The latter, according to Hobsbawm, should be recognised as a

⁷⁷ Hall 1997: 5. Interestingly, we find here one of the rare occasions where reference to Weber’s concept of ‘closure’ is articulated unmistakably clearly.

⁷⁸ Anderson 1983: 15.

⁷⁹ Anderson 1983: 15. Italics in the original.

⁸⁰ Gellner 1983: 55.

⁸¹ Emmett notes this in the Namibian context. 1987: 6.

retrospective position, which the nationalisms of the 20th century invented to endow their aggressive projects with a 'justificatory tradition'.⁸²

In this vein, Hobsbawm remarks on 19th century nationalisms in Europe: "It seemed self-evident and natural that people of diverse descent, language and culture lived in greater commonwealths [größere Staatswesen] under one government – this is especially the case at the beginning of the modern nation state, which is the historically defined aspiration of nationalism. For the American and French revolutionaries the *Volk* – that is the 'nation' – signified the totality of all citizens who consciously went beyond all particularities of custom, local identity, language, descent and (in the American constitution) religion. This applied to the universalist oriented Americans and French as much as to the nationalisms of the Germans and Italians which were cultural-linguistically and ethnically defined from the outset."⁸³

One could deduce logically from Minogue's definition that if nationalism is an attempt to make the boundaries of the state and the nation coincide, then SWAPO's nationalist ambitions may be regarded as attempts to make the boundaries of Namibia coincide to those of the Namibian nation. Since the course of the Namibian boundaries are not in question in SWAPO's activities and not subject to the conflict, SWAPO's nationalism should logically be interpreted so to adjust the boundaries of the nation to those geographical ones of the state. Following from this line of argument SWAPO would be seen as trying to create a nation within its territory. The question arises then only, what is the Namibian nation? Who is included, who is excluded in this concept?

The previous chapter has shown that SWAPO does not regard all who live within the Namibian territory as belonging to the Namibian nation. Firstly, the colonisers are not considered Namibians (but South Westers), the Namibian nation therefore embraces all subjugated people rather than all inhabitants of the country. Secondly, particular references suggest that SWAPO regards only its supporters as Namibian nationalists. Those subjugated, but not supporters of SWAPO would thereby be excluded from the Namibian nation.

If the prevalent definition of nationalism was applied to the case of SWAPO's nationalism, therefore, one would have to qualify the notion of 'nation' here.

⁸² See Hobsbawm 1999.

Furthermore, we would have to ask ourselves if SWAPO unites the people on cultural grounds. We have seen in the past chapter, that SWAPO's attempts to present the people of Namibia as one culturally homogenous group have not been very successful. While SWAPO does call upon the people on explicitly cultural grounds in some respects, in others SWAPO does so on the grounds of the people's political condition as subjugated oppressed people rather than on their cultural identity.

In this sense it is precarious to interpret SWAPO's anti-colonial nationalism in terms of the above definition.

Both, Gellner and Andersen imply that national culture is a discourse, a point which Hall elucidates in examining five different constitutive elements of nationalism: a) the narrative of the nation that endows the respective culture with a continuity which presents today's culture as a consequence of a long organic evolution, b) the primordialism with which the nation is presented (emphasis on origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness), c) the invention of tradition, d) the foundational myth and e) the idea of the pure original folk.⁸⁴

To some degree the insights won in Chapter II support Hall's observation. The construction of a narrative has been traced particularly in SWAPO's work "To Be Born a nation", where the history of Namibia was portrayed as one of resistance against colonial intrusion. We recall the portrayal of Jonker Afrikaner as one of the early "*nationalist* heroes" or the depiction of ethnic uprisings against German colonial power as "early wars of *nationalist* resistance".

However, it is hard to recognise a primordialist emphasis on origins, continuity, tradition etc. – in so far as the stress on continuity was one of political resistance, and not of cultural behaviour patterns. It is not common custom, but rather the shared status and fate as subjugated people that is emphasised as the collective denominator throughout the greater share of the documents studied.

The same applies to the invention of tradition and a foundational myth: both were conceived of in political terms. The tradition is one of resistance and the foundational myth in "To Be Born a nation" refers rather to the first signs of colonial infiltration than to a common cultural origin. Similarly, the idea of a pure true folk has never been dominant in Namibia, where such a concept would rather find resonance for the case of ethnic entities, not for the people on a national level. Although SWAPO refers to the Namibian nation only in the singular, the writings of internal SWAPO often cannot conceal that Namibia is a multi-ethnic country.

⁸³ Hobsbawm 1999:37. My own poor translation.

If Hall's constitutive elements of nationalism do not seem to be valid in the case of Namibian nationalism, have we possibly encountered a maldepiction? Is the reference of nationalism to the anti-colonial movement a misleading reference? Is Namibian anti-colonial nationalism indeed not a nationalism?

Davidson offers an alternative definition of nationalism, which does resemble the connotations of SWAPO's nationalism delineated in Chapter II in some respects, emphasising the idiosyncrasy of nationalism in the context of a liberation struggle. "African nationalism is explained as primarily a 'claim for equality of status and of rights, for personal dignity, self-respect' and the right to marital values and spiritual freedom, simply to free the Africans from the status as colonised."⁸⁵

We can recognise here some of the connotations with which "nationalism" was endowed in SWAPO discourse: 'a claim for equality of status and or rights' in so far as nationalism was conceptualised together with liberation; 'to free the Africans from the status as colonised' also in the mentioned sense as well as in the sense of 'a unity of the oppressed'.

Davidson may offer a suitable description of what "nationalism" in the African context implies – and I would believe this to be true in the anti-colonial context more generally beyond the African. But in how far does this definition denote the similar phenomenon as the ones discussed above? There is no resemblance in Davidson's definition of the inherently *nationalist* tendencies alluded to above, i.e. to make cultural boundaries and political ones congruent. Why do both definitions represent nationalism when they appear to denote two principally different phenomena?

Anthony Giddens formulated a definition of the term which possibly embraces both faces of nationalism, the projected congruence between culture and political territory and the non-culturalist message of Namibian nationalism as captured in Davidson's definition: According to Giddens, nationalism "is a phenomenon that is primarily psychological – the affiliation of individuals to a set of symbols and beliefs emphasising communality among the members of a political order."⁸⁶

To conceptualise the "affiliation of individuals to a set of symbols and beliefs", I believe we have to look deeper into the specific mechanisms at work in the process of nationalist

⁸⁴ See Hall 1992.

⁸⁵ Strand 1991: 81, referring to Davidson 1971: 55-73.

⁸⁶ Giddens 1985: 116.

'identification'. Perhaps once we have understood how identities are generated and how people affiliate with ideas like 'nationalism', we can better work out the correlation of the Namibian liberation struggle with a nationalist struggle and understand the multiple and divergent layers in which SWAPO employs the concept.

Furthermore, an appreciation of the mechanisms involved in nationalist identification will give us better tools to evaluate and understand the legacies inherited by a 'nationalist' liberation struggle.

University of Cape Town

IV. On Identity

*"Identities are constructed through, not outside, difference. [...] It is only through the relation to the other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its 'constitutive outside', that the 'positive' meaning of any term – and thus its identity – can be constructed."*⁸⁷

IV. 1. Identification

As Hall points out, identity is not the stable core of the self, unfolding from the early stages of life until the end through all vicissitudes of history without change. Instead of understanding identity as the "essential" centre of an autonomous individual's existence (a notion that was prevalent during the Enlightenment period), identity is better understood as a process of ongoing and never-ending *identification* – a *temporary* attachment to subject positions, 'which discursive practices construct for us'.⁸⁸ While the subject positions are a product of discursive practices in Hall's sense, the individual adopts the subject position ascribed to it in a particular situation. By identifying, the individual 'responds' to a subject position made available by discourse, and is thereby 'hailed' into position, i.e. it identifies as the addressee. In Althusser's words, 'the subject is interpellated by discourse'.

One may understand discourse as simply "a flow of ideas that are connected to one another"⁸⁹ and that provide a conceptually consistent system of thought. Here anything from a simple speech situation to a complex philosophical exchange about a certain concept may be regarded as a discourse.

Moving far beyond a descriptive notion of discourse, Foucault understands discourse as actively constituting and constructing society, including social subjects, social relationships and forms of 'self'. Discourses are not representations of real relations but rather real relations themselves, namely relations through which human beings live the relation to their world and which serve to sustain systems of domination. "Language signifies reality in the sense of constructing meanings for it, rather than that discourse is in a passive relation to reality, with language merely referring to objects which are taken to be given in reality."⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Hall 1996: 4.

⁸⁸ See Hall 1992.

⁸⁹ O' Barr quoted in Riggins 1997: 2.

⁹⁰ Fairclough 1992: 42 on 'Foucault and the analysis of discourse'. In a decisive passage in his "Überwachen und Strafen", Foucault remarks about the manifestation of power relations: "Diese Macht ist nicht so sehr etwas, was jemand besitzt, sondern vielmehr etwas, was sich entfaltet; nicht so sehr das erworbene oder bewahrte „Privileg“ der herrschenden Klasse, sondern vielmehr *die Gesamtwirkung ihrer strategischen Positionen* – eine Wirkung, welche durch die Position der Beherrschten offenbart

Acknowledging the Foucaultian emphasis on the constructive effect of discourse, Riggins notes, discourses “do not faithfully reflect reality like mirrors [...]. Instead, they are artefacts of language through which the very reality they purport to reflect is constructed.”⁹¹

I have stated before that following Norman Fairclough, discourse is defined for the purpose of this dissertation as a systematic, internally consistent body of representations, the “language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view”.⁹²

According to Hall’s observation, identity is then not the pure true self, hiding inside the many other more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’ that we adopt in social interaction, but instead “formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us.”⁹³ Thus identity is also the product of a process of subjectification, i.e. the process in which we make ourselves subjects of those surrounding particular discourses, as for instance, a supporter of SWAPO does to SWAPO’s ‘nationalism’.

The fact that I am the only one who can say ‘me’ when I am speaking of myself and that I cannot claim “I am my father” is what Pecheux calls the ‘evidentness of the subject’ as identical with itself.⁹⁴ The constitution of the subject, however, involves a paradox by which

und gelegentlich erneuert wird. Andererseits richtet sich diese Macht nicht einfach als Verpflichtung oder Verbot oder an diejenigen, welche „sie nicht haben“; sie sind ja von der Macht eingesetzt, die Macht verläuft über sie und durch sie hindurch; sie stützt sich auf sie, ebenso wie diese sich in ihrem Kampf gegen sie darauf stützen, dass sie von der Macht durchdrungen sind. Diese Beziehungen reichen nämlich tief in die Gesellschaft hinein und reduzieren sich nicht auf das Verhältnis des Staates zu den Bürgern oder auf die Schranke zwischen den Klassen; sie beschränken sich nicht darauf, auf der Ebene der Individuen, der Körper, der Gesten und der Verhaltensweisen die allgemeine Form des Gesetzes oder der Herrschaft zu reproduzieren. Zwar besteht ein Zusammenhang zwischen ihnen (denn sie sind durch zahlreiche komplexe Räderwerke an Gesetz und Herrschaft angeschlossen), doch handelt es sich nicht um einen Zusammenhang analoger oder homologer Art, sondern um einen Zusammenhang je spezifischer Mechanismen und Verfahren. Die Beziehungen sind keine eindeutigen Relationen, vielmehr bedeuten sie zahllose Konfrontationspunkte und Unruheherde, in denen Konflikte, Kämpfe und zumindest vorübergehende Umkehrung der Machtverhältnisse drohen. Die Umwälzung dieser „Mikromächte“ gehorcht nicht dem Gesetz des Alles oder Nichts. Sie wird nicht ein für alle Mal durch eine neue Kontrolle über die Apparate erreicht, ebenso wenig wie durch eine Erneuerung oder Zerstörung der Institutionen; vielmehr besteht sie aus einzelnen Episoden, die jeweils in ihr Geschichtsnetz verflochten sind.” Foucault 1994: 38 f.

⁹¹ Riggins 1997: 4.

⁹² Fairclough 1995: 56.

⁹³ Hall 1992: 277.

⁹⁴ The ‘evidentness’ of identity, however, “conceals the fact that it is the result of an identification-interpellation of the subject, whose alien origin is nevertheless ‘strangely familiar’ to him.” Pecheux 1982: 107. A critique that Paul Hirst originally directed at Althusser does equally apply to Althusser’s student Pecheux in this context. Hirst accused Althusser of assuming that individuals and subjects correspond and that the subject was the unitary identity of the individual. On the contrary, Hirst held “it is possible to conceive the human individual not as the unitary terminal of an ‘imaginary’ subject, but as the support of a decentred complex of practices and statuses which have distinct conditions of

the individual/subject is called into existence: It is not the case that a nothing can be interpellated (hailed) as subject by discourse, i.e. the subject must already exist before being interpellated as subject, it is 'always-already-there'.⁹⁵ In a similar vein, Fairclough notes that "the process of constituting subjects always takes place within particular forms of interaction between *preconstituted* subjects (where the forms of interaction influence the constitutive process)."⁹⁶

What the articulation of an identity implies is that there needs to exist a *preconception* of this very identity - an idea of what this identity means and what makes this identity worth to be *articulated* in a particular context. As Hall suggests, "identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being."⁹⁷ Identities are articulated when rewards can be expected from their articulation; they are 'called up' when needed. A nationalist identity will be articulated in a political situation where to be 'nationalist' will make a difference. It is unlikely that a person will claim a nationalist identity while standing in the queue for concert tickets. Here the articulation of a different identity, for instance that of being a patron of the particular theatre may help the subject to attain to its needs and interests. The person may still be a 'nationalist' while also being a patron, but the nationalist identity is evidently not substantial in the latter context.

How does a subject assume, however, what the articulation of a subject identity implies if it has not done so before? In this context, Pecheux speaks of the "always-already there" of the ideological interpellation that supplies-imposes 'reality' and its 'meaning' in the form of universality – the world of things."⁹⁸ It is in the always-already-there that we have 'pre-ideas' about ideas, i.e. a conceptualisation of an idea (here the subject identity) before its articulated expression.⁹⁹ Hall sheds light on this characteristic of the *preconstruction* and the

existence. The individual is the effect of multiple processes and cannot be equated with a subject conceived of in terms of 'conscious' functioning." Hirst quoted in Thompson 1994:93. Second, Hirst noted that when we consider subjects as 'supports' of processes, we see that the subjects, which perform this role, may include non-human entities like joint-stock companies. Such subjects, he contended, were not 'consciousnesses' and thus could not be analysed in terms of an imaginary relation.

⁹⁵ Pecheux notes in this context: "[...] The subject has always been an individual interpellated as a subject." Pecheux 1982: 106.

⁹⁶ Fairclough 1992: 61. My emphasis.

⁹⁷ Hall 1996: 32.

⁹⁸ Pecheux 1982: 156.

⁹⁹ Thus Pecheux notes, "individuals are interpellated as speaking subjects (as subjects of their discourse) by the discursive formations which represent "in language", the ideological formations that correspond to them. [...] The interpellation of the individual as subject of his discourse is achieved by the identification of the subject with the 'discursive formation' that dominates him. [...] The preconstructed [is] the 'always already there' of the ideological interpellation that supplies-imposes 'reality and its meaning' in the form of universality- the 'world of things' ([while] *articulation* or

articulation of identities when he understands the process of identification as a suture between “on the one hand, the discourses and practices which attempt to ‘interpellate’, speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be ‘spoken’.”¹⁰⁰

From his view, identities are points of temporary attachment to the subject position, which discursive practices construct for us – a successful chaining of the subject into the flow of discourse, an *intersection* as Heath puts it.¹⁰¹ One is interpellated by a subject position made available by discourse, and in other words, by *identifying*, one gives articulation to the preconstructed notion.

It might be worth clarifying the question of agency and structure in relation to the process of identification. If identities are temporary attachments to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us, which degree of agency and choice between different subject positions does that leave for the interpellated subject? Is the subject passively constituted as such without influence on the process of identification?¹⁰² Does a nationalist interpellate – somewhat unconsciously – with a nationalist subject position which surrounding discourses suggest to him?

Hall highlights the two-sided character of the process of identification when he observes, “the notion that an effective suturing of the subject to a subject-position requires, not only that the subject is ‘hailed’, but that the subject invests in the position, means that suturing has to be thought of as an *articulation*, rather than a one-sided process [...]”¹⁰³

Also the observation that identities are ‘called up when needed’ and articulated when one can expect an award from this articulation indicates that identification does in some respect involve agency, and thus choice.

transverse-effects [constitute] the subject in his relationship to meaning, i.e. represents in intercourse what determines the domination of the subject-form).” Pecheux 1982: 156.

¹⁰⁰ Hall 1996: 5-6.

¹⁰¹ See Hall 1996: 6.

¹⁰² In this vein, Thompson argues that Althusser’s view “leaves no room for the autonomous *action* of subjects who may decide to contravene the imperatives of reproduction.” Thompson 1984: 95. Italics in the original.

¹⁰³ Hall 1996: 6. Italics in the original.

Identification then is a synthesis of both structural forces active in discourse, making available *specific* subject positions, and individual agency that confirms or disregards those representations when it chooses (not) to articulate them. Similarly, Fairclough holds “[...] constituted social subjects are not merely passively positioned but are capable of acting as agents, and amongst other things of negotiating their relationship with the multifarious types of discourse they are drawn into.”¹⁰⁴

As we shall see further below, Pecheux delineates particular modalities in which a subject may negotiate this relationship by either identifying, counter-identifying or disidentifying with the subjects positions presented to it.

Understanding identification as a ‘temporary attachment to subject positions which discursive practices construct for us’ we will in the following two sections take a closer look at the construction of subject positions on the one hand, and the processes in which those subject positions are adopted on the other.

IV. 2. The Construction of Subject-Positions

A crucial characteristic of the construction of subject positions is their construction through the outside. Identity, which, as we have seen, is more adequately understood as the process of *identification* - ‘the forming and adoption of an identity’, - involves, precisely because it entails the ‘put-into-relation’ with our environment, a simultaneous process of disassociation. When I identify myself as ‘child’, for instance, I disassociate myself from the group of adults (I disqualify myself as ‘adult’); similarly when I qualify as ‘woman’ as opposed to ‘man’, as ‘white’ as opposed to ‘black’ etc. Hall supports this argument with reference to Freud who viewed identification ‘in relation to consuming the other’, as the “earliest expression of an emotional tie with another person.”¹⁰⁵ In this vein, Hall notes, identities are constructed *through*, not outside difference. It is only through the “relation to the other, the relation to what it is *not*, to precisely what it *lacks*, to what has been called its ‘*constitutive outside*’, that the ‘positive’ meaning of any term – and thus its identity – can be constructed.”¹⁰⁶ For the forging of any identity the exclusion of what it is not is often its most constitutive act. Most so in early stages of its construction, a subject position is more defined by what it is *not* than by what it *is*. As we shall see, this is very much the case in the formation of anti-colonial national identities.

¹⁰⁴ Fairclough 1992: 61.

¹⁰⁵ Hall 1996:3.

¹⁰⁶ Hall 1996: 4.

What identification then implies is the disassociation from the other, the forming of one's own image in a differentiating reflection to another. Abram de Swaan has explored this mechanism of disassociation in the Rwandan context, where he illustrated the generation of hatred for distant strangers through the psychoanalytical effect of what he terms *disidentification*.¹⁰⁷ The mobilisation of Hutu/Tutsi subject-identities, he observed, occurred to a large degree in mutual disassociation, as a *reciprocal constructive relationship*. Indeed Hutu/Tutsi identities formed primarily by way of exclusion, i.e. *mutual* exclusion from one another.¹⁰⁸ There is no attribute which can be claimed by both identities, and no subject may claim to be both, Hutu *and* Tutsi, for there is only an *either/ or*.

In "The Rhetoric of Othering" Stephen Riggins elaborates on a conceptual pair whose essence captures precisely the mechanism of disassociation in the construction of subject positions which de Swaan detected above. The construction of a subject identity, a 'Self', involves its differentiation from an outside, an 'Other'. "Identities are, as it were, the positions which a subject is obliged to take up while always knowing (the language of consciousness here betrays us) that they are representations, that representation is always constructed across a 'lack', across a division, from the place of the Other [...]"¹⁰⁹

In a revealing passage from his *Logic*, Hegel remarked: "Father is the other of son, and son the other of father, and each only *is* as this other of the other; and at the same time, the one determination only is, in relation to the other... The father also has an existence of its own apart from the son-relationship; but then he is not father but simply man... Opposites, therefore, contain contradiction in so far as they are, in the same respect, negatively related to one another or *sublate each other* and are *indifferent* to one another."¹¹⁰

Sartre once argued that the Other was an indispensable mediator between 'myself and me'.

¹⁰⁷ His concept may not be confused with Pecheux's concept of *disidentification*. While de Swaan's *disidentification* refers to the construction of subject identities, Pecheux's concept illuminates the subject's adoption of subject-identities. With the introduction of the concept of *disidentification* Pecheux highlights the possibility of the subject to not identify with the position presented to it in discourse. It has therefore no resemblance with de Swaan's concept, which highlights the mutual constructive relationship between two subject positions.

¹⁰⁸ See de Swaan 1995 and 1997. Cases where the inclusive/ exclusive character is equally represented in a dual constructive relationship present, for instance, the identities of Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. Neither identity can exist without the other, indeed they construct one another.

¹⁰⁹ Hall 1996: 6.

¹¹⁰ Hegel cited in Zizek 1994: 41.

"I need the Other in order to realise fully all the structures of my being."¹¹¹ Whereas the essence of the distinction between the 'Self' and the 'Other' as referring to the 'observer' and the 'observed' in Platonic philosophy still inhibits the use of the terms today, their usage has become somewhat more restricted and their connotations more complex. The 'Other' is commonly used in modern social sciences to refer to "all people the Self perceives as mildly or radically different."¹¹² Consequentially, the 'Self' represents an individual who is negotiating her/his identity in counterdistinction to 'Others'. "For a person to develop a self-identity he or she must generate *discourse of both difference and similarity* and must reject and embrace specific identities."¹¹³

Self and Other may also refer to a group of individuals who identify themselves as a collective in counterdistinction to outsiders on the basis of some commonly shared characteristic.¹¹⁴ Riggins observes that "expressions that are the most revealing of the boundaries separating Self and Other are *inclusive and exclusive pronouns and possessives* such as *we and they, us and them, and ours and theirs.*"¹¹⁵

When Otherness is feared, the lexical strategies one expects to find are those that are evidence of hierarchies, subordination and dominance. Thus the binary construction of identity often hinges upon a hierarchical 'put into position'. Derrida has connected this *mutual construction* to the concept of 'status' in showing "how an identity's constitution is always based on excluding something and establishing a violent hierarchy between the two resultant poles- man/woman, etc. What is peculiar to the second term is thus reduced to the function of an accident as opposed to the essentiality of the first."¹¹⁶ Typically, a subject's identification and self-understanding as 'Self' indicates its perception as existing in a relationship to the Other where the Self presents the essential phenomenon, the Other the residual. We will discuss this in greater detail in relation to Weber's concept of status.

¹¹¹ Sartre quoted in Riggins 1997: 5.

¹¹² Riggins 1997: 3.

¹¹³ Riggins 1997: 4. Italics in the original.

¹¹⁴ In the following I shall use 'Other' in the singular when referring to the abstract concept. 'Others' in plural form will refer to concrete subject positions (e.g. nationalist subject positions). The plural also serves to underline the heterogeneity and complexity of the excluded 'Others'.

¹¹⁵ Riggins 1997: 8. Italics in the original. In respect to de Swaan's Hutu/ Tutsi relationship the conceptual pair of Self and Other can elucidate the antagonistic mechanism at work in the construction of the two positions: "Intermingled with the celebratory and defiant discourses of the minority Self may be lingering elements of shame and self-hatred, a result of exposure to the dominant culture's educational institutions and to psychological masochism." Riggins 1997: 7.

¹¹⁶ Laclau quoted in Hall 1996: 5.

Crucial in all respects is the construction of subject positions across difference. This implies that without the Other against which a particular subject position has originally been conceptualised, this very subject position is hard to understand. And as much as the attributives that fill this subject position are part of this position's constitution, those of its Other are equally constitutive.

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IV. 3. The Process of Adopting Subject-Positions: Three Modalities of Interpellation

Above I have alluded to the force of disassociation in the forging of subject-identities, arguing that no subject-identity is constructed in isolation and in a self-satisfied constitution of itself, but instead in relation to other subject-identities and often even in counterdistinction to another.

Pecheux is one of few theorists who has shed light on the mechanism of disassociation not only in the forging of subject positions, but also in the process of identification itself, in the 'taking up' of subject positions constructed by discourse. He does so from a linguistic perspective more than a psychoanalytical one. Pecheux distinguishes between three modalities of identification:

A first modality involves a simple process of *identification*. Here the subject adopts a subject position in free consent, as, for instance, the entertainer adopts the identity provided for him as 'the entertainer', including whatever expectations and associations may be attached to this subject position. As Pecheux puts it, he/she identifies; the subject is spontaneously interpellated, he does as expected, he plays the game.

The second modality is a process of *counter-identification* and stands in direct contrast to the first. Here the subject turns against the subject position made available for it, instead, it seeks for the reverse: it *counter-identifies*. The subject that counter-identifies revolts against the subject position reserved for her/him and expresses the revolt through the identification with a counter-image, a reversal of what she was expected to adopt, a reversal of what she was given to think. It is a 'bad subject', as Pecheux notes, 'bad' for the purpose of rebellion and protest.

Most of us have been 'bad subjects', for instance, to our parents during the phase of puberty. Typically, the 'youngster' subject seeks to purposefully *not* satisfy the expectations invested into her/him by parents, teachers, guardians etc. Anything he/she wants to do is precisely not to realise the image put upon her/him by the adult environment. The youth seeks to express the revolt by, for instance, clothing contradictory to the parents' anticipations, or sympathising with ideologies, religions, parties etc. the parents obviously disapprove of; in other words, seeking in any possible sense to create a counter-image to the one he/she is

expected to realise. This example also illustrates the finding of an own identity in counterdistinction, in *difference*, to an Other.

The crux is that while the (youth) subject's behaviour aims at a total negation of the (parent) image presented to the subject (the youth), this (parent) image remains the centre of identification, for it informs the very image the (youth) subject does not wish to fulfil. In other words, the subject-position presented to the subject remains the focus of the subject's re-action, for it is on this very basis that its counter-identity is modelled. While the performance of the bad subject depends on the antidote to the image presented to it, this very image continues to lie at the heart of the process of counter-identification.

In Foucault's terms the subject that counter-identifies remains within the boundaries of a 'reverse discourse'. While it struggles to resist the form of power it is confronted with through dominant discourse, its resistance is contained by the epistemological boundaries of dominant power. In consequence, the counter-identifying subject "speaks of its own name ... often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was [qualified]."¹¹⁷ The counter-identifying type of resistance discourse then does not go outside the discursive parameters it seeks to transcend.

In other words, when counter-identifying, the rebellion against the subject position provided for the subject remains within the same epistemological and ontological boundaries as those of the first modality, for the counter-identification rests on precisely the epistemological claims the subject seeks to counteract. The rebellion consists of a "struggle of ideological evidentness on the terrain of that evidentness, an evidentness with a negative sign, reversed in its own terrain."¹¹⁸ If counter-identification signifies a reversal, an antithesis, of the subject position within the boundaries of the same discourse, this also informs the limits of its potential for transcending the claims it protests against. We shall later connect this concept to that of nationalism, where I shall argue that it is precisely this modality of counter-identification that characterises the nature and limits of anti-colonial nationalism, a nationalism that is constituted on the basis of a counter-identification with the colonial regime.

We have seen that while, in the first modality (identification) the subject accepts the subject position provided for it, in the second modality (counter-identification) it rejects this very

¹¹⁷ Foucault quoted in Fairclough 1992: 57.

position and expresses its rejection in the adoption of a reverse-subject position - in both cases it thus stays within the boundaries of the same discourse. Indeed, this “*interdiscourse* continues to determine the subject’s identification or counter-identification with a discursive formation in which he is supplied with the evidentness of meaning, whether he accepts or rejects it.”¹¹⁹

The third modality identified by Pecheux involves a process that breaks out of the provided discursive boundaries by means of *disidentification*. The subject neither adopts the subject position provided for it, nor does it reverse the subject position by means of counter-identification. By contrast, a disidentification occurs where the subject takes up a ‘non-subjective’ subject position, non-subjective in regard to the ruling discourse. The subject seeks to transcend the epistemological and ontological discursive boundaries by identifying with a position of a ‘new type’, subjective to an alternative discourse which involves epistemological and ontological assumptions other than those of the original discourse. “This disidentification effect is paradoxically realised by a *subjective process of appropriation of scientific [!] concepts and identification with the political organisations ‘of a new type’*.”¹²⁰ A political discourse of a new type provides an alternative subject position, which, resting on alternative epistemological propositions, transcends the discursive boundaries of the first. Pecheux concedes, however, that every epistemological break is a continuing break and a matter of political distinction.

Looking at racist discourse in the apartheid context, the policies of non-racism of both the Communist Party in South Africa and SWAPO in Namibia provide an instance of disidentification with racist colonial discourse. The members of either movement do not identify with the Black/White subject position reserved for them by apartheid discourse, neither do they reverse the violent hierarchy between the subordinate/superordinate subjectivities, but instead eradicate the categorisation and stratification on the basis of racist identities with the policy of non-racism. The PAC’s exclusion of whites, on the contrary, may

¹¹⁸ Pecheux 1982: 157.

¹¹⁹ Pecheux 1982: 158. *Interdiscourse* here refers to the “structured whole of discursive formations [in which each discursive formation (i.e. that of identification and that of counter-identification) is situated].” Thompson 1984: 235. As Foucault has argued, what applies to the modalities of interpellation also applies to discourses or discursive formations as a whole: “any given type of discourse practice is generated out of combinations of others, and is defined by its relationship to others.” Fairclough 1992: 40.

¹²⁰ Pecheux 1982: 159. Italics in the original. He continues “Ideology – ‘eternal’ as a category, i.e. as the process of interpellation of individuals as subjects / does not disappear, but operates as it were *in reverse*, i.e. *in and against itself*, through the ‘overthrow-rearrangement’ of the complex of ideological formations (and of the discursive formations that are imbricated in them).”

be viewed as an instance of counter-identification for it retains the racist categories of apartheid discourse (even if only in the short term).

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IV. 4. Sociological Foundations of Group Identity: Concepts of 'Closure'

We have indicated above that counter-identification often hinges upon a reversal of status and hierarchy. In a situation of domination, the subject that counter-identifies seeks to emancipate itself from the confined role ascribed to her/him by inverting its status at the cost of the status of the superordinate. It seeks to break out of its constitution as a 'function of an accident opposed to the essentiality [of the dominant's identity]' as Laclau put it.¹²¹ But instead of diluting the hierarchy then, the 'bad subject' merely reverses the roles and remains within the same hierarchical boundaries.

The concept of 'status honour' is of some relevance here. Emmett has noted that "status honour always rests upon distance and exclusiveness, which restricts social relations with groups defined as inferior or lacking in status honour."¹²² The generation of this distance and exclusiveness is what Max Weber has designated 'social closure', a process by which social groups monopolise ideal and material goods through the restriction of access to resources and opportunities which they control.¹²³

The result of this process is social stratification – a vital element of the colonial state.¹²⁴ We can trace the mechanism of social closure in the formation of the colonial ruling class. In closing itself against the colonised, the ruling group seeks to monopolise advantages, which differentiates it from outsiders. Closure therefore entails two essential processes: a process of association on the one hand, and an active attempt to exclude outsiders on the other. It is, in Parkin's words "a form of collective social action which, intentionally or otherwise, gives rise to a social category of ineligible or outsiders."¹²⁵

Crucially, the effect is not only a reinforced group identity among those who benefit from the process of closure, but also a reinforced group identity among those against whom the closure was undertaken: the 'negatively privileged'.¹²⁶ Emmett notes that "closure strategies are used not only to create privileges by means of excluding outsiders, but also by those who are

¹²¹ Laclau quoted in Hall 1996: 5. See footnote 116.

¹²² Emmett 1987: 26.

¹²³ Weber 1992: 339. See also Weber 1962: 98 and Parkin 1982: 100.

¹²⁴ "[...] the idea of privilege is at the heart of the colonial relationship – and that privilege is undoubtedly economic." Memmi 1965: xii. In the preface to Memmi Sartre remarks "How can an elite of usurpers, aware of their mediocrity, establish their privilege? By one means only: debasing the colonised to exalt themselves, denying the title of humanity to the natives, and defining them in as simply absences of qualities – animals, not humans." 1965: xxvi.

¹²⁵ Parkin 1979: 45.

excluded, as a direct response to their exclusion and as a means of reversing or undermining the privileges appropriated by dominant status groups. It is this second type of closure which Parkin calls 'usurpatory closure'.¹²⁷ If the dominating group forms essentially by means of social closure, the dominated one often reacts with a similar group formation through means of usurpatory closure. The development of anti-colonial nationalism, as we shall see, hinges substantially upon the latter mechanism.

The element of counter-identification in the formation of nationalist ideology is also reflected in Parkin's concept of 'usurpatory closure'. While in the case of social closure privilege is created by means of exclusion, this necessarily entails the formation of a subordinate subject position – defining those who are excluded or 'negatively privileged'. Usurpatory closure then represents the "other half of the social closure equation", i.e. that process which reinforces the subjects' group formation.¹²⁸

While both processes of closure involve moments of *association* (among the included) and *exclusion* (of outsiders), 'social closure' by a dominating group hinges first and foremost on the element of *exclusion* as the monopolisation of resources and restriction of access to them from outsiders is the initial aim of the entire process of closure.¹²⁹

'Usurpatory closure', by contrast, pivots on the power of association against the dominating, and hence, *solidarism*. "The crucial distinction between the two modes of closure is that techniques of exclusion exert political pressure downwards, as it were, in that group advantages are secured at the expense of collectivities that can successfully be defined as inferior; whereas strategies of solidarism direct pressure upwards in so far as claims upon resources threaten to diminish the share of more privileged strata. Thus whereas exclusion is a form of closure that stabilises the stratification order, solidarism is one that contains a potential challenge to the prevailing system of distribution through the thread of usurpation."¹³⁰ Usurpatory actions aim at a biting into the resources and benefits accruing to dominant groups in society and thus often involves a reverse idea of distribution – a characteristic that can also be observed in the ideology of liberation movements. "Whatever

¹²⁶ Parkin 1974: 4.

¹²⁷ Emmett 1987: 28.

¹²⁸ Parkin quoted in Emmett 1987: 28.

¹²⁹ Parkin: "[...] A given social group may adopt strategies both of solidarity and exclusion." Moreover, "[...] It is entirely plausible to speak of primary and supplementary, or simply dual, closure practices; it is possible to retain the necessary principle of dichotomy [signifying the relation between dominant and dominated] without the encumbrances of a zero-sum classification." 1974: 14.

¹³⁰ Parkin 1974: 5.

the intended scale of usurpation it is an aim that generally implies alternative standards of distributive justice to those solemnised by the rules of exclusion.”¹³¹

Max Weber has illustrated that status honour pertains not only to relationships of domination, superiority and inferiority, but also to the attribution of social values and worth to individuals on the basis of group membership.¹³² “The assignment of such social values in a status order can have profound implications, not only in relation to privilege and access to material resources, but also to social recognition (in terms of respect or contempt) and therefore to the constitution of subjective identities.”¹³³ In a situation of counter-identification, where the levels of status honour are reversed between discourse (i.e. dominant discourse) and counter-discourse (i.e. the discourse of counter-identification and resistance), between subject and universal Subject, the social values remain the same. When staying within the same hierarchy, the ‘bad subject’ adopts the social values communicated to it through discourse and continues to seek identification from them.

The process of closure as exclusion involves a singling out of certain social or physical attributes on whose basis the act of exclusion is ‘justified’. In contrast to Weber, Parkin notes that these attributes are not arbitrarily or coincidentally chosen, but typically attributes that have already served as a basis for group formation. The communities singled out for exclusion are typically those whose political and social rights have been deliberately curtailed by the forces of law and order. “Such groups become the target for exclusionary practices because their capacity to resist has been undermined by the state powers. If it were merely a matter of one group ‘seizing upon’ some convenient attribute or other [as Weber has it], it should in theory have been possible for Catholics in Northern Ireland to exclude Protestants from jobs and housing, instead of the reverse; blacks in the Deep South should have been able to seize upon white skin colour as a criterion for exclusion; it should have

¹³¹ Parkin 1974: 10. Interestingly, Parkin illuminates not only the physical dimension of the fight (strikes, attacks, etc), but also the spiritual one, which hinges upon appeals to moral standards and ethical justifications. In the absence of more significant industrially based sanctions, it is an idiosyncrasy of groups that engage in usurpatory closure (applies to both ANC and SWAPO) to be “forced to rely far more heavily upon collective mobilisation of a purely social and expressive kind in order to press their claims. That is to say, when a group has little or no capacity to disturb the operation of the system at its vulnerable points, it is thrown back on a strategy that depends for its effectiveness upon the activation of political energies and moral sentiments. One common, if slightly paradoxical, form this takes is the attempt to manipulate the belief system of the dominant group by pointing up the inconsistencies between its advertised doctrines and its actual conduct. [...] In this manner, even those who do not resort to instrumental sanctions are sometimes able to monopolise proxy power, as it were, by gaining the support of influential sectors of the dominant group.” Parkin 1974: 85.

¹³² Weber 1992: 398ff.

¹³³ Emmett 1987: 26.

been within the ability of women to close off life-chances and opportunities to men, and so on."¹³⁴

The connection to the conceptual pair of 'Self' and 'Other' in discursive analysis is evidently an adjacent one here. Stuart Hall observes that discourses of difference serve to "establish social, political and economic practices that preclude certain groups from material and symbolic resources"¹³⁵ – precisely the observation Weber made in reference to the act of social closure. Typically the construction of a discourse of Self coincides with the creation of a dominant group in an act of exclusion. While a group of individuals monopolises the access to certain resources, they construct a dominant social status position for themselves and thus a group position, since the attribute they share is precisely the privilege they have created for themselves as a collective.¹³⁶ The newly founded group, founded on the basis of exclusion, represents the new 'Self', a 'Self' constructed in counterdistinction to those degraded to a subordinate social status, the negatively privileged 'Others'.

In an analysis of Anti-Semitic Discourse surrounding the 'Waldheim Affair' in the Austria of 1986/87, Ruth Wodak delineates two strategies that accompany the process of what Weber has termed 'social closure': (a) *strategies of group definition and construction* and (b) *strategies of justification*.¹³⁷ The former, strategies of group definitions and construction, involve the creation of a discourse of difference, a 'we-discourse' as opposed to 'they'. Riggins' observation about the backing of a 'we-discourse' by creation of certain pronouns and possessives (alluded to above) pertains to precisely this act of demarcation: the emphasis of the boundaries between the discourse of similarity and that of difference reflected in the language of antithetical pronouns, 'we' – 'they', 'ours'-'theirs' etc. The latter, strategies of justification, typically entail an attempt to rationalise or morally explain (and thereby 'excuse') the act of exclusion on the basis of a victim/victimiser

¹³⁴ Parkin 1982: 102. He continues "None of these could in fact be realised because the state had not already prepared the way for closure along these lines." This remark, however, raises some doubt as to where the initial reason for the exclusion lay. It cannot be a satisfactory explanation to argue that excluded groups become excluded because they are already to some extent excluded. Somewhere the first incentive for exclusion has to be identifiable. Furthermore, Parkin shifts the focus here to the state structure, which reverses the causality of exclusion with subsequent legal marginalisation as he later argues that closure on either side (social or usurpatory) can only succeed in the long-term, if it translates exclusion into legal measures. "Groups that fail to bring about complete social closure with legal backing are usually unable to establish a monopoly or to retail full control over the selection and training of new members." Parkin 1982: 99.

¹³⁵ Stuart Hall quoted in Ruth Wodak 1997: 69.

¹³⁶ For this reason Riggins argues "because the function of Othering [creating subject positions of Otherness, a discourse of exclusion] is exploitation, the political and economic consequences of prejudice should be the focus of research." Riggins 1997: 9.

reversal. “A typical justification strategy is the *division of the world into a dichotomy* – into good and bad, black and white. The contrast between ‘we’ and ‘they’ is emphasised. A similar strategy is the *disavowal of guilt* or responsibility. Other persons are cited as having prejudiced opinions [...].”¹³⁸

Again one of Riggins’s observations seems to confirm this when he states, “the rhetoric of Othering dehumanises and diminishes groups, making it easier for victimisers to seize land, exploit labour and exert control while minimising the complicating emotions of guilt and shame.”¹³⁹

‘Strategies of justification’ for the undertaken act of exclusion on the one hand, and the monopolisation of resources on the other, could involve appeals to civilisational discourse¹⁴⁰ (the method employed by European missions), religious destiny (the Afrikaner allegory of the ‘chosen people’) or the appeal to a myth of historical unjust subjugation which now has to be reversed in order ‘to make things right.’ This is the argument used by Hutus pertaining to the pre-colonial and colonial period in Rwanda, while Tutsis use it likewise in respect to the years following the ‘Social Revolution’ in 1959.

As far as the strategies of group formation and definition on the part of the Other go, it is left with two choices: either to group on the basis of the same criteria established by the Self to exclude it (in terms of counteridentification), or alternatively, to determine different criteria which transcend the attributive dichotomy established by the closure (disidentification). In any case, one constituent criterion of the Other must be to stand in opposition to the Self, otherwise it cannot be in the interest of the Other to articulate its ‘Otherness’. As alluded to above, SWAPO’s policy of non-racism reflects the second possibility, while earlier forms of Namibian nationalism, the activities of the Bantu Welfare Club, for instance, which organised events for the ‘enhancement’ of Black culture reflect the first possibility.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ See Wodak 1997: 73.

¹³⁸ Wodak 1997: 73. Italics in the Original.

¹³⁹ Riggins 1997: 9. The formation of the Afrikaner identity provides a fruitful example of the contradictory and complex process of how a ‘we-discourse’ evolves. See, for instance, Hofmeyer 1987. It is essentially a process of negotiation about which criteria serve for the recognition of a member, as for instance language, skin colour, descent, political affiliation, class position, etc. Who is an Afrikaner? What does an Afrikaner identity entail? Giliomee has shown how the Afrikaner subject-position significantly changed in the course of the second part of the 18th century, from one that chiefly pertained to the Treck Boers of the 1840s to one that embraced the poor farmers of the Cape and excluded the non-white Afrikaans-speakers. See Giliomee 1987.

¹⁴⁰ “Characterising Others as odd or irrational is a powerful strategy of exclusion used by a dominant majority that sees itself as normal and rational.” Riggins 1997: 17.

¹⁴¹ On the ‘Bantu Welfare Club’ see Ngavirue 1997: 210 and Emmett 1999: 139 ff.

Pertaining to 'strategies of justification', the grouping of the Other essentially hinges upon its resistance against the subordinate status ascribed to it by the creation of the 'Self' as 'Self'. The Other then, is an Other only as long as the Self is a Self and once the monopolisation of resources on the part of the Self ceases to materialise, the Other has lost its basis for collective formation, resistance has become superfluous. Once the Other is no longer excluded, the subjects involved on the part of 'Other' have lost their need to unite and hence their moment of cohesion. Unities can now be formed on the grounds of alternative criteria while old associations disintegrate.

Before we embark on a detailed discussion of nationalism in the subsequent chapter, let's review how the precedent analysis of identification can help us comprehend the concept of 'nationalism' in SWAPO discourse.

It helps us, first, to understand the particular mechanisms involved in the process of identification so that we can later discern what a nationalist identity on the part of SWAPO signifies. For now it may answer questions such as: What is the constitutive outside of a nationalist subject position? Who is 'Self' and who is 'Other' in SWAPO discourse? Which status does SWAPO envision for the two after liberation? On the basis of which type of closure does SWAPO operate? What are its *strategies of group definition*? What are its *justifications*?

I have argued above that the constitutive outside of anti-colonial discourse is colonial discourse, most evidently revealed in its designation as '*anti-colonial*' and not '*pro-x*'. Anti-colonial discourse is thus defined by what it is not rather than what is. SWAPO members are the articulated 'Other' of colonial discourse, the subject population vis-à-vis the citizens, the subordinate *en face* the superordinate. Through resistance, the 'Other'/SWAPO seeks not only to reverse the act that subjugated it, but also to find an autonomous identification outside colonial discourse which is best illustrated in the fact that its members insist on their 'Namibian' identity, instead of a 'South Western' one. The people name their own country and themselves, in contradistinction to the names inherited from colonialism. Here occurs a crucial self-identification which endows the 'Other' with a notion of 'Self', an act, which, even if not carrying any material rewards, has important spiritual implications for it endows the subject population with a *positive* identity.

A positive identification is moreover necessary for the people to realise the chances of resistance and the need to engage in usurpatory closure. In this context, Parkin remarks, "it is still necessary for the subordinate and exploited group themselves to achieve their own social closure by forging a common political identity and some measure of collective consciousness

before they are in a position to exert moral leverage. In the absence of any such initial concerted action it seems unlikely that even modest usurpationary gains would be forthcoming.”¹⁴²

Pertaining to SWAPO’s vision of Self and Other after liberation, we have noted in the previous chapter that subject to the different tendencies within SWAPO, nationalism is either conceptualised in terms of a common providence for all those who engaged in SWAPO’s liberation struggle or more inclusively in terms of an independent Namibia which welcomes all residents of the territory to become nationals (both ‘context no. 7’ of Chapter II). From this perspective, the ‘Self’ after liberation would either be represented by all who expressly associated themselves with SWAPO during the struggle, while those who did not would be confined to an ‘Other’ in SWAPO discourse, analogously to a victor-defeated divide. Alternatively, SWAPO’s more inclusive national vision aims at a minimisation of the Self-Other dichotomy and would distinguish only Namibian citizens from non-citizens, subject to factual criteria of citizenship and irrespective of political affiliation during the struggle.

As I have noted before, SWAPO’s non-racism represented an occurrence of disidentification as it went beyond the colonial racial classifications and accepted people of all colour and cultures in its ranks. While its *strategies of group definition* reflected a disidentification with those of the dominant group, its formation rested essentially on a process of usurpatory closure against the social closure undertaken by the colonial state. The *justifications* for its closure are presented by SWAPO, first, as a realisation of the universally accepted rights to independence and self-determination recalled in ‘context No. 1’ (the fight for liberation) and of the usages of ‘nationalism’ detected in ‘context No. 6’ (the fight of the oppressed). Second, SWAPO justifies its resistance as a necessary continuation of Namibia’s anti-colonial resistance as was concluded in ‘context No. 5’.

The question about the criteria of group definition, on the other hand, is precisely the difficult one to answer as it also involves the question about what is signified by SWAPO’s ‘nationalist’ identity. In this vein will the next chapter have to look at which modality of interpellation is at work in anti-colonial nationalist identification.

¹⁴² Parkin 1974: 86.

IV. 5. Conclusions

I have argued that identity is better thought of as a process of identification, which involves the chaining of the subject into a flow of subject positions made available by discourse. The process of identification is a two-sided one where the subject subjectifies itself to particular discourses, but – by identifying – articulates specific representations while leaving out others. In terms of the relation between structure and agency, identification is a synthesis of both structural forces active in discourse, making available *particular* subject positions, and individual agency that reinforces or disregards those representations which it realises.

Following Stuart Hall's understanding of identification as the 'adoption of subject positions which discursive practices construct for us', there are two sides to the process of 'identification': the construction of subject positions in discourse and the adoption of such positions on the part of the subject. The former phenomenon hinges essentially on a disassociation from a constitutive outside, a *difference*, a counter-distinction to which a new subject position is constructed. This mechanism is well illustrated in the conceptual pair of 'Self' and 'Other' which both essentially hinge upon each other, and exist only as far as they are the counter-part of the other. In Laclau's terminology, they exist in a *mutually constructive* relationship.

In regard to the adoption of subject positions, Pecheux has delineated three different possible modalities, in which a subject may react to the subject positions presented to it by discourse: identification, counter-identification and disidentification.

While identification and counter-identification work on same epistemological grounds, disidentification succeeds to break out of the epistemological parameters of the signifying discourse and identifies with a position of an alternative type. I have stated that SWAPO's non-racism, for instance, presents a disidentification in so far as it breaks out of racial categorisation, instead of merely reversing the racial hierarchy and excluding whites from its ranks (which would signify an instance of counter-identification).

The formation of groups typically involves processes of closure against those left outside. Thus Max Weber has argued that a dominant group seeks to establish itself as such by monopolising the access to resources, and thereby creates privilege on the one hand, and a subordinate position for those excluded on the other. The effect is not only an intensified group identity on the part of the privileged, but crucially, also on the part of those left outside, the 'negatively privileged', the 'subjugated'.

When one group undertakes an act of social closure, the excluded are likely to react in 'usurpatory closure' to seek a reversal of the process that has subjugated them. Usurpatory closure therefore pivots essentially upon solidarity among the excluded to collectively aim at a biting into the resources and benefits accruing to the dominant. This can be observed in the colonial context where the subjugated engage in an act of usurpatory closure to resist colonial suppression, as the Namibian people has with the formation of various anti-colonial movements. The crystallisation into one dominant organisation reflects the insight that usurpatory closure can only be successful when channelled into unison action, best achieved through unification of different anti-colonial tendencies into one single movement (SWAPO).

In terms of 'Self' and 'Other', both collective 'Self' and 'Other' subject positions are constructed in the achievement of social closure, the 'Self' as the dominant, the 'Other' as the dominated, rulers and ruled in the colonial context. The individuals of the Other, defined by their subordinate status, may either accept the inferior status position ascribed to them and identify with the discourse of the Self or they may engage in acts of usurpatory closure and engage in resistance.

The latter can either go along the lines of counter-identification, by allying on the basis of the same criteria upon which the 'Self' exerted its exclusion, and reversing the status order and the 'Self'-'Other' dichotomy. The 'Other' then becomes the 'Self' and degrades the former 'Self' into an 'Other', as is well illustrated by the example of Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda. Alternatively, resistance can function along the lines of disidentification, where the 'Other' will not try to re-conceptualise the violent hierarchy of subject positions within the same parameters of the 'Self' discourse (i.e. as dominator and dominated), but seek identification outside of the established status order and outside the 'Self'-'Other' divide.

While SWAPO's criteria of group definition indicate a disidentification with the racist discourse of the 'Self', its vision of the Self – Other hierarchy after independence is more ambiguous. The more radical stand within SWAPO seems to propose a reversal of the violent hierarchy after liberation as only those associated to SWAPO shall enjoy citizenship. Contrarily, a moderate position in SWAPO suggests an inclusive national definition of 'Self', as comprising all those who reside within the country, indicating a disidentification with the segregatory national subject position of the South African administration.

The relationship of 'Other' to 'Self' is defined in terms of antagonism, subjectification and resistance. Crucially, when the monopolisation of resources and privileges on the part of the

'Self' ceases to materialise (either because the 'Other' has succeeded in its resistance or for other reasons), the Self is no longer the 'Self', for it was precisely the privileged status which defined its 'Self-ness'. The Other, by contrast, is an Other only as long as the Self is a Self and once the monopolisation of resources on the part of the Self vanishes, the Other has lost its basis for collective formation, resistance has become superfluous.

Once the Other is no longer excluded, the subjects involved in the party of 'Other' have lost their need for unification and hence their moment of cohesion.

We will see in the subsequent chapter to what extent this may hold true for SWAPO. As I have argued that unities after the end of suppression can be formed on the grounds of alternative criteria, it remains to be seen also if SWAPO's strategies of group definition have altered from appeals to 'nationalism' to alternative ones.

University of Cape Town

IV. On Super- and Subordination

“The colonial relationship which I had tried to define chained the colonizer and the colonised into an implacable interdependence, molded their respective characters and dictated their conduct.”¹⁴³

Now that we have explored identification as the adoption of subject identities, ‘which discursive practices construct for us’ there are some relevant lessons to be deduced for the question of national identities and the phenomenon of nationalism as such.

We have argued that identification is better understood as the suturing between the discourses and practices, which attempt to interpellate us, on the one hand, and the processes that construct subjectivities on the other.¹⁴⁴ If identities are thought of as the points of ‘temporary attachment’ to the subject positions, which discursive practices construct for us, it should be worth exploring which subject positions were constructed as *nationalist* subject positions and how these indicate a certain meaning of the concept of ‘nationalism’.

We have seen in Chapter III that “nationalism” has often been defined as the attempt to make political and cultural boundaries coincide. This definition does not problematise the precedence of the nation or the state either in this process. As Degenaar has suggested, the 19th century European nation-state project epitomised the endeavour to adjust political boundaries to cultural ones, proceeding from the assumption that culture was the static variable.¹⁴⁵ In contradistinction to this stands the converse project of constructing a nation within given state boundaries: the 20th century, post-WWII making of a state-nation by means of nation building. Both scenarios of this definition of nationalism diverge on the conception of culture. While the latter proceeds from the understanding of culture as constructed and evolved within a given territory, therefore dynamic and fluid, the former implies that culture is an ahistorical, pure and primordial phenomenon.

¹⁴³ Memmi 1965: ix.

¹⁴⁴ Hall 1996: 5.

¹⁴⁵ See Degenaar 1992. We have seen earlier, however, that Hobsbawm holds this depiction to be historically inaccurate. Instead, he suggests, the 20th century pre-WWII nationalisms portrayed the 19th century nation-state projects as if they involved a primordialist conception of culture mostly so to justify and support their own assumptions of pure ahistorical cultures on which to build their racist theories.

The above definition, however, did not appropriately depict the moments at work in SWAPO's nationalism. An alternative definition, offered by Davidson resembled SWAPO's nationalism more closely as a "claim for equality of status and of rights, for personal dignity, self-respect [...]". Yet the phenomenon described here had little in common with the definition of nationalism as an attempted congruence between culture and state boundaries, and thus remains a contradiction between more cultural definitions of nationalism and those that highlight its liberatory character.

As we have noted earlier in regard to identity, nationalism too can be a divisive force, as well as it can be unifying, due to its binary exclusivist/inclusivist character. It may be an assertive expression of identity as well as an appeal to constitute and reject or expel outsiders.

Pertaining to the inclusivist/exclusivist divide of nationalism, Emery observes: "Crucial [in the formation of nations] is the development of an inclusive form of mobilisation and incorporation. Yet not all states in Europe, or even Western Europe have travelled along this inclusive path. Germany is one case in point where the construction of the polity along lines of familial descent was crucial to the formation of the authoritarian and fascist state. South Africa includes both of these paths. Afrikaner nationalism, was one of the latter type, but was based on race and language, not descent, and has institutionalised a racially exclusive polity. The Pan-Africanist Congress developed an anti-colonial discourse and movement, and approximated – inversely- the exclusivism of the apartheid state. In the latter part of the 20th Century and after a period of intensive modernisation, a more inclusive moment emerged. The principle agency for that inclusive nationalism, and thus democratisation, was the insurgency of the black community."¹⁴⁶

The peculiar characteristics of inclusive versus exclusive, cultural and anti-colonial nationalism become analytically clearer perhaps when we relate it to Max Weber's and Parkin's concepts of 'social' and 'usurpatory closure' and the conceptual dichotomy of 'Self' and 'Other'.

¹⁴⁶ Emery 1997: 15 f.

V. 1. 'Social Closure-Nationalism' and 'Usurpatory Closure-Nationalism'

Translating the concepts of group formation into the context of nationalism, we have two possible models of nationalism, the one of 'social closure' as a nationalism of the dominant, the other of 'usurpatory closure' as a nationalism of the dominated. In the colonial context, it is the model of nationalism of the dominated – arrived at through 'usurpatory closure' – that is represented in anti-colonial nationalism.

If we look at the nationalism of the dominant, we recognise a nationalist identity forged in a process of social closure, where a group seeks to ensure a superior position by means of monopolisation of resources, and relates its closure to cultural criteria. As the process of social closure constructs a superior position for those who undertook the act of closure, it creates a situation of advantage and disadvantage, of superordination and subordination. In terms of Wodak's *strategies of group definition* 'cultural' criteria, most prominently descent and language, are utilised to define who is included in the group and who is not. As this involves a decision about who is defined as 'indigenous' and who as 'non-indigenous' in a given territory, a cultural identity is turned into a political one. Different discourses may serve to *justify* the undertaken act of closure; civilisationary discourse, for instance was prominent in the case of German nationalism in the 20th century.

Essentially, the establishment of criteria for national citizenship is a case of social closure as certain groups will be defined as ineligible for citizenship and thus excluded from the access to resources including land, protection by the state, social security etc. In a paper on the legacy of political identities of colonialism, Mahmood Mamdani has elucidated this mechanism in an example of former Zaire where a new citizenship law in 1991 excluded the Banyamasisi, a group resident in the Kivu Region, from Zairian citizenship. The group was defined as non-indigenous and thereby excluded from crucial land rights and representation by a local authority.¹⁴⁷ By contrast, the Banyamasisi's deprivation from significant resources benefited the – as indigenous defined – Zairians as the exclusion of the former limited the circle of contestants for essential resources, most significantly, land.

As Hofmeyr has described so well, the recourse to culture necessitates the construction of a cultural myth that suits the political interests of the group that engaged in social closure.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ See Mamdani 1999.

¹⁴⁸ For an impressive account of cultural construction by 'cultural entrepreneurs' in the case of Afrikaner nationalism see Hofmeyr 1988.

For that reason, a comprehensively defined cultural theory has to historicise the developments that account for the choice of criteria used to include certain individuals or collectivities while excluding others; it has to invent a common history for the eligibles, and a myth which justifies the act of social closure and envisions a common destiny for the included. History is (re)constructed in a way that suggests a necessary and predestined development towards the cultural delineation and identification of the 'present', i.e. the time when social closure is undertaken. Pandey captures this well when stating "the enterprise of writing History in the singular, with a singular collective subject, arose precisely in order to give nations a past."¹⁴⁹ Hofmeyr refers to the theorists that engage in such a (re)construction as 'cultural entrepreneurs': people that re-invent and re-narrate a cultural history through the (distorting) popularisation of specific events and developments.

On the other hand, we have a nationalist identity forged in a process of usurpatory closure. A group identity as such need not be generated among the excluded for their collective identity is already negatively established as the group of 'those marginalised through the act of social closure which has been undertaken against their interests'. The expressive proclamation of a 'nationalist' identity of the excluded then signifies an attempt to endow their resistance with greater puissance, either on the basis of a recourse to cultural particularism (as is the case with Basque nationalism in Spain) or on the basis of a nation-wide constituency (as was the case with anti-colonial nationalism in India). Put differently, the negatively privileged unite either on a cultural or a territorial scale to revolt against their domination and mobilise in the name of nationalism. Cultural nationalism – the mobilisation of people on the basis of a common cultural identity – may then be born out of either, social closure nationalism or usurpatory closure nationalism and in both cases it entails the (re)construction of history by cultural entrepreneurs. Crucially though, usurpatory nationalism is essentially defined in political terms. It is aimed at the reversal of a subjugating act and thereby a fundamentally political phenomenon, which may make use of a recourse to cultural criteria in order to enhance the unification of the subjugated, but does not necessarily need to do so. This answers why the anti-colonial nationalism of SWAPO did not reflect the conventional conception of nationalism as a project to make cultural boundaries with state boundaries coincide.

¹⁴⁹ Pandey 1997: 5. In this vein he asks, "are the Histories that we write ever to be more than an official, national memory with only competing (official, national, oppositional,) counter-memories allowed a bit part? [...] Which kinds of counter-memories are deemed important enough to be allowed a place in historical writing?" Ibid.

What this distinction between social closure-nationalism and usurpatory closure-nationalism also implies is a differentiation between the 'marked' and the 'unmarked'. With reference to Derrida, Laclau has argued that an identity's constitution always establishes a violent hierarchy between the resultant poles of inclusion/exclusion, as for instance in man/woman, black/white etc. As noted before, the second term, he holds, is "thus reduced to the function of an accident as opposed to the essentiality of the first. [...] 'Woman' and 'black' are thus marks (i.e. marked terms) in contrast to the unmarked terms of 'man' and 'white'."¹⁵⁰ In the national context, the national identity forged through social closure represents a marked term, whereas the anti-colonial national identity forged through usurpatory closure represents an unmarked one.

The two models of nationalism coincide with a certain distribution of 'Self' and 'Other' subject positions. In the colonial context, for instance, the process of social closure creates the coloniser as the 'Self', the colonised as the 'Other'. It is for this reason that there is no immediate need to generate a group identity for those excluded, as they are already *negatively* identified as the collective of the 'Other', the ruled, the 'subjects'. Where the excluded react with a process of usurpatory closure –necessary for resistance –, and thereby define themselves *positively* as a group, they construct a 'Self' for themselves and an 'Other' for the colonialists.¹⁵¹ Crucially, both types of closure can be achieved in the name of 'nationalism' and each type involves its own discourse with the respective pronouns of 'we'- 'they', 'us'- 'them' etc.

We shall take a look then at each of the two types of nationalism delineated above: nationalism formed on the basis of social closure versus nationalism formed on the basis of usurpatory closure. For both cases, examples shall illustrate the dynamics of each type of nationalism. David Laitin's recent study of post-soviet nationalism in Estonia serves as a model of social closure nationalism, because the case highlights well how – in the process of developing citizenship laws – categories of privileged and excluded, eligibles and non-eligibles are suddenly established. An examination of the archetypical case of French

¹⁵⁰ Laclau quoted in Hall 1997: 5.

¹⁵¹ This mechanism can be related to Foucault's distinction between objectifying and subjectifying practices. On Foucault and the Analysis of Discourse, Fairclough notes "Interview and counselling represent respectively objectifying and subjectifying genres corresponding to the objectifying technique of examination and the subjectifying technique of confession, and the modes of discourse which bureaucratically 'handle' people like objects on the one hand, and modes of discourse which explore and give voice to the self, appear to be two foci of the modern order of discourse." 1992: 54. Similarly, one may contend that the practice of resistance objectifies the subject (i.e. the dominated), making the

republican nationalism shall illustrate in how far this has been an instance of usurpatory closure. While Estonian nationalism involves a formulation of *cultural* identity, 18th century French nationalism hinges essentially on the formulation of a *political* identity.

Both cases may provide a basis for understanding the idiosyncratic mechanism at work in a third and final case analysed in a subsequent section: anti-colonial nationalism.

Post-Soviet Estonian Nationalism

In the context of post-soviet Estonia, the American anthropologist David Laitin carried out a study of national identities and assimilation of the Russian minority within the state.¹⁵²

Following its independence from the disintegrated Soviet Union in 1991 the Estonian government introduced new 'nationalising' policies, including citizenship requirements in connection to the active and passive suffrage, which presented a *novum* for the Russian minority in so far as the Russians as soviet citizens had until then enjoyed the same duties and privileges as Estonian 'citizens'. Laitin examined specifically the case of the Russian parliamentarian Pavel Grigor'ev from the 95% Russian speaking city of Narva (80 000), who had lived and worked on Estonian territory since 1968 and had eventually been elected to the 'Supreme Soviet' of the Estonian Republic. As a consequence of the new policies he lost the right to run for re-election as a non-citizen in 1992. Thanks to a constitutional provision that granted the president of Estonia the right to nominate Estonian residents for citizenship if it was 'for the service of the state', the Russian received Estonian citizenship, successfully ran for re-election and continued his political carrier in the Narva city council. As most inhabitants of Narva, by contrast, his wife and two of his children, underwent a lengthy process of application for citizenship, having to convincingly prove their will and ability to fully assimilate into Estonian culture.

By introducing citizenship rights and duties within state boundaries and linked to certain requirements (language proficiency, descent (i.e. parents hold citizenship), birth within the territory etc.), those that fulfil the requirement essentially engage in an act of social closure against those who do not. The former proclaim themselves 'Estonians', while the latter are reminded of their 'non-Estonianity', whether this pertains to their non-Estonian (e.g. Russian) descent or other criteria. The self-proclaimed Estonians – in the new (juridical) sense of the concept as those fulfilling the citizenship requirements (and those who have

subject *react* to the discourse of domination, while nationalism gives voice to the self and thus subjectifies, i.e. endows it with a subjective position and a positively defined identity.

¹⁵² See Laitin 1998.

succeeded in proving their utility to the state in the eyes of the president(!) – reserve certain privileges and benefits (public education, social security, state funding, investment assistance etc) for their own group and thereby exclude and ‘negatively privilege’ Others, e.g. ‘foreign’ minorities, and diaspora groups. As Weber notes, their advantages are secured at the expense of collectivities that can successfully be defined as inferior; a category of ineligible is created. The earlier cited example of Zaire is another case in point where a new citizenship law in 1991 suddenly distinguished formerly equal residents into categories of indigenous and non-indigenous people.

A possible reaction among the excluded may now exist in accepting the facts laid out against them and either leave the country or apply for citizenship on the grounds of intended assimilation. In this vein, they identify with the subject position ascribed to them. In Pecheux’s terms, ‘they play the game’. By contrast, the ineligible may protest against the state’s rules and engage in resistance, striving to reverse the act of exclusion imposed upon them. Here then, the Others would counter-identify, prove to be bad subjects and seek the reversal of the dominant-dominated dichotomy they suddenly see themselves confronted with. This would involve a positive identification of their group not as the mere outsiders but as the dissenters, an act that would ground on a process of usurpatory closure in reaction to social closure. Of course it is possible to analyse the development of the apartheid state’s homeland citizenship legislation similarly.

French Republican Nationalism

In context of the French revolution, nationalism is often thought of as a particularly republican movement. The doctrine of sovereignty that presumes a single source of political authority is of pivotal relevance here. Trying to transcend the absolutist claim of the *Ancien Regime* about the congruence of the single source of authority with the natural person of the king, Rousseau conceived the notion of popular sovereignty, a sovereignty that lies with the collective body of the people. For the collective body of the people to understand itself as the source of political power, however, it required a collective and unifying consciousness that would define the people as such. As Emmett suggests, “the doctrine of sovereignty provided a direct link between the state and nationalism. If ultimate authority was to lie with the ‘people’, then the ‘people’ needed to be defined, and such definition could only take place in relation to the state which was to embody the will of the ‘people’.”¹⁵³ But what defined the

¹⁵³ Emmett 1987: 9.

people as the people was precisely their condition of subjection *en face* the absolutist state. Their communality lay in their common experience of the contemporary subjugating political system. Nationalism in this case was not a cultural, but a political (republican) movement seeking to unite people on a national scale for the purpose of claiming power at the cost of king and aristocracy: an usurpatory closure.¹⁵⁴

If popular sovereignty put the people into the centre of political authority, the imagined community of this collective body of the people needed to be defined; i.e. a subject-position that interpellated the people positively as a collective had to be constructed, that is not as 'the ruled' [who are negatively identified by their exclusion from rule, by their 'non-sovereignty'], but positively as the 'citizens' which exist in and out of themselves, sovereign in their own right.¹⁵⁵ This kind of nationalism was not of a cultural type, for the criterion of group definition was not French culture in contradistinction to neighbouring cultures, but the status of subjection (within the state's boundaries), which defined the group's members. In this vein, the nationalist subject position was of political, not cultural nature. Nationalist identification occurred as a result of usurpatory closure, born out of protest against the absolutist character of the power that reigned the people.

Justification for the act of 'usurpatory closure' lay in the acclamation of the exploitative injustices of the contemporary system and aimed at a removal of the status hierarchy.

The crux of Rousseau's popular sovereignty was that in terms of Pecheux's modalities of interpellation it represented more a counter-identification with the nature of absolutist power than a provision of a new type, a discourse of disidentification, that would have succeeded to transcend the inherent dangers of absolutist power. While the source of political authority was now to lie with the collective body of the people instead of the sole person of the king, it continued to bear the inherent dangers of abuse under a lack of control (i.e. by a constitution and the rule of law and order). In Pecheux's terms, the conception of popular sovereignty

¹⁵⁴ Similarly, Memmi's observation that "recently the governments of the peoples threatened by Nazism resorted to somewhat forgotten nationalist responses" can be explained in terms of usurpatory closure nationalism. As people are threatened by foreign or domestic subjugation they engage in a unifying act to counter the subjugating force. 1965: 28.

¹⁵⁵ Kamenka notes in a revealing passage; "It is where men feel strongly a discrepancy between their sense of community and the actual political arrangements of which they are part, that political nationalism develops as an integral and fundamental part of the demand for popular sovereignty. Here nationalism attempts to create a correspondence between sense of community and economic and political organisation by irredentism [...] and/or by expelling or assimilating through the strongest ideological pressure what are seen as alien elements with conflicting interests [...] For while minorities organised as communities can be subjects, modern history has shown that it is very difficult for them, to be citizens." 1976: 14-15.

sought an alternative to absolutist sovereignty, but remained within the same epistemological framework and the same discursive boundaries, and therefore provided only a counter-identification, a reversal of the subject positions, not a disidentification. The *constitutive outside* of republican French nationalism lay in monarchical absolutism. As post-revolutionary Jacobins' rule demonstrated, power exerted by the collective of the people bore as dangerous and abusive elements as Absolutism had, where what would constitute itself as the will of the people – “notre volonté, c'est la volonté générale” – was as susceptible to manipulation and abuse as the king's command had been.

Similar to French republican nationalism, the Afrikaner usurpatory closure-nationalist project achieved to turn its usurpatory status into one of social closure nationalism when its constituency gained power. While Afrikaner nationalism originated in a motivation of usurpatory closure against threads of multiple forms of subjection (custom, class, religion, value system etc.), its nationalist project succeeded in 1948 and mutated into a social closure nationalism through excessive privileging of its members.¹⁵⁶ Confirming Parkin's argument, usurpatory closure succeeded precisely in the moment when it translated exclusion into legal measures. “Groups that fail to bring about complete social closure with legal backing are usually unable to establish a monopoly or to retain full control over the selection and training of new members.”¹⁵⁷

While Afrikaner nationalism turned from an usurpatory closure nationalism into one of social closure, Black nationalism grew in resistance as an usurpatory closure nationalism.¹⁵⁸ In this sense, South Africa can be seen as an example of a country where both models of social closure nationalism and usurpatory closure nationalism confronted each other. Molapo's remark that “South Africa is a colonial situation of a special type in which two nations, an oppressing nation and an oppressed nation, live side by side within the same territory...”¹⁵⁹ quite captures this peculiar situation, with the qualification that his notion of ‘nation’ connotes here the anachronistic, primordial and static view of culture in the concept of nationalism, which, as we have seen, is not at all adequate to denote its essence. For our purposes his utterance illustrates well the mutual constructive dichotomy of nationalist

¹⁵⁶ Interestingly, but not surprisingly, then, while usurpatory closure ‘generally implies alternative standards of distributive justice to those solemnised by the rules of exclusion’, this obviously changes when usurpatory closure nationalism succeeds in developing into a social closure nationalism. It may be worth examining the paradigmatic shift in values of distributive justice of a nationalism before it has installed itself as a social closure nationalism with those articulated afterwards.

¹⁵⁷ Parkin 1982: 99.

¹⁵⁸ One could make the argument here that a tendency of British nationalism never emerged because British citizens of South Africa were principally incorporated in the group that engaged in social closure and never suffered structural political or economic deprivation.

closure: the oppressing nation that has formed in social closure *en face* the oppressed one that closed in attempted usurpation. While the oppressing nation defines itself in cultural terms, the oppressed one is bound by its status of subjection.

V. 2. Anti-Colonial Nationalism

In the colonial context for sure, the doctrine of popular sovereignty was not part of the ideology of colonial rule. But, as Emmett points out, it came to play a constituent role in the nationalisms that arose to challenge colonial domination. While the colonial state could not tolerate alternative sources of authority that were not directly under its control, anti-colonial nationalism sought to challenge this authority by forging a new unity among the colonised that questioned the legitimacy of colonialism. While the colonial state became the most identifiable target of resistance, the common experience of colonialism often sufficed to provide the necessary cohesion for a nationalist movement. At the same time, the predominance of the political and military power of the colonial state made unity of resistance essential.

Nationalism in the colonial context signified a direct answer to colonial rule, a counter-definition against the colonial state. In this vein, Eduardo Mondlane maintained “the nationalist assertion did not rise out of [...] a national linguistic, territorial, economic and cultural unity [...] It was colonial domination which produced the territorial community and created the basis for a psychological coherence, founded on the experience of discrimination, exploitation, forced labour, and other aspects of colonial rule.”¹⁶⁰

When anti-colonial nationalism hinged upon the emancipation from colonial rule, nationalist parties provided what Smith referred to as “a sort of state in embryo, ready to take over the colonial apparatus once independence was achieved.”¹⁶¹ If nationalism in the context of the French revolution was republican in its core and counter-absolutist, nationalism in the context of colonialism was emancipatory and counter-colonial.

It is from this perspective that I wish to re-examine the contexts of SWAPO’s ‘nationalism’ delineated in Chapter II. I detected eight specific contexts, which I would like to group into two chief categories:

¹⁵⁹ Molapo cited in Degenaar 1993.

¹⁶⁰ Mondlane 1969: 101.

¹⁶¹ Smith 1983: 51.

Oppositional: No. 1 (liberation), 2 (unity), 3 (revolution), 6 (against oppression), 8 (unity of purpose). *Cultural*: No. 4 (one people), 5 (one past, one destiny).¹⁶²

In the oppositional context, nationalism is broadly defined as a necessary movement to counter the ruling regime. It is a counter-colonial force, which does not recruit its members on a cultural basis, but which appeals to their common experience of oppression. On the basis of this common experience people shall recognise the need to unite, i.e. join SWAPO, and provide a unified and empowered counter force to challenge suppression and function as an institutional representative of the oppressed in Namibia. This conception of anti-colonial nationalism appeals solely to the political identity of the people: it is their political existence as the 'oppressed' and the 'politically excluded', which makes them part of the nationalist movement.

In the cultural context, by contrast, nationalism is understood as a cultural political movement, which unites its members not (only) on the basis of their subjugated status, but (also) of their customary roots. Thus it appeals to their cultural identity, and here significantly not their ethnic one (as Hereros, Ovambos and Namas etc.), but their national one (as Namibians). To the extent that this national cultural identity is not as prevalent among the people as to make them identify with a cultural Namibian nationalism, SWAPO engages in a reconstruction of the past, which emphasises the cultural unity of the people. The fact that SWAPO suggests continuities of national resistance, where a nation did not yet exist, signifies precisely the very attempt delineated by Riggins to construct a narrative that shall strengthen a common cultural national identity. Similar to Hofmeyr's 'cultural entrepreneurs', then, SWAPO constructs a cultural narrative for the Namibian people that retrospectively identifies events and experiences, which contributed to the formation of a national identity among the people, most prominently through the portrayal of 'Namibian' history as one of subjugation and resistance. We recall SWAPO's depiction of early anti-colonial uprisings as expressions of nationalist resistance and its claim that Namibia was "born to be a nation"...

I would hold that the appeal to either a cultural national identity or a political (oppositional) national identity complemented each other in SWAPO's attempts to recruit new members. To

¹⁶² Context No. 7 refers to a future Namibian nation and thus does not expressively indicate if SWAPO's anti-colonial nationalism at the time of resistance is to be understood only in oppositional or also in cultural terms.

the extent that SWAPO's plea to a common cultural national identity was not successful, it had to resort to appeals to the common experience of oppression.¹⁶³

The need to embark upon a project of nation-building in post-independence Namibia signifies in how far the cultural identification as 'Namibians' did not materialise. Nation-building is necessary precisely in order to achieve an identification on a national scale, so that loyalty to other identities, for instance cultural ethnic identities, does not threaten the integrity of the national entity.

The launch of a post-independent nation-building project indicates then that while SWAPO's nationalist discourse attempted to interpellate member-subjects in both registers, the political and the cultural one, it is the political one, which significantly succeeded in this aim. It is the oppositional status to the colonial state which united all 'colonial subjects' in 'nationalism', namely an anti-colonial nationalism, defined in political and not cultural terms as 'anti-colonial'. Anti-colonial solidarity upon which the usurpatory closure of SWAPO's resistance so profoundly rested was essentially forged, to paraphrase Fanon, 'not in declamations of a common culture but in political struggle'.¹⁶⁴

In a late revelation, SWAPO ideologue Peter Katjavivi allowed, "the common suffering under colonial rule, the identification made by the South African regime of two groups – the White rulers and the Black ruled – has forged a unity amongst those who were ruled in opposition to the colonial system imposed upon them."¹⁶⁵ Contrary to all assertions of a common cultural identity of the Namibian people on the part of SWAPO from the late 1960s up until the early 1980s, Katjavivi's statement signifies the concession that SWAPO's

¹⁶³ At the same time, a purely cultural national identification would have underrated the political significance of resistance and threatened the anti-colonial project in its essence. In the context of a UNESCO conference on the "affirmation of cultural identity and the development of national awareness in contemporary Africa" in which SWAPO took part, a note in SWAPO's *Namibia Today* reprinted an extract of the conference's concluding paper: "Through the processes of interaction a new culture is created and generated. [...] The terms 'Africanity', 'Negritude', 'African personality' and 'authenticity' are ideological expressions, which were justified by the needs of the times in which they developed. They have assumed historical significance and should be exulted for the role they played in the struggle to liberate Africa. However, their continued assertion is not justified by the current needs of Africa. *By restricting attention to culture they fell short of producing solutions to the social, economic and political problems of Africa and thus lacked the vitality that could have given them current relevance.*" Meeting organised by the UNESCO and 'Congolese Authorities' in February 1978. Described in *Namibia Today*, 2, 2, 1978, p. 15. Emphasis added. Interestingly, the section was quoted without a single comment of SWAPO's representative at the conference John Noble, which might have indicated SWAPO's position towards the cultural anti-colonial movements of the 40s and 50s.

¹⁶⁴ Fanon 1968: 180 ff.

¹⁶⁵ Katjavivi 1988: 558. In a similar vein, Kiljunen noticed "...all of Namibia's tribal communities have been brought under the colonial order and suffered common oppression. This common oppression has dialectically shaped among those people a sense of collective destiny as a nation." Kiljunen 1981: 188.

constituency significantly presented a political and not a cultural unity. With his remark he confirmed a view that Mondlane held as early as 1969, namely that “the source of national unity is the common suffering during the last fifty years spent under effective [colonial] rule.”¹⁶⁶

If the anti-colonial nationalist identity resulted from a common state of oppression, what defined the relationship between anti-colonial nationalist discourse and colonial discourse?

Nationalism in the colonial context may represent a political counter-identification in Pecheux's terms, as I have argued was the case with republican nationalism in the French context. The *constitutive outside* of this type of nationalism was the colonial state and the forms of power associated with it.¹⁶⁷ While republican nationalism defined itself in contradistinction to absolutism, anti-colonial nationalism constituted itself in contradistinction to colonialism.¹⁶⁸ There is hence a continuity between the discourse of colonialism and the discourse of anti-colonial nationalism as we have noted was the case with the discourse of identification and the discourse of counter-identification. In so far, both, French republican and anti-colonial nationalism of SWAPO implicate epistemological continuities with the regime they counter-identify with. Mamdani has argued that anti-colonial nationalism never succeeded in overcoming the bifurcated nature of power employed by the colonial state, but confined itself to partial reforms in either the customary or the civil sphere.¹⁶⁹ While republican nationalism went on to operate with a power of similar arbitrary and unchecked character as the absolutist state did, the epistemological continuity of anti-

¹⁶⁶ Mondlane 1969: 101. Memmi asserted similarly: “Being oppressed as a group, the colonised must necessarily adopt a national [...] form of liberation.” 1965: 39.

¹⁶⁷ The characteristic of the colonial power to also determine the nature of resistance to this power has been minutely explored by Mamdani (1996). In his account, the bifurcated nature of the colonial state with two distinct spheres of power in the racialised civil and the ‘tribalised’ customary sphere is closely related to the failures of post-colonial states to embark on successful and simultaneous reforms in both the civil and the local state.

The fact that the nature of national resistance is shaped to a great extent by the nature of the colonial power is also documented in the fact, that nationalisms in West African states colonised by France did not, prior to 1957, explicitly define independence as their primary goal. To the contrary, assimilation was the option most striven for as Africans were eligible for French citizenship after WWII. “In the immediate post-war period even the French left (communists, radicals and socialists) who had played a significant role in supporting and encouraging African aspirations for equality, did not think beyond assimilation.” Katjavivi 1986: 21.

¹⁶⁸ Similarly, one can make a related argument about the significance of colonialism as offering a constitutive outside in the development of Western modernity: “By ‘colonisation’, the ‘post-colonial’ references something more than direct rule over certain areas of the world by the imperial powers. I think it is signifying the whole process of expansion, exploration, conquest, colonisation and imperial hegemonisation which constituted the ‘outer face’, the *constitutive outside* of European and then Western capitalist modernity after 1492.” Hall 1996b: 249.

¹⁶⁹ See Mamdani 1996.

colonial nationalism with colonialism materialised where the post-independent government maintained (and often does so still) the despotic form of power employed by the colonial state.¹⁷⁰

As a form of usurpatory closure nationalism, nationalism in the colonial context is defined by what it is not, rather than what is it: namely an *anti-colonial* nationalism. It achieves interpellation from the moment of resistance, not from an own initiality. It is reaction to colonial action, anti-thesis to colonial thesis. Nationalist subjects form a unity in an act of usurpatory closure against the colonial regime. More accurately, the subjects do not identify with nationalism as much as they counter-identify with colonial domination, they take up their subject positions of resistant nationalists in counter-identification to the subordinate subject-positions provided for them by colonial discourse. Anti-colonial nationalism is then not a sovereign discourse on its own, but rather an unmarked *counter-discourse* emerging initially in reaction to colonial rule and lacking an essentiality that would last beyond the existence of (the marked) colonial discourse.

The discursive dependence of anti-colonial nationalism on colonialism is most apparent in racial nationalism as it reflects both the strategies of group definition and the strategies of justification of those of colonialism. As Emmett suggests, “racial nationalism allows subordinate groups to challenge and even reverse the degradation of a racial order. Whereas in the colonial racial context “black has signified for everyone all that was vile and corrupt, now the reversal is true: black is pure, black is noble, black is beautiful.”¹⁷¹ The subject-position of the colonised and its associated attributes are here simply reversed to their respective opposite, status hierarchies are inverted, without being surpassed.

The existential dependence of anti-colonial nationalism upon colonialism also explains why anti-colonial nationalism is predominantly focused on the struggle against colonialism itself, and only secondly preoccupied with the regime it will establish once the colonial power is defeated. In the Namibian case this is all too well documented in the divergent, contradictory and incongruous scenarios laid out by the SWAPO programmes for an independent

¹⁷⁰ In this vein Pandey’s observation holds true that “nationalism served to reproduce and reinforce new forms of patriarchy.” 1997: 3.

¹⁷¹ Emmett 1987: 33. Appiah makes a similar observation in the case of anti-colonial philosophy in Western Africa and of Pan-Africanism: “The tradition on which the francophone intellectuals of the post-War era drew, whether articulated by Aimé Césaire, from the New World or Leopold Senghor from the Old, shared the European and American view of race. Like Pan-Africanism, *négritude* begins with the assumption of the racial solidarity of the Negro.” 1993: 6.

Namibia.¹⁷² If discourse is concerned with the here and now, so will counter-discourse be. In other words, discourse sets the agenda of issues to discuss.

The characteristic of anti-colonial nationalism to be predominantly defined through its *constitutive outside* explains the nationalist vacuum of post-colonial states, once the dominant power has withdrawn. As the need for political resistance has vanished, so has the organisation of resistance in national terms, and the need to identify as a nationalist subject. Similar to Marx' argument that the "class struggle is national, not in *substance*, but as the Communist Manifesto says, in *form*",¹⁷³ one can make the same argument for usurpatory closure nationalism that characteristically forms in counter-distinction to a dominant power. Following from this, anti-colonial nationalism may be cultural in form, but is not cultural in substance; it is political in substance and its nationalist identifications cease to function with the end of the political end that defines it: resistance.

The "scattering to pieces" of nationalism in post-colonial states then would not have been the case, of course, had it been one of *substance*. With the end of colonial domination, resistance to it becomes superfluous and the subject positions constructed in relation to it are respectively outdated.¹⁷⁴ With the decreasing puissance of colonial discourse, the subject positions of identification and crucially, also those of counter-identification, i.e. those of nationalist resistance are decreasingly viable.¹⁷⁵ That is the characteristic of the second modality that it exists only in counter-identification to the first. If anti-colonial nationalism had developed an alternative kind of discourse, for instance through the generation of a democratic culture, it might have superseded the era of independence. It would have had to operate in the boundaries of Pecheux's third modality, a discourse that does not stand in relation to that of the first modality, but instead disidentifies, i.e. creates a new structure of thought both in ontological as well as epistemological terms.

¹⁷² See Dobell's description of SWAPO's 'ideological flexibility' and Ansprenger's and Harneit Sievers' analyses of the SWAPO programmes. We have noted SWAPO's divergent views in respect to a post-independence nationalist identity, see context No. 7 in the conclusion of Chapter II. Apart from SWAPO's instrumental 'ideological flexibility', discussions over a future regime that could have divided the nationalist movement were strategically undesirable.

¹⁷³ Marx quoted in Pecheux 1982: 167.

¹⁷⁴ In this vein, Fanon sarcastically remarked, "to believe that it is possible to create a black culture is to forget that niggers are disappearing, just as those people who brought them into being are seeing the break-up of their economic and cultural supremacy." 1968:188-9.

Translated into the South African context, one may ask from the preceding for instance: Was that the destiny of Black consciousness in South Africa to function as a unifying discourse only as long as the apartheid state politically defined 'Blackness'? Is there a discourse to fill the vacuum of cohesion left by the vanishing of the unifying experience of counter-identification?

Partha Chatterjee has observed similar mechanisms of identification and counter-identification in his study of Indian nationalism. According to him, Indian nationalist discourse reversed the ontological claims with which Orientalism – “an enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage and even produce the Occident politically, sociologically [...] and ideologically during the post-enlightenment period” – had attempted to grasp the Orient.¹⁷⁶ Chatterjee adopts a distinction between different levels within the structure of knowledge undertaken by post war French philosophical writings of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty: levels of the *problematique* and levels of the *thematique*. While the *problematique* represents the ideological claims “which assert the existence, and often the practical realisability, of certain historical possibilities”, the *thematique* refers to the justificatory structures that back the ideological claims by appeal to epistemic and moral principles.¹⁷⁷ When Indian nationalism sought an ‘autonomous and sovereign’ subjectivity, Chatterjee holds, it reversed the ontological claims of Orientalism that endowed the Orient with a subordinate role. Indian nationalism thus reversed the *problematique* of Orientalism. However, Chatterjee argues, at the level of the *thematique*, nationalism accepted and adopted the same essentialist conceptions based on the distinction between the West and the East, the systematised rationality of Western science and the irrational coincidence in Eastern spirituality. “Nationalism denied the alleged inferiority of the colonised people, it also asserted that a backward nation could modernise itself while retaining its cultural identity. It thus produced a discourse in which, even as it challenged the colonial claim to political domination, it also accepted the very intellectual premises of ‘modernity’ on which colonial domination was based.”¹⁷⁸ The difficulty of detaching oneself from colonial discourse lay in the lack of a recognised alternative culture to associate with which would have provided more than a reversed antidote to colonialism. Sarkar captured this dilemma when he remarked, “nationalists [...] did manage to keep or create an autonomous world of literature, art, education, domesticity, and religion. But their efforts to eradicate ‘colonial difference’ (e.g. campaigns against racial inequality in jobs or law courts or civil rights violations, and for political concessions in general) actually meant a

¹⁷⁵ It is this insight that also informed Fanon’s argument that liberation has to precede nationalism. See Fanon 1971.

¹⁷⁶ Chatterjee 1987: 251.

¹⁷⁷ Sarkar critically comment on Chatterjee: “[The enterprise of the subaltern studies] has not been able to transcend the constraints of Nationalism, Marxism and History. Consequently, perhaps the most influential ‘Subaltern’ work of recent years, Partha Chatterjee’s ‘The Nation and Its Fragments’, is still framed by the category of the nation, and remains concerned with the question of its history or histories.” 1997: 22.

¹⁷⁸ Chatterjee 1987: 250.

progressive absorption into the Western colonial project of modern state-building. Thus paradoxically all commonsenseically effective ways of fighting colonial domination (mass political struggle, resistance, or even economic self-help) become signs of surrender.”¹⁷⁹

There is, I believe, a coincidence between Chatterjee’s *problematique* and Pecheux’s concept of *counter-identification*. For is it not precisely the constitutive element of counter-identification to reverse the ontological claims of the subject position presented to it, and to remain within the same epistemological framework at the same time? And does disidentification not occur precisely there, where the subject succeeds in breaking out of the discursive boundaries and in constructing an identity that grounds on alternative ontological and epistemological claims?

If this is so, Chatterjee’s Indian nationalism operated in the second modality, the modality of counter-identification. It reversed the *problematique* of colonial discourse, but remained within the boundaries of the latter’s *thematique*, i.e. its *episteme*.¹⁸⁰

The deficiency of nationalist discourse to transcend the colonial structure of thought is what Chatterjee delineates the *inherent contradiction* of nationalist thinking: that it reasons within a framework of knowledge “whose representational structure corresponds to the very structure of power nationalist thought seeks to repudiate.”¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Sarkar 1997: 10.

¹⁸⁰ In Foucault’s sense the *episteme* is here understood more precisely as “a complex relationship of successive displacement.” 1979: 10.

¹⁸¹ Chatterjee 1987: 253. Applying these insights to Mamdani’s account, the failure to overcome the particularly nature of power inherited by colonialism is found in the fact that anti-colonial nationalisms did not provide a new *thematique*, but remained within the thematic boundaries discussed above. While what he terms ‘mainstream nationalists’ succeeded in deracialising society, they did not succeed in detribalising the rural power. The preservation of customary power and customary institutions contaminated democratised power in the urban. ‘Radical nationalism’, by contrast, broke with the formal institutions of indirect rule, including the customary institutions but replaced those institutions by others of similar nature. Neither the approaches of radical nor those of mainstream nationalism overcame the nature of colonial rule and therefore failed to successfully democratise, the state and civil society. See Mamdani 1996.

V. 3. Conclusions

While we have seen that the construction of subject identities often involves a substantial disassociation from another subject-identity in opposition to which it is constituted (de Swaan), this also holds true for the construction of nationalist identities. As Hall, and Laclau in particular, have pointed out, it is part of the identifying process to delineate oneself from an outside, to constitute one's identity in difference to an Other. This *constitutive outside* is pertinent to the process of *nationalist* identification as much as to any other.

I utilised Minogue's definition that nationalism is a movement, which attempts to make cultural boundaries coincide with political ones, where the precedence of either one is a matter of context. As Andersen has highlighted in his concept of the 'imagined community', the process of making political boundaries congruous to cultural ones (the 19th century European nation-state project is often presented in this light) may involve as much constructivist elements as the process of constructing a culture within given political boundaries (20th century nation-building).

To better understand the contradictory moments at work in nationalism I proposed to interpret nationalism in view of Weber's concept of closure. I hence distinguished between a nationalism of the dominant that grounds on a process of social closure and a nationalism of the dominated which bases on a process of usurpatory closure. While the strategies of group definition in the context of social closure nationalism are culturally defined, their counterparts in usurpatory closure nationalism are politically defined, unifying those that are subjugated. The latter can additionally, but does not need to necessarily, express itself in cultural terms. In the case of cultural nationalism, which can ground on either, a process of social closure or one of usurpatory closure, a cultural theory is developed – typically by cultural entrepreneurs – to give the nation a conceptual legitimacy and a history.

The relation between nationalism of the dominant and nationalism of the dominated represents one of the marked and the unmarked (Derrida). If the identity forged through social closure is a marked one, its counterpart in usurpatory nationalism is unmarked as its political project hinges essentially upon the resistance to a 'Self' and can thus not inhibit an own essentiality. The unmarked is conceptually dependent upon the marked. Whereas the former enjoys analytical content, the latter, to paraphrase Mamdani, lacks both an 'original history and an authentic future'.

To illustrate both types of nationalism in their functioning, I then briefly examined Post-Soviet Estonian nationalism as an example of social closure nationalism and French republican nationalism as an instance of usurpatory closure nationalism.

I argued that the crux with French republican nationalism was that it did not succeed to transcend the very form of power it sought to overcome. While it aimed at a replacement of the absolutist state, the form of power it employed was of equally arbitrary and uncontrolled character. The structure of thought of French republican nationalism presented an epistemological continuity with that of Absolutism so that its attempt to overcome the legacy of the absolutist state was curtailed within the latter's parameters. In terms of Pecheux's modalities of interpellation, the discourse of French republican nationalism created positions of counter-identification with Absolutism, but, significantly, not a disidentification that would have allowed it an independent existence from the power/knowledge of Absolutism.

In the case of anti-colonial nationalism a similar argument can be made. While the constitutive outside of French republican nationalism was Absolutism, colonialism was the constitutive outside of anti-colonial nationalism. Both functioned within the very structure of thought whose power they strove to repudiate.

Re-examining the eight different contexts in which 'nationalism' appeared in SWAPO discourse, I categorised them into two chief registers, the cultural and the oppositional. While by the cultural register, nationalist discourse interpellated subjects on grounds of a myth of a common custom and a common history, by the oppositional register it appealed to the people's common experience of oppression. Whereas the former produced a cultural identity, the latter produced a political one. Since the process of usurpatory closure (of anti-colonial resistance) is essentially a political one, interpellation does occur principally in the oppositional register. Interpellation on cultural grounds may, but does not need to, go along the political interpellation here to endow the political identity with greater puissance.

If post-independent democracy has to be accompanied by a nation-building project, which is to foster cohesion among the people, this documents to which extent the interpellation on cultural grounds has not been successful. Post-independent nation-building is necessary, precisely because the anti-colonial nationalist identity was a political one, whose viability has vanished with the end of resistance.

This phenomenon makes us think about the discursive relationship between colonialism and anti-colonial nationalism. If colonialism chiefly determines the range of subject-positions available to nationalist discourse, then nationalist subject positions are rather counter-identifications with colonialism than identifications with (Namibian) nationalism. Anti-colonial nationalism, in other words, is not a sovereign discourse in its own right, but epistemologically determined by colonial discourse.

At the same time, this is not to deny the autonomy of nationalist discourse. Analogous to Gramsci's argument about the *autonomy* of the subaltern, I would hold that anti-colonial nationalist discourse did indeed enjoy autonomy, expressed most significantly in anti-colonial literature. Crucially though, both the structure of thought and the power it employed were autonomous, but not *sovereign* from the power/knowledge of colonialism.

This point has similarly been made by Partha Chatterjee whose analysis of anti-colonial nationalism in India led him to the conclusion that it carried an *inherent contradiction*. It reversed the *problematique* (ideological claims) of colonialism, but remained within the same *thematique* – the justificatory structures that backed the ideological claims by a recourse to epistemic and moral principles. It thereby reasoned within a framework of thought “whose representational structure corresponded to the very structure of power it [sought] to repudiate”.

A following section of this paper will then have to look at the legacy this *inherent contradiction* leaves in the post-colonial state and how the vacuum of cohesion left by the vanishing of national political identities with the end of resistance can be newly filled.

VI. After Liberation

“After the conflict there is not only the disappearance of the colonised man [...] This new humanity cannot do otherwise than define a new humanism for itself and others. It is prefigured in the objectives and methods of the conflict.”¹⁸²

What is the legacy of the *inherent contradiction* Chatterjee identified in anti-colonial thought?

And how can it be overcome?

One implication of the circumstance, that anti-colonial nationalism was not a sovereign discourse on its own, but reasoned within a framework of knowledge that was essentially that of colonialism, has been expressed in its inability to interpellate subjects as national subjects once resistance (to which nationalism was politically attached) is no longer necessary. Since the anti-colonial nationalist subject position was first and foremost a political and not a cultural one, it becomes superfluous when the political context, in and to which the position was assigned, has vanished.

This is why in the post-independent context we are confronted with a vacuum of nationalist identification. During the anti-colonial struggle, people were united in the state of oppression and in this vein identified as nationalist adversaries of the colonial regime. However, once this state of oppression is overcome, the newly won political freedom allows multiple political subject-positions which go beyond the colonial dominator-dominated dichotomy and may be national as much as they may be communitarian/sub-national in any, that is also an ethnic sense.

However, where loyalty to identities other than the national prevail, the integrity of the national entity is in danger, as is well exemplified by the example of Ethiopia/Eritrea. Secessionist claims flourish where the post-colonial entity has not sufficiently engendered a nationalist identification. The definition of all people within the state's territory as national, that is politically 'indigenous' in Mamdani's sense, may not suffice here to foster a common feeling of belonging, a national identity. For that reason, the endowment of all residents with a *nationality*, including all the benefits this involves, is conventionally complemented with a *nation-building* project to foster precisely that sense of common political belonging among the people which the freedom of a post-independent democracy has ironically diluted.

¹⁸² Fanon 1968: 197.

The vacuum of social cohesion on a national scale left by the end of anti-colonial resistance is thereby sought to be newly 'filled'.

The crucial issue to tackle then is to define which forms of identification may serve as a new 'nationalist denominator'? Which discourse may interpellate people on a national scale, which subject-positions may serve as nationalist-subject positions, whose adoption will transcend loyalties to sub-national entities, such as the region or ethnicity?

Confronted with these questions in the South African context of 1992, Johan Degenaar has explored the issue in greater depth and chiefly identified four discourses that may serve as nationalist ones. Their subject-positions should have the capacity to promote identities that transcend exclusivist (for instance, ethnic) loyalties. He identified:¹⁸³

- a *discourse of common culture*, by which the culture of the dominant group is rendered into the national culture. This is probably the case in our example of Estonia, where cultural minorities are expected to assimilate into Estonian culture.
- a *discourse of modernisation*, which depoliticises particular sub-national (regional, ethnic etc.) claims through the common project of modernisation. A discourse of modernisation was significantly what Chatterjee identified in post-colonial India.¹⁸⁴
- a *discourse of socialism* in which a classless society shall overcome the conflictual nature of particular interests as signified by the Tanzanian project of 'Ujamaa na Kujitegemea'.
- a *discourse of democracy* where a constitution is conjointly decided upon by all groups and where loyalty to the democratic entity is considered supreme.

Let me explain Degenaar's understanding of the discourse of democracy before discussing the relevance of the four discourses in the Namibian context.

From the perspective of democratic theory, Degenaar argues that "the democratisation of society by the state creates a loyalty to the state, which can form the basis of nationhood."¹⁸⁵

The "sovereignty of justice" is in his account the pivotal element of the *discourse of democracy*: law and order as the highest instance of power (the sovereign); the constitution

¹⁸³ Degenaar 1992:7.

¹⁸⁴ According to Chatterjee, in the moment of arrival (of the nationalist project in India), Nehru's modernisation project was the crucial force, uniting India's people in the task to industrialise the economy and to modernise its society. Cultural values were no longer attached to a particular communal culture nor were they considered the property of (or subject to claim by) any culture. Significantly, Chatterjee argues, Nehru's nationalist ideology detached Gandhi's philosophy from its political character, but continued to draw mass support on its basis, while coupling it with a modernist, scientific understanding of society that highlighted the supremacy of economic development. See Chatterjee 1987.

¹⁸⁵ Degenaar 1992: 10.

as the non-negotiable basis for a democratic society, which, in its shared commitment to the values stipulated in the constitution, may find the capacity to grow into a nation.¹⁸⁶

At the same time, the characteristic of a constitution as expressing and embodying certain values prevalent in society informs the limits of such a democratic culture. The crucial task for each community to conceive a constitution is to agree on precisely those values. As Van Syl Slabbert notes: "If a constitution does not reflect an already existing consensus on the nature of political society, then no constitution can fabricate this."¹⁸⁷ In the South African context, to reach this consensus on the nature of political society was the essential task of the negotiation process. In Namibia, this consensus was significantly already achieved with the agreement of the 1982 Constitutional Principles, which outlined the parameters of a future constitution in independent Namibia.¹⁸⁸

Crucially, the goal of a discourse of democracy is not to create and enhance a model culture into which everyone assimilates (as is the case with the common culture approach), but instead "to acknowledge and take pride in the cultural variety of [the] people."¹⁸⁹

The strongest quality of a discourse of democracy in respect to the question of social cohesion is that it transcends divisive cleavages through a) the institutional disregard of particular identities (cultural, sexual, regional etc.) and b) the creation of new, and in the long term cross-cutting, cleavages – so accentuated by Robert Dahl – that promote the formation of different and changing alliances according to the demands of different situations. In this vein, the formation of new and changing unities that I predicted as a symptom of the institutional alleviation of the Self-Other dichotomy after liberation in the conclusion of Chapter IV is even institutionally fostered. Where a citizen coalesces with one on the basis of a shared class interest, he will ally with another by reason of a shared regional concern etc. Crucially, diverse alliances are not formed repeatedly on the basis of one single cleavage, culture for example, but due to diverse interest-coalitions. Nolutshungu captures the philosophy underlying this approach when stating, "the cohesion for the political community

¹⁸⁶ In a similar vein he contends, "the task of democracy is precisely to depoliticise communal culture in the sense that this culture does not claim sovereignty, that is, the absolute power of the state, but relativises itself on behalf of constitutionalism." 1992: 12. Nolutshungu argues in similar terms: "[...] intellectually the only basis of community that can be rationally defended is one that is itself rational from the point of view of human interests and wants. The problem of 'national unity', the 'national question', deconstructed, is no more than the problem of democracy." 1993: 622.

¹⁸⁷ Van Syl Slabbert 1990: 76.

¹⁸⁸ For the Constitutional Principles see Dobell 1998 and Cliffe 1994. In its founding session, the Constitutional Assembly committed itself to the safeguarding of the Constitutional Principles of 1982 (consisting of the basic provisions of liberal democracy) and multi-party democracy with a bicameral parliament, an executive presidency and due process and equality before the law.

¹⁸⁹ Albie Sachs quoted in Degenaar 1992: 11.

depends on the limits it sets for itself – whether these include or exclude secession along racial, ethnic or ‘nationality’ lines, or whether such cleavages are institutionalised in its own internal discourse.”¹⁹⁰

In a similar vein, Mamdani understands democracy as a possible new *thematique* in Chatterjee’s sense, since here the dichotomies of citizen and subject, the customary and the civil, the urban and the rural are deconstructed. A democratic state in his account is one that succeeds to overcome the colonial form of bifurcated (centralised and decentralised despotic) power.¹⁹¹ In view of Pecheux’s concepts again, such a democratisation would have to occur within the boundaries of a ‘new’ discourse outside the thematic boundaries of colonial rule, i.e. in disidentification to the latter. What this implies, is to define political identities not in terms of culture, as the colonial state did in the local sphere (and as is the case in post-colonial federal Nigeria, for instance), but to distinguish between political and cultural identity.¹⁹²

A post-colonial *Aufhebung* of the legacies of colonial discourse along the lines of democratisation would lie not in the transformation of usurpatory closure nationalism into a social closure nationalism, but, by contrast, in advocating a democratic, culturally inclusive national polity.¹⁹³

What relevance do the above possibilities of transcendent discourses have in the Namibian context? Which discourse seems to have been dominant in the post-independence era? Apart from the option of a *discourse of socialism* the three other discourses (of a *common culture*, *modernisation*, and *democracy*, respectively) have been realistic alternatives for the Namibian case.¹⁹⁴

Officially for sure, the governing party Swapo has embarked on the fostering of a discourse of democracy. This is evident not only in its co-writing of the 1989 constitution, which has

¹⁹⁰ Nolutshungu 1993: 622.

¹⁹¹ Ironically, while the policy of Indirect rule of the colonial state fragmented the people and, as Mamdani has shown, fragmented the resistance towards it in the form of reinforcing (and constructing) ethnic identification, it simultaneously provided a common basis for identification of the ruled, a counter-identification that helped transcend pre-colonial and colonially enforced divisions. Restriction of movement across colonial boundaries contributed to the creation of a national consciousness confined within those boundaries.

¹⁹² See Mamdani 1999.

¹⁹³ The contemporary European project is a case in point here.

¹⁹⁴ The socialist option was large precluded by the agreement of all conflict partners on the 1982 constitutional principles, and moreover the informal talks between representatives of the Namibian business sector and SWAPO that preceded independence and involved concessions on the part of SWAPO, towards the maintenance of a capitalist market-based economy. See, for instance, Dobell 1998 and Strand 1991.

been hailed as one of the 'most democratic' constitutions in the world, but also in its 1991 party constitution, and the 1994 and 1999 election manifestos. Thus in the 1991 party constitution Swapo commits itself above all to the generation of an inclusive and democratic environment and the 1999 Election Manifesto reads: "The SWAPO Party ushered in peace and democracy in our country and remains committed to the strengthening of these political values. Democracy is about choices and rights. Under the SWAPO government, Namibians' choices have been expanded. Over the past nine years, the SWAPO Party has worked hard to remove obstacles to these choices by guaranteeing freedom of speech, freedom from racism, and freedom from discrimination on the basis of religion, sex or ethnicity. [...] The SWAPO Party has also been enhancing the abilities and capabilities of citizens to exercise their choices through education, communication, promotion of good health, gender equality and affirmative action. The SWAPO Party is aware that choices and opportunities can be enhanced only if peace is assured, democracy is strengthened, and there is commitment to good governance."¹⁹⁵

However, there is indication that Swapo has been facing difficulties to promote this democratic culture in its own ranks and to thereby provide a positive example of democratisation for the wider society. Instead, critical observers argue that Swapo has rather attempted to install its culture as the dominant one in the country and has thus been following the path of the *discourse of a common culture*.¹⁹⁶ Weiland, for instance, observed in 1998, "the composition of [Swapo's] leadership initially reflected its trans-ethnic aspirations and the party *still* gets support from all over the country. However, this trend has been reversed in recent years, and a large majority of the new generation of political appointees are Ovambo", and, "on its return from exile SWAPO had difficulty adjusting to democratic behaviour, in particular an open information policy and the acceptance of criticism. After winning the elections with growing success SWAPO has established itself as a 'liberation movement in power' (Franz Fanon)."¹⁹⁷ The implications of such an imposition of a common culture on

¹⁹⁵ Swapo 1999 Election Manifesto: "Peace, Democracy and Good Governance." Swapo's chief objective as a party in independent Namibia states "to unite the people of Namibia, irrespective of race, religion, sex or ethnic origin into a democratic, vibrant and peace-loving nation." 1991 Swapo Party Constitution (amended and extended in 1998).

¹⁹⁶ For instance Dobell 1995 and 1997, Leys and Saul 1995, Weiland 1998, Fosse 1992. The authors have observed Swapo's tendency towards undemocratic conduct or even despotic tendencies in numerous examples, among those, most prominently Swapo's handling of the detainees issue, its defaming conduct towards both opposition parties, particularly during campaigning, and towards party internal criticism, a lack of accountability about government expenditure (notably Nujoma's plane purchase), and the leadership's reluctance to meet the grassroots' demand for annual party congresses.

¹⁹⁷ And he continues "despite the rhetoric, in the past [SWAPO] was never a democratic party of the masses, but a party run by cadres. In essence, the party is still run along the rigid hierarchical organisational structures of socialist unity parties it adopted in its 30-year exile..." 1998: 12/13. In a

the people have been elucidated by Fosse. "If nationalism is defined as coterminous with the culture of the majority of the population (a criticism often levelled at the SWAPO government by members of the opposition and by ethnic minorities), then people belonging to culturally distinct groups have to choose between evils, as it were; either they assimilate and become mainstream Namibians, or they retain their distinctiveness at the risk of being ostracised and disqualified."¹⁹⁸

If Swapo shows difficulty in democratising its own organisation and if its actions against potential opposition and inner-party criticism, for instance, suggest the attempt to install its culture as a common culture rather than the promotion of a (tolerant) discourse of democracy,¹⁹⁹ then one may argue that this indicates a continuity with both the rigorous categorisation of Self and Other of colonial discourse and the particular type of power colonialism employed. We are confronted again with a field of power/knowledge, as Chatterjee underlined, where the limits of the post-colonial, similar to those of anti-colonial nationalism, are defined within the parameters of both colonial discourse and its despotic form of power.²⁰⁰

On a more abstract note, Parekh and Nederveen Pieterse characterise the legacy as such: "The distinction between image and reality, falsity and truth, merges, then, with the boundary between dominator and subaltern, and in turn, with other and self. In the process the other of colonialism becomes the self of decolonisation: the roles are reversed, but the logic of image and power, which is also the power of communion, has not necessarily changed."²⁰¹

similar vein, Fosse commented, "there is a tendency [...] discernible among some SWAPO members – perhaps especially among those least acquainted with the ideas and functions of multi-party democracy – to regard the opposition as something illegitimate." 1992: 18.

¹⁹⁸ Fosse 1992: 17.

¹⁹⁹ The defaming measures employed by Swapo against the 1999 election campaign of the newly launched Congress of Democrats of Ben Ulenga, a prominent former SWAPO member (the country's ambassador to the UK and one-time leader of the union movement in the 1970s), exemplify well the aggressive stand taken against criticism within and without Swapo. Thus campaign meetings of the CoD were detracted on a massive scale by Swapo members and Swapo threatened to fire any civil servant who would vote for or become a member of the CoD. In the 1999 elections, the new party (launched only in earlier 1998) attained 10% of the votes, thus replaced the official opposition of the DTA and received 7 seats in the National Assembly against Swapo's 72.

²⁰⁰ On the continuity between colonisation and the post-colonial Hall remarks, "with 'colonisation', and consequently with the 'post-colonial', we are irrevocably in a power-knowledge field of force. It is precisely the false and disabling distinction between colonisation as a system of rule and exploitation, and colonisation as a system of knowledge and representation, which is being refused. It is because the relations which characterised the 'colonial' are no longer in the same place and relative position, that we are able not simply to oppose them but to critique to deconstruct and try to go beyond them." 1996b: 254.

The continuity of categorising the political landscape into 'Self' and 'Other' goes not so much along the lines of a reversal of former (colonial) subject positions of former 'Self' into present 'Other' and former 'Other' into present 'Self'. The strategies of group definitions are not of racial nature as was the case in colonial discourse.

Instead, there are two ways of thinking the self-other relationship in the contemporary Namibian context, the one in political, the other in economic terms.²⁰²

In political terms, I have argued the political developments of the past ten years do not necessarily indicate that Swapo has entirely emancipated itself from the despotic character of colonial power. This pertains predominantly to Swapo's adversary attitude in respect to both the opposition and inner-party criticism. In this respect, the 'Self' appears to signify the party leadership and all members who uncritically follow the leadership's action and recommendations, whereas the 'Other' is ascribed to all critical elements in and around Swapo. It grotesquely seems as if a new 'enemy' has to be created against whom to gather allies and against whom to unify energy.²⁰³

Again, it is impossible to overestimate the force of the creation of 'Self' and 'Selves' through an Other. The creation of a common enemy is essentially what German nationalism of the 20th century was based upon. In a cynical vein, war against a foreign state can be the best form of 'nation-building', very successfully employed by the United States. Similarly, the practice of post-independent leaders to create a common foe against whom the nation must unite was a common and sometimes successful form of nation-building to be witnessed in postcolonial Africa. The foe image is preserved or erected to ensure a continuity of cohesion (a sort of nation-building, an artificial attempt to continue counter-identification, no longer with the colonial regime, but now with a new opponent against whom to ally).

In economical terms, by contrast, the self and other dichotomy of the colonial economy has largely preserved itself along similar lines. Due to the fact that no major redistribution of resources has taken place in the postcolonial state – the crucial land question is still pending – the economic wealth of the country remains polarised in the strata that were the politically

²⁰¹ Nederveen Pieterse and Parekh 1995: 6.

²⁰² Pertaining to this relation, Hall remarks, "the difference, of course, between colonising and colonised cultures remain profound. [But ...] Indeed, the shift from circumstances in which anti-colonial struggles seemed to assume a binary form of representation to the present when they can no longer be represented within a binary structure, I would describe as a move from one conception of difference to another, from difference to *differance*, and this shift is precisely what the serialised or staggered transition to the 'post-colonial' is marking." 1996b: 247.

²⁰³ The group definitions are rather a question of agreement and criticism here. "If you agree with SWAPO you are one of them, if you don't you are the 'Other'."

and economically privileged of colonialism. Moreover, the economic dependence of Namibia upon its colonial power South Africa remains as strong as ever. Ironically, usurpatory closure nationalism – while stimulated by resistance against both monopolisation of economic resources and political benefits on the part of the colonial stratum – has achieved political emancipation, but not economic emancipation.²⁰⁴ In this vein, Nederveen Pieterse and Parekh have sarcastically contended that political decolonisation led to a form of economic neo-colonisation.²⁰⁵

There is a global momentum in this failure to decolonise economically. To recognise the political and discursive significance of this particular continuity of the ‘Self-Other; Other-Self’ relationship of colonialism and the post-colonial in the economic sphere would help bridge the gap between two discourses that have evolved largely separate from one another: that is post-colonialism and capital globalisation. “What is remarkable”, Dirlik notes, “is that a consideration of the relationship between post-colonialism and global capitalism should be absent from the writings of post-colonial intellectuals.”²⁰⁶

An understanding of nationalism in terms of Weber’s closures may hereby help in so far as it evokes the initially economic relation that signifies the self-other relationship (as the selves of social closure against those excluded).

Finally, there is a second important reason why a re-examination of nationalism in terms of Weber’s closures is a prolific, if not critical, exercise for future academia.

As Hobsbawm has indicated in a 1999 article, we need to revisit ‘nationalism’ if we wish to understand its current proliferation, particularly the growing nationalisms in the European context. Whereas in the post-colonial context we stress the need to distinguish political from cultural identities, the new nationalisms of the Western world develop along the lines of the ‘new ethnicity’. Identity politics and multiculturalism strive for a reintroduction of culture into political identification. Belgium’s practical separation in 1970 and secessionist

²⁰⁴ Katjavivi recognised this odd development when he remarked “The nationalist movement has learnt that the colonial regime it has fought is supported by the world wide economic system of which it is part, and that freedom will not be won by a mere change of rulers. It has therefore come to the conclusion that *nationalism has its limits* and that a complete transformation of the political, economic and social system is necessary to meet the needs of the people.” 1988: 559. Emphasis added.

²⁰⁵ “Yet, no matter how much international support Namibia receives, it will never be able to break its extreme dependence on South Africa, the legacy of decades as the ‘fifth’ province of its southern neighbour. As this economic interdependence inevitably influences Namibia’s political development, the survival of democracy in Namibia is closely tied up with the fate of democracy in South Africa. Since the elections in 1994, its progress has been watched with high hopes and expectations. Namibia’s democracy can only consolidate, if the South African experiment of a democracy in the making proves to be successful.” Weiland 1998: 24.

²⁰⁶ Dirlik quoted in Hall 1996b: 257.

tendencies in North Italy, Basque and Quebec are cases in point here. Hobsbawm locates these tendencies within the greater framework of identity politics, communitarianism and the question about 'belonging'. Significantly, "the new nationalisms aim at a reduction of the multi-dimensional existence of man in society to a one-dimensional group identity."²⁰⁷

The greatest danger of this is to re-categorise the world into a 'we' and 'you', a 'self' and 'other' – and to tolerate or to not even recognise the structural injustices this entails, and, by means of power/knowledge, conceals.

²⁰⁷ Hobsbawm 1999: 38.

VII. Conclusion

“‘Colonialism’ always was about, and ‘post-colonial’ certainly is about, different ways of ‘staging the encounters’ between the colonising societies and their ‘others’ [...].”²⁰⁸

This dissertation has attempted to shed light on the character of anti-colonial nationalism, and particularly sought to elucidate why anti-colonial nationalisms, once the enemy is defeated, often cease to provide a sufficient basis for national identification. Why, the initial question posed, are nation-building projects necessary in states whose people have fought nationalist struggles for decades and should therefore be characterised by a high degree of social cohesion on a national level?

In order to answer this question I started out with a case study of nationalism in Namibia. I examined the concept of anti-colonial nationalism in the discourse of SWAPO, proceeding à la Fairclough from an understanding of discourse as ‘the language used to represent a given social practice from a particular point of view’. Studying SWAPO’s major publications I delineated several distinct contexts in which the concept was used and in which it carried distinct connotations. As I reviewed prevalent definitions of nationalism, a general consensus among the different definitions, most prominently from Gellner, Minogue and Emmett, indicated that nationalism was broadly conceived of as the endeavour to make cultural boundaries and political boundaries coincide.

This could happen in two ways: either the cultural entity was perceived as static, and political borders constructed around it (by war or treaty), or the political boundaries would be set and a common culture constructed within these political boundaries. While adjusting political boundaries to cultural ones was the effort of the 19th century nation-state nationalisms, the 20th century nation-building projects represented the reverse: to construct a culture within given political borders.

Whereas the former venture proceeds from a static, primordial view of culture with identifiable and unchangeable boundaries, the latter implies a constructivist understanding of culture where the phenomenon is thought of as a dynamic and social process.

Curiously enough, none of the two nationalist options essentially captured what SWAPO’s uses of the concept appeared to indicate. SWAPO’s nationalism certainly was not a

²⁰⁸ Hall 1996b: 247.

nationalism that perceived set cultural boundaries and fought for the adjustment of political borders to cultural ones. This was rather the project of the apartheid state. Neither was it aimed at the construction of a common culture within the given political boundaries, although this unquestionably was an effect of its nationalist activity.

The incongruency between the delineated connotations of SWAPO's nationalism and the prevalent definitions lead me to a more theoretical discussion of identity and nationalism in hope to better understand the implications of anti-colonial nationalism and anti-colonial nationalist identification.

The analysis elucidated that identity is better understood as a process of identification. Stuart Hall depicts it as 'a chaining of the subject into a flow of subject positions made available by discourse'. In this vein, identification involves both, the construction of subject positions in discourse and the adoption of such positions on the part of the subject. While the former phenomenon hinges essentially on a disassociation from a constitutive outside, a *difference*, a counter-distinction to which a new subject position is constructed, this mechanism is well illustrated in the conceptual pair of 'Self' and 'Other'. Both essentially hinge upon each other, and exist only as far as they are the counter-part of the other. In Laclau's terminology, they exist in a *mutually constructive* relationship.

On a social level, the formation of a Self involves what Max Weber has termed 'social closure'. A group monopolises the access to resources and thereby creates a superordinate group position for itself versus those that are excluded from its ranks – it creates privilege. Crucially, the effect of social closure is not only an intensified group identity on the part of the privileged, but also on the part of those left outside. The excluded may react with 'usurpatory closure' to jointly reverse the act that has subjugated them and to fight against the established (dis)privilege.

In terms of 'Self' and 'Other', both collective 'Self' and 'Other' subject positions are simultaneously constructed in the act of social closure, the 'Self' as the dominant, the 'Other' as the dominated, rulers and ruled in the colonial context. The subjects of the Other, defined by their subordinate status, may either accept the inferior status position ascribed to them and identify with the discourse of the Self or they may engage in acts of usurpatory closure and in resistance.

The latter can either go along the lines of counter-identification in Pecheux's sense, by allying on the basis of the same criteria upon which the 'Self' exerted its exclusion, and reversing the status order of the 'Self'-'Other' dichotomy. The 'Other' then becomes the 'Self' and degrades the former 'Self' into an 'Other', as is well illustrated by the example of Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda. Alternatively, resistance can function along the lines of Pecheux's disidentification, where the 'Other' will not try to re-conceptualise the violent hierarchy of subject positions within the same parameters of the 'Self' discourse (i.e. as dominator and dominated), but seek identification outside of the established status order and outside the 'Self'-'Other' divide.

Significantly, when the monopolisation of resources and privileges on the part of the 'Self' ceases to materialise (because, for instance, the 'Other' has succeeded in its resistance), the Self is no longer the 'Self', for it was precisely the privileged status which defined its 'Selfness'. The Other, by contrast, is an Other only as long as the Self is a Self and once the monopolisation of resources on the part of the Self vanishes, the Other has lost its basis for collective formation, resistance has become superfluous.

Once the Other is no longer excluded, the subjects involved in the party of 'Other' have lost their need for unification and hence their moment of cohesion.

To better understand the contradictory moments at work in nationalism I proposed to interpret nationalism in view of Weber's concept of closure. I distinguished between a nationalism of the dominant that grounds on a process of social closure and a nationalism of the dominated which bases on a process of usurpatory closure. The relation between nationalism of the dominant and nationalism of the dominated represents one of the marked and the unmarked in Derrida's sense. If the nationalist identity forged through social closure is a marked one, its counterpart in usurpatory nationalism is unmarked as its political project hinges essentially upon the resistance to a 'Self' and can thus not inhibit an own essentiality. The unmarked is conceptually dependent upon the marked. Whereas the former enjoys analytical content, the latter, to paraphrase Mamdani, lacks both an 'original history and an authentic future'.

I have argued that the constitutive outside of anti-colonial nationalist discourse is colonial discourse, most evidently revealed in its designation as 'anti-colonial' and not 'pro-x'. Anti-colonial discourse is defined by what it is not rather than what is. SWAPO members are the articulated 'Other' of colonial discourse, the subject population vis-à-vis the citizens, the subordinate *en face* the superordinate. Through resistance, the 'Other'/ SWAPO seeks not

only to reverse the act that subjugated it, but also to find an autonomous identification outside colonial discourse, which is best illustrated in the fact that its members insist on their 'Namibian' identity, instead of a 'South Western' one. The people name their own country and themselves, in contradistinction to the names inherited from colonialism. Here occurs a crucial self-identification that endows the 'Other' with a notion of 'Self', an act, which, even if not carrying any material rewards, has important spiritual implications for it endows the subject population with a *positive* identity.

SWAPO's non-racism represented an occurrence of disidentification as it went beyond the colonial racial classifications and accepted people of all colour and cultures in its ranks. While its *strategies of group definition* reflected a disidentification with those of the dominant group, its formation rested essentially on a process of usurpatory closure against the social closure undertaken by the colonial state. The *justifications* for its closure are presented by SWAPO, first, as a realisation of the universally accepted right to independence and self-determination. Second, SWAPO justifies its resistance as a necessary continuation of Namibia's anti-colonial resistance.

Re-examining the eight different contexts in which 'nationalism' appeared in SWAPO's nationalist discourse, I categorised them into two chief registers, the cultural and the oppositional. While by the cultural register, nationalist discourse interpellated subjects on grounds of a myth of a common custom and a common history, by the oppositional register it appealed to the people's common experience of oppression. Whereas the former produced a cultural identity, the latter produced a political one. Since the process of usurpatory closure (of anti-colonial resistance) is essentially a political one, interpellation does occur principally in the oppositional register. Interpellation on cultural grounds may, but does not need to, go along with the political interpellation here to endow the political identity with greater puissance.

If post-independent democracy has to be accompanied by a nation-building project, which is to foster cohesion among the people, this documents to which extent the interpellation on cultural grounds has not been successful. Post-independent nation-building is necessary, precisely because the anti-colonial nationalist identity was a political one, whose viability has vanished with the end of resistance.

This phenomenon makes us think about the discursive relationship between colonialism and anti-colonial nationalism. If colonialism chiefly determines the range of subject-positions

available to nationalist discourse, then nationalist subject positions are rather counter-identifications with colonialism than identifications with (Namibian) nationalism. Anti-colonial nationalism, in other words, is not a sovereign discourse in its own right, but epistemologically determined by colonial discourse.

At the same time, this is not to deny the autonomy of nationalist discourse. Analogous to Gramsci's argument about the *autonomy* of the subaltern, anti-colonial nationalist discourse did indeed enjoy autonomy, expressed most significantly in anti-colonial literature. Crucially though, both the structure of thought and the power it employed were autonomous, but not *sovereign* from the power/knowledge of colonialism.

This point has similarly been made by Partha Chatterjee whose analysis of anti-colonial nationalism in India led him to the conclusion that it carried an *inherent contradiction*. It reversed the *problematique* (ideological claims) of colonialism, but remained within the same *thematique* – the justificatory structures that backed the ideological claims by a recourse to epistemic and moral principles. It thereby reasoned within a framework of thought “whose representational structure corresponded to the very structure of power it [sought] to repudiate”.

The discursive dependence of anti-colonial nationalism on colonialism is most apparent in racial nationalism as it reflects both the *strategies of group definition* and the *strategies of justification* of those of colonialism. Racial nationalism reverses the degradation of a racial order. Whereas in the colonial racial context black has signified all that was vile and corrupt, now the reversal is true: black is noble, black is beautiful. The subject-position of the colonised and its associated attributes are here simply reversed to their respective opposite, status hierarchies are inverted, without being surpassed.

The existential dependence of anti-colonial nationalism upon colonialism also explains why anti-colonial nationalism is predominantly focused on the struggle against colonialism itself, and only secondly preoccupied with the regime it will establish once the colonial power is defeated. In the Namibian case this is all too well documented in the divergent, contradictory and incongruous scenarios laid out by the SWAPO programmes for an independent Namibia. If discourse is concerned with the here and now, so will counter-discourse be. In other words, discourse sets the agenda of issues to be discussed.

The characteristic of anti-colonial nationalism to be predominantly defined through its *constitutive outside* explains the nationalist vacuum of post-colonial states, once the

dominant power has withdrawn. As the need for political resistance has vanished, so has the organisation of resistance in national terms, and the need to identify as a nationalist subject. Similar to Marx' argument that the "class struggle is national, not in *substance*, but as the Communist Manifesto says, in *form*",²⁰⁹ one can make the same argument for usurpatory closure nationalism that characteristically forms in counter-distinction to a dominant power. Following from this, anti-colonial nationalism may be cultural in form, but is not cultural in substance; it is political in substance and its nationalist identifications cease to function with the end of the political end that defines it: resistance.

The "scattering to pieces" of nationalism in post-colonial states then would not have been the case, of course, had it been one of *substance*. With the end of colonial domination, resistance to it becomes superfluous and the subject positions constructed in relation to it are respectively outdated. With the decreasing puissance of colonial discourse, the subject positions of identification and crucially, also those of counter-identification, i.e. those of nationalist resistance are decreasingly viable. That is the characteristic of Pecheux's second modality that it exists only in counter-identification to the first. If anti-colonial nationalism had developed an alternative kind of discourse, for instance through the generation of a democratic culture, it might have superseded the era of independence. It would have had to operate in the boundaries of Pecheux's third modality, a discourse that does not stand in relation to that of the first modality, but instead disidentifies, i.e. creates a new structure of thought both in ontological as well as epistemological terms.

Lastly, the question, how the post-colonial state can fill the gap in social cohesion left behind by the disintegration of anti-colonial nationalism once liberation is achieved, has been answered in reference to different models of nation-building. Namibia has arguably been following a common culture approach, where divergent cultural affiliations are transcended through the promotion of loyalty to one common culture, mostly that of the dominant group.

As Mamdani has shown, however and, as a reading of Chatterjee equally signalises, it is only a discourse of democracy that has the capacity to surpass the legacy which both, the structure of power of the colonial state and the structure of thought of colonialism, exert on the post-colonial state in Africa.

²⁰⁹ Marx quoted in Pecheux 1982: 167.

Such a democratisation would have to occur within the boundaries of a 'new' discourse outside the thematic boundaries of colonial rule. What this implies, is to define political identities not in terms of culture, as the colonial state did, but to distinguish between political and cultural identity. A post-colonial *Aufhebung* of the legacies of colonial discourse along the lines of democratisation would lie not in the transformation of usurpatory closure nationalism into a social closure nationalism, but, by contrast, in advocating a democratic, culturally inclusive national polity.

If Swapo shows difficulty to democratise its own organisation and if its actions against potential opposition and inner-party criticism indicate the failure to promote a culturally insensitive discourse of democracy, then one may argue that this also indicates a continuity with both the rigorous categorisation of Self and Other of colonial discourse and the particular type of power colonialism employed. We are confronted again with a field of power/knowledge, as Chatterjee emphasised, where the limits of the post-colonial, similar to those of anti-colonial nationalism, are defined within the parameters of both colonial discourse and its despotic form of power.

The continuity of categorising the political landscape into 'Self' and 'Other' goes not so much along the lines of a mere reversal of former (colonial) subject positions. The *strategies of group definitions* are not of racial nature as was the case in colonial discourse. Instead, I have argued, there are two ways of thinking the self-other relationship in the contemporary Namibian context: the one in political, the other in economic terms.

In political terms, the political developments of the past ten years do not indicate that Swapo has entirely emancipated itself from the despotic character of colonial power. In this respect, the 'Self' appears to signify the party leadership and those members who uncritically follow the leadership's action and recommendations, whereas the 'Other' is ascribed to all critical elements in and around Swapo. It grotesquely seems as if a new 'enemy' has to be created in order to generate inner-party unity. The foe image is preserved or erected to ensure a continuity of cohesion, an artificial attempt to continue counter-identification, no longer with the colonial regime, but now with a new opponent against whom to ally.

In economical terms, by contrast, the self and other dichotomy of the colonial economy has largely preserved itself along similar lines. Due to the fact that no major redistribution of resources has taken place in the postcolonial state, the economic wealth of the country remains polarised in the strata that were the politically and economically privileged of

colonialism. Moreover, the economic dependence of Namibia upon its colonial power South Africa remains as strong as ever.

There is a global momentum in this failure to decolonise economically. To recognise the political and discursive significance of this particular continuity of the 'Self-Other; Other-Self' relationship of colonialism and the post-colonial in the economic sphere would help bridge the gap between two discourses that have evolved largely separate from one another: those of post-colonialism and capital globalisation.

An understanding of nationalism in terms of Weber's closures may hereby help in so far as it evokes the initially economic relation that signifies the self-other relationship.

Finally, there is a second important reason why a re-examination of nationalism in terms of Weber's closures is a prolific, if not critical, exercise for future academia.

As Hobsbawm has indicated in a 1999 article, we need to revisit 'nationalism' if we wish to understand its current proliferation, particularly the growing nationalisms in the European context. Whereas in the post-colonial context we stress the need to distinguish political from cultural identities, the new nationalisms of the Western world develop along the lines of the 'new ethnicity'. Identity politics and multiculturalism strive for a reintroduction of culture into political identification. Significantly, they aim at a reduction of the multi-dimensional existence of man in modern society to a one-dimensional group identity.

Essentially, this yearning for a unitary one-dimensional identity resembles what Hegel conceptualised as a *Beisichselbstsein* – an integral self-sufficient identity. The dissimilarity between the two is that while the new ethnicity, principally another *Volksgeist*, strives to achieve this unanimous sense of belonging by constructing the notion of a purist cultural identity that involves the demarcation from a constitutive outside and thereby creates and signifies this very outside, a Hegelian *Beisichselbstsein* would involve an embrace of both the Self and the Other *within* us, and thus accept them both as integral parts of our identity.

The greatest danger of the reduction of our multi-dimensional existence into one-dimensional domains of belonging is to re-categorise the world into a 'we' and 'you', a 'self' and 'other' – and to tolerate or to not even recognise the structural injustices this entails, and, by means of power/knowledge, conceals.

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