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INTERCONNECTEDNESS, HEALING & HARMONY

THE APPLICATION OF UBUNTU IN PEACE RESEARCH AND IN NAMIBIAN-GERMAN POSTCOLONIAL DISPUTES EMERGING FROM THE RETURN OF HUMAN REMAINS

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Master's Thesis, 101 pages

June 2016

Abstract

The colonial past, and particularly the colonial wars that occurred over one hundred years ago between present-day Namibia and the German Empire, still impact Namibian-German relations. The first repatriation of human remains – of Ovaherero, Ovambanderu and Nama origin – from the archives of the German Charité University Hospital to Namibia in 2011 reinvigorated disputes concerning Namibia and Germany's shared history and associated legacies, particularly with regard to the acknowledgement of genocide and reparations. This thesis analyses speeches of Namibian traditional leaders representing those descendant of this history, as well as Namibian and German government representatives speaking at the handover and welcoming ceremonies in Berlin and Windhoek. The study proposes the application of the widespread Southern African weltanschauung *Ubuntu* to enhance mutual understanding, particularly concerning the underlying values of the Namibian arguments. Hence, it aims to develop a new perspective on Namibian-German postcolonial disputes, thus contributing to a more positive development of these relations. Moreover, this thesis seeks to uncover how the values and practices of Ubuntu may contribute to conflict transformation and peace research in a broader sense, thereby offering the field of peace research an alternative method of conflict transformation derived from Ubuntu.

This study is conducted as part of the discussion on the role of culture in peace research, understanding culture both as essential to human relations and as a resource for conflict resolution. The analysis uses Chaïm Perelman's 'New Rhetoric' to identify the topics, means and premises of argumentation in the selected speeches. The results of the analysis show that the speakers use the occasions to emphasise different topics and perspectives, including their divergent interpretations of Namibia and Germany's shared colonial history and its repercussions in current relations. The examined speeches display fundamentally different premises of argumentation, particularly between the German representatives and those of the affected Namibian communities. The consideration of Ubuntu is found to make the value basis of Namibian argumentation more accessible by emphasising and contextualising the central values employed by Namibians, namely humanness, humaneness and interconnectedness. The study therefore finds that the consideration of Ubuntu can enhance mutual understanding and support a positive development of Namibian-German postcolonial relations. Furthermore, it is suggested that the contextualisation of values through Ubuntu may be beneficial in other cases involving communities familiar with Ubuntu, and many values and principles of Ubuntu can be applied in support of conflict transformation. The identified Ubuntu mechanisms of conflict transformation include communal engagement with conflicts and the past, the leadership of respected community members, encouraging remorse and forgiveness, and restorative justice. An emphasis on interconnectedness serves as a reminder of a shared humanity and the social context of conflict, with reconciliation ultimately aiming at healing social relations and fostering harmony. More research is suggested to further investigate the potential for Ubuntu in peace research, and the application of its principles in conflict transformation.

Key words: *Ubuntu, Namibia, Germany, Human Remains, Colonialism, Postcolonial, African Conflict Transformation, Culture, Rhetoric Analysis*

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

When the first human remains from the colonial era were returned from Germany to Namibia in 2011, it became evident that unresolved questions and open wounds from this colonial history still strained the relationship between Namibians and Germans. The human remains became symbolic of the contested memories and claims of the Namibian colonial experience – a memory largely suppressed in the official relations of the two countries. Affected Namibian communities sought to highlight topics including the recognition of historical events as genocide, an official apology from Germany as legal successor of the German Empire, the payment of reparations, and the representation and acknowledgement of these affected groups in the debate. The topic has recently gained renewed attention, as the first official talks on Namibia and Germany's shared colonial history were initiated in 2015. This shows how topical this issue is, as well as how necessary it is to investigate the pitfalls of past relations and uncover possibilities for improved future cooperation.

In July 2015, the German government seemingly had a change of mind in its attitude towards its recognition of the genocide. In an obscure statement, and subsequent exchange with a journalist, the spokesman of the German Foreign Office Dr. Martin Schäfer admitted that the current Foreign Minister, and by relation the government, considers the German-Namibian colonial wars an genocide; a novelty in the postcolonial history of Germany (Bundesregierung 2015).[1] The statement also revealed that there had been increased communication on the shared colonial history between the two governments. Subsequently, Germany and Namibia each appointed Special Envoys to lead the discussions surrounding their shared past. The German Special Envoy for Namibian-German Relations explains the new position of the German government:

> "In cooperation with the Namibian side we would like to find a common language for dealing with a very dark chapter of the German colonial period [...] We would like to find a formula that expresses the regret of the German side. Ultimately, it is also important to us that Namibia is able to accept an apology from the German side. Then, on that basis, we would like to develop and maintain a common culture of remembrance." (Ruprecht Polenz in Krug 2016)

The current German Ambassador to Namibia underlines the preparedness of the German government by stating that, "the issue of colonial history is coming to the forefront; therefore the awareness that this is one part of our history that needs to be dealt with is a sentiment which is growing. One can also see a growing readiness [in Germany to address the past]" (Beukes 2016b) . He envisions the current talks to "look at two wings: the area of an apology and the other area is the issue of redress, to look at possibilities for special support in this context" (Beukes 2016b).[2] The

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[1] See also the video documentation and transcript of the freelance journalist, Thilo Jung:
http://www.jungundnaiv.de/2015/07/10/bundesregierung-fuer-desinteressierte-bpk-folge-vom-10-juli-2015/
[2] While the ambassador is the first official to point to an apology as a result of the new talks, the issue of compensation will likely be more difficult to address, as the new terminology, "redress", suggests.

new initiative to engage with German-Namibian past is remarkable and generally commendable. However, I contend that a conversation on the past and present relations has to be inclusive in terms of *who* may talk and be heard, *how* the discussions go and *what* can be deliberated. This thesis will thereby simultaneously follow and justify this line of thought.

This need is reflected when, even in this early stage, the talks are controversial for their secretive beginning and the minor involvement of existing stakeholders in the debate. The start of the deliberations gained increased attention in Namibia when the Namibian Ambassador to Germany Andreas Guibeb urged German parties represented in the Bundestag to withdraw or reject motions tabled by German opposition parties calling for an apology and reparations concerning the genocide. He did so in order to support the discussion process between Germany and Namibia, but at the same time angered some of the genocide committees of the traditional communities in Namibia (New Era 2016).[3] While some communities support the new structures of dialogue, others criticise the bilateral, state-level consultations for excluding the affected Namibian Traditional Authorities (Tjitemisa 2016).[4] The critics protest that they have not been consulted and the government was further marginalising them and disrupting their own efforts concerning the genocide (Beukes 2016d; Joseph 2016). Promoting their own approach and interests, Nama, OvaHerero and Ovambanderu Traditional Authorities have recently issued a joint statement urging members of the German Bundestag to directly include the communities in the dialogue (Rukoro, Frederick, and Nguvauva 2016). Furthermore, they announced to bring their claims before the International Tribunal in The Hague (Namibian Sun 2016). Ultimately, it is fair to suggest that the tensions between the representative committees, as well as with the Namibian government –

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[3] The ambassador's justification of the intervention and the state-to-state negotiations may be seen as evidence of how the postcolonial consultations are determined by the conditions set by Germany: "As much as I hate to be the bearer of bad news, I must state that the position of the German government – based on public international law – is that such matters are negotiated between the democratically elected governments of the respective countries. [...] If the German government and all parties in the Bundestag say that this issue will only be negotiated between the two governments and they are at last willing to collectively qualify what happened in Namibia as genocide, then we can all help the vice-president [and] the special envoy designated by the Namibian government, to solve the issue by demonstrating our unity and support for finding a lasting, mutually beneficial solution" (Guibeb in New Era 2016).

[4] The traditional communities most involved in the debates on genocide, repatriation of human remains and reparations are Ovaherero, Ovambanderu and Nama, as will be discussed in chapter 2. I refer to the "traditional authorities" as the governance bodies of the "traditional communities", in line with Namibian practice and the Traditional Authorities Act. When using "Ovaherero", I refer to the people united under the OvaHerero Traditional Authority, without distinguishing the existing subgroups or going into the debate of the contested legitimacy of the position of the Paramount Chief of the OvaHerero Traditional Authority. I try to avoid inflating the related Ovambanderu and the Ovaherero, following the self-definition of the groups, although sometimes I do so using the term "Herero", due to the application of a wider sense of Herero culture, including Ovamdanderu and Ovahimba. The Nama groups are united in the Nama Traditional Leaders' Association with a rotating chairmanship. See also Hinz 2010: 395-6 (footnote 3). For the role and structure of traditional leadership in Namibia, see Keulder 2010: 150-70. The traditional authorities have founded several common and separate committees and councils to follow up on the genocide and related debates. The ones most commonly referred to here are the Ovaherero/Ovambanderu Council on Dialogue for the 1904 Genocide (OCD-1904), Ovaherero Genocide Foundation, and the Nama Genocide Technical Committee. The committees differ in their opinion on some issues, such as the recent state-level developments (Nampa 2016) and the rightful claimants of reparations for genocide (Beukes 2016a).

revealing the complexity of representation in a postcolonial situation – further complicate the dispute, thereby weakening the Namibian position against Germany (Nampa 2016).

The postcolonial constellation increases the importance of open and inclusive interaction. The results of my bachelor thesis[5], which examined Namibian-German relations more broadly, pointed to the need of a human-centred approach in relations between the two states and their peoples. It suggested that 'soft topics' such as culture and identity are neglected in international relations, hampering the mutual understanding and the efficient resolution of conflicts, particularly in the postcolonial context. In Namibian-German relations, the neglect especially concerned issues of recognition and respect, individual and collective memories, and different perspectives. The thesis pointed to the possibility that the South African concept of *Ubuntu* may offer alternative approaches to interpersonal and international relations, emphasising precisely those aspects that were found to be missing in the existing relations. The thesis at hand builds on these previous results. It continues to examine the postcolonial relations of Germany and Namibia, whilst exploring the concept of *Ubuntu* and its potential contributions to the betterment of Namibian-German relations.

Ubuntu is a long-established customary understanding of human relations and principle guiding the social life of many African communities.[6] At the same time, it is a *weltanschauung* and practice[7]. In application to modern national society, Ubuntu has contributed to the transformation to majority rule in South Africa. The concept then entered the political sphere and has since been debated lively in some academic circles, particularly from the field of philosophy (see chapter 2.3). While Ubuntu is attributed most closely to the Xhosa and Zulu groups of South Africa, similar principles and even the expression itself are common throughout southern Africa. In contemporary Namibia, Africans from different walks of life refer to Ubuntu in everyday situations, making it a part of common culture and language. A columnist in a Namibian newspaper observes this:

> "The call to embody and uphold Uuntu (Ubuntu) has become very loud but still lacks clarity and substance. [...] I think the term 'Ubuntu' is used loosely these days. In the Land of the Brave [Namibia], there is a lack of viable sources and projects that are unpacking this vague yet loaded concept." (Mushaandja 2015) .

Mushaandja relates that he first learned the term Ubuntu from an elder and well-known Namibian exile poet. He explores what Ubuntu may mean in the context of contemporary challenges. For

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[5] Rampke, Babett (2012): Germany's Postcolonial Relations with Namibia: Understanding the Human Side of International Relations. BA thesis (Social Sciences and Philosophy, Political Science). Leipzig: Universität Leipzig.

[6] With "African communities" I refer to both "traditional" and modern groups of Africans with some common identity. As tradition feeds into modern life, a clear distinction of the two is not possible. The boundaries of 'community' are fluid and depend on the context, therefore the term can refer to a particular village or all individuals with a certain (e.g. linguistic) identity in a broader (national/transnational) society. The term 'African' bears the dangers of undue generalisation and of romanticising particularisms. These dangers are addressed in this thesis through the emphasis of plurality ('communities') and the reflection of traditional practices in a modern context.

[7] I use *weltanschauung* to emphasise the everyday relevance of Ubuntu as a concept of thought, which remains distinct from the academic philosophy of Ubuntu that engages in a discussion of the weltanschauung and practice of Ubuntu. The debate on the different understandings of Ubuntu will shortly be discussed in chapter 2.3.1

instance, it is often used as an appeal, criticising the lack of Ubuntu in a particular social setting or situation. Here, Ubuntu represents a social ideal encompassing a specific set of values that is expected to guide everyday behaviour.[8] These references to Ubuntu bear a similar meaning to the academic sources used as the basis of this thesis' analysis.

Ubuntu has been chosen as a tool to approximate the Namibian cultural notions precisely because it is a popularised concept, with a significant amount of academic literature available. This literature has been critical in introducing this African notion to outsiders like myself, enabling its application in Western[9] research and practice. However, it should be noted that such an understanding of Ubuntu remains limited to analytic academic debate, since it is unable to comprise the full prescriptive content of a complex cultural notion such as Ubuntu, which in practicing societies is usually taught to children from a very young age and infused in nearly all everyday practices. This highlights the need to have a short reflection of my positionality as a Western researcher.

The limitations of this thesis are largely connected to limited access and perspective to Ubuntu and the views of both Namibian and German stakeholders. The restriction in the understanding of Ubuntu translates to an outsider position. As a European, I have no ownership and thus no right to formulate definitions of Ubuntu that limit, extend or shift the meaning of the notion.[10] However, in order to apply Ubuntu to my research, I inevitably have to subscribe to certain interpretations of the notion, beginning with the decision to apply Ubuntu to Namibian statements. At the same time, my research requires me to make interpretations and emphases in the statements of the speakers that are going to be analysed, inevitably filtering their voices through my perspective and appropriating them for my research purpose. Subscribing to postcolonial critical theory, these actions are highly problematic in the thematic context of the study. Appropriating African[11] knowledge for my purposes puts the Western in the active role of producing knowledge and the non-Western as a passive object of study, reproducing colonial power structures. Additionally, this constellation bears

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[8] There are many examples of everyday references to Ubuntu in Namibia. I have encountered Ubuntu for example in social media, when friends called for Ubuntu in light of violent crime or other negatively evaluated behaviour. The Namibian Red Cross Society refers to Ubuntu in a recent campaign: "The Drought Relief Campaign aims to encourage the Ubuntu spirit among the Namibian people, by soliciting support for our brothers and sisters affected by the drought situation throughout the country." (Facebook timeline post 04.05.2016, https://www.facebook.com/NamibiaRedCross/). Another example is the strong reference in the popular song "Human" by the Namibian artist Elemotho, engaging with similar topics (2008, http://elemotho.com). The use of Ubuntu in the context of my master thesis was approved by those Namibians I asked for advice, including Dr. Hoze Riruako, at the time the political advisor to Paramount Chief Kuaima Riruako and member of the delegation to Germany in 2011.

[9] The term "West" is used in this thesis as a simplification of the Anglo-Saxon and European tradition and centre of global economic, political and normative power. It is not meant to imply a geographic, or in any ways unified, sector.

[10] This understanding essentially follows Postcolonial Theory and Critical Whiteness. The theories problematise speaker positions and the continuity of colonial power relations. Colonial patterns are for example reproduced in the knowledge creation *about* the periphery as "others", also present in this thesis. See Said 1994.

[11] The term "Africa" is used in this thesis to refer to shared cultural aspects and historic experiences of societies on the African continent, without claiming to include all societies or fully describe them (see also footnote 6). The simplified opposition of Africa and the West (see footnote 9) is not meant to naturalise these constructs and present them as diametrically opposed, but to point out particularities in the context of the thesis topic.

the danger of fetishising African thought and underrepresenting the cultural dimension of Western arguments (see Said 1994; also Brigg and Muller 2009). As a European-born and largely European-educated scholar, I cannot remove myself from these dynamics.

Despite these concerns, Western social sciences need to open up and actively listen to 'peripheral' voices, justifying the interest of this study. An aspect of active listening is to reflect the heard content, which is the intention of this research.[12] In the examined case, the role of an open listener is particularly important for me as a German, seeing that through my citizenship I am indirectly one of the addressees of the Namibian claims. My position is thereby determined both by my origin and heritage as well as by my interest in the Namibian point of view. At the time of the return of the skulls in 2011, I was in Namibia, studying as an exchange student at the University of Namibia. Already interested in the political dynamics and history of German-Namibian relations, I got to personally experience and hear the emotions and arguments of Namibians. This gave me a feeling of urgency that these voices needed to be heard more thoroughly. Having developed an interest in African philosophy, as well as having experienced Namibian culture through my friends, I noticed that specific aspects of these experiences were absent from the general debate. This motivated the choice of study for both my bachelor thesis and this master thesis. However, the text should be read with the position of the author and the related flawed interpretations in mind.

Although I invite a critical reading of my text and accept the limitations of my position as a Western author, a short excursion to the Climate Summit COP21 in Paris in late 2015 reveals the necessity for contemporary peace research to actively engage with alternative, non-Western concepts, specifically disclosing the potential of Ubuntu-related methods of conflict management. Observers attribute the eventual consensus reached at the consultations in Paris to the *Indaba* held in critical phases of the negotiations. First successfully introduced in the climate summit in Durban, South Africa in 2011, *Indaba* refers to a Zulu and Xhosa practice of meetings with decision-makers whereby 'red lines' and 'landing zones' are shared, thus laying out the limits and possibilities of finding common ground (Rathi 2015; Obergassel et al. 2016). The example shows that the innovative use of traditional methods related to the Ubuntu principles can have an invigorating effect on negotiations and conflict transformation, even in unexpected contexts.

Peace research has been established as a critical, normative and relatively open field of social research with a global focus; yet, much of the literature – as in other social sciences – is produced in the West, based on Western education and largely Western sources. Peace research only partially engages with cultural difference, and as such only uses a fraction of its potential input (see Brigg 2008). This thesis understands difference as a challenge and opportunity alike, and discusses the

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[12] On both the challenges and opportunities of engaging with difference, see also Brigg 2008: 6-15.

role of culture in peace research in the theory chapter. While the different perspectives generated from culture bear great potential for conflict, they also provide different resources for managing conflict; both aspects will be explored in this thesis. Acknowledging the limitations mentioned above, Ubuntu will be used as the lens through which to look at Namibian-German postcolonial disputes, thus generating a new perspective on the conflict.

The speeches analysed in this thesis are from two events relating to the return of twenty human skulls from Germany to Namibia. The human remains were discovered in the possession of the Charité Berlin anthropological collection in 2008, when the process of identification and repatriation began. In September/October 2011, the first lot of twenty skulls was returned. More human remains remain stored in various institutions across Germany. A second, less publicised repatriation was facilitated in 2014, and more remains are to be identified and returned in the future. In 2011, the human remains brought attention to Germany's brutal colonial history, setting the stage for repeated calls for an acknowledgement of genocide and reparations. The repatriation gained great attention in the Namibian press, amongst the affected groups, activists and researchers. Subsequently, a delegation of over seventy representatives of Namibian ethnic groups, the government and spiritual leaders went to Germany to collect the witnesses of a painful history.

This thesis focuses on the discourses linked to this repatriation of the skulls in 2011. It analyses the rhetoric means and dynamics of ten speeches given by Namibian and German representatives in Berlin and Windhoek. In light of the events that unfolded in 2011, the difficulties of the Namibian-German relations and memories are seen "in particularly sharp focus" (Kössler 2015: 10). The events were one of the few official interactions of Namibian Traditional Leaders (i.e. claimants representing the affected communities) and both Namibian and German government representatives. Moreover, the speeches were addressed to both German and Namibian audiences and stakeholders, thus exposing a variety of topics and perspectives. Hence, the selected research material offers an enlightening perspective on the character and pitfalls of the Namibian-German postcolonial relations, but also on the opportunities for increased understanding and an enhanced relationship. Thus, the case is illuminating for the underlying dynamics of reconciliation, contributing to the development of new perspectives in peace research.

The study has two key research aims: firstly, to engage with the postcolonial dispute between Germany and Namibian stakeholders to explore whether an emphasis of cultural aspects (through a reference of Ubuntu) could improve mutual understanding; and secondly, to preliminarily explore the potential of Ubuntu for conflict transformation and peace research in general. Consequently, this thesis will explore the following three presuppositions:

1. The negligence of culture leads to an undervaluation of the premises of argument and obstructs the effectiveness of communication and conflict transformation between Namibian and German stakeholders.

2. An apprehension of Ubuntu can make the premises of the Namibian arguments more accessible to outsiders.

3. Ubuntu as an African weltanschauung and practice can make a valuable contribution to conflict transformation and peace research.

This thesis combines a theoretical strand of investigation regarding the questions of culture and Ubuntu in peace research with the analysis of Namibian and German speeches to examine to what extent and in which way these presuppositions can be found true in the given case.

The second chapter studies the role of culture in conflict transformation, arguing for the importance of recognising culture in conflicts using the work of Kevin Avruch. Furthermore proposing to see culture as a resource, it then gives an overview of African conflict transformation mechanisms. Further narrowing the perspective, the enquiry turns to Ubuntu, summarising recent debates on the notion and creating an understanding of the elements related to conflict transformation. In the third chapter, the postcolonial relations and disputes between Namibia and Germany are summarised, eventually focusing on the debates and events surrounding the repatriation of the remains of twenty Namibians in 2011. The fourth chapter develops the framework for analysis, building on the theory of rhetoric of Chaïm Perelman. The use of this Western methodology to analyse Namibian and German speeches and approach the African concept Ubuntu may be viewed critically. However, it both reflects my educational background and contributes to the aim of this thesis to make the Namibian perspectives and Ubuntu accessible to a Western audience.

Using the analytical framework, chapter five engages with the ten selected speeches. The analysis, through the rhetoric analysis, determines four major topics of debate and examines the different rhetoric means used by the speakers to emphasise these topics and convince the audience of their arguments. One section concerns particularly the premises of argumentation, revealing the value and culture base of the arguments. The rhetoric analysis gives important insight into the relationship between the speaker(s) and the audience(s), displaying the major discrepancies and rifts found in such arguments. The concluding chapter combines this analysis and the study of Ubuntu, developing interpretations of the value base of some of the Namibian arguments through Ubuntu and thus using Ubuntu as a perspective on this dispute. Subsequently, relevant elements of Ubuntu are connected to peace research in general. This section seeks to point out existing similarities with other conflict transformation methods, as well as exploring the potential for new insights when specifically applying Ubuntu to peace research. Finally, the thesis concludes by pointing out the potential value of Ubuntu to Namibian-German relations and to peace research more broadly, encouraging further research to consolidate these possible benefits.

2. Cultural Perspectives: Culture and Conflict Transformation

This chapter discusses the importance and role of culture in conflict transformation. It also presents some of the basic terms used in this thesis – namely culture, conflict, and conflict transformation. The first section will develop an understanding of the relationship between culture and conflict transformation on the basis of Kevin Avruch's significant contribution, supplemented with insights from John Paul Lederach and David Kahane. The second part of the chapter will focus on existing research on African cultural notions in conflict transformation. It problematises the notion 'traditional', which leads to a better understanding of how indigenous content functions in peace research, for example by exploring the successful application of African culture in conflict transformation. Finally, the chapter closes with the example of the southern African concept of Ubuntu and its applications to peace research. This aspect will set the scene for the analysis of the postcolonial event between Namibian and German stakeholders, and will be taken up subsequently in exploring the relevance of Ubuntu to peace research in general.

2.1 Culture, Conflict and Peace Research

This section outlines the implications of culture for peace research. Firstly, the definitions of culture (based on Kevin Avruch) and conflict (building on Lederach) used in this thesis will be presented and justified. Subsequently, the role of culture in conflict transformation and peace research will be explored by engaging with the criticism of culture, before some concrete options of approaching culture in peace research are offered.

2.1.1 Defining Culture

The role of culture in conflicts has been both neglected and debated heavily in sections of peace research and the study of conflict resolution. In the 2009 SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution, Faure (2009: 506) contends that "[t]he current intellectual challenge is to grasp in its functional aspect the quicksilver concept of culture and to analyse under which circumstances it becomes a causal variable". The difficulty in approaching culture lies in the multiple and often vague meanings contained within the concept. Faure (2009: 507) defines culture as a set of socially shared and transmitted beliefs, values and meanings that influence perceptions and behaviour, contributing to the identity of a specific, for example ethnic or national, group of people.

Some years earlier, Avruch observed that there is "great conceptual confusion" about culture as a concept in social sciences (Avruch 1998: 3). Since the 1990s, Kevin Avruch has contributed significantly to the inclusion of culture in conflict analysis and resolution (Brigg 2014). Throughout his career, he emphasised that "culture is always the lens through which differences are refracted

and conflict [is] pursued" (Avruch 2012: 12), an approach that resonates with the research problem in this thesis. In his 1998 seminal book "Culture and Conflict Resolution", Avruch develops "an accessible and nuanced understanding of culture" (Brigg 2014: 244). Avruch explains that historically, in and before the nineteenth century, culture was regarded as an asset only the elite possessed. Later, this part of culture – encompassing specific cultural rituals such as opera, classical music and theatre, as well as particular norms and behaviours – came to be understood as 'high culture' ('Hochkultur'). While all humans were now considered cultural beings, a developmental continuum from 'savage' to 'civilised' categorised humans according to 'how much' or which quality of culture they possessed (Avruch 1998: 8). This understanding of culture was a foundation of colonialist rationale that persists even today.

The understanding proposed by Avruch – and largely followed in this thesis – is a complex notion of culture. Culture represents "a derivative of individual experience, something learned or created by individuals themselves or passed on to them socially" (Avruch 1998: 5). This definition does not exclude the symbols and meanings transmitted in a society over generations, but goes beyond the limited understanding of culture as only being these expressions. Culture is both practice and the reflection of practice. For Avruch, culture is located within individuals, but also in their interaction with others. As such, culture is individual, and an individual always embraces several cultures from her different social experiences and environments, such as her family, ethnic group, geographical location, social class, and profession (Avruch 1998: 16-8; Avruch 2012: 11).

Furthermore, each group of people, no matter what binds them together, can be a stimulator of culture. Therefore, a society always contains a complex system of cultures, which cannot be described by a singular denominator. Since no two people in a population share the exact same societal position or group membership, they will not share the exact same culture or set of cultures. They also do not share the same perceptions of culture and its representations. With this understanding, culture is heterogeneous. Since it is based on experience, it is also ever changing, flexible and unstable. Culture can be understood as a problem-solving approach of humans to their environment; we encounter challenges, and in response we develop social practices. Since problems differ over time and in varied spaces, culture is a locally and temporally diverse phenomenon (Avruch 1998: 18-21). From this perspective, culture encompasses two ideas or layers. It includes the idea of generic, universal culture, or rather the ability for culture, which all humans share. Simultaneously, culture means locally specific complex systems of "meanings created, shared and transmitted (socially inherited) by individuals in particular social groups" (Avruch 1998: 10). The latter is the focus of this thesis.

To better understand the proposed definition of culture and how it differs from other uses of the concept in social sciences, Avruch (1998: 12-21) presents some "inadequate ideas of culture" (Avruch 1998: 12). These ideas oversimplify culture, resulting in intended or unintended misrepresentation and misinterpretation. One of these 'inadequate ideas' is the assumption of culture as being homogeneous within a society – that is, clearly describable, without internal paradoxes, and prescribing clear behavioural rules. This can be related to the idea that culture is uniformly distributed within a society, with the expectation that this group is perfectly homogeneous. By consequence, all difference can be dismissed as 'deviance'. This is often connected to equating culture with ethnicity or nationality, as is also implicit in the definition by Faure as presented above.

Another 'inadequate idea' that is particularly evident in discourses on (and in) Africa is the idea that culture equals tradition. Here, the notion of culture only includes what is visible, especially customary behaviour. It focuses mostly on showcases of tradition such as dances and music, but also includes customary rules such as how to approach an elderly, respected person. This idea of culture, prevalent in 'cultural sensitivity trainings', also assumes culture as being timeless and stable, more located in history than in the present.

A third 'inadequate idea', relevant also to peace research, is that culture is a 'thing' with no need for human agency. This view is frequently found in the literature that assigns culture an important role in conflict. When culture is seen as a 'driver' of conflict, authors give the impression that culture is an independent actor in the conflict, not regarding for example the human agency in the construction of this culture, as well as its political use in the specific context. Such simplifying ideas of culture may appear to make it more operational, but they may do more harm than good in the context of peace research and practice. The complex definition proposed by Avruch understands culture as fundamental to the human being, thus permeating the identity and relations of people. It emphasises the great variety of expressions and influences of culture in conflicts and conflict resolution. While this thesis subscribes to the complex and constitutive understanding of culture, culture is also used as a repository of meaningful practices, expressed in the application of Ubuntu to peace research. Hence, Avruch's view of *what culture is* will be complemented by John Paul Lederach's instrumental view on *how culture can be used* as a resource (see 2.1.4).

2.1.2 Defining Conflict

Before taking a closer look at the role of culture in conflict, the understanding of conflict itself must be clarified. Similar to culture, Avruch views conflict as "a feature of all human societies and, potentially, an aspect of all social relationships" (Avruch 1998: 24). Both culture and conflict are features of human interaction and social practice. Avruch defines conflict as occurring "when two related parties – individuals, groups, communities, or nation-states – find themselves divided by

perceived incompatible interests or goals or in competition for control of scarce resources" (Avruch 1998: 24-5).

While it is necessary to reveal Avruch's definition of conflict when following his argument on culture and conflict, it does not reflect the possible complexity of conflict. Looking at the conflict between Namibians and Germans, which is the main focus of this thesis, it is evident that not only culture, but also conflict, needs a complex definition. Avruch implies that a conflict usually occurs between two opposing parties. However, today, conflicts often involved multiple parties that relate to each other in diverse ways. Furthermore, these conflict parties are not necessarily internally homogeneous (see e.g. Münkler 2005). Moreover, it is not only interests, goals and resources – or the perception thereof – that can be at the heart of a conflict. Instead, conflict is understood here as a multifaceted social practice with diverse reasons and effects. Following the social constructivist theoretical perspective, social conflict is seen as developing through divergent meanings and interpretations of events and actions. As such, conflict is a functional practice of people negotiating their perceptions of the world, and thus creating reality (Lederach 1996: 8).

With this understanding of conflict in mind, Lederach (1996: 16-9) promotes the term 'conflict transformation' instead of conflict resolution or management. The aim of intercepting a conflict is not necessarily its resolution – this is not even always possible, since conflict can continue in different forms if a relationship between the parties remains. Rather, it is the transformation of the destructive elements of a conflict. Lederach sees conflict as dialectically related to human relationships, both resulting from them and impacting them in the future. On the one hand, conflict needs to be actively transformed through social interaction. At the same time, conflict changes social interaction, relationships and perception, and is therefore a major driver of change. Hence, Lederach points out that 'transformation' indicates both the descriptive aspect of conflict transforming society, people and perceptions, and the prescriptive perspective of peace practitioners pursuing a transformation of conflict from a destructive to a productive relationship.

2.1.3 Culture in Conflict Transformation – A Defence

As conflicts are seen to emerge from interpretations and meanings in social constructivist thought, Lederach (1996: 8) develops the role of culture: "From this starting point, conflict is connected to meaning, meaning to knowledge, and knowledge is rooted in culture". Using this perspective, culture is an essential aspect of all conflicts, and thus the analysis of culture needs to play a central role in conflict transformation.

However, Väyrynen (2001: 2-3) observes that there is also the opposite perspective, which denies a constitutive role of culture in conflict. In this 'totalist' school of thought, as Väyrynen calls it,

conflict is not rooted in culture but in universal needs. This idea is promoted for example in John Burton's human needs theory and his related problem-solving approach of conflict resolution (Väyrynen 2001: 5-7). In this approach, individual and cultural biases need to be filtered out – the principle role of the facilitator or mediator – in order to get to the root of the conflict, understood as unfulfilled universal needs, and solve the conflicting issues. In contrast, non-totalist views stress the importance of culture in forming morals and values, which are seen as central factors in conflicts. While totalist views focus on the similarities of conflict parties, the emphasis on culture encourages embracing and living with difference (Väyrynen 2001: 3). Väyrynen (2001: 8) criticises the filtering of cultural effects promoted by Burton, arguing that the conflict resolution workshop "is a place where a cultural encounter takes place, and where the socially and culturally produced border between 'we' and 'they' can be reflected, not abolished".

Within the non-totalist approaches, where the role of culture in conflict is emphasised, Väyrynen (2001: 3-4) identifies four branches: social constructivism, feminist theories (which emphasise the influence of gender), frame analysis (focusing on different frames of reference), and discourse analysis (acknowledging the importance of language). The social constructivist argument understands culture as a basis for interpreting the world and acting in it, and is emphasised in the following discussion of Avruch and Lederach. Within the social constructivist perspective, Väyrynen (2001: 5, 117) holds that conflicts are not so much over interests but over meaning and the lack or loss of a shared reality. These also seem to be the issues at the centre of the postcolonial disputes between Germans and Namibians.

Avruch started writing on culture and conflict at a time when culture had to almost entirely give way for power as the sole contributor to conflict and basis for conflict resolution. Critiquing this predominant approach, he instead argues for the importance of culture in conflict analysis and, accordingly, conflict resolution. From a constructivist standpoint, Avruch (1998: 23-55) notes that classical approaches to conflicts and International Relations undervalue the relevance of culture. The realist and neorealist paradigms in particular "have silenced or misappropriated cultural accounts", applying the "inadequate ideas about culture" described above (Avruch 1998: 23). An example of this can be found in the conflation of culture and nation, when a nation is presented as having a particular character, and any diversity found within it is systematically neglected (Avruch 1998: 31-4). Moreover, realism underestimates the importance of culture by considering power, interest and resources to be the only relevant factors in conflicts. Without inquiring about the agency of conflict parties, affected individuals, and their perceptions, beliefs and values in relation to those factors, culture seems meaningless. However, Avruch (1998: 29) notes that the realist paradigm is losing its significance since states can no longer be seen as the only relevant actors of

world politics, even though the leaders of more powerful states try to cling to this paradigm through officially only cooperating with other states.

Yet, even realism's antagonist – idealism, which stresses the importance of beliefs and ideology – deflates culture into a homogeneous engine of political aspirations (Avruch 1998: 29). Within the idealist perspective, culture gains value. However, it is still only seen as a meaningful difference between parties, and not within them. This leaves a simplistic idea of culture as a cause for conflict, but not a feature to be considered on the various levels found within conflict i.e. involving different conflict actors[13]. Avruch cautions:

> "The mere existence of cultural difference is rarely a cause of conflict. This hardly diminishes culture's importance to conflict analysis or resolution, however, because it is *always* the lens through which the causes of conflict are refracted." (Avruch 1998: 30)

Culture has been viewed as a lens through which people understand the world in constructivist approaches of International Relations (Avruch 1998: 35). These approaches focus less on material than on cognitive aspects, and are thus more open to the roles culture may play, often as a sidekick to the keyword 'identity'.

Another area in which culture has been acknowledged as a major aspect in peace and conflict research is negotiation (Avruch 1998: 39). Negotiations are a communicative way of approaching a conflict. The study of negotiations emphasises the negotiating individuals and how they are situated. As Avruch (1998: 40) argues, culture is one aspect of this context. Nevertheless, there is a debate on the impact of culture, with some, such as William Zartman and John Burton, arguing that negotiation (and by extension diplomacy) is universal. Avruch (1998: 44), however, disagrees, stating that the universally accepted practices of negotiations and diplomacy themselves are a culture, which the participants share, recreate and modify in practising it. Yet, even when the importance of culture is stressed in the context of negotiations or conflict research, it is often with the qualification that culture is always trumped by power. A difference in power can be seen to diminish the relevance of culture to a relationship; with enough (military, economic, persuasive) power, one party can even impose its culture onto another (Avruch 1998: 48-53). The discussion of culture in negotiations is important to this thesis as it points to the culture infused in the negotiations by Germany, arguably the more powerful party in the postcolonial disputes. When focusing on specific undervalued cultural aspects, as is argued for Ubuntu here, there is a danger of naturalising the pervasive 'mainstream' culture.

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[13] A similar argument was famously made by Samuel P. Huntington, who foresaw a "clash of civilisations" based on worldwide nine broad cultural affiliations (Huntington 1997). The level of generalisation about culture leaves a comprehensive criticism of his argument beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the assumption that cooperation across civilisations is virtually impossible should be sufficiently revoked through the arguments about intercultural conflict resolution presented below.

In his contribution to this discussion, Faure (2009: 506), focusing on business negotiation, contends that understanding negotiations requires comprehending the meanings that different actors attach to their experiences – even though it may not always be easy to single out the specific effects of culture. According to Faure, culture impacts conflict transformation through the actors' behaviours, beliefs, cognition and identity (Faure 2009: 509). While Faure describes the efforts that have been made since the late 1980s – especially in the fields of intercultural (business) negotiation and cultural particularities – he maintains that "it is more than urgent to investigate [various] societies to get a better understanding of the basic process of conflict resolution in its multiple expressions" (Faure 2009: 521).

Avruch (1998: 79) goes further and argues that it is impossible to avoid culture from influencing conflicts, their resolution and the study thereof. Instead, it is the result of cultural bias and power that cultural differences have been neglected in conflict transformation theory and practice. Contemporary conflict transformation practitioners and analysts may themselves constitute a group sharing a particular culture, which has become the dominant culture. This form of conflict transformation is heavily influenced by Western European and Anglo-American culture. Avruch (1998: 77-8) supports this point with the example of the widely accepted notion that emotions need to be excluded from negotiations – to "separate the people from the problem", as Fisher and Ury demand in their prominent publication "Getting to Yes" (Fisher, Ury, and Patton 2011).

Yet, this analytical approach to conflicts may not be universal, but particular mostly to people from a white, Anglo-American and Western European cultural background. Avruch concludes:

> "The theory derives ultimately from a folk model – the privileged folks, in this case. These are the folks who 'hold the cards' in many interethnic or intercultural negotiations; so it is not surprising that this is also their model of choice. In the end, by ignoring any consideration of the model's ethnic and class provenance, its promotion from folk model to expert's 'theory' occurred totally unselfconsciously. And in suppressing the cultural dimension, we run the risk of losing at the same time a way to get at the asymmetries of power politics in intercultural negotiations in the real world." (Avruch 1998: 79-80)

Evidently, the 'non-cultural' model of negotiations and conflict transformation sustains itself. By elevating a particular model to universality, it gives the negotiators with this background an advantage. It is not surprising that, from the perspective of these negotiators, negotiations applying this dominant model are seen as more successful. Negotiators who do not follow these implicit rules, on the other hand, are seen as deviant and disturbing the process. The cultural bias of the privileged 'folk' results in a blindness towards this bias and towards other cultural models.

More recently, Avruch (2012: 64) has observed that, by now, culture has been integrated in most practices of conflict resolution and alternative dispute resolution. While the foundations of the field focused on universally applicable techniques of conflict resolution, this universality is now

considered more critically. Hence, culture is now regarded as one of the important factors to consider in conflict analysis and resolution. However, culture is still rarely regarded as a resource for conflict transformation mechanisms. The following section will present some ideas that propose a constructive use of cultural resources in conflict transformation.

2.1.4 Culture in Conflict Transformation – Some Approaches

The Canadian political philosopher David Kahane emphasises the cultural bias found in supposedly 'culture-neutral' approaches, and thus supports the need to take culture into account in conflict transformation (Kahane 2003). Drawing on examples from conflicts between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians, he shows that the neglect of different cultural approaches to conflict transformation results in neutralising and naturalising the approaches of the dominant culture. Kahane observes that the "common-sense story of just adjudication has deep roots in western cultural, legal and philosophical traditions, and is closely tied to accounts of political legitimacy" (Kahane 2003: 6). However, he asserts that from the perspectives of Canadian Aborigines (and other previously colonised groups), this version of justice may be seen as "deeply corrupt" (Kahane 2003: 6), considering that they have long been refused membership in liberal society. Thus, Kahane (2003: 7) concludes that the notion of neutral, just adjudication may be neither neutral nor just. It raises the question of how to approach dispute resolution in intercultural conflicts without cultural imposition of a one-sided understanding of justice.

In this context, Kahane (2003: 10-1) specifies that personal culture is constructed by various memberships shaping the understanding of the surrounding world. The social environment – in a co-formation of different memberships and cultures – contextualises, shapes and challenges those memberships and cultures in processes including political ambitions and power relationships. With this co-formation in mind, the power dynamics in conflict transformation between cultures become more evident. Dominant categories achieve the power to portray their specific interpretation of reality as neutral and objective. To apply a naturalised method – here the predicament of liberal autonomy and adjudication as conflict resolution – is not to evade culture, it is to choose one specific cultural script: "the gap between cultures is often asymmetrical, in that dominant groups can safely ignore other perspectives, and entrench their own worldview as the norm" (Kahane 2003: 19). Acknowledging the existence of different cultures and their influence in a conflict allows for a levelling of the playing field – where the definition of culture and its role can become open for debate (Kahane 2003: 13).

The design of culturally sensitive conflict resolution processes requires the recognition of power asymmetries and their influence on shaping the conflict and cultures. Although he generally follows Avruch's definition of individual and multiple culture(s), Kahane (2003: 12-3) contends that taking

culture into account requires some extent of generalisation over cultures and their perspectives. Admittedly, generalisations cannot capture the individual traits and nuances of culture. However, without generalisations, culture would not be operational and would need to be ignored in conflict transformation, inevitably leading to a tacit overemphasis on the dominant culture and its methods. Thus, cultural generalisations are functionally embedded in a particular context and always have a political nature.

Kahane's discussion bears important lessons for my project. Although the diversity within Namibia and within the groups engaged in the dispute with Germany is significant and may not be understated, the resulting paralysis and the lack of focus on the claims and their backgrounds can – from an analytical perspective – only be overcome by focusing and generalising. The discussion also shows that this process is necessarily political and influenced by factors that are both intrinsic to the conflict history and resulting from my personal background and history. Moreover, the partiality and diversity of cultural invocations needs to be taken into account. Nonetheless, the discussion also highlights the importance of the neglected narratives, and the relevance of their potential contribution to peace research. Kahane (2003: 17) makes another point important to my study, namely that recognising a dispute, determining it as relevant, and acknowledging the legitimate stakeholders to the dispute are also subject to cultural perspectives and power dynamics. This is reflected in the importance of the engagement with the past to some Namibian communities and the – until recently – virtual ignorance by Germany (see chapter 3).

Avruch (1998: 59) also discusses the problem of generalisation and the diversity of perspectives. He introduces the concepts of 'emic' and 'etic' approaches to describing cultural differences in conflict research. Emic methods use native terms and base their understanding of those terms on local concepts. The recognition of such concepts is based on a thick description of the terms and the contexts they are used in. Such an emic strategy can be opposed to etic approaches, which use the analyst's point of view and allow for generalisation and comparison (Avruch 1998: 60-3). However, differences can only be grasped when understanding the different points of view *and* being able to compare them to one another. This results in the methodological challenge of combining emic and etic methodology to constructively approach culture in conflict transformation (Avruch 1998: 68-72). Baaz (2015) cautions that Avruch's anthropological approach may limit the understanding of the role of culture in conflict, advocating for a more multi-disciplinary approach.

Avruch (2012: 66-8) also distinguishes between experience-distant and experience-near conceptions of culture, following the anthropologist Clifford Geertz. The modern social scientific methods, which attempt to technically analyse culture, result in experience-distant notions of culture. These can be compared to experience-near concepts of culture – the everyday understanding of culture as

employed by members of the respective cultures. Avruch warns that experience-near notions of culture are politically laden and are used as ideological resources by conflict parties, especially in ethnic conflicts, to motivate their followers. Hence, he maintains that third parties and analysts need to be aware of the distinction, focusing on the opportunities of the experience-distant notion while being aware of the dangers of the experience-near use of culture by local adversaries. The aim of this distinction is to avoid both over- and underrating culture in conflict resolution (known as type I and type II errors). This call for distance is a slight contrast to Avruch's earlier support of emic analyses of culture, perhaps developed in the context of rising debates on cultural relativism.

Nevertheless, this debate demonstrates that while it is crucial to consider the role of culture, it is inevitably connected to power and normativity, a connection that Avruch addresses in his more recent work (Avruch 2012: 141-75). Brigg and Muller (2009) criticise Avruch's differentiation of scientific and political usages of culture, reminding the reader of the colonial emergence of the concept of culture. They hold that Avruch reiterates the colonial baggage when giving primacy to the modernist Western social science methods to understand and define the 'other', while neglecting to recognise that this process itself is limited and discriminatory. Brigg and Muller suggest that, instead, research should accept cultural difference without immediately intending to 'have' or 'know' the culture. Instead, culture can be considered as an empty signifier (following Laclau's terminology), which needs to be continuously filled with meaning in a dialogical process involving both facilitators and parties. The criticism of Brigg and Muller also points to the limitations of this study (see introduction), while at the same time encouraging to engage with difference and non-Western approaches in a non-essentialist manner.

The theoretical perspective of Brigg and Muller can lead back to a veteran understanding of the conflict resolution field, where practitioners directly sought to make sense of the difficulties arising from culture. While not addressing all conceptual challenges brought to light by Avruch and Briggs/Muller, Lederach provides additional tools to engage in the dialectic process of understanding cultures. In a fairly radical attempt at integrating culture into conflict transformation, Lederach (1996: 10) discusses culture as a *resource*, suggesting an interactive process for the transformation of intercultural conflicts. Lederach (1996: 47-53, 69) critically discusses the dominant model of conflict resolution trainings and third party mediation as the pure application of a prescriptive approach to conflict resolution and cultural sensitivity. The approach assumes that the techniques of conflict transformation remain universal, and only the vocabulary and themes of the resolution process need to be matched with the context of the conflict, with culture being one variable. Lederach criticises the dominant prescriptive approach for its "assumptions of cultural universality", the idea that "resources for empowerment lie outside the setting" – specifically in the

Western tradition, and the subsequent "residue of imperialism" inherent in the model (Lederach 1996: 68, 70).

Instead, Lederach (1996: 55-62) suggests that the facilitators and parties learn from each other, combing their various approaches to conflict transformation so to create a functioning process. Developing the "elicitive model" (Lederach 1996: 55), he sees the facilitator's role as someone who supports the identification of the modes of conflict transformation already existing in a particular environment, thus eliciting them and making them useful in repairing the broken social system that caused, and was caused by, the conflict at hand. In cooperation with the participants, existing views on conflicts and their resolution are discovered and described, categorised and then evaluated, and accordingly recreated and adapted to reach a desirable outcome. These elicited modes are then tested and applied, and the process is repeated and continued in the same manner (Lederach 1996: 58-61). In contrast to prescriptive models, the elicitive process is built on a self-identification of the existing conflict transformation mechanisms available in a specific context, including their strengths and weaknesses. The professional facilitator, instead of imposing a universal model, adds her technical knowledge to the implicit knowledge of participating locals, using cultural analysis to develop suitable models of conflict transformation (Lederach 1996: 65).

While this study does not suggest a training process as in Lederach's version of the problem-solving workshop, the elicitive model still bears some lessons. The aim of this study is to challenge the persistent German narrative about its postcolonial conflict with Namibia, and the way the conflict should be approached. Following Avruch's understanding, it is suggested that culture is fundamental to our being and understanding of the world, and thus influences conflicts on all levels. Additionally, culture is seen as a resource, as it is in the elicitive model presented by Lederach. His instrumental use of culture complements Avruch's foundational conception for the purpose of this study. The study is an attempt to describe some of the implicit cultural invocations and possibly elicit alternative approaches to the conflict from the cultural resources of the Namibian stakeholders. The appraisal of Ubuntu's potential contributions to peace research simultaneously supports both authors' submission that cultural analysis enhances conflict transformation. Written by an outsider to the discussed African cultures, this can only be a starting point that breaks with the dominant mode of reiterating European narratives to enable and encourage real dialogue.

2.2 African Conflict Transformation Mechanisms

Interest in the practices of conflict transformation in African cultures has been slowly growing, after these methods were largely ignored in mainstream (Western) conflict resolution research and practice. Paradoxically, even peacemaking in Africa is predominantly taught and practiced based on

models derived from Eurocentric conventions (Murithi 2008: 16). If culture is understood as a resource, as Lederach suggests, the insights from African cultures to conflict transformation are perhaps being neglected at a time when they are particularly needed. Zartman (1999b, 1-11) argues that with the globalisation of knowledge, African knowledge systems should be added to the world repertoire, or compared and linked to similar existing approaches from other places. As a result, African resources would be more accessible to the rest of the world, and external methods may become more relatable for individuals and societies in Africa.

When talking about culture as a resource in the African context, the term 'tradition' forces itself into the debate. Although the definition given above shows that culture is much more than just 'old ways of doing something', in the discourse about Africa, 'culture' and 'tradition' are often used interchangeably. This limits the concepts of both terms, reducing cultural practices to visible elements such as festivals, dances and clothing that are celebrated as remnants of the past, and tradition to almost-forgotten styles of such events and objects. Osaghae (1999: 204) gives a more encompassing definition of the traditional as "the legacy of the past, including the changes and transformations that this past may have gone through". With this denotation, Osaghae objects to the idea that the 'the traditional' is untouched and unchanged by the influences on African societies in the past century. While we generally refer to traditional practices when referencing culture in conflicts in the African context, the pervasiveness of tradition (and its modern interpretations) in a society's culture is important to notice and justifies this approach. However, unless taking a purely historical standpoint, only those traditions practiced today or those potentially applicable in a contemporary society are relevant sources for inspiration on conflict transformation.

While many aspects of modern African societies are similar to, or even derivatives of, Western practices, the search for particular African methods consciously excludes those elements and emphasises those practices less commonly found in Europe and North America:

> "The search for traditional strategies of conflict management then looks for the past in present-day social formations that can be applied to modern conflicts, and stresses the *indigenous* content." (Osaghae 1999: 204, emphasis in original)

The reason for this focus can be validated with the general overemphasis and dominance of Western approaches criticised above. The inclusion of local practices is emancipating in that it allows for the contextualisation of peace processes and the participation of locals, and it challenges the perpetuation of (post-)colonial foreign influence in Western interventions (Osaghae 1999: 201). The political potential of cultural legacies can be exemplified with how they have been used to stabilise power in both colonial and postcolonial Africa. Examples include the reinforcement and reinvention of traditional leaders during colonialism, and the emphasis on ethnic bounds to hold onto power in many postcolonial African states (Osaghae 1999: 203, 215). Thus, local practices are not void of

destructive influences and applications that may be exploited by actors pursuing their own agendas. Only a critical evaluation can reveal both the constructive and detrimental aspects of traditional and local practices.

Exploring the methodological questions, Zartman (1999b, 1-11) suggests that as a first step, the practices used by African societies to deal with conflicts need to be identified, described in detail, and understood in their essence. This requires, firstly, a critical reading of anthropological writings, which are often the first written accounts of cultural practices, but usually produced by outsiders with limited access and a particular bias. In addition, old conflict transformation methods can be found in the customs and conventions of modern societies, both removed from, and integrated in, modern urban and state conditions. Another repository of traditional knowledge can be found in oral history and stories told over generations. The conflict management practices recorded in these ways do not claim to be representative of universal practices shared throughout Africa, but they complement each other in creating a more holistic picture (Zartman 1999b: 6). Zartman further argues that this picture, as a second step, can be used for comparisons both internally and externally. Practices within Africa can be compared, identifying similarities and differences. The African methods of conflict management can similarly be compared to existing practices elsewhere, identifying their similarities and differences. Thus, it can be evaluated which 'new' African conflict management practices can be added to the repertoire studied in peace research, and which known practices can be regarded as somewhat more universal, since they have been developed and applied in various parts of the world. Lastly, traditional practices may be measured against their applicability to various modern conflicts, determining their relevance today (Zartman 1999b: 7-8).

A review of different conflict transformation practices by Osaghae (1999: 205) finds that different African societies show notable similarities in the nature and management of their conflicts. The major difference is found between centralised and non-state systems, which display distinct forms of conflict management. The communal organisation and value system of many African societies is reflected in the nature of their conflicts and resolutions, which results in a set of shared conflict resolution practices. In communal societies, even conflicts between individuals tend to expand to the level of families, clans or villages, if culture emphasises those affiliations. The embroilment of society in personal conflicts entails the involvement of many or all members of society in the transformation or resolution of such conflicts. Thus, many traditional conflict transformation strategies involve communal ceremonies, consensus, trusted and respected members of society, and an emphasis on morals and solidarity - in short, what Osaghae (1999: 208) calls a "social fabric approach to resolving conflicts".

Another shared characteristic of African traditional approaches to conflict transformation is how it is embedded in the entirety of social life, and involves a variety of social and cultural practices (Osaghae 1999: 209). The resolution of conflicts often encompasses political meetings, religious practices, community gatherings and festivals including feasts and dances. Conflicts are also often treated similarly to diseases, or as a society's social illness comparable to a person's mental illness. Therefore, healing rituals similar to those used for medical purposes are also employed to heal the society or individuals after conflicts (Zartman 1999a: 221). Thus, members of the society that play an important role in the political, spiritual, medical and social guidance of that society or family are also involved in conflict transformation.

The interwoven relationship of conflicts and society may explain why social cohesion and harmony are central aims – and tools – in the conflict transformation of many African societies (Osaghae 1999: 211-2). Conflicts not only affect individuals, they have an effect on the entire social composition. With social cohesion an important aim, justice and judgments are less about directing blame and sanctioning the offender, but about restoring harmony. Thus, many traditional judgments focus on the needs of the victims (if applicable), and are therefore based on a restorative justice idea (see Malan 2008). Offenders rehabilitate themselves by restoring the damage done. Any settlement thus focuses on the integration of the offender (or all parties involved), rather than their exclusion from society. This approach of atonement requires the acceptance of guilt and damage by the offender, but also the acceptance of the settlement by the aggrieved party. With the same principle in mind, dialectical conflicts are usually not resolved by deciding on who/what is right and wrong, but on finding solutions that all parties can agree to in a consensual manner. Blame and responsibility may be shared between the parties, but also the entire society who could not hold off the conflict. In both cases, reconciliation is an important and highly emphasised factor in restoring harmony. The focus is on a positive-sum outcome, which allows all parties to leave the conflict with dignity, and having re-established social relations (Osaghae 1999: 211).

Some mainstream Western – and especially (neo-)realist – conceptions view conflict as inevitable, natural to the human condition and as such irresolvable. In contrast, many African perspectives put emphasis on the possibility to solve conflicts (Omeje 2008: 91). The emphasis of many traditional methods is on forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, and restorative justice – in short, on (re-)building social trust (Murithi 2008: 16-7). This attention to restoring[14] society, and the transformative justice

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[14] The 'restoration' of society is an important concept in African conflict management – and also in Ubuntu. Reading the literature, it is notable that 'restoring' has several dimensions. One aspect, prevalent in 'restorative justice' is the rehabilitation of the offender and their reintegration into society. Conversely, the regeneration of the victim's honour and the replacement of their loss, where appropriate, are included. This may also refer to the recovery and retelling of culture and history, for example in postcolonial and post-apartheid societies. 'Restoring' society primarily refers to the (re-)establishment of social harmony. Although the prefix 're-' implies a return to the previous order, this is not

mechanisms they offer, makes the traditional methods especially attractive in situations that require a transformation of society from conflict to peace. Traditional means can create a 'bottom-up' inclusive judicial system where the state cannot provide justice. The focus of traditional justice mechanisms on morality – rather than prosperity – as both the means and condition for justice is well suited in a transition (Albert 2008).

Different understandings of justice therefore make up a big part of cultural influence on conflicts and their transformation. The practiced examples of transitional justice in Africa show the use of restorative and retributive approaches to justice. Restorative justice, with the aforementioned emphasis on inclusion and rehabilitation, as well as compensation of the damage to the victim, is used in almost all known approaches to justice in African societies. Retributive justice, with an emphasis on punishment and the prosecution of injustice, can be found as a complementary element. Yet, the focus remains on a transition from past wrongs to a shared future (Malan 2008). Thus, arbitration and adjudication by a powerful figure, such as the chief or elders, complements the consensual approach. The judgment remains to be based on morality and shared values. In the majority of cases, conflict settlement takes the form of mediation or third-party supported negotiation on the basis of agreed principles (Zartman 1999a: 220-4).

Some documented examples illustrate the different portrayed elements of conflict transformation based on African cultures, values and practices. The *gacaca* system in Rwanda is perhaps the most internationally well-known application of traditional justice mechanisms. The established practice for resolving family and local disputes was adapted and used to pass judgement on some of the crimes that occurred during the 1994 genocide. In the *gacaca*, elders served as judges in local meetings, conducting hearings with all members of the community. These courts tried serious violent crimes, and could administer life-long prison sentences for murder and rape. Thus, the *gacaca* courts fulfilled a primarily retributive idea of justice. However, with a strong emphasis on hearing testimonies and reconciling perpetrators and survivors, the *gacaca* system also included a strong restorative spirit (Malan 2008: 133-6). The *gacaca* system has, however, received strong criticism for providing a playground for post-conflict power dynamics, engraving perpetrator and victim roles and failing to address underlying local grievances (Thomson 2011).

The approach effectuated by Desmond Tutu in post-apartheid South Africa was solely focused on (re-)conciliation[15]. Tutu cited his *ubuntu* culture as the basis of the reconciliatory spirit he

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necessarily the case in all situations, as the overarching aim to create social harmony may require an entirely new societal setup.

[15] While the term 'reconciliation' is commonly used in this context, it can be argued that the aim was perhaps to create a new South African society in which co-existence is possible, rather than to restore a previously existing social fabric. At the same time, it can be argued that the communities have been functioning on some levels that were destroyed during

perpetuated. Although most *ubuntu* societies administer restitutive judgments, restitution played a minor role in the South African reconciliation process. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) delivered forgiveness to perpetrators of apartheid crimes under the condition that perpetrators (and victims) would share their truths and admit the full extent of their wrongdoings (Malan 2008: 136-9). The TRC borrowed the core of its approach from the *ubuntu* principle of recognising the humanity in other people – even in those who had wronged someone. Societies embracing *ubuntu* see conflict as a threat to social cohesion and harmony, which are the basis of society. The exact handling of those who disregard societal norms and laws may differ in the various societies subscribing to the widespread notion of *ubuntu*. Often, the community is involved in a conflict resolution forum (known for example as *lekgotla*, a word derived from Setswana), and elders have a leading role in deciding the way forward. The focus, especially if the offender admits guilt and shows remorse, is on making up for the incurred losses and restoring social trust. In complex conflicts, community organs and elders also take a mediating role (Murithi 2008: 26-7). The potentials of *ubuntu* for peace research are discussed in detail in the next section.

A reconciliatory approach is also found in the *Mato Oput*, a conflict resolution and reconciliation ceremony practiced by the Acholi in northern Uganda. It has been advocated and applied on a community level to support the reconciliation process in the protracted internal and regional conflict in Uganda. Mixed-gender Councils of Elders hear complaints and testimonies of community members. Perpetrators are encouraged to acknowledge responsibility, demonstrate genuine remorse, and ask for forgiveness. Victims are encouraged to grant forgiveness, and compensation is paid by the perpetrator on suggestion of the elders. The process is concluded by the *Mato Oput* ceremony, which consists of sharing a bitter herbal drink, symbolising the bitterness resulting from the conflict, which must now be overcome to restore harmony. Additionally, in violent conflicts, the spears are broken to symbolise an end of the violence (Murithi 2008: 21-6; Albert 2008: 41).

More examples of traditional methods are found throughout Africa. Often, they are reinvented and reformed to suit particular circumstances. Some were employed in extraordinary situations, such as the *guurti* in the peace process in Somaliland or the *palaver houses* in post-civil war Liberia. Others function as permanent complimentary justice systems dealing with specified offences and disputes, for example in Nigeria, Botswana and Namibia[16] (Murithi 2008; Albert 2008).

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apartheid and in the violent anti-apartheid struggle, thus justifying the notion of 'reconciliation' in the sense of a restoration of social relations. See also the previous footnote.

[16] For a list of traditional authorities and references on customary law in Namibia, see the overview compiled by the Legal Assistance Centre, http://www.lac.org.na/namlex/Custlaw.pdf. See also the three published volumes of the "Customary Law Ascertained" book series edited by Manfred O. Hinz for detailed information on the traditional authorities and their laws.

Osaghae (1999: 213-7) evaluates the merits of traditional conflict transformation strategies for conflicts in Africa today. He concludes that the 'traditional' could make a valuable contribution to present challenges. Although most conflict strategies relate to small-scale conflicts, such as on family or village level, the 'social fabric' approach to conflicts indicates how interlinked all levels of society are, and how micro-techniques could be applicable – and perhaps even needed – in a larger political context as well. This emphasis on relations may limit the applicability of traditional methods on inter-societal conflicts. However, national-level applications in diverse countries such as Uganda, Nigeria and South Africa show that traditional methods can be accepted beyond the particular limits of their origin, and the required bounded identity can be created on higher organisational levels of community. Yet, a precondition for this is the understanding of relatedness as neighbours, groups with a common history, or – as the broadest category – humans. However, considering the changes that African societies have faced and, in parts, the different nature of conflicts today, Osaghae suggests that the traditional strategies should be selectively reconstructed. Even though societal transformations in Africa have been significant, modern political practices and conflicts are connected to traditional thought.

Murithi (2008: 28-9) points out that the social structures and conflict resolution mechanisms of many African traditional societies are strongly patriarchal. In some cases, women are excluded from meetings, or are required to have male relatives speak for them, depriving women of the right to defend themselves, amongst other issues. This marginalisation often also applies to children and youth. This not only fails to conform to the international standards and goals of equality, but it also limits the reach of conflict transformation capacities. Albert (2008: 38-9) suggests that the tasks in traditional peace methods are shared according to set role expectations. While he admits that men are usually in central and powerful roles of conflict management, he draws attention to the contribution of women to peace. Women's roles are focused on preventative diplomacy and peace education, teaching and reinforcing the morality and social cohesion that aims to prevent and manage conflict. Considering that mainstream peacemaking and peacebuilding still faces major challenges on the inclusion of women, this perspective shows that there are some open doors for women to gain access to peace processes. Nevertheless, there is a need for the discussion of women's roles and gender equality in both mainstream and traditional approaches.

A serious limitation is the particularism of traditional strategies. Whereas there are some general features of conflict management shared by many African traditional societies, the distinct expressions differ greatly. This means that while different groups may use, for example, cleansing rituals as part of conflict transformation, these rituals probably differ greatly in each practical expression. This particularistic character of traditional procedures makes it difficult to apply the

methods in a larger, modern organisational context. As a solution, Osaghae (1999: 214-5) advocates for the construction of a new model, fed by an eclectic selection of best practices from traditional methods of conflict transformation. He suggests that, "*ubuntu* is an example of how traditional systems could be reconstructed to serve the needs of present-day requirements of conflict management" (Osaghae 1999: 217). The elements of Ubuntu that could be part of such a reconstructed model will be explored below.

2.3 Ubuntu and Conflict Transformation

Ubuntu emphasises several of the typical ideas and mechanisms of African approaches described above. The South African term from the Nguni language family[17] became popular with the South African transformation from apartheid to majority rule. Having said that, the term came to be recognised by people in a much wider territory across southern Africa as describing the practical application of some of the values they share as Africans[18]. The next section will introduce Ubuntu and the debates surrounding the concept, followed by a discussion of the elements relevant to conflict transformation.

2.3.1 Ubuntu as Praxis and Philosophical Expression

Ubuntu has its roots in the traditions and rules that have governed community life in rural communities, but its specific meaning referred to today is closely related to its modern application in the diverse identity of the young South African nation and its neighbouring countries. Ubuntu has recently been the object of a lively philosophical debate, especially amongst South African academics[19]. The debate evolves mostly around the question to what extent the contemporary reference to Ubuntu in South Africa is in a linear relation to customary practices and a particularly African worldview. The discussion also enquires as to whether Ubuntu presents something uniquely African, and how it can be positioned in a global philosophical discourse.

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[17] The Nguni language family comprises for example Xhosa and Zulu, and is a subgroup of the Bantu languages spoken by many people living in Sub-Saharan countries. Many of the Namibian African languages, for example the Oshiwambo languages and Ovaherero, are also part of the Bantu language family. For an accessible classification of languages, see www.ethnologue.com.

[18] As an example, the 'Centre Ubuntu' in Burundi builds its efforts in peacebuilding and reconciliation on what they call the Ubuntu philosophy: http://www.centre-ubuntu.bi. Note that Gade (2012) rightfully warns that examinations of the shared content of concepts and terms with the same name or central ideals are not sufficient at this point.

[19] The academic debate is conducted in particular at and amongst certain centres of African thought at South African universities and research institutes. An example is the "Thinking Africa" project at Rhodes University, which aims at instilling a debate on modern applications of African thought (http://www.ru.ac.za/thinkingafrica/). Additionally, (South) African researchers abroad participate in the debate, such as philosophers including Mogobe Ramose at the African Studies Centre Leiden (http://www.ascleiden.nl/content/webdossiers/african-philosophy). Another arena of debate are theological circles, exemplified in a special edition of the journal Verbum et Ecclesia (http://www.ve.org.za/index.php/VE/issue/view/88), which was supported by the Ubuntu Research Project of the University of Pretoria (http://www.up.ac.za/en/centre-for-the-advancement-of-scholarship/article/277590/ubuntu-research-project-funded-by-the-templeton-foundation).

Generally speaking, Ubuntu is a complex system of understandings about the world and the essence of being human, which also comprises ethical imperatives defining the relationship between individual and community. Munyaka and Mothlabi (2009), who hold Ubuntu as a centuries-old way of life, emphasise the centrality of personhood and humanness in what is at the same time a spiritual concept, a set of goals, ideals and values, and human acts based on those ideals. The centre of those ideals and acts is human growth and self-improvement, with the aim of being the best person one can achieve to be, and acting towards the good of oneself, others and the community. This process is accompanied by mutual respect, and based on both inalienable rights and obligations of any human, and especially any member of society. Thus, Ubuntu is "a philosophical concept that engenders recognition of the humanity of other persons and hence promotes respect while challenging all to create a community that is caring, accepting and compassionate" (Munyaka and Mothlabi 2009: 78).

The emphasis of community is often described as the central difference between the Western/European and African social order (see e.g. Biney 2014). This difference bears a great potential for conflict and misunderstanding, as many colonial encounters and wars have already documented. Yet, while the foundation of many African philosophies is the community, and while community is a central aspect of Ubuntu, Ubuntu is not a purely communal philosophy[20]. Ubuntu emphasises the relationship between the individual and community, and thus recognises the individual as important social unit (Vervliet 2009: 27-8; Shutte 2008).

The Ubuntu conception of personhood emphasises the wholeness, development and interconnectedness of the person. Ramose (2003c: 232-4) argues that rationale, emotion, and spirituality need to be regarded of equal importance for a complete and balanced human being. Moreover, the person is conceived as flexible, simultaneously in the states of "being and becoming" (Ramose 2003c: 232). Active self-development is therefore one of the main expectations towards any member of society (Ramose 2003b: 627). At the same time, self-development has to be accompanied by the openness to adjust one's image of the other as they are developing, refraining from reducing the other to individual characteristics or a static image (Bangura 2011: 239). Even so, the development of the individual is interconnected with society and the spirit world of the ancestors.

The communal paradigm – to put society above or on the same level of one's own welfare – requires a somewhat bounded community to relate to. Family and community are important units in which to carry out Ubuntu, and they create a sense of belonging. However, some authors insist that

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[20] Eze (2008) argues that African Communitarianism in general mediates between the individual and the community, rather than oppressively placing the communal good over the individual.

the boundaries of community are permeable and natural, rather than static: "[Ubuntu ethics] resolves the problem of exclusion in bounded reasoning by prescribing mutual recognition and respect complemented by mutual care and sharing. Thus *motho ke motho ka batho* is the maxim that prescribes permeable and not impermeable boundaries" (Ramose 2003a: 329). Arguably, this enables the application of Ubuntu in external and more general contexts. In other words, "one belongs to others by reason of one's common humanity; the African world view is, ideally, inclusive" (Munyaka and Mothlabi 2009: 69).

The Africanist scholar Wim van Binsbergen (2001) argues that the modern invocations of Ubuntu are completely detached from the traditional practices found in rural village life, which he claims are not usually referred to as 'Ubuntu'. Instead, Ubuntu is a hybrid concept developed by academics that form a Western-educated elite relatively removed from their African roots. Thus, he concludes that Ubuntu is a globalised rather than local concept, employed for a specific political gain in modern South Africa. Some African scholars heavily criticise Van Binsbergen's standpoint. Bewaji (Bewaji and Ramose 2003) condemns the dismissal of African heritage and original philosophy implied in Van Binsbergen's separation of complex thought and local practice. He emphasises the importance of ancestral heritage as the core of the Ubuntu concept in its modern application. Thus, Bewaji and Ramose find it impossible for outsiders to fully understand Ubuntu due to its complexity and spiritual foundation. Christoph Marx (2002), from an outsider perspective, considers the emphasis on Ubuntu as a romanticising of the pre-colonial past. He adds a critical perspective when he warns against the glorification of what he deems an expression of cultural nationalism, which may threaten social cohesion in South Africa. The African philosopher Michael Onyebuchi Eze (2010) criticises the "commodification" of Ubuntu in South Africa's political and economic spheres, but also describes its role in the South African national identity as a cultural renaissance in a postcolonial context, entailing pre-colonial and (anti-)colonial historicity and contemporary interpretations.[21]

Two surveys of the written accounts and the interpretations of Ubuntu conducted by Gade (2011; 2012) show how these views have developed and coexisted. Firstly, Gade (2011) finds that Ubuntu has rarely been mentioned in writing before the 1980s, and the discourse grew rapidly with the end of apartheid rule in South Africa and the mentioning of Ubuntu in the Interim Constitution of 1993. While Ubuntu was understood as a human quality in the first writings, it was then seen as a philosophical concept and connected to African humanism, before it eventually became known as a worldview inspiring a particular way of life. The isiXhosa/isiZulu proverb "*umuntu ngumuntu*

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[21] The debate on the authenticity and the accessibility of Ubuntu is linked to a larger debate about the existence, location and coloniality of African philosophy; see for example the works of Kwasi Wiredu, Paulin Houtondji and Augustine Shutte.

ngabantu"[22], which is now almost always referenced to explain Ubuntu, only became connected to the concept in 1994 (Gade 2011: 306-9).

In his examination of different understandings of Ubuntu by 'South Africans of African Descent (SAADs)', Gade (2012) discovers that both different interpretations are currently present amongst the authors: Ubuntu is "a moral *quality* of a person [or] a *phenomenon* (for instance a philosophy, an ethic, African humanism, or a worldview) according to which persons are interconnected" (Gade 2012: 487, emphasis added). For the first group, Ubuntu is a characteristic expressed in social behaviour such as forgiveness, moral restraint, and empathy. For the second, Ubuntu is best described as African humanism, connected to the aforementioned proverb emphasising interconnectedness, and through a shared vision informing a particular behaviour. Gade (2012: 494-8) also observes that the understanding of a person, central to both interpretations, varies considerably amongst SAADs. To some, every human is inextricably a person. To others, personhood in the sense of Ubuntu is much more limited, only applying to those fulfilling one or more of the following criteria: "those being black, having been incorporated into personhood, or behaving in a morally acceptable manner" (Gade 2012: 494). The latter perspective significantly limits the applicability of Ubuntu.

In one of the most recent contributions to the debate, published by the "Thinking Africa" project of Rhode University, the South African university professor Leonhard Praeg (2014) attempts to incorporate both positions, reflecting on the temporal aspect of the concept, and distinguishing between praxis (u̲buntu) and philosophical expression (U̲buntu), while emphasising their interconnectedness:

> Only when we become homeless, do we start theorizing about what it means to belong. Or only when we start taking belonging for granted, does belonging become a problem for thought. Or, lastly and with reference to our investigation, only when we no longer live ubuntu, does Ubuntu become a problem for thought. Modernity is that moment when belonging becomes, first and foremost, a problem for thought. This, I think, is the historical locus of our contemporary concern with the question of Ubuntu. (...)
>
> [The difference between praxis (ubuntu) and philosophical expression] is crucial because while the praxis of ubuntu is endogenous to Africa, its articulation as philosophical expression (Ubuntu) is not, for the simple reason that, through the paradoxical logic of globalisation, the latter is fundamentally constituted as modern, contemporary philosophy; that is, as glocal philosophy. To call Ubuntu a glocal phenomenon means recognising that global discourses (Christianity, human rights and so on) give a peculiar expression to the meaning of local

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[22] The proverb can be loosely translated "A person is a person through other people". It is cited in various notations and other languages, for example as *"motho ke motho kabatho"* in seTswana. The translations of the proverbs are often debated, since they fail to encompass elements such as the implied processual nature of being human: "Although the English language does not exhaust the meaning of this maxim or aphorism, it may nonetheless be construed to mean that to be a human be-ing is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish humane relations with them. (...) a humane, respectful, and polite attitude towards others constitutes the core meaning of this aphorism. (...) In other words, be-ing human is not enough. One is enjoined, yes, commanded as it were, to actually become a human being" (Ramose 2003c: 231).

> traditions such as ubuntu, but in a way that also allows the resulting Ubuntu to feed back into the global discourse as a locally based critique and expansion of those very discourses. The result, as I argue, is that Ubuntu is neither here nor there, neither simply from 'over here or reducible to what is from 'over there'. It is once here and there. (Praeg 2014: 36-7)

When looking at the practical implications of Ubuntu, as is the case in this thesis, this last proposition seems the most useful. It allows for an examination and incorporation of historical, traditional and lived experiences of communities practicing ubuntu as way of life, as far as (written) accounts are accessible. At the same time, Praeg's stipulation of Ubuntu as a 'glocal' phenomenon makes it possible to evaluate both external and recent influences and expressions, applying elements of Ubuntu to specific circumstances, without claiming to fully immerge into a reality of some 'pure' Ubuntu. It makes the concept accessible to a non-native, such as myself, without claiming to understand all facets of the concept. Nonetheless, the warnings of indigenous authors need to be taken seriously, and I need to acknowledge that as an outsider I will not fully understand Ubuntu. Therefore, I am limited to entering an academic debate with little access to the spiritual side of the phenomenon, resulting in a danger of misinterpretations and the loss of essential elements and meanings.

In general, the application of Ubuntu in modern societies, and even more in research fields with a global perspective, has serious limitations. Matolino and Kwindingwi (2013) hold that the prevalence of violence, greed and Black elitism in South Africa show that the reference to Ubuntu is not unconditionally successful. They argue that Ubuntu is a politically opportune narrative of a better past that distracts from current challenges. Moreover, they hold Ubuntu to be out-dated and reliant on small, tight-knit communities. In his response to Matolino and Kwindingwi, Metz (2014) presents powerful examples of how the notion of Ubuntu employed as an ethical principle could potentially be integrated into modern governance and society, so to fulfil the principles of sharing and mutual care.

Ubuntu has been discussed and applied in various fields other than the South African transformation process. In southern Africa, the term is often cited to invoke a sense of community and responsibility. In this context, it is often referenced in relation to politics and law. While Ubuntu and similar lived concepts are normally applied in traditional and informal courts in various countries, Ubuntu has also been cited in judgments of regular courts in South Africa (Muvangua and Cornell 2012). Moreover, Ubuntu found resonance internationally within the field of management studies, with an Ubuntu-based model developed by Mbigi (2005) that promotes inclusive management practices. The reference to Ubuntu serves as a moral compass, as subaltern empowerment, and a politicised tool of control in the realms of knowledge production, commerce, politics, and jurisprudence (Cornell 2014).

With the famous application of Ubuntu in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), it has become relevant to ask about the wider applicability and significance of the Ubuntu to reconciliation and conflict transformation. As a holistic social notion, Ubuntu is not limited to conflict transformation mechanisms, and it is difficult to single them out from the wider framework of the societal order, values and norms, spiritual ideas, and leadership principles inherent in the notion. Nonetheless, the Ubuntu philosophy and worldview describes values and mechanisms that can be related to conflict transformation.

2.3.2 Conflict Transformation in Ubuntu

As a principle of social organisation, Ubuntu has been applied in the management of conflicts in different contexts. In pre-colonial times, communities applied Ubuntu ideals to resolve intra-societal conflicts peacefully through dialogue and adjudication by senior society leaders (Masina 1999: 172). The community would come together to hear and discuss the different perspectives surrounding an adverse event in a meeting (for example called *inkundla* or *lekgotla* in isiXhosa). This open engagement would lay the foundations for subsequent settlement. Elders would lead the meeting and guide the process, and eventually have the authority to administer rulings. Respect for the elders and their moral prestige would keep the parties committed to the process and outcome (Masina 1999: 171). Damages would often be 'repaid' in cattle, and the discussions held in public to simultaneously shame and reintegrate the offender into the community. The described manner of conflict resolution was performed in a variety of conflict situations, such as within a family or marriage, between individuals or families, or between the society and an individual. Describing examples from Xhosa culture, Masina (1999: 172-6) shows how the community would approach different offenses, and which persons and processes would be applied. For the most serious crimes, especially those involving social taboos such as rape and incest, Masina (1999: 174) summarises that, "*ubuntu* means the authoritative restoration of equilibrium and acceptable conduct to a momentarily troubled society". This quote shows that social harmony was one of the principle aims of conflict resolution through Ubuntu. This principle also came to play in intergroup conflicts, particularly if there was a higher authority able to mediate between the groups, such as a chief between two villages or clans. However, in these times external conflicts were usually solved by war (Masina 1999: 175).

Masina (1999: 177) furthermore observes that in more recent times in South Africa, practices relating to Ubuntu were expanded beyond the ethnic boundaries. The function of Ubuntu in the TRC was to invoke a local concept that points towards reconciliation rather than revenge, supporting the principal goal of the new government to overcome the divided past, creating unity and peace. In this context, Ubuntu was a tool for "peacemaking through the principles of

reciprocity, inclusivity and a sense of shared destiny" (Murithi 2006: 29). Most importantly, Ubuntu reminded participants of the TRC consultations of their intertwined and shared humanity. The application of Ubuntu in the TRC brought to light its capacity in peacebuilding – particularly with a focus on reconciliation, and the healing of relationships. Desmond Tutu himself described his motivation to reference Ubuntu in the TRC as follows:

> What dehumanises you, inexorably dehumanises me. Forgiveness gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanise them. *Ubuntu* means in a real sense that even the supporters of apartheid were victims of the vicious system which they implemented and which they supported so enthusiastically. Our humanity was intertwined. The humanity of the perpetrator of apartheid's atrocities was caught up and bound up in that of his victim whether he liked it or not. In the process of dehumanising another, in inflicting untold harm and suffering, the perpetrator was inexorably being dehumanised as well. (Tutu 1999: 35)

Tutu (1999: 51-2) found that impersonal state-administered justice through punishment would have been unfitting for the South African purpose. Instead, the TRC drew upon African traditional jurisprudence, in which "the central concern is not retribution or punishment but, in the spirit of *ubuntu*, the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships" (Tutu 1999: 51). Tutu's invocation of Ubuntu highlighted the greater emphasis on the South African people – victims, perpetrators and legal practitioners – in this approach. This first famous interpretation of Ubuntu in the context of national reconciliation has been immensely influential in the following debates. It should be noted, however, that Tutu's understanding of Ubuntu was strongly intertwined with his Christian theology[23]. Moreover, the approach of the TRC has been criticised for not addressing the structural violence and legacy of apartheid. In addition, reconciliation through the TRC was a relatively short-term approach. While Ubuntu was mentioned prominently in the Interim Constitution, it vanished from the actual Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The South African society today cannot be described as living in social peace and harmony, although it is an explicit goal of Ubuntu (Richardson 2008).

Central elements of Ubuntu in the promotion of social harmony are common humanity and respect for people. The principles are often highlighted in the context of conflict transformation, as they lay an important foundation for any peace process: "Respect for a person, accompanied by acceptable good behaviour, is crucial. It signifies recognition of another person's humanity. (...) People are recognised and regarded as equals by virtue of their humanity." (Munyaka and Mothlabi 2009: 66). Thus, persons have an indivisible right to be respected and valued, and to have their perspective and voice recognised, subject to no other condition than being human. However, the Ubuntu conception

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[23] It may be argued that the influence of Christian ethics on modern Ubuntu concerns more than only Tutu's application, seeing that Christianisation has had a substantial effect on the self-understanding of many Africans. However, in an attempt to focus on the contributions of Ubuntu, literature that inflates Ubuntu and Christian contributions to reconciliation has largely been excluded from this thesis. For a theological interpretation of Ubuntu, see Battle (2009).

of human rights emphasises primarily the obligation towards others to respect their humanity (Biney 2014: 47). The reason for this is that respect, dignity and (self-)worth are established in relation to the other; mistreatment of, or disrespect for, others thus hampers one's own humanity (Ramose 2003b: 643-4; see also Tutu 1999: 35). It is therefore common in Ubuntu-practicing societies to remind people of the humanity of another person when they are mistreating or disregarding the other. This is a mechanism that can well be used in peace processes, to contain the accusations and claims of the opponents, and encourage the conflicting parties to engage with each other.

The ethics found in this regard for other people may also lead to a rejection of individualism and selfishness. People are required to care about, and for, others, and are regarded suspiciously if they fail to do so in their actions.

> "In such an instance, compassion and co-operation, regarded as essential virtues for the survival of community, are considered sacrificed. Individualistic, self-centred acts are seen not just as failure to contribute to the well-being of both the person and the community, but as bringing about harm, misery and pain to others." (Munyaka and Mothlabi 2009: 71)

As much as it is praise to say someone 'has ubuntu', it is a shame to be considered to 'lack ubuntu' – that is, to lack the humaneness that is essential to be fully considered human. Social status is thus linked to the good one does for the community. The discouragement of seeking one's good over another person's welfare is closely related to the idea that the community as a whole should enhance and support the development of its members. In addition to the principle of shared humanity, Masina (1999: 170) identifies "caring, compassion, unity, tolerance, respect, closeness, generosity, genuineness, empathy, consultation, compromise, and hospitality" as central values of Ubuntu in relation to conflict management. These characteristics compel people to work together in solving problems.

The social fabric characteristic in Ubuntu implies that a conflict between two people involves the entire society, as Murithi (2009: 227) points out. According to the notion, every member of society is linked to at least one conflict party in some way, and by extension feels to have been wronged or have responsibility for what caused the conflict. Thus, mechanisms to foster conflict resolution and reconciliation are particularly important. They involve the whole society and focus on sharing and hearing out each other's views, as in the open *lekgotla* forum. Murithi (2009: 228-9) identifies five stages of the reconciliation process: First, a guilty party is asked to admit blame and responsibility. As a second step, they are requested to show genuine remorse. The third step is a dialectical process that involves the perpetrator asking for forgiveness, and the affected side being asked to show readiness to forgive. Fourthly, the elders would determine a symbolic and/or restorative compensation to be paid by the perpetrator. The last step is the affirmation of the continuing

reconciliation process, whereby the parties commit to healing and restoring harmony. Symbolic acts may be used to leave resentments behind. Murithi (2009: 229) summarises:

> "The wisdom of this process lies in the recognition that it is not possible to build a healthy community at peace with itself unless past wrongs are acknowledged and brought out into the open, the truth of past events revealed and social trust renewed through a process of forgiveness and reconciliation."

The aim of conflict resolution as an element of governance in the Ubuntu spirit is to restore social harmony. Several authors identify harmony as the "overarching principle" in Ubuntu (Ramose 2003c; Mkhize 2008, 35-44). Metz (2007) interprets Ubuntu as a moral theory and highlights the moral value of harmony as an African ethical principle, distinct from what is common in the West. Thereby, the ideal of harmony goes beyond the immediate interpersonal relationship to include the wider society, the physical environment and even previous and future generations. Hence, peace is not only an aim but also a tool to maintain "cosmic harmony" (Ramose 2003c: 236-7). The idea of cosmic harmony emphasises the importance of justice in peace processes:

> "Peace through the concrete realization of justice is the fundamental law of *ubuntu* philosophy. Justice without peace is the negation of the strife towards cosmic harmony. But peace without justice is the dislocation of *umuntu* [the living] from the cosmic order." (Ramose 2003c: 237)

Legal researchers have argued that the primary goal of justice in African communities is to restore harmony (Oko Elechi, Morris, and Schauer 2010). A further implication of the effort to achieve harmony is the preferred use of consensus in decision-making (Ramose 2003c: 237).

For this integration of peace in a general moral framework, Murithi sees the value of Ubuntu particularly in peace education. He believes that the emphasis on shared humanity can foster empathy, collaborative problem solving, and the conscious use of our common resources. Keasley (2014) argues that Ubuntu treasures peacebuilding as a cultural value, which is cultivated through education from early childhood onwards. He argues:

> "Teaching children about peacebuilding while they are in school would be ideal; however, the occurrence of this in individualistic, retributive-based societies is rare during the early schooling years." (Keasley 2014: 256)

The emphasis on moral education in Ubuntu traditions could encourage peace education in formal and informal learning in Africa. Thus, the authors support the application of Ubuntu from interpersonal and intersocietal conflicts, right up to the levels of world economic governance.

Van Binsbergen highlights the primary value of an application of Ubuntu for conflict resolution in contemporary South Africa:

> "Despite having rural and small-scale face-to-face relationships as its referent, ubuntu can be effective, in the first place because it is appreciated as an African thing, but in the second place and especially because, despite its globally-derived format, it introduces non-global, particularistic and intimate elements in the very heart of Southern African globalisation. Ubuntu

can work precisely because it is novel, out of place there where it is most appealed to. It allows the conflict regulator to introduce an unexpected perspective to which (for historical, identity and strategic reasons) few parties could afford to say 'no'." (van Binsbergen 2001: 74)

The ability of Ubuntu to invoke a notion of common humanity and respect may serve to prepare the ground for reconciliation. It may also be invoked to keep parties at the table throughout a long peace process. Furthermore, Ubuntu may support the long-term stabilisation of peace at the community level. Arguably, these applications of Ubuntu throughout the peace process are independent of a specific form or level of conflict. However, the potentials of Ubuntu have not yet been explored sufficiently in practice and research. This thesis will come back to this question at a later stage. First, the investigation focuses on the crystallisation of German-Namibian postcolonial relations, following the return of the human remains in 2011. The case study aims to understand the importance of implicit cultural references in a postcolonial situation. The case provides a canvas for testing Ubuntu as a supportive tool in recognising specific cultural references – with the final chapter reflecting upon the application of Ubuntu as an instrument in conflict transformation, not only in the case study, but also in its wider value for peace research.

3. Background: The Colonial and Postcolonial Relations of Namibia and Germany

This chapter gives an overview of the aspects of the colonial and postcolonial relations of Namibia and Germany that are relevant to this thesis, in order to set the scene, and provide the reader with the information necessary to follow the analysis and the arguments presented hereafter. The first section summarises the relevant events that occurred during the short but violent colonial history of the German colony of South-West Africa. The focus then turns to Namibian independence and subsequent postcolonial developments within and between the countries. Finally, the last section will look at issues surrounding the human remains of Namibian descent in Germany, which have been a focal point of postcolonial disputes since 2008.

3.1 Colonial History

The German Empire developed its interest in colonial expansion late in comparison to others colonising nations, formally holding colonies for only a few decades. Various groups had settled in what is now known as Namibia, living in semi-pastoral, livestock-breeding communities particularly in the central and southern areas. European missionaries and traders had already penetrated most of the land, with Britain annexing the Walvis Bay area, suitable for a port, before Germany showed interest in setting up a 'protectorate' there. African community leaders took an active role in assessing and negotiating the economic, political and security implications of having an increasing European presence in their communal areas. Nonetheless, the German colony South-West Africa was established in Berlin, at the Africa Conference of 1885 (Katjavivi 1988: 1-12).

German colonisation was marked by the settlement of German farmers and a subsequent privatisation of land, accompanied by frequently reoccurring warfare (Kössler 2015: 14-5). Over the next three decades, the German colonial administration systematically extended its effective control, especially with the set-up of the colonial army 'Schutztruppe'. Colonial rule spread effectively within the so-called Police Zone covering south and central Namibia. The impact on the indigenous population was considerable. As Christianity spread, administrative controls tightened, and more German settlers received land titles. The loss of control and land resulted in repeated non-violent and violent resistance, which culminated in the wars of 1904-8 (Katjavivi 1988: 7-12). [24]

A rebellion of the Bondelswart community had pulled most of the German colonial army to the south of the colony when several groups of the Ovaherero started a campaign near Okahandja. Attacking infrastructure and German farms, the Ovaherero quickly gained control over rural central

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[24] The generally agreed periodisation 1904-8 is debatable since uprisings already started earlier and violent colonial campaigns of the German "Schutztruppe" continued later, see Hillebrecht 2007: 74.

Namibia (Zimmerer 2005: 25-7). After these first successes of the Ovaherero, the colonial army was reinforced and a violent and eventually genocidal[25] war ensued. The newly assigned Commanding General Lothar von Trotha, selected for his efficiently brutal track record, issued a proclamation that became known as the 'Extermination Order', after the massive but inconclusive battle at Ohamakari/Waterberg in August 1904. The proclamation removed all Ovaherero as subjects of the German colony and ordered soldiers to shoot them, chase them into the desert, or detain them until no Herero would remain free in the German colony. The order was enforced with soldiers killing and detaining Herero, sealing off the way out of the Omaheke desert, and with the establishment of prison and work camps[26] with a mortality rate of at least 45% (Hillebrecht 2007: 82-5). Additionally, Ovaherero were not allowed to own land or cattle, rendering a re-establishment of livelihood and societal structures impossible. An estimated 80% of the Ovaherero population died during, or in the aftermath of, the war in 1904 (Hillebrecht 2007: 80-4; Gewald 2004). Hinz (2010: 402) concludes, "the events in and after 1904 eventually resulted in the almost total extinction of the Ovaherero as a nation: physically, socially, politically, culturally and spiritually".

After the defeat of the Ovaherero resistance, the Nama in southern Namibia started a resistance of their own. The guerrilla warfare of the decentralised Nama groups continued at least until 1907 when hostilities officially ended. In 1905, von Trotha issued a second proclamation, against the Nama. Nama fighters were shot, hanged, or brought to the previously established camps. According to estimates, more than half of the Nama population were killed (Zimmerer 2005: 35-7). The restrictions on ownership, autonomous economic activity, settlement, and movement remained in force. In addition, as late as 1911, the San of eastern Namibia were affected by a similar genocidal proclamation and manhunts (Kössler 2015: 19).

In the literature, the colonial German military and governance strategy is generally referred to as genocide, not only because of the high proportion of direct deaths in the affected populations, but also because of the expressed intention to wipe out specific ethnic groups – a major factor in the definition of genocide in international law (see Sarkin-Hughes 2009). This genocide was not only executed through warfare, but also in the intentionally bad conditions of prison camps and forced labour. Moreover, the permanent destruction of the bases of societal life of the targeted groups adds to the genocidal characteristics of this action. The groups were not given the opportunity to create

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[25] The term 'genocide' is generally accepted amongst respectable researchers for the German colonial war against the Herero, and largely also the Nama and other groups. The term is, however, still debated in the political discourse, see Hinz 2010: 396. For the German debate on the term 'genocide' and different accounts of the events and memory practices, see Melber 2005.

[26] The prison and work camps are often called 'concentration camps', putting them in relation to the Holocaust concentration camps some decades later. For a summary of the debate about the continuities between German colonialism and Nazi Germany, see Kössler 2015: 79-98; for a critique of the continuity suggestion, see Zollmann 2007.

any self-sufficient livelihood, they were permanently displaced and disowned, and their traditional social life was consciously interrupted (Gewald 2004; Zimmerer 2005).

During World War I, South Africa seized control of Namibia. Germany was declared unfit to govern colonies – with one reason for this pointing to its violent treatment of colonial subjects – evidence of which was collected in the so-called 'Blue Book' by British authorities (Silvester and Gewald 2003). Thus, South Africa received a United Nations (UN) mandate to govern Namibia, including the northern area, as a de-facto part of its territory until 1990. South African governance, later systematised as apartheid, was built on the conditions left by the German colonial endeavour (Hillebrecht 2007: 78-9). The UN mandate was retracted in 1966 after Namibians had started a campaign for independence. The resistance was organised primarily by the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO), which became the largest independence movement in the area. In the same year, SWAPO launched an armed liberation struggle (Katjavivi 1988: 59-64). Namibia gained independence only in March 1990, after an intense decade-long battle, supported by the international diplomatic efforts of both traditional and independence movement leaders, and with the then changed global political constellation (Katjavivi 1988: 121).

3.2 Postcolonial Namibia and Germany

The colonial history of Namibia and Germany could only be publicly debated after Namibian independence. Memory practices were limited under the oppressive regime of apartheid South Africa. Thus, Namibians could formulate claims against Germany only after 1990, and the German government suddenly found itself called to responsibility for the deeds of the German Empire almost hundred years earlier. By the time of Namibian independence, after over a century of German and South African colonialism, profound inequalities had become entrenched in Namibian society. The constitution of independent Namibia granted far-reaching safeguards for settlers of European descent, halting redistribution of land and economic power especially in the areas where settler colonialism had been prevalent. The SWAPO Party, which emerged from the former independence movement, has held government since independence. As Oshivambo groups from northern Namibia dominated the movement, this distribution has been reflected in the government. Additionally, the public memory of the struggle for independence has been focused on the armed aspects of the liberation war against South Africa, neglecting the earlier wars of resistance and liberation efforts in southern and central Namibia. As a result, the groups from southern and central Namibia have vocalised claims for recognition and equality both internally within Namibia and externally towards Germany (Kössler 2010; Kössler 2005; Gewald and Melber 2005).

The first demands for recognition of the genocide emerged in the first decade after independence. Memory practices of southern and central Namibian groups are considerably oriented towards the events that occurred during German colonialism. Oral history, performances and annual commemorations frequently reference the colonial wars, transmitting the groups' images of history to future generations. Kössler (2005: 49) argues that the formation and debate of public memory in Namibia is highly influenced by the inequality that is pervasive within society. Political and economic power determines which voices are heard and which expressions of public memory are possible. Inequality in Namibia measures as one of the highest globally. The German-speaking population of Namibia uniformly displays high development and wealth indicators, and virtually no instances of poverty. On the other hand, San and Khoekhoegowab-speaking (i.e. Nama/Damara) households, and the regions they predominantly live in, show poverty levels significantly higher than the average of the national population (Kössler 2015: 42). The skewed distribution of wealth not only influences the way in which memory can be formed, transmitted, and expressed, but this inequality has also been one of the arguments raised in the restorative justice claims. Moreover, the contested distribution of land is a breeding ground for frustration. The redistribution of land is too ineffective, and the commercial land in central and southern Namibia remains largely in the hands of white farmers or Black elites. The 'land question' has internally explosive potential, and fuels the reparations debate with Germany. Both the acquisition of land and reparation demands can be seen as parts of the effort of the affected groups to re-establish themselves (von Wietersheim 2008; Kaapama 2007; Melber 2015: 109-25).

The role of the Namibian government is particularly important in this context. It has been mentioned that the government of independent Namibia has favoured a narrative of national unity, with a founding myth mostly focused on the armed SWAPO-led liberation struggle against South Africa. From the onset, the central government has feared that reparation claims will foster tribalism within Namibian society. Following independence, the central message was to leave the past behind, and work towards a common future. Hence, it has been difficult for the Namibian government to support claims against Germany (Katjavivi 2014).

Attention to the shared German-Namibian history is not only disparate within Namibian society; the contrast is even more prominent between Germany and Namibia. German colonialism is of little account in German history, including in academic, political and educational spheres, amounting to what some dedicated researchers call 'colonial amnesia' (Kössler 2015: 64-9). The German parliament recognised a 'special responsibility' to Namibia already shortly before its independence, in a motion announced in March 1989. This vague commitment, without specifying the reasons for this special relationship, has often been cited by state officials, and is reproduced to date in official

statements and information leaflets. The word 'genocide', while widely accepted amongst researchers, had seemingly been banned from official use until mid-2015 (Kössler 2015: 74-8; Rampke 2012b: 12). In an analysis of German media coverage concerning Namibian-German relations, Stukenberg (2014) found that there was no collective memory and postcolonial conscience in Germany. She observed a lack of awareness of colonial power relations when officials and the media reproduced colonial speech and stereotypes.

Members of the Ovaherero made first attempts to start a debate about an official apology for the genocide and subsequent compensation in the 1990s. They tried to use the state visits of Chancellor Helmut Kohl (1995) and President Roman Herzog (1998) to engage with German officials. However, Kohl refused to meet the delegation and Herzog only did so outside of official protocols. These early rejections are thought to have intensified the focus of the Ovaherero. Moreover, Herzog was the first to claim that it was too late for an apology and that there is no legal basis for reparations, since there had not been relevant international legislation in place at the time. These arguments continue to be advanced today, remaining deeply contested (Kössler 2015: 237-8).

The Ovaherero maintained their claims and have filed court cases, at first unsuccessfully, with the International Court of Justice. Since 2001, using the US courts, they have tried to claim 600 million US dollars as compensation. The US legal system allows for cases against non-state perpetrators even when events took place outside of the United States (Sarkin-Hughes 2009).[27] The case against Germany and companies that took part in, and benefitted from, the colonial wars are currently on hold, since the claimants have not yet found a court to take up their case. The filing of the court cases has arguably resulted in increased caution on the German side not to give any apology or mention the genocide, since that could be seen as a basis for accepting their responsibility to give reparations (Kössler 2015: 242; Hinz 2010: 397). However, the compensation claims go beyond the monetary claims in the court case. A study found that most respondents would prefer land, education and development over directly receiving money. Additionally, an emphasis is on the acknowledgement of genocide and the need for an apology and honest reconciliation efforts (Erichsen 2008: 62).

The claims gained renewed attention with the centennial of the beginning of the wars in 2004. The central commemoration near the Waterberg, the location of the largest battle in the Herero-German war, still focused almost exclusively on the Ovaherero stories (Kössler 2015: 241). The German Bundestag passed a second motion regarding the colonial wars, reaffirming Germany's 'special responsibility' to Namibia, but refraining from delivering an apology (Deutscher Bundestag 2004). The German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul

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[27] For a thorough examination of the court cases and the socio-legal context, see Sarkin-Hughes 2009.

attended the centennial commemoration in Namibia, and in her speech asked for forgiveness (Wieczoreck-Zeul 2004). The statement was received well amongst the audience and accepted as an apology. However, it was not backed and formalised in Germany, practically making it a personal statement by a private person rather than an official apology by a high-level German state official. The refusal to offer such an apology continued (Kössler 2015: 247-61).

In the following year, Minister Wieczorek-Zeul championed a reconciliation initiative worth €20 million in official development assistance (ODA). Rather than compensation, the German government channelled part of its development aid into the regions affected most by German colonialism. The 'Namibian-German Special Initiative Programme' (NGSIP) had to be revised after the Namibian government refused to sign off on the plan because of a lack of consultation with the affected communities. Even with the increased involvement of these communities, the programme continued to be criticised to have little positive impact (Kössler 2015: 262-4; Ngavirue 2007).[28]

The increased attention to the claims caused other affected groups to come forward more vocally, most notably the Nama. The concerns also entered the national agenda. In 2006, the government seemingly changed its approach when the Namibian National Assembly unanimously accepted a motion by the opposition MP and Ovaherero Paramount Chief Kuaima Riruako, expressing the full support of the Namibian parliament for the claims of the Ovaherero and Nama (Weidlich 2006; Riruako 2006). However, this support remains limited and the Ovaherero and Nama leaders have repeatedly questioned the commitment of the Namibian government (Kössler 2015: 267-72).[29]

3.3 Human Remains

Another dimension of the postcolonial relations came to the forefront in the last decade, when activists and researchers started investigating the postcolonial composition of anthropological collections in Germany. So far, concerning the German-Namibian relationship, these engagements have cumulated in the repatriation of 20 skulls from the Charité University Hospital Berlin in 2011, and a total of 34 skulls and 2 skeletons from Berlin and Freiburg in 2014. Many more human remains are stored in the collections in Berlin and Freiburg as well as in Greifswald, Frankfurt and Dresden, likely including body parts of Namibian origin (Stang 2016).

The collections were built to a large extent during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the time of colonial expansion and (pseudo-)scientific interest in remote landscapes and their inhabitants. Science at the time was concerned with classifying all imaginable objects, including flora, fauna,

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[28] The NGSIP has now been launched and produced first results, receiving some positive resonance (see Coetzee 2016). The programme is scheduled to finalise its activities by September 2016 (see http://ngsip.org/who-we-are).
[29] This year, the Namibian parliament supported a motion to introduce a national 'Genocide Remembrance Day', further displaying the commitment to stronger integrating the genocide into national memory.

and humans. To that end, and for private collections, collectors travelled to colonised areas and gathered specimens from graves, battlefields, and earlier collections. In the case of Namibia, it is documented that skulls were additionally received from the prison camps during the colonial wars, where deceased prisoners were shipped to Germany on the request of race scientists. Africans were subjected to treatment that was inconceivable for (deceased) Germans. Unmarked mass graves of Africans near battlefields, prison camps, and railroads point to the same conclusion, considering the diligently marked and preserved graves of German soldiers on Namibian graveyards (Kössler 2015: 274-280; Erichsen 2012).

The restitution of human remains faces many difficulties. One problem is the lack of interest in the individual at the time of the retrieval, resulting in a documentation of only ethnic or racial description. The rudimentary documentation often makes it impossible to ascertain a detailed provenance of individual human remains, which would be important for repatriation and a proper burial. Moreover, collections were often shifted between institutions, keeping insufficient records. The importance of the collections diminished with the two world wars, leaving them almost forgotten, and in some cases destroyed. Determining the origins of anthropological collections is therefore costly and time-consuming (Kössler and Wegmann 2011).

In the Charité Human Remains Project[30], the university hospital created the first multi-disciplinary project to work through its own anthropological collection, resulting in the first repatriation in 2011.[31] The speeches analysed in chapter 5 were delivered in the course of the restitution of the first 20 skulls from Germany to Namibia. Traditional leaders started requesting the restitution of all remains through the German state, after their existence became publicly known in 2008. The German embassy insisted on a state-to-state restitution, which the Namibian government responded to with a formal request of repatriation (Kössler 2015: 285-6).

Kössler (2015: 273) calls the actual handover a "debacle". The first planned date in May 2011 had to be postponed due to internal disagreement about the Namibian delegation to Germany. This dispute exemplifies the complexity of representation within postcolonial Namibian society, where disputed traditional leadership, its recognition by the state, and intertwined party politics shape the often-contested group alignments and representative power in traditional communities and the state. Negotiations were held between national government and traditional leadership, as well as between

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[30] See http://anatomie.charite.de/geschichte/human_remains_projekt/

[31] For an extensive documentation of the views expressed and the events surrounding the restitution and genocide debate in general, see the (Namibian and German) media coverage at the time, documented in press clippings collected in the National Archives of Namibia (record A.0981 "Repatriation of human remains", (2) "Newscutting collection") and on the webpages of civil society groups:
http://www.africavenir.org/advocacy/german-genocide-in-namibia.html,
http://genocide-namibia.net/medienecho/
http://www.berlin-postkolonial.de/cms/index.php/component/content/article?id=4

the different joint and separate committees of the traditional communities dealing with the issues pertaining to the genocide.[32] Eventually, a 70-head delegation was assembled, led by the vocal Minister of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture, Kazenambo Kazenambo. It consisted of representatives from the traditional communities and committees concerned in this restitution, as well as members of the Namibian media. In Germany, the responsibility for the human remains was just as unclear. Cultural matters are the duty of the individual states (*Bundesländer*), but the human remains were considered to be the sole responsibility of the institutions holding the collections – internationally, an unusual practice. The handover was negotiated between the German federal government and the Namibian government (Kössler 2015: 287-90).

The Namibian delegation to Germany considered its task to not only receive the skills, but also to perform rituals related to the dead, as well as connecting this event to the Namibian independence victory through songs. Another objective was to raise awareness for the colonial past with the German media and public. Additionally, many hoped to bring up the topics of apology and reparations with German officials, seeking to find closure for the genocide in general (Opoku 2012; Katjavivi 2012).

Upon arrival in Germany on September 26, 2011, it became apparent that the German authorities would not correspond to the high profile approach of the Namibian side. (Kössler 2011: 37-8) . The German Government "virtually boycotted" (Kössler 2015: 292) all events during the delegation's visit, including a church memorial service and a panel discussion to which the government had been invited. Most notably, the government refused to be a signatory to the restitution document. Instead of state officials, representatives from the Charité, the National Museum of Namibia, and the Namibian Heritage Council signed the document (Berliner Morgenpost 2011). The delegation was disappointed by this arrangement [33] and considered leaving without the human remains. Simultaneously, community members in Namibia expressed their anger with a demonstration and petition to the German embassy (Sasman 2011a).

The German refusal to sign the papers and receive the delegation was inconsistent with the insistence on state-to-state negotiations and the mantra of a relationship as equal partners. The low profile of the German Government also stood in stark contrast to the attention it gained even in the German media. While German media used the strong imagery of the skulls to pay unusual attention

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[32] An additional dimension, which should be mentioned here but cannot be discussed in detail, is the difficult standing of the German-speaking community in Namibia. The debates on the colonial past within this group, often of a denialist nature, happen mostly in the secluded forum of the German language newspaper Allgemeine Zeitung (www.az.com.na), see e.g. Hillebrecht 2007.

[33] Not only the Namibian delegation, but even the Charité staff, was surprised by the decision, as Prof. Thomas Schnalke, Charité Human Remains Project, remarked during the scientific workshop "Sammeln und Bewahren, Erforschen und Zurückgeben – *Human Remains* aus der Kolonialzeit in akademischen und musealen Sammlungen", Berlin, 4 October 2012 (author's observation).

to Germany's colonial extinction wars, the Foreign Office neglected to recognise the violent history surrounding the retrieval of these skulls in its short official press release, mentioning only that the skulls were brought to Germany during colonial times[34]. The German government later claimed that no official requests had been received from the Namibian government, justifying the lack of attendance and an official reception (Kössler 2015: 292-3).

The only instance where the German Government was represented was the handover ceremony at the Charité. Minister of State Cornelia Pieper from the Foreign Office delivered a speech at the event[35]. The speech was accompanied by protests from activists from German civil society, calling for an apology and reparations. Pieper left the ceremony after her speech and before those of the Namibian state and traditional representatives, allegedly because of security concerns (Kössler 2015: 294). The early exit was seen as another disrespectful affront against the Namibians, and symbolised the one-way approach of the German government, who expected to set the tone in Namibian-German relations while refusing to listen to its counterparts (Hintze 2011, 1-2).

In Namibia, the repatriation gained great attention. This was probably fuelled by the degrading treatment of the delegation in Germany (Kössler 2015: 295-6). Several thousand citizens received the skulls at the airport, which is located over 40 kilometres outside Windhoek (Sasman 2011b). Different proceedings took place under the title 'Requiem of the Martyrs' on the 4th and 5th of October 2011. The remains were displayed publicly at the Parliament Gardens. On the second day, the central memorial event took place at the Heroes' Acre outside Windhoek, framing the return of the skulls in the context of national independence. The event was attended by a wide range of representatives in government positions, Members of Parliament, the Diplomatic Corps, and of course Traditional Leaders and community members. The speeches were framed by a parade of the Namibia Defence Force, as well as traditional performances (Sasman 2011c). At these events, Germany was represented by its Ambassador, Egon Kochanke.[36]

Diplomacy surrounding the return of the skulls continued long after the event. When the German government assumed that the skulls could be decontextualised from the colonial situation in which they were removed from their motherland, it missed the "emotive energy" (Du Pisani in Rampke 2011) of the skulls issue and neglected the self-identification of the affected previously colonised

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[34] "Zweck des Aufenthaltes der namibischen Delegation ist die Rückführung von während der deutschen Kolonialzeit nach Deutschland verbrachter Schädel verstorbener Angehöriger der Volksgruppen der Herero und Nama nach Namibia. Die Schädel werden in einer der historischen und kulturellen Bedeutung entsprechenden Zeremonie von Vertretern der Charité an die namibische Regierung übergeben werden.", retrieved from http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/ Presse/Meldungen/2011/110928-Übergabe-Schädel-Herero-Nama.html, 03.08.2015
[35] See analysis in chapter 4.
[36] See: Programme "Requiem of the Martyrs", Heroes' Acre, Windhoek, Namibia, 4 - 5 October 2011, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Windhoek, October 2011. Additional observations by the author, who attended the event at Heroes' Acre.

groups. This ignorance was asserted at several other occasions in the following months, for example when Ambassador Kochanke claimed that the Namibian delegation made a "negative impression" in Germany because of its "hidden agenda", without further specifying either allegation (Nampa 2011)[37]. While the official position of the German Government did not change, some attempts to pacify the situation were recognisable in visits by officials in 2012, when they also met with the afflicted communities directly. At the time, the debates on reparations were linked to suggestions of land grabbing from farmers of German descent, raising fears of an escalation of a conflict in Namibia (Kössler 2015: 302).

The second repatriation of human remains in 2014 had an extremely low profile compared to the first. The unity of the Namibian actors, created by the fractions with the German government in 2011, ceased when the Namibian government bypassed traditional leaders in the return of remains from Freiburg and Berlin. The repatriation concerned the mortal remains of in total 35 individuals that were deported to Germany at different times, including but not exclusive to the colonial wars. The Namibian government sent a small delegation comprised of only government representatives and one delegate from the Council of Traditional Leaders, resulting in an outcry from other traditional authorities and a boycott of the official ceremonies in Namibia (Nunuhe 2014; Kahiurika 2014). The affected Namibian traditional communities believed that the motivation of the Namibian government to participate in these modalities was to sideline the affected groups. The statements of government representatives displayed an interest to transform the human remains into an issue of national concern. In Germany, the motivation of the quick and small handover was most likely to avoid similar public attention as in 2011 (Kössler 2015: 306-13).

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[37] See also the statements made in the German Bundestag and Kössler's evaluation, e.g. Kössler 2015: 300.

4. Methodological Framework

This chapter lays out the methodological basis for my analysis. It summarises Chaïm Perelman's theory of the 'New Rhetoric' and develops a framework and questions of analysis specifically for the purposes of this study. An overview and justification of the primary sources concludes the chapter. The analysis of the rhetorical strategies is used to determine which arguments the speakers bring forth and how they develop their claims. This will help to determine whether or not notions and values such as Ubuntu drive the argument of some of the speakers. This chapter provides an overview of Perelman's theory, while the analysis chapter focuses on those rhetoric means actually employed in the speeches, pointing out details of Perelman's work where needed.

4.1 Chaïm Perelman's New Rhetoric

Rhetorical analysis first and foremost examines the effectiveness of speech acts (Longaker and Walker 2011: 3). Chaïm Perelman's work provides a particularly comprehensive perspective on rhetoric, including different angles on the effectiveness of text and speech. The 'New Rhetoric', which Perelman develops, constructs a comprehensive "theory of persuasive communication" (Perelman 1982: 162) that presents and analyses tools of effective rhetoric. Using Perelman's typology as framework for the analysis requires an understanding of his philosophy, as well as a translation into practical analytical use. To that end, I combine the reading of the two most significant books of Perelman and his co-author Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971; Perelman 1982) with an external analysis of Perelman's work (Gross and Dearin 2010) and a previous application of the 'New Rhetoric' in the rhetorical analysis of political speeches (Kuusisto 1999).

Chaïm Perelman (1912-1984) did significant work in extending the meaning of rhetoric compared to classic rhetoricians: "[Perelman] renovates and refurbishes each of the Aristotelian components of rhetoric - invention, style, and arrangement." (Gross and Dearin 2010: x). The 'New Rhetoric' is the life work of the Belgian Jewish philosopher whose mission it was "to find a rational basis for decision making in the fields of human endeavour", beyond formal logic (Gross and Dearin 2010: 13). The work was revolutionary for continental European rhetoric, logic and philosophy (Gross and Dearin 2010: 10). The narrow analysis of the formal reasoning of logic, removed from a specific situation, is not sufficient for Perelman. Instead, he introduces the rhetoric as situated, concrete reason. Essentially, not only are analytical and logical arguments reasonable to Perelman, but convincing and persuasion are also instruments of reasoning (Gross and Dearin 2010: 27-8).

Gross and Dearin (2010: 14) observe that Perelman's theory implies an opposition to classical rationalism, which "led him [Perelman] to enlarge the domain of reason to encompass a rhetorical rationalism that allows for a pluralism of values and multiplicity of ways of being reasonable". This rejection of a unique truth and the openness to multiple bases of argument is particularly important for the analysis in this thesis, as the same idea is presented in my presuppositions. Another supporting factor in using Perelman's work is his early promotion of social constructivism, "[t]he idea that what passes for knowledge is always a sociological construction based upon agreements among groups of a certain milieu" (Gross and Dearin 2010: 17). This is also a view subscribed to in this thesis.

Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca worked on their seminal publication, "The New Rhetoric" (originally published in French in 1958), for over a decade and Perelman extended on it throughout his career, culminating in the more concise "The Realm of Rhetoric" (originally published 1977). Their ambitious aim was to construct a "theory of demonstration [...] by analyzing the methods of proof used in the human sciences, law, and philosophy." (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 10) In the study, the authors examine mundane arguments such as advertisements and speeches in the political and legal spheres looking for a "truly practical logic" (Gross and Dearin 2010: 28). It "is a micro-analysis of arguments, one that is endlessly suggestive of ways of analyzing texts at the level of word and phrase, of the arrangements of parts, and of the structure of arguments" (Gross and Dearin 2010: xi). Three main topics are covered in both "The New Rhetoric" and "The Realm of Rhetoric". First, the interaction of the speaker with the audience is analysed. Next, the influence of prior arguments and premises is reviewed. Finally, the argumentative schemes found in rhetorical reasoning are classified (Kuusisto 1999: 48). These three elements will be explored below.

Argumentation does not take place in a vacuum. It "is intended to act upon an audience, to modify an audience's convictions or dispositions through discourse" (Perelman 1982: 11). Perelman defines the *audience* as "the gathering of those whom the speaker wants to influence by his or her arguments" (Perelman 1982: 14). This audience does not necessarily have to be physically present when the argument is presented, but it may receive the argument through media or secondarily through earlier listeners or readers. The audience can range from a single listener – even the speaker herself in an inner reflection – to the assumed totality of all rational humans, the 'universal audience'. Often, the speaker targets a specific audience or sub-group, which is constructed by the speaker. It is important for the success of the speaker's argument that this construction is close to reality. Perelman insists that the speaker needs to adapt her arguments, methods of persuasion and intended results for her audience. The speaker may identify her audience (and sub-groups) based on relevant categories such as social characteristics or values, and thus adapt the argument to the pre-

existing views of the audience, and her methods and techniques to what may be most efficient in the given setting. Hence, it is more difficult to make an efficient argument to a universal audience (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 17-45).

Perelman holds that the speaker addresses the universal audience only with arguments that she deems every rational adult may subscribe to, therefore aiming to *convince* everyone. Otherwise, a limited audience is to be *persuaded* of an argument that is not self-evidently true to all humans. Conviction is free of limits in time and space while persuasion is situated in a particular setting, and is more inclined to call for direct action. The differently constructed audiences are interlinked, may influence each other, and sub-groups or individuals may be addressed in representation of others. Essentially, argumentation "tries to gain a meeting of minds instead of imposing its will through constraint or conditioning" (Perelman 1982: 11); this underlines the importance of the audience to the argument itself (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 26-30; Perelman 1982: 9-20). In the case of my analysis, the speakers all speak at the same two occasions and thus address the same physical audiences. However, they may very well target different actual audiences. This can be reconstructed by the adaptations the speakers make to their audience.

The audience determines which *premises* the argument can be built on: "the speaker can choose as his points of departure only the theses accepted by those he addresses" (Perelman 1982: 21). The unspoken agreements – shared beliefs, values and customs that are shared by the targeted audience and the speaker – are the assumptions the argument is based on. If the speaker fails to acknowledge those values, or assumes premises the audience does not already hold, the speaker's argument will fail to persuade the audience. Perelman differentiates between premises with regard to the *reality* and the *preferable*. The real is self-evident and factual to the audience (those that may be referred to as 'truth' or 'fact'), or it concerns statements the listeners commonly consider as normal and reasonable presumptions. While facts may be revealed to be wrong, presumptions are more easily questioned and thus need to be reinforced more prominently. Facts, truths and assumptions are accepted by the universal audience and can be opposed to premises based on preferences i.e. widely respected values of a specific audience (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 63-70).

The differentiating aspect of values is that they are not universal, but shared by a specific audience. Nonetheless, Perelman speaks of universal/general or abstract values (good/bad, just/unjust) and specific or concrete values which are attached to specific groups, institutions or objects. While several audiences may share specific values, Perelman suggests that the level of acceptance and the hierarchies of values (i.e. the superiority of one value over another, when they stand in conflict to each other) is more important. Additionally, values may be framed in *loci* of the preferable i.e. in a very general classifications of values, seen for instance in a preferable quantity (the good of many is

of higher value than the good of one) or quality (a unique opportunity is preferred to the reoccurring event). In addition to values, different premises may come into conflict with one another, for example with particular facts. The speaker then has to know which hierarchical relationship the conflicting premises have to the audience i.e. which one may be rejected in favour of the other. A narrow audience will share more specialised premises than a universal or more heterogeneous audience. The adaptation to the audience and its premises ensures a common ground on which an argument can be built (Perelman 1982: 21-32; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 70-85).

Naturally, deeply shared premises are to be exposed in a cross-cultural situation, such as the meeting of leaders from different Namibian ethnic groups and representatives of the Namibian and German states. This may highlight premises that are deeply anchored in a particular culture – so much so, that they are not normally noticed. Only with intercultural sensitivity are the speakers able to adapt their speech to a plural audience, or one that does not share much of this cultural foundation. This concerns both the presumptions considered *real* and the values and loci that make up the *preferable*. Yet, values cannot be avoided in an argument; they cannot be removed through denial, but must be considered in order to ensure the basis of an argument (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 75).

Perelman/Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman spend most of the remainder of their books on the analysis and description of different techniques of argumentation, and the structuring of proof (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 185-508; Perelman 1982: 48-137). Different theses and arguments interact in a discourse. Thus, the structure of the elements in an argument influences its outcome. Perelman distinguishes two main forms of argumentation: *association* (or liaison) and *dissociation*. The speaker either unifies elements that did not previously belong together through association, or she argumentatively separates parts of a considered entity when applying dissociation. Perelman further subdivides the arguments by association into quasi-logical arguments, arguments based on the structure of reality, and arguments establishing the structure of reality (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 187-192; Perelman 1982: 48-52).

Quasi-logical arguments are the closest to formal reasoning and mathematical logic. The argument is compelling through the reduction of reality to simple circumstances and a structured composition of related theses and schematic comparisons, building up to a seemingly inevitable conclusion. Quasi-logical arguments are typically found in the form of incompatibilities, definitions, analysis, transitivity, inclusion, division, comparison, and probability. However, quasi-logical arguments differ from formal demonstration in that they are built on and present disputable premises and theses, and operate in an imperfect, complex environment (Perelman 1982: 53-80; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 193-260).

Arguments based on the structure of reality claim to disclose the true nature of things by establishing a connection of elements of reality as evidence for a claim. Reality can be structured in *liaisons of succession,* which establish a relationship between elements of the same nature. The clearest examples of sequential relations are cause-effect relationships, which examine and evaluate consequences, manifestations, origins, means, and motivations. The second way to structure reality is in *liaisons of coexistence,* which bind together two different levels of reality. Generally, one element is seen to be the manifestation of another, or a contested claim is connected to an accepted one. A classic example of this is the inference of a person's character through his or her acts. The tie of the different elements assumes a – sometimes questionable – stability and predictability of both aspects. The connection of two elements entails a great deal of interpretation, which may be convincing to the audience through the authority of the speaker, established through her position and power relations, or when her argument is supported by previous argumentation. Representation also falls under the relations of coexistence, such as when an individual is seen as representative of a group, or when a symbol stands for a greater idea, such as a flag symbolising a nation – this leads to historic comparisons and personification (Perelman 1982: 81-105).

Arguments establishing the structure of reality use particular cases or analogies to create a desired understanding of reality. This inductive method is especially used when no existing view of reality can be invoked as the basis of an argument. The particular case can be used to illustrate a generalisation, an established rule, or a model or anti-model that encourages or discourages imitation. Analogies explain a contested or new relationship through comparison with a well-established theme, by constructing and exploiting a similarity. Metaphors fulfil a similar effect, but are condensed analogies that are commonly used or easy to deduct (Perelman 1982: 106-125).

In addition to these associative techniques, the speaker can also use *dissociative arguments* when separating two connected terms – philosophical pairs – and pointing out their difference. Dissociation is often based on the thesis that something that appears to be in a certain way is actually different or untrue (appearance vs. reality). One example is the contestation of an analogy or metaphor, when the discussant questions assumed similarity. Dissociation also goes beyond breaking the links of elements, to breaking up items previously united by a single notion. An example is Locke's dissociation of state and religion. However, the dissociation can result in a closer association of the two terms, when repeated simultaneous mentioning of these terms binds them even closer together in the minds of the listeners (Perelman 1982: 126-137).

Perelman also shortly engages with some of the major themes of the classical study of rhetoric, namely rhetoric figures, the structure of argument, selection/fullness, and interpretation of data (Perelman 1982: 33-47, 146-152). The philosopher examines the conditions for a strong argument.

According to Perelman, the strength of an argument is determined by its efficacy and validity – the ability to effectively persuade the targeted audience, and to convince every reasonable mind. The speaker chooses between the infinite possibilities of arguments and interpretations, in order to achieve a balance in the fullness of an argument. This balance results from a sufficiently extensive but comprehensible string of proofs in support of the broader argument (Perelman 1982: 140).

4.2 Framework for the Analysis

Perelman's extensive philosophical examination of rhetoric "offers something practical yet sophisticated to the analysis of politics" (Kuusisto 1999: 52). For the purpose of my study, the ideas are condensed to an analytical framework, which can support the understanding of the speeches given by the stakeholders at the ceremony. The starting questions are summarised in the following chart. The questions set the direction for the analysis, while some details of Perelman's rhetoric theory will support the analysis in the next chapter.

CHART 1: Questions of analysis

- Who is the audience targeted by the speaker?
- Which unspoken premises does the speaker assume?
    - Does the speaker use more premises of the real or the preferable?
    - Which values, customs and beliefs does the speaker build on or reference?
- Which argumentative techniques characterise the speech?
    - Quasi-logical arguments: Where does the speaker use structured reasoning?
    - Arguments based on the structure of reality: Which forms of sequential and coexistential relations does the speaker use?
    - Arguments establishing a structure of reality: Which examples, illustrations and (anti-)models does the speaker use? Which analogies and metaphors establish the speaker's points?
    - Dissociation: Where does the speaker perform dissociations or deconstruct links?
- *Fullness of argument*: Which theses are stressed and by which means? Does the speaker aim at validity or efficacy?
- Which *data* is used or neglected? Which interpretations are given? How is the *presence* of particular elements created?

The focus of the analysis is on the content of the speeches and the meanings attached to different topics in the debate and surrounding events. Although rhetoric analysis often focuses on the strength of argumentation, the purpose of the analysis is not to evaluate the quality of the speeches. Perelman's theory allows examining the substance placed in the speeches by the speakers, as well as the relationship between the speakers and the audience. The analysis following the framework points to specific prominent themes that will be used to structure the presentation of the analysis.

4.3 Primary Sources

The examination focuses on the first return of human remains from Germany to Namibia. As was discussed in the background chapter, the repatriation of twenty skulls of Ovaherero, Ovambanderu and Nama descent gained large interest in Namibian society. The ten speeches analysed in this thesis are from two events relating to the repatriation in late September and early October 2011 (see table 1). These speeches were chosen from the specified repatriation events because these occasions can be seen as a landmark in Namibian-German postcolonial relations. The repatriation increased the perceived urgency in the debate on recognition, apology and reparations. In the events of 2011, "one can see the persistent problems of Namibian-German memory politics in particularly sharp focus" (Kössler 2015: 10).

Five of the speeches to be analysed were held at the handover ceremony hosted by the Charité Human Remains Project in Berlin, Germany, on 30 September 2011. Four speeches are by members of the Namibian delegation, and one by the German representative of the Foreign Office. Apart from the five speeches, the Chairman of the Executive Board of the Charité, Prof. Karl May Einhäupl, also gave a speech during the ceremony[38]. The ceremony was attended by the Namibian delegation, representatives of the Charité, and German civil society activists advocating for greater colonial consciousness (Küpper 2011). Other events in Berlin included a memorial church service, and a podium discussion the day before the handover ceremony (Scholz 2011).

The other half of the speeches were given on 5 October 2011, the day of the official memorial in Namibia. Before the memorial, the remains were welcomed at the international airport (4 October.) and displayed in the Parliament Gardens (4-5 October). The memorial ceremony titled 'Requiem of the Martyrs' took place at the memorial monument Heroes' Acre, which is dedicated to the fallen heroes of the liberation struggle, outside Windhoek, Namibia. Many Namibian office holders, Members of Parliament, and Traditional Authorities attended the event.[39] Although not all of the speeches have the place of their delivery indicated, it can be assumed that they were held in the same context. According to the official programme[40], Minister Kazenambo briefly opened the ceremony[41]. Then, the three main organisations representing the traditional communities in matters

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[38] E-Mail exchange with Prof. Dr. Andreas Winkelmann, Institute of Anatomy, Charité. Records of the speech by Prof. Einhäupl could not be found. However, since the focus is on the interaction between the German state and the Namibian state and affected ethnic groups, the unavailability of his speech does not significantly affect the study.

[39] The author of this thesis herself attended the 'Requiem of the Martyrs', having been already interested in the matter and present in Windhoek for exchange studies. This, and the better documentation of the event at the Heroes' Acre, allows for a more detailed description of the setting of this event, compared to the event in Berlin.

[40] Programme 'Requiem of the Martyrs', Heroes' Acre, Windhoek, Namibia, 4 - 5 October 2011, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Windhoek, October 2011. Additional observations by the author, who attended the event at Heroes' Acre.

[41] The short remarks of Kazenambo and the benedictation of Bishop Kameeta could not be obtained for analysis. However, this does not weaken the analysis since both talks were very short and the speakers are here not representing

relating to the genocide shared their contributions (each allocated 10 minutes), namely the Ovaherero/Ovambanderu Council for Dialogue on the 1904 Genocide (OCD-1904) (Maharero), the Nama Traditional Authorities Association (Fredericks), and the Ovaherero Traditional Authority (Riruako)[42]. The German Ambassador followed with his remarks (10 minutes) before the Namibian President delivered the keynote address (30 minutes). The ceremony was concluded with music by the brass band of the Namibian Defence Forces, a benediction by Bishop Kameeta, closing remarks by the Director of Ceremonies, Member of Parliament Hon. Alpheus !Naruseb, and the national and African Union anthems. The ceremony ended with an opportunity for the attendees to view the human remains.

The selection of the ten speeches reflects the focus of the thesis. The study concerns mostly the interaction between the German state, the Namibian government and the ethnic groups making claims against Germany. The German and Namibian governments were each represented by one representative in Berlin and Windhoek. The ethnic groups affected by the genocide, while cooperating, each have their own representation and sometimes conflicting interests (see chapter 2). The human remains repatriated from Berlin belonged to the Ovaherero, Ovambanderu and Nama groups. At the two events, the Ovaherero and Nama were represented by their elected federal leaders, who at the time presided over the other chiefs in the ethnic groups. These chiefs are recognised as Traditional Leaders by the Namibian government. Additionally, the speeches of the Chairperson of the Ovaherero/Ovambanderu Council for Dialogue on the 1904 Genocide (OCD-1904), at the time an Ovaherero Chief, are analysed.

While the limitation to these speeches may exclude some perspectives presented in the course of the restitution in 2011, the choice reflects the interest of the study. The selected speakers represent the groups and institutions central to the debates on the postcolonial legacy, genocide, and reparations. The emphasis on Namibian voices reflects both the distribution at the events and the focus of this thesis. The skewed gender ratio with only one female speaker is inescapable. It reflects the male domination of the diplomatic services, governments and the largely patriarchal traditional governance in Namibia.[43]

The availability of, and access to, the speeches posed some challenges for the research process. The analysis is based on the written documentation of the speeches, which may differ from the actual

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one of the three target groups (German and Namibian government, Namibian affected groups). The speech as representative of the Namibian government was delivered by President Pohamba at the Heroes' Acre.

[42] The representatives are not mentioned by name in the official programme.

[43] The lack of female (and youth) representation limits the study, as memory creation and healing may be different amongst these groups. It cannot be naturally assumed that the political and traditional representatives actually represent the views of the entire population. However, this study focuses on the political representatives and their arguments. In a broader study of views on the colonial history and legacy, as well as the relations of Germans and Namibians on various levels of society, these other voices should be represented.

spoken word and excludes non-verbal cues of the speakers, and surrounding factors such as the reaction of the audience. Two different formats of written documentation are used. The scripts of some of the speeches are available for download from the respective government webpages. The Namibian Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture, which led the Namibian delegation, compiled other speeches in a magazine-like publication, titled 'Return of the Human Remains'. The magazine was published in 2012 and contained the reprinted speeches, various analyses of the event, and greetings by various stakeholders. It was seemingly not distributed widely, the copy used for the analysis was found in the Namibian National Archives. All speeches were held in English, except for the one by the German Minister of State Pieper, which was held in German. In this speech, some differences between the German script and the English reprint have been discovered.

The speeches are presented in table 1 and numbered from 1 to 10. These numbers will be used in the following chapters to identify the different sources.

Table 1. List of Primary Sources

Nr.	Speaker	Speaker's Role	Occasion, Date	Format & Source
1	Alfons Kaihepovazandu Maharero	Ovaherero Chief of the Otjikatjamuaha Royal House, Chairman of the Ovaherero/Ovambanderu Council for Dialogue on the 1904 Genocide (OCD-1904)	Handover Ceremony, Charité Berlin, 30.09.2011	Script, third-party online source
2	Kuaima Riruako	Paramount Chief of the Ovaherero	Handover Ceremony, Charité Berlin, 30.09.2011	Script, third-party online source
3	Dawid Fredericks	!Aman Chief, Chairman of the Nama Traditional Leaders' Association	Handover Ceremony, Charité Berlin, 30.09.2011	Script, third-party online source
4	Cornelia Pieper	German Minister of State in the Foreign Office	Handover Ceremony, Charité Berlin, 30.09.2011	a. Magazine reprint, Namibian government b. Script, German government online source (in German)
5	Hon. Kazenambo Kazenambo	Minister of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture	Handover Ceremony, Charité Berlin, 30.09.2011	Magazine reprint, Namibian government
6	Dawid Fredericks	!Aman Chief, Chairman of the Nama Traditional Leaders' Association	(Place not given), 05.11.2011	Magazine reprint, Namibian government
7	Alfons Kaihepovazandu Maharero	Ovaherero Chief, Chairman of the OCD-1904	'Requiem of the Martyrs' Heroes' Acre, near Windhoek, 05.11.2011	Script, third-party online source
8	Kuaima Riruako	Paramount Chief of the Ovaherero	(Place not given), 05.11.2011	Magazine reprint, Namibian government
9	HE Egon Kochanke	Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Namibia	'Requiem of the Martyrs' Heroes' Acre, near Windhoek, 05.11.2011	a. Script, German embassy online document b. Magazine reprint, Namibian government
10	HE Dr Hifikepunye Pohamba	President of the Republic of Namibia	'Requiem of the Martyrs' Heroes' Acre, near Windhoek, 05.11.2011	a. Script, Namibian government online source b. Magazine reprint, Namibian government

5. Analysis: The Return of Human Remains and the Postcolonial Altercations between Germany and Namibia

The analysis uses the framework developed from Perelman's theory of the 'New Rhetoric' to identify the arguments emphasised in the different speeches and the means by which the rhetoric is used. Speaking at the same events, the speakers share a similar surrounding, audience and general framework for their speeches. However, they make different choices on what topics to emphasise, and what interpretations to put forward on these topics (see Perelman 1982: 33, 41). The presentation of the analysis groups the discussion according to the identified themes. Before going into the analysis, the following section will summarise briefly the arguments of the ten speeches.

5.1 Summary of the Speeches

The following short overview will introduce the main points in the various speakers' addresses. In his speech in Berlin (1), Alfons Kaihepovazandu Maharero summarises Namibian-German history and outlines the agenda of the Ovaherero/Ovambanderu Council for the Dialogue on the 1904 Genocide (OCD-1904). While acknowledging positive developments in Namibian-German relations, he expresses disappointment in the lack of commitment by the German government to the repatriation events, and maintains that peace cannot be achieved without the full acceptance of responsibility, a formal apology, and restorative justice. In his address at the ceremony in Namibia (7), Maharero focuses more on the skulls and emphasises that they reinforce the claims for compensation. He calls for an open dialogue with Germany, through the Namibian government, while involving the communities affected by the genocide.

Kuaima Riruako, at the time Paramount Chief of the Ovaherero, begins his statement in Berlin (2) by thanking those who made the repatriation possible. When handing the podium to Utjiua Muijangue, the Chair of the Ovaherero Genocide Committee, the tone changes to highlight the political demands towards the German government.[44] In a long and detailed account, Riruako strengthens the claim for compensation. Furthermore, he outlines the Ovaherero perspectives on their history with Germany, their disappointment with the current position of the German government, and their demands to have all remains returned to Namibia. He further highlights that these skulls are the result of German pseudo-scientific endeavours, and suggests that a "trialogue" on reparations should begin, between the German and Namibian governments, as well as the affected groups. In his speech on 5 October (8), Riruako focuses on the meaning of the returned

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[44] While the script of the speech shows that Riruako gave the word to Muijangue, the argument will still be assigned to him in this analysis, as he is given as the overall author/speaker of the speech.

skulls for the re-writing of the history of the Ovaherero in Namibia. He repeatedly requests that the German government engage with the legacies of the genocide.

Nama Chief Dawid Fredericks recounts the ongoing suffering of his people in his speech in Berlin (3). He also demonstrates his disappointment about the treatment by the German government, saying that he considers this a way to dehumanise Namibians. Fredericks further emphasises the connection between the German colonial war and the relative poverty of his people in his speech at the memorial in Namibia (6). Subsequently, he requests reparations that directly benefit those communities that have at present and historically been suffering as a result of the genocidal wars.

Kazenambo Kazenambo, leader of the delegation to Germany, recounts the brutality of the shared history in Berlin (5), thereby contextualising the meaning of the skulls for the Namibian delegation. He reinforces the promotion of national reconciliation and unity in Namibia. President Hifikepunye Pohamba, speaking at the Heroes' Acre (10), places the repatriation event in the context of the wars for an independent Namibia. He pays tribute to the war heroes from different times and groups within Namibia, and praises the stable and independent country to which the remains could now return. Moreover, Pohamba highlights Namibia's bilateral cooperation with Germany.

Egon Kochanke, speaking as German ambassador at the Heroes' Acre ceremony (9), recalls the harmful practices during German colonialism. He affirms the commitment of the German government to its 'historical responsibility', confirming this commitment several times in parliamentary decrees, speeches, and development cooperation initiatives. The ambassador emphasises the relations Germany maintains with the Namibian state, but not with individual groups within Namibia.

Minister of State in the German Foreign Office, Cornelia Pieper (4), as the only representative of the German government at the ceremony in Berlin, welcomes the Namibian delegation and outlines the background of the return of the skulls. Pieper recalls the brutality of colonialism and asks for reconciliation. Subsequently, the German official presents a positive outlook at future relations with Namibia, particularly emphasising achievements and expressing the hope for even closer cooperation. The speech was accompanied by disappointed calls for an official apology, which no German representatives gave in either Berlin or Windhoek. Pieper departed from the ceremony prior to the speeches by the Namibian ethnic representatives mentioned above, thus failing to recognise their arguments through the presence of the German government (Tagesspiegel 2011).

5.2 Presentation of the Analysis

The following sections group the main discussion topics in the analysed speeches, aiming to essentially cover all debates as identified in the analysis. The choice of arguments, disclosed with

the analytical framework presented in the methodology chapter, reveals the topics important to the speakers. The means by which the rhetoric is used to promote these arguments indicates the importance of the topics and the relationship between the speaker, topics and audience. Eventually, the analysis closes in on the topic of values and premises, the core focus of this study.

5.2.1 The Repatriation and Human Remains as Manifestation of History

All analysed speeches refer to the colonial history in various ways. The human remains were displayed in Berlin and Windhoek, and were thus visible reminders of the past. As a basis of argumentation, the remains are associated with aspects of reality that are less perceptible:

> "I wish the whole world to hear and know that these skulls are the tangible material evidence of what had happened to our people. They represent acts of war atrocities and genocide committed against our people during their just wars of resistance." (2, Riruako)

The speakers use the remains as a reference and starting point to present their understanding of the structure of reality, both in recognised sequential and coexistential liaisons and in newly established structures of reality. The human remains, and the events surrounding their repatriation, are often presented as manifestation of their history, as representatives telling about the past. At the same time, they are used as illustrations for the different interpretations of history presented by the speakers (see Perelman 1982: 50-51).

As manifestations, the skulls reflect the character of the German colonial era in the history of Namibian society. To Ovaherero leader Kuaima Riruako,

> "The year 2011 [...] seems to herald the beginning of the full realisation of Namibian history. This is what the return of the skulls of our ancestors symbolises, especially to us the Ovaherero, and other direct victims of Imperial Germany's atrocious excesses in the then Deutsche Südwest Afrika [sic] as Namibia was known during German occupation of the territory. It symbolises the subjugation of her people and their eventual near annihilation." (8, Riruako)

The human remains are not just a manifestation of history, but they are also grounds on which history can be re-written. Riruako implies that the history of the resistance and suffering of the Ovaherero and other affected groups have not been sufficiently recognised in history; a drawback which can be rectified starting with a proper consideration of the skulls and what they represent. Additionally, Riruako calls for new discussions with the German government about the responsibilities arising from the history that is represented by the skulls:

> "We are here [in Berlin] not just to receive the skulls of our people, which have been lying here in various institutions in this country for well over hundred years, but also to rewrite the history of a sad event that happened to my people and the Nama people in particular, who were specifically singled out by Orders of Extermination by a hired retired German soldier by the name of General Lothar von Trotha." (2, Riruako)

The strong emphasis on the connection between the skulls and historical accounts aims to support the specific interpretations of history put forward by the respective speaker. As the German government has not officially acknowledged the genocide, history is still contested. Thus, depending on their function and position, the speakers subscribe to and emphasise different connections and interpretations of this history.

Especially in his speech in Berlin, Riruako gives a rich account of the history of the Ovaherero under German colonial rule and warfare. Yet, his narrative returns to the human remains, underlining the evidential truth in his charges. He provides various examples of cruelties and deadly encounters, as well as a long list of atrocities committed under von Trotha's command. Riruako's speech builds up to the long affirmation that the uprising of Ovaherero "was just a war of self defense" and that "German colonialism started the war" (2). The war is thus portrayed by him as an inevitable, logical consequence of German colonialism. The justification of the uprising and the atrocities committed against the Ovaherero are the foundation of his claims for the recognition of their interpretation of history, as well as the related compensation.

The 'extermination order' by General von Trotha is mentioned or quoted in several speeches (1, 2, 5, 10). It is presented as the ultimate piece of evidence that the mass deaths of the Ovaherero, Ovambanderu and Nama qualify as genocide. President Pohamba, for example, links the 'extermination order' with the collection of the skulls, suggesting that these two items exist on the same scale of colonial violence and cruelty:

> "The German Imperial Army was not contented only to have wiped out a large section of our people. They also severed the heads of some of the victims, including small children and sent them off to Germany for experimentation." (10, Pohamba)

In the president's narrative, the repatriation symbolises the national history of liberation, rather than the fate of particular ethnic groups. It is not so much evidence brought before Germany, but a lesson of history directed at all Namibians:

> "This is a momentous day in the history of our nation. It is a day that should remind all of us about the difficulties that our people have endured in their march towards nationhood."

> "The return of these remains gives us an opportunity to pay deserving tribute to the heroic deeds of our fore-bearers. These are the heroes and heroines who made history for our nation." (10, Pohamba)

The emphasis on historical accounts is even greater in the speech of the Namibian government representative at the event in Berlin, by Kazenambo Kazenambo. Citing the entire 'extermination order', as well as quotes of the German Emperor Wilhelm praising von Trotha's actions, his argument culminates in the claim that concerning the presented human remains, "the majority of the victims were innocent civilians" (5, Kazenambo). Speaking for the national government,

Kazenambo uses the history to call for remembrance and national unity, rather than emphasising the deeds of specific groups and demanding restorative justice.

In contrast, Nama representative Fredericks uses the occasion to point out the consistency of the historical and present condition of the Nama group:

> "[...] we are sad to note that not much has changed as far as the suffering of the descendants of those who went through the atrocities, and some of whose skulls return to Namibia today [sic]. The poverty that prevails amongst the Nama people today was caused when colonisers took away their wealth and their fertile lands were taken away and given to colonial settlers." (6, Fredericks)

For Fredericks, like for Pohamba, the severance and deportation of human heads shows an increased scale of violence, in addition to the genocidal killing. This combination of violent acts and the historical significance of the wars gives rise to Fredericks's demand for compensation.

The OCD-1904 representative Maharero makes a similar argument. The human remains take the role of evidence in a case he makes for the recognition of the violent history and the payment of reparations.

> "The skulls before us today are a living embodiment and reminder of the most gruesome manner in which our forefathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, perished while incarcerated in concentration camps."

In his speech in Germany, Maharero uses the account of history to substantiate the demands of the OCD-1904 towards the German government. To Maharero, the history of hostile engagement started in 1896, when Ovaherero and Ovambanderu were expelled from their land in early battles. The following uprising was a result of this violent loss of land, property, and lives, which intensified throughout the war and resulted in the suffering of the following generations. Maharero not only speaks of the human remains in relation to the history of various Namibian groups and Namibian liberation, but also with regard to the colonial suppression of African peoples in general:

> "[The handover of human remains] forms part of the sad history of humiliation and denigration of the African people in general and more specifically our ancestors who directly bore the brunt in this regard." (1, Maharero)

Framing the experience of Namibian peoples into the wider experience of African colonial oppression compares and combines the struggles of different African peoples, in an attempt to unify their power and transfer possible successes of one group to the demands of others (see Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 231).

The example of this statement reveals that in short rhetoric arguments such as the speeches at hand, many statements can be classified in several categories of argumentation (see Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 192). Maharero's statement can be read both as liaison of succession and coexistence. In the many instances when the human remains are framed in line with other evidence

of colonial atrocities, they can similarly be seen as one of several examples connected to establish a structure of reality.

The German representatives at both events connect the events to the past, although more cautiously. To both, the events are a "reminder" of a "dark chapter":

> "The transfer of these skulls today to Namibian hands reminds us of a dark chapter in our divided German-Namibian history. During the German colonial domination of Namibia there was a bloody crackdown on riots in the then German South West Africa by the imperial protection force which many Namibian people fell victim to. Surviving Herero, Nama and Damara were imprisoned in camps, condemned to forced labour and many did not survive." (4, Pieper)

> "Today's ceremony and yesterday's reception at Hosea Kutako Airport [...] reminds us of a dark chapter in our common German-Namibian history. Today is the day we reminisce [sic!] about atrocities which took place over a hundred years ago and still cause immense grief to the descendents [sic] of the Ovaherero, Ovambanderu and Namas who perished in this war." (9, Kochanke)

The quoted sections are, in both cases, the only direct recognition of Germany's colonial history. It is remarkable that while in Berlin, the German government projects the history as "divided" (4), while the ambassador refers to a "common" (9) history in Windhoek. The German speakers avoid definitions of the historical events, such as the term 'genocide', and instead use vague expressions such as "sad period" (4) or "tragic events" (9). They focus on the positive impact of German relations with Namibia, and the positive aspects of recent, current and anticipated future bilateral relations. Clear, distancing words are used when talking about the extraction and treatment of the human remains, pointing to the evident manifestation of cruelty found in the presence of the skulls. When Pieper and Kochanke term the studies performed on the skulls as "pseudo-scientific" (4, 9), "unethical" (9) and characterised by "inhuman racism", they use dissociative terms (see Perelman 1982: 134) to create distance between the 'old' and 'new' Germany. These expressions are then contrasted with illustrations of the supportive role of the German government and German Charité in the recent repatriation process.

The accounts of history take a central role in almost all speeches. The focus is especially pronounced in the speeches in Berlin. The human remains are referenced as manifestations and tangible evidence of the brutal colonial history that Germany and Namibia share. This is important for the following claims of the speakers, because they interpret this history and its connection to the present differently. Several speakers use the metaphors "way" and "chapters" to develop a sense of connection or disconnection of past and present. Namibian President Pohamba opens his address with reference to the "journey to independence":

> "We are gathered here today at a solemn occasion. It is an occasion that reminds us of the long journey that, we, the Namibian people have walked to the dawn of freedom and independence.

This journey, and indeed the historical landscape of our nation, are marked by many epoch-making milestones." (10)

He names the 1904-1908 'War of Resistance' as one of the most significant "milestones" in Namibian history, and comes back to the metaphor of the "march towards nationhood" (10) in his speech. In the speeches of Kazenambo (5) and Kochanke (9), the present events are a "first step" in the process of identifying and returning all remains from Germany to Namibia. To Fredericks (6), it is the "first step" in a comprehensive process leading to reparations and the elevation from poverty for the affected groups. Riruako sees the "next logical step that should be taken" (2) to be an engagement in dialogue regarding reparations, rather than allowing the delegation to "go home" without pressuring for such engagement.

In Windhoek, Riruako encourages all parties "to start gearing up for the next chapter" (8), which would be opening up dialogue that deals with the "historic responsibility" of the past. Fredericks emphasises the continuity of past and present grief when maintaining that Namibians "ended one-half of the chapter on suffering" with independence, but also stresses that "the other half of the suffering" (6) with reference to the colonial wars will not end before restorative justice is achieved. Namibian Minister Kazenambo (5) describes the colonial periods under Germany and South Africa as a "dark chapter" which will never be forgotten. Pieper and Kochanke use the metaphor in the same way, describing the colonial wars as a "dark chapter in our common German-Namibian history" (9, similar in 4). For the German representatives, however, this chapter is closed. Pieper speaks of "a past chapter in science" when research used dehumanising means to achieve racist results. In contrast, the initiative of Charité presents an opportunity for "rehabilitation" for both science and this aspect of German history. The metaphor of the chapter is used here not so much to show consistency but rather to dissociate the past from the present.

The diverging evaluations of history particularly inform the claims on reparation demands (5.2.3) and the perspectives on current bilateral relations (5.2.4). The understanding of history is reflected in the speakers' ideas about rightful representation and the importance of ethnic or national identity, which is analysed in the following section.

5.2.2 National Unity and Representation

The previous section shows that liaisons of coexistence are used when the skulls are invoked as direct representatives of the fallen heroes of the first wars of liberation. The same mechanism is invoked whenever one person speaks as the representative of others. With the shift of focus to groups such as tribes and nations, the acts of some can be invoked to represent the character of the group (Perelman 1982: 98-9). These various speakers are invited to participate in the events as representatives of different interest groups. Thus, not only do their interpretations of history differ,

but so too does the significance and position of the repatriation itself. Moreover, the claims made by the legitimate representatives, as well as the assumptions associated with the addressed audience, vary depending on the speakers' representative roles.

The representatives of the Namibian government on both occasions emphasise the Namibian identity of the victims. They address a unified Namibian audience. For instance, President Pohamba speaks of the "mortal remains of Namibians" (10). The fate of those whose remains are returned is put in the context of Namibian independence:

> "It is an occasion that reminds us of the long journey that, we, the Namibian people have walked to the dawn of freedom and independence." (10)

In quasi-logical reasoning, the human remains are employed to call for national unity:

> "Through their unselfish sacrifices, our ancestors laid a strong foundation for the modern liberation struggle, which led to the attainment of our freedom and independence in 1990. In order to honour their enduring legacy, we should continue to promote National Reconciliation and to build our country as *'One Namibia, One Nation'*." (10)

Kazenambo, himself a descendant of the Ovaherero group, yet speaking in his capacity as Minister of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture, emphasises that Namibians will not forget both the colonial and the apartheid times. However, he calls for the promotion of "national unity, peace and stability" (5). The connection made between the anti-apartheid and anti-colonial struggles has two functions. Firstly, the analogy raises awareness about the colonial wars, since the independence war continues to be the dominant shared memory of the general Namibian audience, especially to those in government power. At the same time, however, it is a signal for the specific audience of the groups mostly affected by the German colonial wars that their history is part of a larger Namibian history. Thus, the Namibian government officials inadvertently portray themselves as legitimate representatives of the affected tribes in the discussions with the German government. Both national representatives call for a rejection of tribalism, regionalism and racism as well as sexism, referencing some challenges of Namibian society, and arguably hinting at the particular compensation interests of the Ovaherero, Ovambanderu and Nama. Like Pohamba, Kazenambo invokes the promotional slogan "One Namibia, One Nation" as well as the line from the national anthem "Their blood waters our freedom" (5, 10). The slogan and anthem are symbols used to invoke a national identity for the Namibian audience.

Ovaherero Chief Riruako acknowledges his group's Namibian identity and its representation through the national government, for example referring to it as "our Namibian Government" (2). As a result, he emphasises the responsibility of the Namibian government in some aspects, for example as the "custodian" (8) of reacquired historical documentation and human remains on behalf of the victims' descendants. Even so, Riruako voices doubt about the loyalty and commitment of the

government, particularly on the topic of compensation. As the climax of his Berlin speech, he declares:

> "The Namibian Government must make a categorical stand and tell the whole world whether it stands together with the German subterfuges or by the side of the Ovaherero and Nama people on their demand for reparation, just as the State of Israel stood firmly behind the cause of the Jewish people. Otherwise, I shall before long regard it as conniving with the German Government, which is bent on denying Namibian citizens what is due to them – namely compensation." (2)

This excerpt is an exceptionally strong and conflict-laden statement within the analysed speeches. The analogy of the compensation of Jewish Israel is invoked repeatedly in Riruako's speech. It is discussed later as justification of the reparation claims. In this context, the analogy calls for the Namibian government to rigorously represent the proclaimed interests of its citizens, neglecting the fact that only a section of the population is making those claims. While calling for the government to "stand by the side" of the descendants, Riruako implies that it is the responsibility of the latter to formulate demands and related policies. In addition, Riruako calls for a "tripartite committee" (2), comprised of the Namibian and German governments and representatives of the descendants, to negotiate on matters related to reparations. He insists on the inclusion of the affected groups not only in these discussions, but also in terms of revealing all available materials and scientific results of the deported artefacts and human remains. With the structure of a contradiction, he presents his central claim:

> "It cannot be about us and yet without us when it comes to the ownership of these things." (2)

In his speech in Windhoek, Riruako focuses on the complete return of all human remains and related documentation as the prerequisite of reclaiming history and achieving compensation. In this regard, he makes no claims to the Namibian government but concentrates on the responsibilities and willingness of the direct descendants:

> "The descendants of the Ovaherero and Nama ancestors are prepared to carry on thus onerous task [of repatriating the remains] because they do it on behalf of their ancestors, and on their own behalf, as a historical responsibility they have never shied away from, not in the past, not today nor in the near or distant future." (8)

This sequential relation points out the motivation of the descendant groups and their determination for justice. The government is sidelined to fulfil their assigned tasks ("for safekeeping by their custodian, the Government of the Republic of Namibia", 8). The representatives in this matter – the "rightful descendants" (8) – are not only ascertained by their blood relation to the victims, but also by their determination to seek justice for these ancestors. This conflict on the representation of the claimants against the German state is reiterated in most speeches. The tribal leaders emphasise their position representing their respective groups, or, like Riruako, the descendants of the genocide.

Alfons Maharero, the OCD-1904 Chairperson, repeats that he is "[s]peaking for the Ovaherero and Ovambanderu people" (1). Yet, from that perspective, he seems to be addressing a German audience in most of his Berlin speech. His speech is constructed to convince the Germans of their responsibility for the colonial genocide. As a first move, he explains the history from the perspective of the Ovaherero and Ovambanderu. Next, he outlines the OCD-1904 goals, directed at "those who may be tempted to embrace an illusionary view that many years have passed since this dark period (...)" (1), referring to the German government. Maharero contrasts this "illusionary view" and the perspective of the OCD-1904, which suggests that peace can only be achieved through an apology and restorative justice. Maharero later also appeals to the "German citizenry" (1) to develop a critical understanding of these historical events, engage in reconciliatory activities, and stand in solidarity with Namibians to put pressure on the German government to act. In particular, Maharero addresses the descendants of leading German personnel within the colonial military and administration. Maharero finishes by addressing the absent German government, expressing his disappointment with their absence.

In the speech in Windhoek, Maharero's attention turns away from the German citizenry and government to both Namibians and the Namibian government. He is now speaking for and to the Ovaherero, Ovambandero and Nama descendants about the ordeal of their ancestors. Here, he concludes the right to restorative justice to an unspecified, universal audience. Turning to the Namibian government, Maharero declares his willingness to work through the government so to achieve these goals on Namibian terms, and thanks the government for its support in the repatriation. Picking up on the government leaders' appeal to unity, Maharero re-interprets this for the purpose of the agenda of those he represents:

> "Finally, we appeal to all Namibians, from all walks of life, to unite and fight for the just demand for reparation." (7)

The same pattern of addressing Germans and Namibians is found in the speeches of Captain Dawid Fredericks. While speaking of the German government in the third person in the Berlin speech (3), his accounts of mass graves in Namibia and the state of the Nama people, his claims about the lack of interest by Germany to engage with this issue, and the preferred response of the German state appear to be directed to the German government. The disappointment expressed in this speech and the indirect addressing of the German government shows that Fredericks is not expecting a direct response anymore at this point. Instead, his claims are framed in a form similar to an open letter, trying to exert pressure indirectly through the approval of a broad or universal audience. In Windhoek (6), Fredericks uses an inclusive "we" to describe the sentiments and claims of the affected groups, and integrate them into a greater Namibian narrative. As representative of the

Nama, he ends his speech with an appeal to the Namibian and German governments to hear their demands.

The representatives of the German government at the ceremonies in Berlin and Windhoek both acknowledge this representative function, and specify that they are addressing "the Delegation of Namibia", "as a representative of the Namibian people" (4, Pieper) or, respectively, "the dignitaries of the Namibian Government and the thousands of members of so many traditional authorities gathered here" (9, Kochanke). Apart from that, Pieper's speech takes a neutral tone, seemingly addressing a universal audience with uncontested facts. Only at a later stage in the speech does she speak first in her personal capacity ("I would also like to express my own personal deep regret (...)", 4[45]) and addresses "the Herero, Nama and Damara (...) the people of Namibia" (4). Then, she changes the perspective and speaks for Germany and all Germans ("Germany and the Germans know their history", 4). Speaking for the government again, Pieper clarifies the national level of cooperation:

> "The Federal Government has agreed with the Namibian government to make the bilateral relationship a partnership between equals. Never again, must there be preferential treatment of, or domination of, one community over another." (4)

On a side note, the use of the phrase "never again" is interesting, since it is usually associated with Germany's Nazi past. However, it is doubtful that this is an intentional reference, since the German government has otherwise been avoiding any association of the colonial wars with the Holocaust. At the end of her speech, Pieper seemingly speaks for both the German and Namibian governments:

> "Conscious of its close historical ties, Germany and Namibia will continue their intensive political dialogue and mutual trust and expand their relations further with an eye to the future!" (4)

Kochanke similarly uses both the German and Namibian nations as reference points. He states that Germany supports the Namibian national reconciliation policy and maintains relations "with the Namibian government for Namibia as <u>one</u> nation" (9, emphasis in original). He makes this claim as a result of a quasi-logical argument, laying out the past and current bi-national relations of the two countries. The emphasis on "one nation", referencing the Namibian slogan of national reconciliation, gives the German government a reason not to engage with the internal discussions and different experiences of Namibian society. Kochanke reaffirms both his representative role and the message of unity in a dissociation:

> "My government does not maintain special relations with individual ethnic groups." (9)

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[45] In the draft published on the website of the German Foreign Office, this segment is not quoted. The following segment is only addressed at "the Namibian People" (das namibische Volk). The speech was delivered in German, but it is unclear what the actual spoken word was. According to the newspaper "Der Tagesspiegel", Pieper adds to her speech the personal words: „Ich möchte Ihnen gegenüber auch ganz persönlich mein tiefes Bedauern, meine Scham ausdrücken." (Tagesspiegel 2011).

With this clinical sentence, the German ambassador strongly repudiates the claims made by all Traditional Leaders and ethnic representatives at the occasion. He severs all potential direct relations between the groups affected most by German colonialism and the modern German state. Thus, he establishes his structure of reality and marks all contradictory statements as "illusionary" (see Perelman 1982: 134).

Just like Pieper in Berlin, the ambassador only uses the first person singular when expressing "deep regret" about the "tragic events" (9). Both German representatives switch to a personal capacity and use this 'safe' wording to avoid any form of official apology. However, one person is represented to a great extent in the speeches, without actually being a speaker at the events herself. Three speakers mention the near-apology of Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul as German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, revealing the turning point of the relations through that speech at the centennial of the colonial wars in 2004. Yet, the meaning of said statement and the representative role of Wieczorek-Zeul are contested. Ambassador Kochanke references the "plea for forgiveness" (9) as evidence for the responsibility taken up by Germany, the need to leave the past behind, and the positive development of bi-national relations. To that end, he references the presence of Hifikepunye Pohamba, President in 2011, who was a minister in the government of President Nujoma in 2004. He emphasises the closure of this chapter:

> "From what I have heard and read her plea was accepted and the hand she extended was taken."
> (9)

For Ovaherero Paramount Chief Riruako, the acknowledgement of an extermination war and German responsibility should be binding for all German governments:

> "Your representative has spoken in your name, and you cannot run away from that." (2)

He invokes the concept of representation of a nation through state delegates, which the German government insists on. Riruako also makes a similar move when emphasising the endorsement of General von Trotha's orders by the German Reich. Both arguments insist on the coexistential relation of individuals' and nations' actions, and the character and responsibility of the nation they represent (see Perelman 1982: 98-9). Chief Maharero, contrarily, deplores the lack of representative power of the statement, and the subsequent lack of a German apology:

> "Again, although our state of sorrow was partly lifted by this bold step of courage and statesmanship, we however learned that upon her return to Germany, Ms Wieczorek Zeul was rebuked in Parliament for having taken such a reconciliatory gesture. Therefore, as we stand here today there has not been **a formal apology** from the German Government." (1, emphasis in original)

He thus bemoans, yet emphasises, the dissociation of personal and representative functions and the lack of an official German responsiveness, which the German officials inadvertently continue to

evoke in their statements, when they cease to speak for the government in expressing remorse for the loss of lives and livelihoods.

The issue of representation in the debate on German-Namibian history is contested both within Namibia internally and between the German and Namibian representatives. The German state representatives strongly emphasise the principle of the 'nation state' and the Namibian government calls for national unity. The traditional leaders call for a recognition of their role in the debate, and highlight the particular effect of the colonial wars and legacies on their ethnic groups and regions. The representatives continue this debate when outlining and discussing the justifications for compensation.

5.2.3 The Justification of Reparation Demands

Many of the previously outlined arguments of the Namibian ethnic representatives are justifications of their demand for compensation. In one way or another, their speeches all build up to the call for restorative justice. Captain Fredericks expresses his hopes for a beneficial outcome:

> "Let the return of the remains be the first step in the reparations process and let us take drastic steps to take the people out of poverty into a dignified human life in the land of their ancestors."
> (6)

The Namibians use a quasi-logical argumentation structure, among other techniques, to present reparations as a logical consequence. The Chairperson of the OCD-1904, Maharero, structures his speech (1) so that the skulls can be connected to the Namibian accounts of history (see 5.2.1), as well as the poor conduct of the German government and people (see 5.2.4), in order to evidence his appeal for a dialogue aiming at reparations. The speech in Windhoek especially picks up the essence of this argument:

> "The return of these skulls serves as strong evidence that Namibia has a case to demand restorative justice for the genocide committed by Germany during its colonial rule in the then German South West Africa. Therefore we see the return of these skulls as a first step in a comprehensive process of restorative justice." (7, Maharero)

Maharero integrates the human remains in the larger narrative of the demand for restorative justice. The remains are a manifestation of history, as well as a basis for a more contested thesis – the right to compensation.

The speech of Nama Captain Dawid Fredericks in Berlin (3) is constructed to make two points, namely to express disappointment with the attitude of the German government towards the repatriation process, and to outline four demands: 1) that the German government accepts responsibility for the colonial violence, 2) apologises for this violence, 3) enters into a dialogue with Namibians, and 4) is willing to compensate the affected groups directly. Using structured

reasoning, he puts forth several arguments in his speech to create a base for these demands. Some of the arguments seem disjointed at first, and only come together resulting in the common claims.

Fredericks first describes the discovery of a mass grave of colonial slave workers near the railroad in Namibia, linking it to the present repatriation of skulls. Then, the Captain emphasises the contemporary "sorrow and poverty" (3) of his people. These points connect the past suffering of his group in colonial times to their continued hardship in the present-day. Fredericks then contrasts this Namibian suffering with the lack of interest of the German government in the issues related to the human remains. He mentions the violent deaths of two leaders of Nama groups, again contrasting this experience with Germany's failure to recognise these crimes. Fredericks implies that there is a contradiction between the realities for his people and the behaviour of the German side. Contradictions, as quasi-logical elements of argumentation, highlight incoherence and absurdity (Perelman 1982: 54). Perelman (1982: 55) also points out that incompatibilities are presented to be solved. The main demands of Fredericks are, in effect, the answer to these incompatibilities:

> "We can give you the assurance that we shall continue without any fear to demand from the German State to [sic] that which we are entitled to." (3)

The demands are therefore presented as a logical consequence of the historical and present condition of the Nama people, and the antithetical behaviour of the German state.

Fredericks again uses quasi-logical argumentation in his speech at Heroes' Acre, where it is directed at the Namibian government and people. Once more referencing the past and present suffering of the Nama, he uses a comparison and transitivity to argue for Namibian support of the specific claims of the affected groups:

> "We today talk of veterans who need to be compensated in this country. What should we call those whose skulls we receive today? Why should the offspring of those who made so many sacrifices ask for reparations, compensation or paying back for atrocities committed against their ancestors? Such compensation should come automatically to lessen the pain and humiliation." (6)

Here, Fredericks refers to the substantial support to veterans of the Namibian liberation struggle and their dependents, who are entitled to a pension and other assistance such as grants, employment and housing.[46] Frederick uses this example to suggest that victims of colonial wars are also veterans, therefore their descendants are also entitled to compensation. This is an argument of transitivity that can only be refuted by invalidating one of the premises (see Perelman 1982: 70).

Kuaima Riruako uses a similar method of argumentation when he presents the skulls as evidence of the genocide that leads him to demand reparations.

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[46] see http://www.mova.gov.na

"In this regard how can we just come here and simply collect these skulls and go home without saying anything else? We say that all these acts constituted, in terms of international law, a crime of genocide, for which we demand a just reparation." (2)

The return of the skulls marks for him the opportunity "to start gearing up for the next chapter" (8), a tripartite discourse on reparations. He sees such an open discussion as "the next logical step" (2) since, in his view, both Germany, through its former Minister Wiczoreck-Zeul, and Namibia, in a parliamentary decision, have acknowledged the genocide. The call for reparations is therefore presented as the result of a rational argument, and a consequence of previous acts. Riruako points out a causal chain of argumentation making restitution seem inevitable as it is based on an already existing structure of reality (see Perelman 1982: 81-3).

Riruako employs reciprocity, historical analogies, and models to strengthen the argument for compensation. He gives the example of German settlers in Namibia, who received compensation for losses during the war already in 1904 (2). Furthermore, Riruako employs at length the analogy of compensations for Israel and Jews after the Second World War. He uses the quasi-logical argumentation strategy of reciprocity, claiming equality to be justice:

"The German Government relied on its own moral conscience to do the right thing for the humanity of the Jews, and the State of Israel, and in so doing passed that legislation to pay compensation.

"The State of Israel was paid in goods and services while Jewish organisations, and even other countries, were paid and are being paid in cash to the tune of billions.

"Are we the Ovaherero and the Nama, different (as human beings) and therefore undeserving of the same treatment? Or is it because we are not white and therefore don't deserve compensation? These are not just rhetorical questions but questions that are begging for honest and sincere answers." (2)

Riruako is not only invoking reciprocity between Namibians and Jews. He is also tapping into the debate of the value of Black and African lives, thus making his claims part of a larger debate (inclusion). Moreover, he uses the example of Jewish compensation as an analogy and a model. He refers to the "*Bundesentschädigungsgesetz*" as a blueprint for the restitution of the victim groups of the colonial genocide.[47] According to Perelman, these strategies aim at establishing a structure of reality. Riruako attempts to create links between those different cases, so to create a basis for a previously denied common understanding of reality.

For Fredericks and Riruako, the centrality of the arguments for reparations are evidenced using a vast array of rhetoric strategies. The dominance of quasi-logical argumentation may be seen as an indicator of the strength the speakers themselves assign to their argument. The claim for direct compensation seems so self-evident to them, that a structured presentation of the arguments should

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[47] As mentioned before, there has been a passionate debate about the continuities between the genocide in Namibia and the Holocaust during the Second World War. For references and a contribution to the debate, see Zimmerer 2011.

convince even critics. However, they are aware of the contestation of those arguments, with Fredericks especially expressing disappointment to this regard. Hence, the speakers support the argument with both methods outlining reality, and the creation of new liaisons using examples, models, and less contested claims. In the analysed speeches, the traditional leaders do not specify the expected form and extent of reparations, except that they must be adequate and directly given to the affected groups. The absence of a specification puts the emphasis in the speeches primarily on encouraging each party to engage in negotiations. It may display openness for the outcome or, conversely, point to self-evident claims that assumedly need no specification.

Kazenambo and Pohamba, the Namibian government representatives, make no claim for reparations (other than the restitution of all human remains), and do not respond to the demands. Neither do the German delegates respond to the claims directly. However, Kochanke and Pieper react to the demands by the Ovaherero, Ovambanderu and Nama with the rejection to engage with individual population groups, as described in the previous section. Furthermore, the emphasis on the existing good relations between the two countries, particularly in relation to development cooperation, may be a reaction to those demands. These alternative suggestions of compensation and cooperation between the two countries and their peoples are explored in the next section.

5.2.4 The Current Bilateral Relations

The German representatives engage little with their colonial history, and not at all with the Namibian demands for reparations. They acknowledge the importance of an awareness of the past, but consider it to already be at adequate levels. In Pieper's view, "Germany and the Germans know their history" (4), a claim that is usually connected to the German confrontation of its Nazi past. Since the history is known, Pieper moves on to the present and highlights the changed, positive relations. Towards the end of her speech, the emphasis is on the future. Pieper's understanding of the relation of the three aspects of time in the German-Namibian relationship is summarised:

> "We should together seek ways in which our reflections on this sad period can help us foster the present positive, forward-looking approach to relations between our countries and peoples." (4)

However, the German representative does not detail how the past may inform the present relationship, other than creating a starting point for close bilateral ties.

Since the apology and reparation claims were first raised, the reaction in Berlin has often been to emphasise the development cooperation budget.[48] Related statements by the German representatives at the ceremonies are to be seen in this context:

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[48] See for example the debates in the Bundestag, e.g. in March 2012 following motions by the Green and Left parties, discussed in Rampke 2012b.

> "Since Namibia's independence, we Germans have shouldered our responsibility primarily through increased bilateral cooperation - mainly development cooperation with the Namibian government" (9, Kochanke)

> "In development cooperation, the Federal Republic of Germany also does its part, with well over half a billion euro since the independence of Namibia." (4, Pieper)

The high level of development cooperation payments is the cornerstone of the German argument that Namibian-German relations are already good, and that the past is sufficiently being taken into account. The argument is augmented with various incidents of German engagement as manifestation of "close, multifaceted bilateral relations" (4). Pieper references German tourists visiting Namibia, partnerships of schools and towns, as well as economic investments. Additionally, she mentions initiatives of non-state actors to illustrate that "we are doing our best for remembrance of and reconciliation with atrocities committed during the colonial era" (4). Amongst those activities are the renaming of street names, the initiation of memorials, and the scientific enquiry of the Charité. All these examples are presented as manifestations of Namibia and Germany's good relations. Pieper points out:

> "This commemoration today, which also shapes the future of our relations with Namibia and its people, comes from our people." (4)

The emphasis of non-state actors is a contrast to the usual rhetoric emphasising government-to-government relations. However, this seemingly new approach may be similarly limiting, since it leaves no room for discussions between the German state and Namibian non-state population groups. The perspective of the German government, as presented by Pieper, is peculiar considering that the mentioned initiatives, including the Charité Human Remains Project, have been criticising the government for leaving decolonisation efforts entirely at the responsibility of civil society. Some civil society activists were even present at the event, interrupting the speech of the State Minister and calling for an apology and reparations.

Neither of the German representatives offers the requested apology. Both, however, acknowledge the "moral and historic responsibility towards Namibia" (4, similar wording in 9). They also personally express regret for this historical experience:

> "Allow me to join you in mourning these tragic events, I bow my head and express my deep regret." (9)[49]

After paying tribute to "those who died" (4), Pieper seeks reconciliation:

> "I would now, on behalf of the German Government, like to ask the Herero, Nama and Damara for reconciliation and reach out to the people of Namibia."[50]

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[49] See the previous discussion on the unclear documentation of a similar statement in the speech of State Minister Pieper.

The use of a sentence structure that could very well result in asking for forgiveness ("Bitte... um Vergebung") invokes the notion of an apology, without actually providing one. It makes this statement ambivalent, leaving it open for re-interpretation (see Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 132). However, with the raised expectations towards a clearly expressed apology, and many of the present activists understanding German, the remark was not taken as an apology during the event. Conflict transformation literature understands reconciliation ("Versöhnung") as both the process and the result of interaction to overcome even deeply felt animosities (see chapters 2 and 7). While reconciliation is a dialectical process, the perpetrator (in this case without doubt the German Empire) can only ask for forgiveness after admitting guilt, but the victim has to offer it in her own time. Germany refuses the process of reconciliation and yet impatiently asks for the end result, foregoing the basic principles of reconciliation (see e.g. Ramsbotham 2011: 258-60). Consequently, this statement left Namibians feeling more frustrated than in a reconciliatory spirit.

Nevertheless, Pieper continues her speech remarking:

> "Our responsibility requires gestures that make clear that we are serious about asking for reconciliation." (4)

Pieper inadvertently admits that relations are not as good as presented elsewhere, with her use of the word "reconciliation" and the admittance of the need for "gestures" – as otherwise, there would be no need for either. The use of the term "*Versöhnung*" is an attempt to establish a structure of reality by connecting it with German-Namibian relations. However, even this positive expression highlights the conflict, a similar mechanism to what Perelman observes for philosophical pairs that are tightly fastened together through the attempt to separate them (Perelman 1982: 136-7).

Without offering an apology or a starting point to discuss compensation, the German representatives turn to emphasising cooperative future relations. Pieper emphasises the willingness to "face the past, study it and draw conclusions from the findings for the future" (4, similar in 9). Both representatives also promise to "continue the dialogue" (9) between the two governments, regarding the return of all Namibian human remains from Germany. Kochanke suggests a joint scientific programme, while Pieper says that the government "is prepared to continue as facilitator and supporter of the return process" (4). The future relationship between the two governments is to be a "partnership between equals" (4), with greater cooperation in "future-critical sectors" (4). Ambassador Kochanke mentions the "Namibian German Special Initiative" (9), a project established by Germany in 2004 to the benefit of the Namibian regions affected most by German

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[50] The speech was delivered in German. In the official German documentation the phrase is formulated as follows: "Ich bitte an dieser Stelle im Namen der Bundesregierung das namibische Volk um Versöhnung." Notably, the German word has a somewhat different connotation to the English "reconciliation". The German term implies the creation of friendly relations after disagreement, but without the prefix "re-" that indicates the return to previously friendly relations.

colonialism. He sees the commemoration event as "another opportunity to deepen relations between our two countries" (9).

The German speakers paint a favourable picture of the relations between Namibia and Germany as well as Namibians and Germans. With the exception of emphasising the German commitment to maintaining relations at the state level, they do not react to the demands of the Ovaherero and Nama. This ensures that the German government does not engage in a conversation (with sub-state groups) that it officially denies. Moreover, singling out the positive aspects of bilateral relations is an attempt to give presence to them (see Perelman 1982: 35). Repetition and great detail aim to evoke a desired reality (see Perelman 1982: 37). At the same time, it becomes evident that the speeches of the German representatives are not necessarily intended to resonate with the critical audience at the events. Since there is disagreement on fundamental premises between the German state representatives and the traditional leaders and postcolonial activists (see 5.2.6), the speakers do not seek to effectively persuade the attending audience, but rather they make an argument intended to convince a general audience of the validity of their main claim – namely, that Germany is already living up to its responsibility. Since the premises that the general audience subscribe to are obscure and diverse, the speaker needs to use a variety of arguments and examples to build a convincing argument, as can be observed in the lengthy description of positive relations in Pieper's speech (see Perelman 1982: 138-45).

Maharero, Riruako and Fredericks counter the impression of good relations presented by the Germans. In his confrontational speech, Riruako rejects the "empty cliché's [sic] like 'Special Initiative', 'Special moral and historical responsibility', 'reconciliation', etc." (2):

> "I am inclined to sound a word of caution that my people's patience can run out and they are also, as I am talking to you, watching on television the developments in the Arabs world and cannot remain uninfluenced forever when they see how others are solving their problems. The peace and tranquility [sic] that obtain [sic] in Namibia today, I'm afraid, may not remain forever." (2)

Maharero attempts to dissociate the German development assistance and restitution processes:

> "Furthermore while recognising and appreciating the existing bilateral development cooperation between our government and the government of the Federal Republic of Germany, we can no longer accept the notion that such development assistance is a response to our demand for restorative justice." (7)

While acknowledging the existing support and relationship between Germany and Namibia, Maharero and Riruako attempt to interrupt the connection of development cooperation and compensation for historical wrongs. By disassociating the two ideas, they present a difference between the apparent and the real (see Perelman 1982: 126). Although the money transferred in development assistance may be presented as an expression of "historic responsibility", these

speakers demonstrate that, to them, this is not an acceptable reality. Maharero, for example, provides an alternative perspective for the German 'Special Initiative', when rejecting the unilateralism of the programme and instead insisting on a dialogue (1).

To Namibians, their painful history and related legacies need to be tended to before a positive future can be envisioned. Riruako maintains that history needs to be "re-written" and that Germany has to play a role in that:

> "The re-writing of our history shall never and cannot be complete until the Germans repatriate every one of the skulls, and everything else taken from the shores of our motherland and fatherland, Namibia, and restore it to the descendants of the victims." (8)

Additionally, information on the remains, including the research performed on them, should be given to the descendant groups, and collected in Namibian libraries, archives, and museums (8, 2). The emphasis on "re-writing", "repatriate" and "restoration" in the quote exemplifies the need for Namibians to engage with their past. Arguably, to them, "reconciliation" is needed in various meanings of the word: to improve the relationship between the former colonisers and colonised, to consolidate divergent perspectives of history, and to begin the process of accepting and overcoming their own history.

Fredericks, disappointed with the minimal presence of the German government, wants Germany to "take responsibility" and "officially" (3) hand over deported remains and colonial mass graves. Maharero joins the call for a full recovery of the human remains and research results, and maintains that these are part of "a comprehensive process of restorative justice" (7). Moreover, he calls on the German people "to develop a critical consciousness of this shared history" (1) in particular, the direct descendants of high colonial staff who should engage in dialogue with Namibians, and put pressure on the German government. Maharero summarises the exigencies declaring that, "unconditional admission of responsibility, official apology and restorative justice are the pillars of genuine reconciliation and peace between our people" (1). Maharero maintains that these conditions are not nearly fulfilled:

> "Namibia has been independent for 21 years now, and we have continued to witness a degree of intransigence on the part of the German Government." (1)

The remarks and behaviour of the German government and its representatives fall far short of what the Namibian delegation had expected. Maharero indicates his group's "dismay and disappointment for the inhospitable treatment accorded to our delegation" (1, 7) and bemoans the "low profile" (1) of the German government during the events in Berlin. Moreover, he expresses disappointment over the refusal of the German government to sign the handover protocol.

In a similar way, Nama Captain Fredericks focuses on the present conduct of the German government, expressing shock about its lack of interest in the "skulls affair", and its refusal to "admit their inhuman actions" and "take responsibility" (3). He links the colonial past and the present conduct:

> "I understand this newest deed as a further renunciation of the human existence of the Nama and Herero. I say so because r [sic] understand this conduct as that the German State still regard ourselves as sub-humans and commodities which were brought from Deutsch Sud West Afrika by private persons for enrichment and souvenirs." (3)

Here, Fredericks links the acts of the German government to its inherent character. He points to a continuity of poor treatment for Namibians, creating a strong contrast to the narrative of change advanced by Pieper. While Pieper claims a change in nature, Fredericks suggests that there is merely a difference in degree of the expression of Germany's persistent colonial character. Fredericks uses a strong notion of expected behaviour and values, which is discussed in the final part of the analysis.

5.2.5 Premises, Values and Culture

According to Perelman, premises build the basis of arguments. Perelman distinguishes between premises bearing upon the "reality", namely facts, truths, and presumptions, and the "preferable", such as values, hierarchies, and loci of the preferable (Perelman 1982: 23, see also section 'Methodological Framework'). In essence, premises are all those objects in a rhetorical piece that form the basis of an argument, but are not justified because they are usually expected to be shared by the audience. Based on the previous four sections of analysis, the following discussion will first look at the premises that are based on the *real*, before turning to values and the premises based on the *preferable*.

It was shown in section 5.2.1 that all speakers reference history, and to various degrees the present, when justifying their interpretations of history. The speakers who elaborate less on history still base their arguments on historical events. However, they assume a greater shared understanding of history. This may be the reason why the past is discussed less in the speeches in Windhoek than in Berlin. In Windhoek, the speakers build on a shared historical knowledge of the predominantly Namibian audience as premise, as a universally shared fact that does not need to be justified. In Berlin, however, speakers Riruako, Maharero and Kazenambo cannot assume their understanding of history to be shared by the whole audience. Since Germany does not accept the term 'genocide', history is still contested in this forum, and has to be substantiated before being used as a premise.

A highly contested topic with diverging premises is the reparation debate. Two of the premises relating to compensation are neither justified nor questioned by any of the speakers. The first

premise is the fact that the skulls, and the victims they represent, were mistreated by German colonial troops, as well as those who brought them to, and worked on them in, Germany. The second premise is the seemingly agreed presumption that an established, admitted genocide gives the right to reparations or compensation in some form. The first premise can be found in the speeches of all representatives. It can thus be justifiably assumed that the different speakers and the audience share this premise. The second, however, is strongly present in the speeches of the Ovaherero and Nama leaders. The German speakers neither reference nor deny the presumption. If Germany ever acknowledges the claimed genocide, this silence may give room for new arguments on the validity of the link between genocide and compensation.

The claim that genocide has been committed in history is substantiated in some speeches, but not in others. This is the primary factual premise upon which the reparation demands are based (see section 5.2.3). While the historical events and affected groups are uncontested and less discussed in Windhoek, the compensation for these specific groups is under debate. One discrepancy in the premises of the presenters can be found in the assumption of the ethnic leaders that the "affected communities" (1) should qualify for direct compensation. The national leaders, however, hold up the conflicting idea of nationalism and national representation (see 5.2.2). The speeches of the German representatives harbour the premise that the compensation for history can be covered through good bilateral relations, strong social interaction, and development aid (see 5.2.4). They also imply that the recent attitude of the German government has been supportive towards such relations, as evidenced in the initial restitution of the human remains. However, at least the Namibian audience from the affected ethnic groups contest both of these premises. The divergence in the premises of the arguments relating to compensation result in different conclusions that will not convince the respective other. The implication of unaddressed diverging premises between speaker and audience is the rhetoric error of *petitio principii*, which is discussed below.

It will be shown that values are particularly important to the Namibian arguments. Perelman describes the premises bearing on the *preferable* as "objects of agreement in regard to which only the adherence of particular groups is claimed" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 74). Values, customs and beliefs enter all arguments at some stage, and are particularly present in political, legal, and philosophical debates. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca further elaborate that, "it is not possible to escape from a value simply by denying it [...] when one interlocutor puts forward a value, one must argue to get rid of it, under pain of refusing the discussion" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 75). The two qualifications of values presented by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca pose a challenge to intercultural debates: values are often culturally particular, and they cannot be ignored in discussion. This is also the case in the encounters of Namibian and German speakers.

Having said that, not all values are inherently particular to specific groups. Perelman speaks of universal or general values, which are more widely shared. Concrete values are often presented as expressions of such general values, thus making them accessible to a wider audience (Perelman 1982: 27). The speakers in Berlin and Windhoek reference several general values across different backgrounds. For example, the state representatives of both Germany and Namibia uphold the values *nationalism*, *national unity* and *national representation*. Another repeatedly invoked general value is *responsibility* for history and actions of the past. The German government references "historical responsibility" as one of the main foundations of its relations with Namibia. Like other Namibian representatives, Nama Captain Fredericks also refers to historical responsibility, expressing disappointment in the German government not taking responsibility for the actions of its predecessor state (3). The German and Namibian speakers thus cite the same general value to argue for opposite theses.

Similarly, when Riruako draws on the value of *equality* (2), he uses comparisons with German farmers and Jewish victims of the Holocaust to make a case for the right to reparations. State Minister Pieper also instances equality when she assures a "partnership between equals" (4). Here, this reinforces the principle of the nation state, a forward-looking approach in international relations, and the refusal to engage with sub-groups within a state. As a result, the same value, equality, is employed to speak for and against a discourse on reparations. The speakers connect the abstract value equality to different concrete values.

Finally, Namibian speakers employ the general value *justice* (2, 3, 8). They can assume that the German government shares this value, as it is for example embedded in the German Constitution. Yet, the German government and its representatives do not share this concrete interpretation of justice in the speeches, namely the "just" claim for compensation.

The examples above show general values that are shared by the audiences and speakers from different backgrounds. However, the emphasis and importance of the values differ, supporting Perelman's thesis that value hierarchies are more important than the values themselves. While the different recipients admit the values, the degree to which they are accepted differs (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 81). Nonetheless, the use of universal values creates some level of common understanding. The role of shared general values is therefore particularly important considering the different backgrounds of the speakers and audiences. Values, customs and beliefs that are presented in the framework of universal values are more relatable, and more difficult to ignore or declare invalid by other speakers (Perelman 1982: 27).

The reference to the *future* is certainly a familiar concept to both the speakers and the audiences. In the German speeches, the future is the value most strongly referenced. Many Namibian speakers

also refer to the future, but they have a bleaker future in mind in this context. To the descendants of the victims, who themselves live with the legacies of colonialism, the past is closely connected to the present of the Nama, Ovaherero and Ovambanderu. The different visions of the future result in the term being employed for different reasons, and to make different arguments. Like a mantra, the German speakers reiterate the need to focus on the future for Namibia and Germany's bilateral relationship. The future is not only presented in a positive light, but it is also itself considered of high value. The German speakers both end their speeches with references to the future:

> "What happened between 1904 and 1908 cannot be undone. But we can accept our common history and draw conclusions to implement lessons for the shaping of a common German-Namibian future." (9)

> "Conscious of its close historical ties, Germany and Namibia will continue their intensive political dialogue and mutual trust and expand their relations further with an eye to the future!" (4)

The affirmation of presently positive, future-oriented relations in the German speeches points out a fault line in the German argument. "To be unconcerned with the audience's adherence to the premises of the discourse is to commit the gravest error: *petitio principii* or begging the question." (Perelman 1982: 21-2). In the German discourse, the relations between Germany and Namibia are traditionally close, with this closeness implying good relations. The past can remain untouched as a basis for those relations, which are considered to function at the state level. However, the premise that the state level is the most important level, as well as the argument that the quality of relations can be judged from the quantity of cooperation on selected levels, is neither shared by the audience nor justified by the speakers. These premises are reflecting truths and values informed by German culture and political ideals. The affirmation of good relations (see the discussion on Pieper's speech in 5.2.4), and the need to orientate towards the future, can be selectively emphasised and repeated in an attempt to create a desired reality (see Perelman 1982: 35). However, this is to no avail. This argument is unlikely to convince an audience that predominantly does not share these premises. Although the premises may be factual to the speakers, they are invalid in a rhetoric sense if not subscribed to by the audience, thus committing a *petitio principii* (Perelman 1982: 23).

The presence of the past for the Namibians is not only based on the identified legacies of colonialism. The links between past, present and future are a declared cultural value of the African communities in Namibia. The identification with their ancestors is close and real for the Namibians in the speeches. For example, the victims are not only referred to as a group that suffered genocide. In many speeches, Namibians name or list the names of fallen leaders and fighters, referring to them in a personal manner (1, 2, 3, 10). Additionally, the terms used to identify the different generations of Namibians always show their connection over time. Examples include "ancestors" (1–3, 5–8, 10, also Kochanke (9) is referring to "your ancestors"), "forbearers" (10), "descendants"

(1, 6, 8), and "forefathers, mothers, brothers, sisters" (7). Likewise, Namibia is referred to as the "motherland" (8, 10), "fatherland" (8), and as the ancestors' "home" (7) and "land of birth" (10). The actions of the ancestors are portrayed in a lively manner. Their fight is a fight that continues today, and the decisions taken by the Namibian groups against the German Empire are still considered valid choices (see e.g. the justification for the war in Riruako's Berlin speech, 2). Ultimately, the purpose of these persons goes beyond their death, and creates a thread through history:

> "We are proud that although they were brutally killed, their spirit was never broken. We are also consoled that while the mortal remains were removed from the country amidst the ruins of war, they have returned to an independent, peaceful, and stable Namibia. This is what they died for. And now they can rest." (10, Pohamba)

Moreover, the dead are attributed features of the living. In particular, the human remains and the spirits of the ancestors are assigned feelings:

> "The Namibians' remains have finally come home after more than 100 years in a foreign country. Where ever their spirits are in the firmament, they must be rejoicing today that they have finally come home." (7, Maharero)

Riruako (8) describes a bond between the ancestors and the descendants, which binds the latter to strive for justice and the recompense of negative impacts today. The bond is expressed in traditions such as an annual revisiting of the burial sites of leaders. While the German speeches build up to a strong outlook towards the future, the focus on links between past and present/future is a defining element of the character of the Namibian speeches.

One link between ancestors and descendants, between past and present, is respect. A significant aspect in the Namibian speeches is to relate their message to the abstract value of *respect*. To Fredericks (3) and Maharero, it is important that the mortal remains of fallen Namibians, as representatives of the ancestors, are now treated with respect:

> "However we have finally managed to bring them home so that Namibia can accord them the fitting respect and honour they deserve so that their souls can rest in eternal peace where they will be reunited with their mothers and fathers." (7)

In Germany, the remains experienced "total contempt and were shown no respect" (7). Thus far, this evaluation is probably shared between all speakers and audiences. However, the conclusion of the Namibian speakers goes further. The lack of respect shown for the skulls and the deceased is seen as a negation of their human existence: "They were treated like chimpanzees in laboratories whereas they were humans" (7).

A lack of respect on a different level is also experienced by the delegation that came to Berlin to receive the twenty skulls. Maharero speaks of an "inhospitable treatment" and a "humiliating reception" (7). This lack of respect is framed as a consistency between past and present. Fredericks sees a strong connection between the disrespectful behaviour of Germany in colonial times and

now. The continued lack of respect implies to him a continued lack of acknowledgement for the humanness of the affected groups. He therefore believes that Germany continues to see them as "sub-humans and commodities", and considers the displayed German behaviour as "a further renunciation of the human existence of the Nama and Herero" (3). While respect is important to most people, such a categorical connection between respect and humanness would probably not be agreed to by a universal audience. It results from the interpretation of the general value in a specific cultural environment.

The values *humanness* and *humaneness*[51] are very present in the speeches of the tribal leaders. These underlying premises can be seen as part of the framework in which the universal values are interpreted. They manifest in the historical accounts, which emphasise the inhumane suffering of the Namibians and the dehumanising actions of the involved Germans. The specific concept of humanness is also reflected in the way that Namibian representatives speak about their ancestors. Although they are not physically alive, the forbearers are still human and as such are deserving of respect. They remain part of the family, the community, and the nation. Living persons, especially direct descendants, ought to have a relationship with the dead, and have a responsibility towards them. Thus, when responsibility is invoked as a reason to push on with the demand for restorative justice, it leads back to the humanness and interconnectedness of the living and the dead. The calls of Namibian speakers for equality and hospitality are qualified with the emphasis on the humanity of all those involved. Not to make guests feel welcome, as the Namibians claim was the case during their reception in Germany, means a lack of respectful and humane behaviour. Furthermore, the idea behind the claim for equality is one of oneness/identity in humanity; humans are to be treated with equal consideration and respect on the basis of being human.

The values humanness and humaneness are closely linked to the idea of *interconnectedness* in the accounts of Namibian traditional leaders. Humans are interconnected through their humanity and thus ought to show mutual respect and equality. Moreover, the emphasis on lineage relates to interconnectedness. Not only people, but also events and conditions over time, meaning past, present and future, are interconnected. The importance of traditions, as mentioned for example by Riruako (8), is another expression of the value placed on the interconnectedness of past and present.

The values and assumptions of humanness, humaneness and interconnectedness build a foundation for the construction of other values invoked by the Namibian speakers. Human(e)ness appears to be the "governing principle" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 80) of this set of values, and is

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[51] The terms "humanness" and "humaneness" are used separately to emphasise the two aspects of personhood: to have humanity by nature and be respected by others as such; and to gain humanity through behaviour considered to be humane. Both aspects are emphasised in the contracted term "human(e)ness". See also the discussions on African philosophy and Ubuntu in chapters 2 and 6

therefore high up in the hierarchy of values. Thus, arguments built on these assumptions gain greater significance in a convincing argument targeted at the desired audience. At the same time, as human(e)ness is at the core of many other values Namibian speakers and audiences hold dear, any argument that negates this value is likely to be dismissed. Likewise, an argument that fully neglects these values would not be convincing to this audience.

Human(e)ness and interconnectedness are central elements of the Ubuntu worldview and practice (see 2.3). At no point in the speeches does any one of the representatives directly speak of Ubuntu. Nonetheless, the discussion above shows that the central elements of Ubuntu are reflected in the principle values that are important to the Namibian speakers – especially the leaders of the Ovaherero, Ovambanderu and Nama, and presumably also the Namibian audience. The analysis under consideration of Perelman's rhetoric reveals that the neglect of values as important premises of argumentation results in a lack of understanding and persuasiveness. This means conversely that the understanding of Ubuntu may support the better apprehension of the premises, and subsequently the arguments, of the Namibian speakers. In a constructive approach to the postcolonial relationship of Namibian and German societies, Ubuntu may open up new levels of conversation. This opportunity is explored in the following chapter, after a summary of the results of the analysis.

5.3 Conclusion

The analysis of ten speeches from events concerning the repatriation of human remains from Berlin to Windhoek in September and October 2011 highlighted different narratives of the Namibian and German speakers. The central themes discussed in the speeches were the interpretations of history, representation and identity, reparation demands, and the current status of bilateral relations. The examination of the premises of argumentation revealed the different facts, truths and values the speakers subscribe to. The representatives of the German government, the Namibian government, and the affected ethnic groups Nama, Ovambanderu and Ovaherero employed a variety of rhetoric strategies to advance their arguments, as the analysis with Chaïm Perelman's New Rhetoric brought to light.

The analysis revealed that the speakers use both associative and dissociative techniques in their argumentation. Mostly, the Namibian speakers used quasi-logical arguments to derive conclusions from history. The Namibian state representatives derived the call for national unity from their accounts of history, while the traditional leaders used accounts of history, the evidence of human remains, and comparisons with other cases to justify their demand for reparation payments. The representatives spent most of their speeches explaining their standpoints, actions, and motivations relating to the reparation claims. These links between (historical) causes and effects corresponded

to sequential relations (liaisons of succession) in Perelman's framework. The speakers used liaisons of coexistence most prominently when presenting the human remains as manifestations of history, and of their respective claims for compensation, national unity, and cooperative contemporary relations.

Moreover, the speakers invoked coexistential relations when claiming representative status for an ethnic/national group or the deceased, or when debating the accepted level of representation. With these *arguments based on the structure of reality*, the representatives advanced their respective interpretations of the links between different elements of reality. These linkages were a vital component in each speaker's argument, as the claims were strongly based on the presented worldview. The speakers established new structures of reality using inductive reasoning from examples, illustrations, models, analogies, and metaphors complementary to their arguments. These arguments were based on links that they presumed to exist already, essentially supporting the same claims. Examples and illustrations showed either the gruesome history of Namibian-German relations, or the evaluation of contemporary relations. Models and analogies strengthened the demands for compensation, and metaphors were used to highlight either consistency or change over time.

The German state representatives applied dissociation to distance the present from the past. All speakers used dissociation mostly to differentiate between undesired and supported behaviour. For example, the Namibian speakers employed dissociative phrases to point out "illusionary" understandings of history, and its current legacies. They also used it to express their disappointment with their treatment in Berlin, as well as the notion that development cooperation offsets the German responsibility to acknowledge and compensate the historical violence and injustices that Namibians suffered during the colonial period. The state representatives used dissociation to reject individual tribalism and group claims. The main discrepancies in a comparison of the speeches were found between the speeches of the three Namibian communal representatives and the two German speakers. While the Namibians tried to link history and its legacies, the Germans dissociated past and present. When the Germans connected development cooperation and historical responsibility, the Namibians rejected this association.

Perelman places a great proportion of the effectiveness of communication on the interaction between speaker and audience, including the suitable choice of premises. Addressing their argument to a universal audience, the German representatives claimed validity using factual premises and rational argumentation. The German speakers focused on the present and outlined a cooperative future as a guiding value. Yet, with this argumentation, they cannot effectively persuade the audience that is following their speeches most closely, namely the interested and

affected sections of Namibian society. The Namibian speakers, both communal and state representatives, addressed this audience more directly and presumably more effectively. They appeared to share more premises, particularly values, and a common understanding of history.

The Namibian delegation also stressed the connections between the past and the present. Both general values and specific values, informed by culture, were found to be important bases for the arguments of Namibian speakers. The values most prominent in the Namibian speeches were humanness, humaneness and interconnectedness. Many of the values were framed in universally shared terms, but the specific expressions reflected the cultures of the speakers. The traditional leaders also addressed the German speakers and audience. With arguments based on their values and their reality, it is dubitable that they were able to persuade the Germans to follow their line of reasoning. The premises and values reflected in many of the Namibian speeches were hardly taken up by their German counterparts. As culture is reflected in customs, traditions and values, these differing premises of argumentation were highly influenced by culture. The analysis therefore supports the thesis that the negligence of culture entails an undervaluation of the premises of argumentation.

The following concluding chapter builds on the results of the analysis of Namibian and German speeches concerning the repatriation of human remains to Namibia in 2011. Connecting the analysis to the theory chapter, it focuses on the premises identifiable in the speeches of the Ovaherero and Nama speakers that the German state representatives neglect. It explores the proposition that Ubuntu may enhance the mutual understanding of all parties involved in these postcolonial altercations, by emphasising and giving access to the value-based premises of the Namibian traditional leaders in the genocide debate.

6. The Potential of Ubuntu in Peace Research

Building on the analysis (chapter 5), and the appraisal of culture and in particular Ubuntu in conflict transformation (chapter 2), this concluding chapter will consider the potential of Ubuntu for Namibian-German relations and more broadly in peace research. The first section connects the arguments and premises of the Namibian speakers that differ from those of the Germans to the notions prevalent in Ubuntu, in order to explore the hypothesis that Ubuntu makes the arguments of the Namibian speakers accessible in new ways. The second section will take these results further to general applications of Ubuntu in peace research and conflict transformation, identifying how they relate to existing research and could be beneficial to the field.

6.1 Ubuntu as an explicans for the Namibian claims

The analysis of speeches by German and Namibian representatives revealed that the speakers have different perspectives on the shared history, the rightful representation and identities, the question of reparations, and the status of current bilateral relations. The most substantial contrasts between the Namibian and German speakers were found in the premises of their arguments. The analysis disclosed that the differences in the premises and values of the speakers and audiences obstruct the effectiveness of communication between the participants in the debate on the human remains and postcolonial relations. Many of the premises of the Namibians, particularly the traditional leaders, are based on values. While the analysis has shown that many values are framed in terms of general values that both Namibians and Germans can relate to, it also concluded that in more concrete terms, the interpretation of those values differs greatly. Arguably, the differences result, at least in part, from a different cultural framework of the argumentation. The analysis demonstrated that the negligence of culture allows for certain premises of argumentation to be undervalued. In the following paragraphs, the differences are evaluated and compared to elements found in Ubuntu.

The first example is the assertion 'responsibility for the past', which the German speakers interpret as an indirect responsibility that is being fulfilled in close bilateral relations and development aid. The Namibian traditional leaders, on the other hand, present a more direct interpretation of responsibility for deeds of the past, which should result in a direct apology and compensation. The speakers link this understanding of responsibility to a restorative notion of justice. This resonates with the idea that peace and harmony can only be restored after an open interaction between those who inflicted the damage and those who were affected, culminating in compensation for the loss/pain. This proposition is common in traditional African conflict management. Similarly, the idea of compensation is also prevalent in Western legal thought. However, two significant differences can be observed. As has been discussed earlier, punitive justice is more common in

Western legal systems. Additionally, it is more common to have intermediaries involved to determine responsibility and administer punishment, e.g. collecting fines. While elders and local authorities also administer judgement in Namibian traditional communities, the compensation goes largely to the affected party. An illustration of this comes from the customary law[52] of the !Kung San community on the crime of murder, which is applied in addition to Namibian criminal law:

> "The guilty party shall wipe away the tears of the deceased's family. According to customary law, the family of the guilty party shall bear responsibility for paying for the crime as soon as possible in order for peace to be restored between the families.
>
> The fine shall be either 10 (ten) head of cattle, 1 (one) of which shall be for the Traditional Authority, or N$45 000 (forty-five thousand Namibia Dollars), of which N$10 000 (ten thousand Namibia Dollars) shall be for the Traditional Authority." (Hinz 2016: 443-4)

The example shows elements also described as principles of conflict management in the Ubuntu framework: the emphasis on peace and the restoration of relationships, collective responsibility, restorative justice, and compensation (Murithi 2009). The demand for reparations seems to be an increasingly contentious topic in German-Namibian relations. While the demands from the affected Namibian groups become more forceful, the German government continues to exclude the topic from any discussions about the past. Using Ubuntu as a reference point, this outright refusal to talk about compensation seems unjustified, and a strong hindrance for reconciliation. While Namibians want development programmes similar to those implemented under the Namibian-German Special Initiative Programme, they expect these programmes to be framed in terms of reparations for Germany's colonial past (Erichsen 2008). This insistence becomes more understandable when considering the traditional laws and conflict resolution mechanisms of the region.

German Minister of State Pieper asked for reconciliation in her speech at the Charité. Peace researchers point out that reconciliation is a long process and, respectively, the end product of such a process (Ramsbotham 2011: 246-61). However, neither of these points can be applied to the German-Namibian case at this point. While Pieper called for "Versöhnung", which more closely corresponds to the latter interpretation of reconciliation – that is, the end of confrontational attitudes, and their replacement with amicable ones – the Namibians are insisting on beginning a new process – one that reflects, acknowledges and makes amends for the past. In conflict management practices observed in Ubuntu societies, reconciliation is a process of mutual engagement to address the past, heal the wounds, and restore a harmonious relationship (Murithi 2009). Important aspects of this process include openness, listening, remorse, and healing.

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[52] In Namibia, state law and the customary laws of the Traditional Authorities are applied parallel, following the stipulations in the Namibian constitution and the Traditional Authorities Act. The recent documentation of customary legislations (Hinz 2016) gives insight into the management and values of the traditional communities, although a detailed evaluation of the legal texts goes beyond the scope of this thesis.

The process of reconciliation in Ubuntu also includes compensation as a restorative form of justice. Compensation is closely connected to the acceptance of guilt and a genuine apology – both important steps of reconciliation. In this context, compensation is seen as the restoration of balance also found in Namibian customary laws, as the above quoted example from the !Kung shows. In his speech in Berlin, Maharero follows the Ubuntu understanding of reconciliation when he holds that the "unconditional admission of responsibility, [an] official apology and restorative justice are the pillars of genuine reconciliation and peace between our people" (1). Assuming that Ubuntu is a frame of reference in Namibian society, the conditions and mechanisms of reconciliation are therefore not reflected in contemporary German-Namibian relations.

Other contested notions found in the speeches are those of representation, identity, and nationalism. While the German and Namibian national leaders emphasised national representation, the traditional leaders emphasised their own role and the importance of their tribal communities. Firstly, this relates to the idea of direct responsibility, with the affected groups claiming the primary right to compensation as practiced in their cultural and legal frame of reference. Secondly, it points to an internal power struggle in Namibia over rightful representation in the matters at hand – intersecting with communal, national and international levels. This relates to the question of bounded community, which is present in the philosophical debate on Ubuntu (Munyaka and Mothlabi 2009). The traditional leaders expect the state to respect their primary interest and act at most as a mediator between the local and the international level. While they expect empathy for their suffering, the communities perceive the government to interfere with their affairs when it is seen to take its own position on this issue. This may be seen as the political equivalent to the negotiation of identities discussed on a philosophical level, when applying local tradition and concepts, such as Ubuntu, in modern and globalised contexts (van Binsbergen 2001). The question of identity is therefore central to a contemporary consideration of Ubuntu.

At the same time, the internal power politics and struggle for identity has vivid influences on the Namibian-German discussions. A consideration for the greater identity questions and the importance of community in African populations stands in contrast to the predetermined position of the German government to refuse any engagement with Namibian sub-state actors. While Ubuntu is just one aspect of these questions, it supports an understanding of bounded (yet permeable) reasoning, as well as the communal/multi-layered identity of Namibians (Vervliet 2009). Additionally, the emphasis on consensus and listening in Ubuntu (Ramose 2003c: 237) partially explains the call for an open discourse that includes all levels of representation.

In this context, the interpretation of the value 'equality' differs significantly between the speakers. The German speakers refer to the equality of the two states in their bilateral relationship, providing

a legal interpretation of equality. Alternatively, the Namibian speakers conceptualise equality as an interpersonal relation, and the equal worth of each person as a human being. Equality in this sense is not an abstract value, but is executed in interpersonal interactions and respect shown for one another. The importance of feeling treated as equal becomes apparent when looking into Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasises universal humankind (van Binsbergen 2001: 65). At the same time, personhood is directly linked to being respected and respecting others, thus connecting one's own humanity with the recognition of the humanity of others (Ramose 2003b: 643-4; Tutu 1999).

The Namibian speakers reference the dehumanising treatment of their ancestors during the colonial period, and with regard to the deported human remains. In that sense, Ubuntu shows its emancipating potential in overcoming the past negation of Black humanity (see Gordon 2014). The Ubuntu worldview can help to highlight the emphasis placed on the suffering of the past, as well as the emotional connection to one's forbearers. An important aspect of Ubuntu is the strong interconnectedness of the living, dead, and future family/community members (Ramose 2003c: 236-7). This increases the importance of giving the remains of the deceased a dignified burial, thus allowing their spirits to attain peace – as displayed in the speeches in Windhoek. The rituals performed by the Namibian delegation in Berlin, and the need for ritual experts as part of this large delegation, are also an expression of this aspect. The metaphysical connection to ancestry explains the strong emotional reaction to the suffering of the dead. Additionally, philosophers point out the inseparability of emotions and rationale (Ramose 2003c: 232-4), which explains the emotional argumentation and language of the Namibian delegation.

The Namibian delegates not only refer to the absence of respect in the past, but also in the lack of recognition they experienced in Germany. Recognition and respect are inseparably connected in the Ubuntu mindset. As mentioned above, respect is linked to the concept of personhood. A lack of respect signifies a denial of the humanness of the other. This idea is represented in the grievance expressed strongly by Captain Fredericks, in that the Namibians felt regarded as "subhuman commodities" by the German government. Humanness and humaneness were identified as governing principles of the referenced values in the speeches of the Namibian traditional leaders, however, the German speakers Pieper and Kochanke did not reference these, or related, aspects.

On the contrary, the lack of engagement from the German government was understood to represent a lack of respect for the Namibian delegation, especially given the importance of the events for Namibians. This lack of respect culminated in Minister of State Pieper's early departure from the handover ceremony – an act that would be regarded as disrespectful in many cultures. The emphasis on conversation and listening in Ubuntu traditions underscores the upsetting effect on the Namibian

speakers. Therefore, Ubuntu reveals the importance of humanness in the arguments of the traditional leaders, which could be used for the Germans to better understand their perspective.

Indeed, in Ubuntu, respect is grounded in recognising the humanity of others. The interconnectedness of persons and the strife for personal growth (i.e. an improved human(e)ness) are central aspects of the Ubuntu conception of personhood (Munyaka and Mothlabi 2009), therefore it is clear why the Namibian delegation were disappointed in the German response to their visit. Respectful treatment would have been considered just as much a right for the delegation as an obligation of the German hosts. Not only was the delegation's right for respectful treatment foregone, but the German government representatives similarly failed to deliver the expected respect. Following the Ubuntu principle, they therefore undermined their own humanity in addition to the humanity of the visiting Namibians and the ancestors who should have been honoured in the ceremonies relating to the repatriation of their human remains.

Throughout all the mentioned elements of the debate, it can be observed that the past is much more present for all the Namibian speakers than for the German representatives. Arguably, the German speakers do acknowledge this, and call on the Namibians to turn towards the future. This discrepancy is usually explained with the greater impact of the colonial period and the genocide on contemporary Namibian society, and with the primacy of the Second World War in the German collective memory (Zeller 2010: 65). Having said that, a contributing factor to the Namibian emphasis of history may be the greater appreciation of the past in societies influenced by Ubuntu. The interconnectedness of past, present, and future becomes apparent in the close relations of the living with their ancestors across different generations. Additionally, the social politics of Ubuntu emphasise the importance of confronting and resolving issues of the past, before present-day healing can succeed.

While one may feel that the Namibian communities are wilfully maintaining a confrontational relationship with Germany, it should be noted that Ubuntu and the documented Namibian customary laws emphasise the ultimate goal of harmony and peace. A simple word search reveals that the customary laws of the Nama, San, Ovaherero and Ovambanderu reference "peace" significantly more often than, for instance, "justice". Many stipulate the promotion of peace as one of the primary tasks of the traditional authority and its leaders (Hinz 2016). However, the achievement of peace requires an engagement with transgressions and the painful past. The current state-level debates between Germany and Namibia neglect these related needs.

This section has shown that the values and practices connected to Ubuntu are present in many arguments of the Namibian speakers. The application of Ubuntu to the analysed arguments can therefore enhance the understanding of specific aspects of Namibian reasoning – particularly of the

prime custodians of those customary approaches to social life. It is remarkable that the arguments that can be related to Ubuntu are especially those assertions that are most contentious between the Namibian and German speakers. Hence, these results substantiate the hypothesis that Ubuntu can support the understanding of the priorities and premises of the Namibians in the postcolonial disputes with Germany. Furthermore, an appreciation of Ubuntu may help Namibian communities to focus on their common goals and cultural ideals, and thus contribute to a more coherent approach of the Namibians. Hence, the findings of this thesis suggest that in the currently evolving climate of German-Namibian relations, and the recently commenced government-level discussions on the shared history, an enhanced mutual understanding may support successful outcomes for all parties.

6.2 The Contribution of Ubuntu to conflict transformation and peace research

The analysis and the theoretical consideration in this thesis have shown that Ubuntu has potential as an African contribution to conflict transformation theory and practice in general. The previous section demonstrated that specific elements in the Namibian arguments could be better understood when applying the ideas embedded in the concept Ubuntu. Chapter 2.3 introduced Ubuntu and outlined the elements applicable to conflict transformation. The remainder of this chapter will build on the earlier discussions and explore the implications and potentials for peace research more broadly, linking the Ubuntu mechanisms to other debates in the field.

It is unsurprising that a foundational principle such as Ubuntu can easily be related to conflict transformation, as conflicts and their management have necessarily been a part of the social organisation and governance of all societies. Examples of the application of Ubuntu and its principles in political transition, governance, and law in South Africa speak for the potential of a contemporary application. As Masina (1999: 176-7) has shown, national identity in South Africa has widened the application of Ubuntu reconciliation mechanisms beyond the ethnic group, with European values not replacing but complementing traditional indigenous values. In modern South Africa (and arguably beyond), Ubuntu can be employed successfully precisely because it contributes an often unexpected perspective, which due to its local origin cannot easily be dismissed (van Binsbergen 2001: 74). However, critics caution against a de-contextualisation of Ubuntu in the application outside its original environment. It is maintained here that these warnings need to be taken seriously in terms of *whether* and *how* Ubuntu can contribute to social organisation in a modern and broad context. However, the criticism does not hinder the first investigation of the potentials of Ubuntu in terms of *what* it may contribute to peace research.

The use of Ubuntu in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provides important lessons for Ubuntu in peace research. The TRC has often been considered successful in

addressing the pain felt from the violence and atrocities experienced during apartheid. Yet, the commission did not address the structural violence of apartheid and its legacy. This was not the aim of the TRC, and the explicit application of Ubuntu was too short-lived to achieve a societal transformation of that extent. However, instead of interpreting the lack of social cohesion in contemporary South Africa as a failure of Ubuntu, it is suggested here that it is important to consider the long-term potential of Ubuntu – not only as a founding myth, but also as a guiding principle of political and social life.

The five stages of Ubuntu reconciliation processes identified by Murithi (2009: 228-9) – taking responsibility, showing remorse, asking and granting forgiveness, compensation, and symbolic reconciliation – are relatively common for conceptions of reconciliation globally, especially in a socio-psychological perspective (Bar-Siman-Tov 2004: 3). Yet, the aspects of conflict transformation particularly emphasised in Ubuntu are the engagement with the past and the process of healing, with the aim to (re-)gain harmony in society. These elements and their contribution to peace research will be discussed separately below.

The foundation for reconciliation is laid in the early stages of conflict settlement, when the community comes together to discuss the different perspectives surrounding an adverse event. Engaging with the past is seen as a precondition for social healing and the establishment of a common future not only in Ubuntu (see Ramsbotham 2011: 249). The role of Ubuntu in the TRC was to ease this engagement with the past and, therefore, to foster reconciliation and forgiveness. In a general discussion of political reconciliation, Schaap (2004: 103) highlights the importance of forgiveness, framing it as the mitigation of the irreversibility of past action. He maintains that forgiveness entails the wronged party letting go of bitterness and enmity, following the expression of genuine remorse by the transgressor. Ubuntu reiterates this dialectical relationship of remorse and forgiveness. In this sense, Ubuntu does not bring a revolutionarily new idea into reconciliation, but as the TRC shows, the concept helps to strengthen these elements in a particular cultural setting.

Richardson (2008: 72) suggests that reconciliation needs "narratives sufficient to convey the truth of the past, especially the painful, even the guilt-ridden episodes". The application in the TRC and even more the centuries of application on community levels, have proven that Ubuntu can be such a narrative. Particularly in the Bantu African context, the appeal to a common humanity and communal harmony appears to be powerful in creating space for a genuine reconciliation process. The appeal to a universal mankind is the principal method in Ubuntu to confront issues hindering a peaceful coexistence. This is the key to opening doors for a creative redefinition of stalemate situations, as van Binsbergen (2001: 65-6) characterises the reconciliation process.

While long-term post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation are seen as increasingly important in the international community, the specific language of social healing arguably is more unfamiliar. In contrast, oftentimes only ritual healing is referenced as the "indigenous" contribution to the repertoire of reconciliation methods in Western conflict resolution literature (see e.g. Ramsbotham 2011: 256-7). Although this is a distinct and important aspect of traditional mechanisms for social healing in Africa, as has been discussed in chapter 2, 'healing' has a much broader meaning and implication. In Ubuntu, the social body of society is regarded similarly to the physical human body with regards to the healing necessary after conflict. This healing aims at enhancing social harmony, a central principle of Ubuntu. The strife for harmony is further called for due to the interconnectedness of the living, the dead, and the yet-to-be-born. The relevance of this transcendence was already demonstrated in the analysis of the Namibian speeches. Thus, the definition of peace includes matters beyond the relationships of the living. This may, for instance, call for an inclusion of heritage protection, development, the environment, and other aspects into a broad and positive definition of peace.

Moreover, the aim of harmony emphasises the importance of justice in peace processes so to develop sustainable solutions. The links between justice and harmony were visible in the example from customary law in Namibia in the previous section. The emphasis on harmony in justice and post-conflict reconciliation is not reflected in international initiatives, which take an ever-increasing influence in dealing with serious conflicts and crimes – as seen, for example, in the International Criminal Court, which focuses predominantly on African issues. Future research on the implications of the discrepancy between local principles and international practices may be beneficial in strengthening international institutions and interventions. The perspective of Ubuntu could support such an endeavour.

As conflict is seen as a hindrance to the harmony of the community, the community guides and follows the entire development in Ubuntu-inspired reconciliation processes. In many cases, everyone in the community feels invested in the process as they feel either wronged or responsible through a connection to one of the parties. This interconnectedness is also referenced throughout the reconciliation process, emphasising a shared reality and common humanity. The involvement of the entire community and the emphasis on a shared humanity give the described reconciliation process the specific character of Ubuntu. The peaceful potential of this approach ultimately lies in the sustainability gained through community support and the priority of values.

Elders are of particular importance to the success and the sustainability of the reconciliation. The notable respect shown for elders in many African societies keeps the parties committed to the process and outcome. Mediation practitioners and researchers agree that getting conflicting parties

to talk to each other is often the most difficult aspect of a mediation process. The mediator's principal role is to therefore create space for the parties to share their stories and listen to each other (Joenniemi 2014). Elders take the role of a neutral third-party mediator, but unlike in typical international mediation, they do not see themselves as outsiders, but rather as strongly connected to the conflict. This connection is a stronger version of a strand of existing (yet recent) mediation theory, one that is especially based on mediator's accounts. It suggests that the mediator always becomes a part of the mediation process, and does not remain "external" (see e.g. Svensson and Wallensteen 2010). The respect for elders, which is an integral part of practiced Ubuntu, eases this aspect significantly. This idea is not exclusive for Africa – it is already being applied by prestigious mediators in a variety of international mediation contexts. Ubuntu and African thought have been contributing to this development, for instance in the initiative "The Elders", founded by the first Black South African President Nelson Mandela.[53]

In its practical application in society, Ubuntu can be considered as a strong ethical framework and a moral compass promoting specific values and behaviour. Metz (2007) highlights harmony as the central reference point of Ubuntu as a moral theory, while others emphasise the principle of shared humanity. These abstract ideas are complemented by concrete prescriptions such as caring, tolerance, hospitality and consultation. Such ideas underlying ethics and morality are deep cultural principles that are learned at an early age. Keasley (2014) argues the early learning of peace as a value – practiced in Ubuntu societies more than elsewhere – could be promoted from Africa to the rest of the world. The integration of peacebuilding as a value taught to children could prompt further enquiry in the importance of moral education for peaceful societies. Ubuntu values could then be the basis for proactive peace education in Africa, and perhaps in other contexts as well.

The specific notion of personhood in Ubuntu has implications for relevant topics and approaches to conflict, as was also shown in relation to the Namibian perspectives. The conception of personhood in Ubuntu philosophy portrays the human being as constantly evolving, i.e. 'becoming', an important notion for conflict transformation. It enables parties to view each other from a new perspective, and embrace change. This acknowledgement of different facets of a person corresponds to the conflict transformation principle that promotes understanding towards the interests of the parties, rather than a focus on static conflicting positions (Fisher, Ury, and Patton 2011: 42). Another relevant aspect of the conception of personhood is a clear stance against the fragmentation of the person. Calling for a holistic and flexible view of people also emphasises the indivisibility of the emotional and the rational. This is clearly at odds with widespread opinion to "separate the people from the problem" in negotiations (Fisher, Ury, and Patton 2011), which

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[53] See http://theelders.org/about.

encourages a purely rational engagement with conflicts. Ubuntu thought gives the opposite indication: only if the whole person is acknowledged in the process, can negotiations and reconciliation be successful and sustainable. Addressing both emotion and rationality may have a cleansing and healing effect. Moreover, all aspects of the person should be included because Ubuntu stipulates that people are in a constant process of self-development, of "being and becoming" (Ramose 2003c: 232), and conflict transformation fosters and builds on this personal growth like any other social process. Here, Ubuntu can make an interesting contribution to the debate on emotions in negotiation and mediation.

The conception of personhood has implications for an Ubuntu-influenced understanding of human rights. The holistic image of the person and the notion of shared humanity lead to a broad notion of human rights. Van Binsbergen (2001: 66) observes that the general (Western) understanding of human rights has a similarly strong commitment to universal humanity as Ubuntu does, providing a basis for complementation. However, the understanding differs when the mainstreamed understanding emphasises human rights as claims against others, whereas Ubuntu stresses the obligation towards others (Biney 2014). As the failure to award another person the befitting respect hampers one's own humanity, the individual has the obligation to respect others' rights in order to retain their own humanness. Human rights then include the protection of human life in a broad sense, including the development of the human, and cannot be dependent on the social position, economic power, or any other factors. Importantly, the realisation of one person's rights may not infringe on the rights of others. The purpose of society is to facilitate the protection of human life in this broad sense. This focus on personal development, and the two-way relationship of community and individual, is similar to Johann Galtung's concept of "positive peace" and the related term "structural violence". This term, which gained importance in peace research, defines violence as anything in a society that hinders the development of a person. The relation of Ubuntu to human rights and positive peace can be considered as a point to bring the African concept into global debates, exploring further applications in non-African contexts. Hence, Ubuntu can contribute to the further development of globally diffused concepts arguably based on Western cultural ideas.

The strong ethical principles in Ubuntu, particularly respect and mutual recognition, have potential for application in many areas. For 'good governance', Shutte (2009) convincingly demonstrates that Ubuntu can be used to complement a global concept that is locally perceived as obscure and empty. He shows that Ubuntu could increase the understanding and acceptance of good governance, a notion used by international actors in developing democracies with a fairly mixed record. With a local frame of reference, the government would be more accountable to the local population than with a global term that has little relation to the locals.

This chapter, as has been one of the aims of this thesis in general, has demonstrated the contributions of Ubuntu for the German-Namibian relations and conflict transformation. Ubuntu was shown to contribute to reconciliation in various ways, and additionally complement prevalent understandings of peace education, human rights, and other political and social aspects. These various (potential) contributions of Ubuntu to global peace research show that the appreciation of a particular cultural notion can both support local (and intercultural) peace processes and enhance the conceptions of peace research in general. Thus, Lederach's elicitive approach to conflict transformation – used as an reference point in this study – proved to be fruitful to widen the theoretical base of peace research. Moreover, the example of Ubuntu illustrated the richness of culture and its influence on conflicts and their transformation. This may suggest that, when failing to appreciate diverse, informal knowledges and cultural repositories, (Western) peace research overlooks significant contributions and falls short of the potential of the discipline.

However, the consideration of Ubuntu in southern Africa is not primarily for the benefit of Western research. Focusing on humanism, Biney (2014: 40) considers contemporary Ubuntu primarily as a humanising response to the dehumanisation experienced by African people ever since the first European conquests. Gordon (2014: 16) cherishes Ubuntu as a "humanistic critique" of existing (Western) practices. Thus, Ubuntu provides a tool for the emancipation of Africans both in the values and principles it fosters, and in its character as an African contribution to a social organisation (Gordon 2014: 21-2; Ramose 2009). In general terms, the exploration and development of Ubuntu by African authors can be seen as a part of the postcolonial project to create and spread alternative knowledge. Western scholars can support this process by appreciating and providing an audience for the emerging contributions to general and academic thought.

The exploration of Ubuntu's potential in peace research supports the early suggestion that Ubuntu can be reconstructed to serve contemporary conflict transformation. The process of reconstruction is ongoing, as the lively philosophical debate on Ubuntu reveals, and the integration of the practices into peace research and conflict transformation is still at the beginning. The application of Ubuntu in non-African contexts and general peace research requires the concept to be operationalised through culturally proficient African authors, supposing that the broader application is desired. At the same time, the openness towards such concepts amongst the researchers, practitioners and donors in the still Western-dominated field has to increase. This submission is not to suggest that Ubuntu can or should be the one singular value governing human relations, although that might be the case or desirable in a particular environment. Yet, Ubuntu was found to have a significant explanatory power and provide a refreshing perspective both in a particular African-European dispute, and for peace research in general.

7. Conclusion

This thesis aimed to explore the value of Ubuntu to the Namibian-German postcolonial relations and to peace research. The case analysis found that Ubuntu has significant explanatory power for some premises of the Namibian speakers. Furthermore, Ubuntu has the potential to contribute a refreshing perspective to several aspects of peace research. The analysis focused on the postcolonial interaction of Namibian government and community representatives, and members of the German Federal Foreign Office, examining ten speeches from the handover of twenty skulls of Namibian origin from the German Charité University Hospital to Windhoek in September and October 2011. The thesis was successful in confirming the three presuppositions presented in the beginning:

1. The negligence of culture leads to an undervaluation of the premises of argument and obstructs the effectiveness of communication and conflict transformation between Namibian and German stakeholders.
2. An apprehension of Ubuntu can make the premises of the Namibian arguments more accessible to outsiders.
3. Ubuntu as an African weltanschauung and practice can make a valuable contribution to conflict transformation and peace research.

A theoretical consideration of the literature on culture in conflict transformation showed that while there is a limited section of peace research that engages with culture, there should be a greater focus of culture in transformation processes. Culture was shown to add value to local conflict management processes in the literature review on African conflict transformation mechanisms. The analysis through the framework of Chaïm Perelman's 'New Rhetoric' showed that a lack of shared premises and the failure to address the value basis of the arguments hampers effective communication between Germans and Namibians on issues connected to the human remains. In connection with the presented literature, it can therefore be affirmed that the negligence of culture leads to an undervaluation of the premises of argument, and obstructs the effectiveness of communication and conflict transformation.

The analysis found evidence that the cultural foundation of the values put forward by the Namibians can be accessed through Ubuntu, because they show similarities with regard to the principles of Ubuntu. Thus, in this case, it was found that Ubuntu makes the premises of the Namibian speakers more accessible to outsiders. The consideration identified specific aspects of the Ubuntu framework in the arguments of the Namibian speakers: the interconnectedness of persons and of past, present, and future; responsibility for the past; restorative justice and reconciliation; representation and multi-layered, communal identity; equality and respect; and, human(e)ness. It can be concluded that an enhanced understanding of the priorities and premises of a Namibian audience or speaker could

translate into the aversion of misunderstandings, more effective communication, and ultimately successful conflict management.

Although this insight is unlikely to affect the heavily politicised debate currently underway in this case, it shows that mutual understanding is possible when opening up to the premises and values of the other. Building on the findings of this thesis, it is recommended that the currently developing negotiations should be designed to be open-ended and inclusive. The stipulation present prominently in the analysed speeches from 2011, "it cannot be about us yet without us", has already developed into one of the main slogans of the latest protest against the government-dominated talks (Rukoro, Frederick, and Nguvauva 2016). This shows that the stakeholders, who have been driving the debates to the current point of action, do not accept the current level of involvement of the affected communities as sufficient. Moreover, one central claim of those communities, reparations, already seems to be excluded from the debate. Using Ubuntu practices as a reference point, the claim for compensation and restorative justice has been identified in this thesis as value-based – and therefore not easily given up on. While the restrictive position of the German government considering this claim is understandable for political reasons, it is imperative for the success of the process that the consultations start open-ended and without excluding central topics and demanded outcomes.

This refers to the more general assertion that Ubuntu can make a valuable contribution to conflict transformation and peace research. According to the exploration in this thesis, the same aspects of Ubuntu that were identified in the Namibian speeches can be applied to benefit conflict transformation and peace research in general. The main mechanisms of Ubuntu with regards to peace are the processes of reconciliation, emphasising recognition, healing (dealing with the past), remorse, restorative justice and forgiveness, and harmony as an overarching principle of society. Ubuntu, as a guiding principle for social life, supports long-term peacebuilding. The focus on healing and restoring or creating harmony can build a strong narrative for reconciliation. Additionally, Ubuntu emphasises the role of justice and ethical principles in peacebuilding. It was suggested that the conception of person and society in Ubuntu can contribute to the prevalent understanding of human rights. This conception also presents an alternative view on the role of persons in conflict resolution processes and politics, for example including emotions and past experiences as aspects that should be addressed. Moreover, the earlier applications of Ubuntu in southern African societies and in modern South Africa provide specific tools for reconciliation processes, such as the involvement of elders and the community.

Thus, with the example of Ubuntu, it was shown that particular cultural notions are a valuable resource for peace research. Firstly, the acknowledgement of culture allows for an adaptation of

generic methods of conflict transformation to the concerned individuals and societies. Considering the influence of culture on perceptions, ideals and behaviour, such localisation potentially increases the effectiveness of the initiative. Secondly, cultures can contribute more broadly to the theories and methods of the field. The particular conceptions and tools can complement the existing concepts in peace research, bringing new impulses and thus supporting the development of the field.

The analysis and the theoretical considerations have shown that Ubuntu has the potential to be an African contribution to conflict transformation and peace research in various environments. A large part of the potential has not been evaluated in academic research, prompting further research. As the origins and principles of Ubuntu have been debated in South African scholarship in the past years, it is now more accessible for further application by researchers and practitioners. As was shown, the understanding of an outsider will remain limited, suggesting that the work of developing an applied Ubuntu for conflict transformation can better be done from within the Ubuntu-related cultures. However, fellow outsiders to Ubuntu are encouraged to engage with the potential of Ubuntu, in order to incorporate the possible positive contributions of Ubuntu into their own practices.

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