



Master Thesis  
Place Culture and Tourism

**The Representation of German Colonial History  
in the  
Cultural Tourism Landscape of Namibia**

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**Date:** 10/06/2019

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**Word Count:** 21761

## ABSTRACT

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Little is known about the presentation and negotiation of German colonial heritage in Africa. Colonial heritage destinations in Africa are popular destinations for participants of the postmodern dark tourism trend, but also manifestations of a negotiation of history by different actors in multi-layered postcolonial debates. By taking both dimensions into account, this thesis focuses on the presentation of colonial history in Africa, examining heritage that derives from German colonization (1884-1915) in today's independent state of Namibia. How is German colonial history presented in the Namibian cultural tourism landscape and what are the main differences in presenting the colonial past to create meaning in the presence? How do the different population groups on the private sphere, and the postcolonial state manifest their connection to German colonial history? To answer these questions a multi-method ethnography has been implemented, encompassing on-site field work at relevant heritage destinations and museums in Namibia, as well as in-depth expert-interviews with eight individuals who are actively participating in Namibian heritage practices or research. The results of this thesis show that German colonial history in Namibia seems to be presented without elaborating on the dark events of death and violence of that time. This relates to both the narrative of the state, but also to heritage displays by the descendants of the German colonizers and the victims of the Herero and Nama genocide. Whereas official heritage by the state and private initiatives by German-speaking minority focus on monologic presentations of their own (imaginary) versions of history, leaving out the sufferings during German colonial times, the Herero and Nama communities face certain socio-cultural and -economic blockades, that hinder them to present their perspective to the country and the world more actively.

**Keywords:** African Colonial Heritage, Dark Tourism, Heritage Performance, Dialogical Heritage, Namibia Memory Debates

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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English railway stations, French prisons, Portuguese architecture – The Scramble for Africa at the end of the 19th century has left many marks of European colonialism on the African continent. Today, both private and legally institutionalized heritage that derives from former colonial powers is abundant in Africa. Despite the tension these cultural sites embody, they can be instrumentalized for the creation of new identities of postcolonial nation-states (Harrison, 2013) and today grow more and more attractive for national and international tourists (Burmon, 2010; Light, 2016). Here it must be stated, that the public attention regarding colonial heritage in Africa mostly seems to be directed towards Anglo-Saxon history. The extensive practices of the English Empire often make people forget that other countries, which are less renowned of being colonial powers, changed the face of Africa extensively at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Belgium or Germany for example left physical and non-physical traces in countries like Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Namibia.

Whereas the colonial writer Joseph Conrad depicted the horrendous colonial practices of Belgium's King Leopold II in stories like *Heart of Darkness* or *An Outpost of Progress*, there is a real lack of focus on the former colonial rule of Germany. This blind spot especially relates to the field of heritage studies and the question of how former German colonies in Africa deal with their colonial history and integrate it in the social performances of their heritage sites. To shed light on this neglected research area, the colonial heritage in Namibia was chosen as central theme for this research. Namibia serves this idea especially well, as the memorialization of the Herero and Namaqua wars during the rule of German South West Africa (lasting from 1884 to 1915) is still at the heart of the country's postcolonial debate today. The question of genocide, in regard of the extermination order stated by the German General Lothar von Trotha in 1904, which proclaimed that every Herero within the borders of the German colony should be killed or expelled, is still a widely discussed topic in Namibia. The multi-layered postcolonial debate revolves around this genocide question and how it is dealt with by the different affected stakeholders. In this connection, Kössler (2008) rightly states that the "experience and memory of German colonialism cannot be marginalized". It still forms "a central reference for collective identity" for both the Namibian descendants of the colonizers and the colonized (p.318). But how do Namibians and German-Namibians interpret their common history? And to what extent do they differ in presenting it? The

case of Namibia is a very suitable example to explore to what extent the performances of cultural heritage destinations are direct manifestations of postcolonial memory debates in Africa.

Here, it is relevant to research both the public and private spheres that constitute the memory complex of the country. To do this, this study also takes part in the academic debate around the contestation of heritage as an instrument to build identities and collective memories (Harrison, 2013; Lowenthal, 1998, Rathkolb, 2009). It researches how both the Namibian state, but also the communities form their identity in presenting German colonial heritage. As this academic debate has mostly neglected case studies of discordant heritage in postcolonial African states, the thesis contributes new and exclusive insights about this particular geographic area.

When looking from the perspective of the tourist industry, the research aims to go toe-to-toe with the apparent increasing interest in dark tourism sites like former prisons, war sites or likewise colonial heritage sites (Chaturvedi, 2018; Cullen, 2019; Velu, 2019). Here, it must be stated that a large share of academic literature has focused on dark tourism sites in connection to their demand and experience. The negotiation of such sites within a complicated memory complex, especially in connection to postcolonial states in Africa, do not find the same attention. As a result, it is academically relevant to research this new tourism phenomenon from within the postcolonial situation. This way it can be examined how current heritage debates influence the presentation of dark tourism destinations.

Finally, this study is motivated by the need to raise awareness about Germany's colonial past in Namibia, by supporting the opinion that a wider discussion about it is necessary. Since a few years, more and more voices are being raised to encourage Germany to deal with its colonial history instead of ignoring it. Only the smallest part of Germany's population knows about the cruel past of human trafficking, genocide and other colonial misdeeds that accompanied these times (GFBV, 2005).

With all that in mind, the research questions this thesis pursues to answer read as follows: How is the history of German colonialism exhibited in the cultural tourism landscape in Namibia and what are the main differences in presenting the colonial past to create meaning in the presence? The issues that surround these questions mostly relate to the different heritage practices by the Namibian state and the memorialization of German colonial history by communities on the private sphere. The contestation of history by different communities suggests that various different narratives surround the presentation of heritage in Namibia. Certain socio-cultural and -political

dependencies and interests influence the memorialization practices of the state, the German-Namibian minority and the Nama and Herero communities. The role of German colonial heritage in Namibia therefore must be connected to current academic debates and concepts about memorialization and contestation of the past (Harrison, 2013; Lowenthal, 1998; MacDonald, 2013; Mataga, 2018) and the management of heritage displays (Bennett, 1988; Harrison, 2013; Hoebink, 2018).

The theoretical framework in chapter 2 will help to discuss such concepts. It will not only examine the relatively new phenomenon of dark tourism, but also look into the issue of displaying discordant heritage in postcolonial Africa. Relevant debates and previous research results will be presented. To understand the analytical part of the research, it is also necessary to present a historical background of Germany's colonial past in Namibia and a contextualization of Namibia's postcolonial debate (chapter 2.3 and 2.4). The Herero and Namaqua genocide, which is seen as the darkest hour of that time, will be a major part of the historical overview. In the following, the third part of the thesis will give more insights about the methodological framework that was used to find answers to the research question. Through adopting an ethnographic framework, which includes interviews, participant observation and on-site analysis the study aims to answer the research question based on a diverse data set. The latter gives a complete overview over the practices, opinions and feelings of all actors influencing the presentation of German colonial heritage. In this context, different colonial heritage sites serve as objects of investigation. Museums and other cultural sites in places like Swakopmund - a remarkably German township on Namibian soil - were observed. Interviews with representatives of private and institutionalized heritage sites, but also academic experts with Namibian background, give further insights. In chapter 4, the analysis identifies certain modes of presentation by different actors, both on the private and public sphere in Namibia. Here, the results of the research will be discussed and analyzed in detail. To put the analysis into context, it will be connected to the main aspects of the theoretical framework.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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### 2.1 COLONIAL MEMORYLANDS IN AFRICAN POSTCOLONIAL STATES

With his famous theory of *Lieux d'mémoire* or realms of memory the French memory scholar Pierre Nora suggests that the collective memory and identity is bound to, and expressed by certain places, customs and traditions (Nora, 1989, as cited in Rathkolb, 2009, p.355). This concept also applies to places in Africa that manifest the memory of former colonialism – a time that is deeply rooted in the identity of today's African nation states. The collective memory of both Namibians, but also German-Namibians, is expressed by cultural heritage sites like the Waterberg Plateau or the town Swakopmund with its typically German 'Jugendstil' architecture.

*Lieux d'mémoire* do take several different forms. They not only define material sites of memorialization such as monuments or buildings, but also intangible practices like rituals or days of remembrance (Freytag, Lippuner & Lossau, 2014, S. 215). In this context, Harrison (2013) points towards another cultural phenomenon that must be considered – the conservation of absent presences and voids. The commemoration of such absences normally follows an act of iconoclasm, where certain physical identity markers are destroyed. In this regard, the author brings up the famous example of the commemoration of the spectral traces of the former Berlin Wall. Its absence is the symbol for freedom and unification of the German state (p.166-177). For this study, researching absent heritage is important, as there are a lot of colonial structures and memorials in Namibia that have been destroyed after the South African army occupied and defeated German South West Africa in 1915. It must be examined if and how the symbolism of for example former sites of concentration camps or destroyed Herero graveyards are materialized in heritage displays.

When examining the creation of heritage in postcolonial states, realms of memory do not appear out of thin air. They are created in the context of complex and multi-layered colonial debates with different 'factions' in both the public and private spheres. Comparable to Macdonald (2013) and her "memory complex" in regard to Europe - which she describes as a diverse "assemblage of practices, affects and physical things which includes such parts as memorial services, nostalgia and historical artefacts" (p.6) - it has to be assumed that a similar memory complex maintains and negotiates the various perceptions of the colonial experience in Namibia.

Here, where various cultural communities with different backgrounds live together, different historical experiences are mediated and materialized via heritage displays. The German colonial history of the country underlies a variety of historical interpretations. As a result, heritage is presented in different ways within the memory complex. The *Lieux d'mémoire* and memory practices by the German-Namibian minority therefore might significantly differ from the ones by the black population and its various different tribes.

The different collectives of the memory complex, each practicing memorialization by projecting their own focal points of history, do not always base their negotiation of the past on historical facts. In this context, it is important to mention Lowenthal (1998) who denotes that heritage is based on a misuse of history. He explains that heritage does not mediate history as it actually happened – it rather is restricted to a composition of chosen narratives serving an exclusive purpose. Heritage “passes on exclusive myths of origin and continuance, endowing a select group with prestige and common purpose” (p.128), according to Lowenthal (1998). The imaginary pasts sustain the identity of certain collectives and help to distinguish them from each other. Lowenthal gives the example of how Swiss heritage and the story of *Wilhelm Tell* strengthens the liberty and patriotism of the Swiss people, despite it being renowned as clearly fictional (p.130). As a result, the memory complex is an accumulation of different heritage narratives which often project different non-factual pasts.

The most dominant actor in such a negotiation of the past is the state. The meaning of heritage as identity-marking symbol is therefore often connected to the dominant political ideology and the production of ‘official heritage’. In this context, Harrison (2013) refers to “official heritage” as state-authorized and -legitimized professional heritage practices (p.14). A similar construction and institutionalization of meaning in form of heritage sites by African states has found some attention in the field of heritage studies. Adedze for example (1995) explains that museums were used for promoting nationalism and political unity in Western Africa. Mataga (2018) gives an overview of Zimbabwean attempts to create a “nationalistic master narrative of the country’s past” by employing a preservation framework that mainly puts emphasis on anti-colonial war sites like battlefields or cemeteries (p.293). By implementing a heritage landscape that mirrors the state’s ideology, public spaces were created to commemorate the state’s proclaimed narrative. Mataga finally points towards a similar dynamic in all Southern Africa where official heritage institutions deploy the colonial war past as “official heritage” (p.293).



By examining the idea of heritage narratives that are professionally planned and motivated by the state, one major aspect of the thesis at hand is to explore if this dynamic also applies to colonial heritage in Namibia, and if the state takes a similar dominant role in influencing the collective memory of its people. To answer that question, different state-owned heritage sites were analyzed with the help of the acquired data from field-observation and expert-interviews.

Furthermore, the Zimbabwean case guides this research into the direction of taking further perspectives of African memorialization processes into account – namely the ones beyond the state narrative. The visualization and bureaucratization of state narratives in form of heritage complicates the already existing and widely fragmented set of heritage issues in Southern Africa. In Zimbabwe, pressure groups, political opposition and other collectives of local communities criticize the created hegemony of a single state memorialization narrative as an exclusive, sanitizing and narrow opinion of the war against colonialism. With their own commemorative practices, they counteract this single stately perspective which seemingly marginalizes all other angles of understanding the past (Mataga, 2018, 291). The politicized heritage landscape visualizes the belief system and ideology of the existing regime, but does not unify the various groups of the population who stick to their right of understanding the past differently. This notion is especially tangible in the postcolonial, multicultural populations of Southern Africa.

When looking at the heritage landscape of Namibia for example, Kössler (2008) points towards the communities that distinguish themselves in their memorialization process from the narrative the state provides. He explicitly states that “memorialization practices differ clearly between those that are statesponsored and those that are not” (p.318). The population’s conception of the German colonial era is somewhat disharmonious when it comes to different ethnicized groups of the descendants of both the colonized and the colonizers in Namibia. Both parties see the former German colonial rule as important focal points of their identity, while they relate to it “in clearly different ways” (p.318). Apart from the liberation narrative of the state, the colonial past manifests itself as identity marker in various practices, ranging from parading a ‘visit to the ancestors’ at Herero Day, to the nostalgic, denialist and mystical remembering of the struggles of the first German settlers (p.318-220). With this information at hand, it seems obvious how relevant it is to consider heritage practices of both the public and private sphere in this study.

In this context, the perspective of the German diaspora in Namibia is one that must be put into context. In the same way as Macdonald (2013, p.25) observes the implications of communities

who long for the Socialist past in a post-socialist Europe, it must be examined how the presentation of German heritage by a German colonial diaspora clashes with the social, cultural and political life of today's independent Namibia. According to Valis (2000), nostalgia appears as “an effect of exile” (p.117). Exile communities are formed by their collective longing for traditions and customs of their country of ancestry and/or bygone eras. The descendants of the German colonizers in Namibia similarly might long for their colonial state as communities who nostalgically look back at the Socialist past in Europe. As the German colonial history in Namibia is one of war and death, it is relevant to research to what extent a nostalgic mindset in the German-Namibian community clashes with the historical interpretations of other actors in the postcolonial memory debate. The question at hand is if and how the presentation of nostalgia contributes to the memory complex of Namibia. To answer this question, this thesis is complemented by an examination of the disharmony that mirrors itself in the performances of private cultural tourism businesses of both the descendants of the colonized and the colonizers. How do private tourism businesses owned by local communities present colonial heritage? Is their presentation in line with the message carried out by other private initiatives and/or the ones reflected by official heritage institutions?

In this context of creating meaning around heritage, Hoebink (2018) presents the idea of museums and heritage sites as social performance. His concept emphasizes the notion that heritage takes an important position in the public sphere in expressing certain ideas and delivering a message to its recipients. According to this, it can be assumed that certain elements are arranged to create an effect on society. Hoebink (2018) illustrates this notion with his ‘performance heptagram’, which is formed by the interplay of actors, audience, social contexts, collective representations, textual and spatial scripts<sup>1</sup>, mise-en-scene<sup>2</sup> and means of symbolic production (e.g. objects and buildings).

Bennett (1988, p.90) gives insights into museum performances that were instrumentalized to serve a certain purpose. With a view on the age of late-nineteenth-century imperialism, he

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<sup>1</sup> “Scripts are formed by the textual and spatial stories the audience is presented with. Textual scripts are often organised along historical, thematic or geographical lines. Furthermore, performances that provide the audience with much text (written or spoken) often do so to better explain objects that were originally not created to be looked at. Spatial scripts are expressed via the route the audience may follow.” (Hoebink, 2018, p.6)

<sup>2</sup> Mise-en-scène relates to the display mode. It defines how the visitor addresses the display. For example, it can be differentiated between an object-centered exhibition, and one that emphasizes the immersion of the visitor by imitating certain settings from real-life (Hoebink, 2018, p.6)

explains how states created museum performances to make their populations governable by using historical sciences in their display. He argues that states presented an anthropological view on the segregation between developed Western societies and the supposedly primitive people of their colonies. The museums provided “examples of an earlier stage of species development which Western civilizations had long ago surpassed” (p.91). As a result, the museological displays underlined the states’ ideological perspective about the inferiority and primitivity of the people in their colonies. The past was used to create meaning in the presence. As a result, memory complexes often present only the ideologic perspectives of the most dominant socio-cultural and -economic groups of society. These so-called politics of representation – which raise issues like the misrepresentation of minority cultures in the production of meaning around heritage and museums – remain as one of the dominant fields of contemporary heritage studies (Harrison, 2013, p. 107-108).

However, in contrast to heritage approaches that focus on highlighting the hegemony of an elitist collective, it must also be mentioned that there are many examples of practices that promote multiculturalism and diversity as the dominant image of their heritage. Instead of projecting a one-sided narrative, the focus lies on including the different understandings of history of all cultural communities. In this model of presenting management, bottom-up approaches are mostly welcome. .Harrison (2013) for example mentions how post-apartheid South Africa instrumentalizes heritage to project self-image that focuses on highlighting the various ethnic facets of its “rainbow nation”. He presents the example of the District Six Museum in Cape Town which developed out of a group that fought for preserving the memory of District Six in the years after the forced removals of ‘non-whites’ during the apartheid regime (p.151-155). In explicitly emphasizing the histories of the historically disadvantaged, the bottom-top initiative “seeks explicitly to place the history of subaltern people in the forefront of heritage and tourism in the city” (p.155). Other examples of similar heritage approaches that bring forth a multiplicity of narratives are the cases of Singapore, Canada or Malaysia (Harrison, 2013; Tunbridge, 2008). In Singapore for example, colonial heritage such as the famous Raffles Hotel finds its place in the overall projection of a multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious identity (Tunbridge, 2008, p.309). Diverse historical perspectives, no matter if bad or good<sup>3</sup>, are presented

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<sup>3</sup> e.g. WWII experiences, Japanese atrocities or Malay heroism are part of the memory landscape (Tunbridge, 2008, p.309).

through heritage to “encourage intergenerational empathy and contribute to the national communal identity” (Tunbridge, 2008, p.309). The presentation of multiculturalism replaces the presentation of a hegemonic narrative by the state.

To counter monologic presentations of the past in general, Harrison (2013, p.205) proposes a more “relational or dialogical model, which sees heritage as emerging from the relationship between a range of human and non-human actors and their environments”. By interconnecting the environment with human and non-human actors he aims for a development where the traditional boundaries of heritage practices (object vs. subject, expert vs. layperson or past vs. present) start to vanish. As part of this model he also suggests more democratic decision-making on how heritage sites are presented. His model challenges the “traditional separation of specialists, politicians, bureaucrats and stakeholders in the identification, conservation and management of official heritage” (p.205). Neglected human and non-human actors who are often forgotten in contemporary heritage practices would have the right of agency and would make the overall presentation of heritage more representative for all stakeholders.

Whereas social performances of heritage and museums have been researched mainly with a eurocentric focus, heritage in Africa, and especially the analysis of heritage deriving from German colonies in Africa, seemingly has not found any attention in the literature. In the latter context, the difficulty that surrounds the presentation of colonial heritage does not only derive from the multi-layered debate around it, but also from the sensitive tension that comes with presenting death, violence and even genocides.

## 2.2 COLONIAL HERITAGE AND DARK TOURISM IN AFRICA

When examining heritage in connection to recent tourism trends - and explicitly the hype around Dark Tourism<sup>4</sup> - the positioning of colonial heritage in African tourism strategies is getting more and more relevant. Since African cultural heritage destinations with a connection to colonialism often relate to dark historical events that present death and violence (e.g. the battlefield of the Battle of Waterberg in Namibia), they find a relevant place on the widening dark tourism

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<sup>4</sup> Several sources list Dark Tourism as one of the leading travel trends in 2019 (Chaturvedi, 2018; Cullen, 2019; Velu, 2019)

landscape. Whereas colonial heritage sites and dark historic places were only marginally interesting for tourists in the 19<sup>th</sup> and most part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a transformation of tourism as a social leisure activity in postmodernity makes them more and more relevant for today's global tourism industry. As discussed by Sharpley (2018, p.59-80), a wide cultural change in postmodernity, including the rise of consumerism, an economically stronger middle-class and a swift and vast distribution of information technology, triggered a de-differentiation of social spheres. In this development, tourism practices merged with other phenomena of the social world like popular media, sports or history. Niche markets in tourism were created. One of these niche markets is dark tourism. Due to its importance in today's tourism studies, it is essential to connect the research question to literature about this phenomenon.

Dark tourism is a postmodern trend where an increasing number of tourists pursue visits to destinations related to death, colonial heritage sites receive more and more attention (Burmon, 2010; Light, 2016). While the "relationship between tourism and death has now become a mainstream research topic within tourism studies" (Light, 2016, p. 276), it must be stated that a large share of the literature has focused on dark tourism sites in connection to their demand and experience. In this context, the focus lies on dark tourism experiences in relation to diverse forms of heritage sites such as battlefield sites in the UK (Miles, 2013), Holocaust museums and memorials (Beech, 2010; Cohen, 2011; Lennon & Foley, 1999), famous prisons like Alcatraz and Robben Island (Strange & Kempa, 2003; Shackley, 2010), city cemeteries (Pécsek, 2015) or catastrophe sites like Chernobyl (Yankovska & Hannam, 2013).

The most relevant theoretical aspects for this research relate to a more general analysis of the critical boundaries of dark tourism sites. Here, the range of academic contributions go into several different directions: While some scholars at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century elaborated on the problematic integration of dark history sites into everyday leisure tourism as an inappropriate form of harmonizing history (MacCannell, 1992; Walsh, 1992), others engage with the topic in highlighting the potential of difficult heritage to educate, creating peace and establish a new sense of identity for formerly damaged communities. Andermann and Arnold-de Simine (2012) therefore state that heritage objects "have turned into the material hinges of a potential recovery of shared meanings, by means of narrativization and performativity" (p.3), whereas Roberts (2018) examines "the ways in which dark tourism is (...) expressed as a potential educative experience" (p. 604). Taking this idea into account, the research of this thesis carefully approaches the questions

of to what extent the shared colonial heritage is building bridges between its own communities, but also how it presents its case to German tourists who might get exclusive educational insights which the public sphere in Germany lacks to communicate.

The potential of using tourism at colonial heritage sites as a driving force for a more positive future is covered in detail in the academic literature. Yet, the sources agree on the fact, that realizing a positive outcome from heritage management has mostly failed due to contradictions and a complex situation overall, especially in destinations where war and death have played a big role in the past. The case of the Rwanda genocide exemplifies this notion. Friedrich, Stone and Ruksha (2018) report how disunity in interests and political strains complicate a meaningful dialogue through dark tourism heritage in Rwanda. Concretely they state that such discordances stand “between victims and perpetrators, national and international visitors, as well as between legislative authorities, private enterprise, and international development organizations” (p.262). To what extent such opposing tensions influence colonial heritage management in Namibia, is another important piece of the overall result of this research. Is the potential of dark tourism realized at colonial heritage destinations in Namibia or do certain sensitivities obstruct such a development?

As a country going through an emotional postcolonial debate between the descendants of the victims and perpetrators of a genocide, the management and positioning of dark tourism sites undergo the scrutiny of all Namibia. Here, the ethical implication of the management of a heritage performance comes into focus. Light (2016) highlights that there has been an ample amount of case studies that observe ethical issues of the management of such sites (p. 279). The question is evident: How can a dark tourism site be planned and positioned in combining the pleasure of a leisure activity with the experience of death and violence? As discussed above, tourists, but also the locals themselves, are the addressees of a message that is partly created by the management of the site. Therefore, the experience of the tourist and/or local is highly influenced by certain decisions by the site’s management. The latter relate to different components of planning the overall experience, such as deciding on the display mode, selecting objects, but also managing pricing, advertisements and so on. The ethical dangers of managing such an experience are clear. Presenting a heritage site that offends certain communities or promotes a voyeuristic experience of violence are just two examples. This research therefore examines how various heritage

management practices in Namibia deal with the sensitivity of mixing a touristic experience with the presentation of death.

Overall it can be noted, that beside the Rwanda study by Friedrich, Stone and Ruksha (2018), there is a real lack of similar research papers that explore how discordant heritage is negotiated in Africa. The attractiveness of Asia or Europe for tourists, and rather more famous dark heritage sites like World War II sites or the Killing Fields in Cambodia e.g., may have equally created a dominance of research papers dealing with these areas (Beech, 2010; Cohen, 2011; Hughes, 2008; Lennon & Foley, 1999; Koth, 2014; Miles, 2013). Because of Namibia's whole different socio-cultural situation in comparison to these countries, researching German colonial heritage on the country's cultural (dark) tourism landscape yields new and important insights for the field. To provide a certain foundation of knowledge, a short overview of the colonial history in Namibia is presented in the following.

## 2.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Before it is possible to elaborate on the different constituencies around Namibia's heritage production, it is necessary to shortly examine the different historic events that shaped Namibia's postcolonial situation of today. In the following, the most important developments and actors of Namibia's past will be introduced. In this context, it must be noted that the scope of this thesis does not allow a detailed summary of the overall picture of Namibian history, but only an overview of history that points at the most important occurrences relevant for the development of this research. This chapter mainly draws upon the historic interaction between the German colonizers and the colonized people of Namibia, but also on the essential events that led to today's independent Republic of Namibia. To start with, it makes sense to take a precolonial perspective on the two ethnic groups that were most affected by German colonial rule – the Herero and Namaqua.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the central Namibian highlands were used as a living space by a "particular pastoralist strata" (Gewald, 2000, p.188) which developed from the interaction between different people and cultures living in Namibia since before the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This then undefined ethnic group revolved around shared living concepts of pastoralism and

herding cattle, until it developed further as Herero society midway the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, Herero central Namibia already had been in contact with the outside world. The tribes were well armed and also made use of ox-wagons and other appliances (BBC & Olusoga, 2004). With a view on the socio-political composition of the Herero, it must be noted that - before the German colonial power entered the region - the Herero society was “driven by spits and tensions” between groups within the community (Gewald, 2000, p.188).

In southern Namibia, the indigenous Nama people, who were Khoikhoi in their origin, also lived a life based on pastoral and nomadic principles. Their formerly undisturbed social and economic structures gradually changed when the Oorlam people migrated north from the Cape colony: “Through their access to European weaponry and their adoption of the commando paramilitary system, Oorlam groups such as the Witbooi came to dominate the Nama politically and culturally” (Sunseri, 1986, p.200). Generally, most communities in 19<sup>th</sup> century Namibia, including the Nama and Herero were influenced by the “evolution and disintegration of politics and ethnicities” (Gewald, 2000, p.188). This notion relates to the interplay between the communities which gradually changed the socio-cultural and socio-political nature of each community. One major influence that stimulated this process, were constant fights between the different tribes. The Nama, under the leadership of Hendrik Witbooi, and the Herero of central Namibia were in constant battle with each other (Sunseri, 1986, p.200). When German colonial rule was installed, the process stagnated as they suddenly encountered a common foe.

Even if Africa already had been largely divided and appropriated by other European countries, Germany was able to get its piece in the Scramble for Africa in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the “apathy and short-sightedness of British statesmanship” (Calvert, 1969, p.1), the German government took the possibility to claim its protectorate in South West Africa. Bounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, and the borders of Portuguese West Africa in the north, the Cape Colony in the south and Bechuanaland to the east, German South West Africa came into existence in 1884. In the following, the Second Reich expanded its empire by moving more and more settlers, traders and farmers to their colony in South West Africa. In a protectorate where a majority of space was desert, the Germans joined the competition for the fertile land of central Namibia. The issue of who is to own the land created frictions between the Germans and the local Africans tribes (BBC & Olusoga, 2004).



Under the governor Theodor Leutwein, Imperial Germany first established a policy of negotiating treaties with the Herero chiefs and leaders of other tribes. In doing so, they instrumentalized the tensions between Herero chiefs to their own benefits. Here, especially the German support for Herero chief Samuel Maharero, who struggled against other Herero chiefs to ensure a more powerful position within Herero society, must be mentioned. As a result of their cooperation, Samuel Maharero was able to achieve the new position of paramount chief of all Herero and the Germans were rewarded with land and cattle: “For the time being, in exchange for land, cattle and labor, taken from his newly acquired subjects Samuel Maharero was able to purchase and rely on the support of Imperial Germany” (Gewald, 2000, p.193).

The Rinderpest epidemic of 1895 did not only bring more devastating economic consequences, but further weakened the position of Herero chiefs who were in opposition to the Germans and Maharero. “Further labor export, land sales and continued dispossession” (Gewald, 2000, p.199) were the results. While the German colonial state became more and more powerful, the African people became more dependent on them. The continuing loss of land and the fact that the African people had no legal protection against the racial supremacist and impudent actions (including rape, beatings or murder) by the German settlers against them, stirred emotions (BBC & Olusoga, 2004). The contaminated environment, which was worsened when Theodor Leutwein passed a legislation that constrained the German settlers’ desire to buy more land, made a war between the Herero and the Germans inevitable (Gewald, 2000, p.202). After the provocations by German settlers and soldiers were answered by a Herero revolt on 14 January 1904 that killed 125 German men, a German military campaign was initiated (Hull, 2008, p.7-8).

Theodor Leutwein only led the first phase of that campaign under his command. He and his troops pushed the Herero to the edge of the Waterberg, the last source of water before the Omaheke desert<sup>5</sup> (Hull, 2008, p.9). However, Leutwein generally opposed a further escalation of the conflict. He opted for settling the war by entering negotiations with Herero chief Samuel Maharero – an attitude that led to his dismissal as commander (BBC & Olusoga, 2004; Gewald, 2000)<sup>6</sup>. In being interested in a more forceful and aggressive solution to the conflict, the German state under the rule of Kaiser Wilhelm II appointed General Lothar von Trotha, a commander with the reputation of fully embodying the “aggressive tenets of Imperial Germany’s military culture”

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<sup>5</sup> Omaheke is the Herero name for the Kalahari Desert

<sup>6</sup> Theodor Leutwein stayed as governor of the colony

(Hull, 2008, p.9). Matching this characteristic, the new commander and his army aimed “to surround the majority of Herero at the Waterberg and to destroy them with a simultaneous blow” (Von Trotha, 1904, as cited in Hull, 2008, p.11). This attempt failed when the Herero broke the German lines during the battle and fled into the Omaheke desert in early August. The events that followed are central to today’s postcolonial debate. Von Trotha’s reaction to his failure at the Battle of Waterberg are directly connected to today’s genocide question.

Von Trotha ordered his troops to pursue the fleeing Herero, by cutting off escape routes and blocking access to waterholes. His aim to force the Herero to turn around and fight was fruitless. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1904, when most of the fleeing Herero had already died in the desert (Hull, 2008, p.13), von Trotha issued what today is known as his infamous *Vernichtungsbefehl*:

Within the German border every male Herero, armed or unarmed, with or without cattle, will be shot to death. I will no longer receive women or children but will drive them back to their people or have them shot at. These are my words to the Herero people. (Von Trotha, 1904, as cited in Gewald, 2000, p.207).<sup>7</sup>

Von Trotha’s proclamation to the Herero people prompts the assumption his conscious aim was to exterminate and expulse all Herero from the colony. The intend of this extermination order is still highly debated in and outside of Namibia today. While some look at it as an official sanctioning of following through with a genocide, others relativize and even deny the implications of it. The number of victims, however, speaks for itself. Before the extermination order, there had been about 80 000 Hereros. After von Trotha’s proclamation and the war they had been reduced to 15 000 (United Nations, Journal Films Inc. & Moore, 1975).

Under the leadership of Hendrik Witbooi, the Nama people in the south broke their treaty with the Germans in October 1904 and equally revolted against their rule of violence. The Nama War raged for over three years and was characterized by a more decentralized guerilla-like style of war. In contrast to the Herero, who mostly died in battle or during their escape to the desert, the Namas were mainly exterminated in concentration camps (Hull, 2008, p.15). From originally about

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<sup>7</sup> Original German translation: „Innerhalb der Deutschen Grenze wird jeder Herero mit oder ohne Gewehr, mit oder ohne Vieh erschossen, ich nehme keine Weiber und Kinder mehr auf, treibe sie zu ihrem Volke zurück oder lasse auf sie schießen. Dies sind meine Worte an das Volk der Hereros.”

20 000 Namas, only 10 000 remained after the war (United Nations, Journal Films Inc. & Moore, 1975).

Concentration camps and slave labor took a central role in the high death toll of the Herero and Nama people. The colonial war led to the erection of numerous camps to which all Africans were sent who survived the hostilities, austerities and diseases that the conflict brought upon them. In the bigger colonial towns like Windhoek, Swakopmund or Lüderitz camps were used and maintained by the civil colonial government, but also by private enterprises and businesses (Zimmerer & Zeller, 2016, p.65-66). The German infrastructure still seen today, can be directly linked to the deployment of slave workers:

Prisoners were put to work in civilian companies, ranging from laundries to transport contractors, breweries and shipping companies. Various military units used their prisoners, often children, primarily for the maintenance and care of their stock. This entailed the construction of cattle kraals, the pumping of water, and the cutting of grass for fodder and herding. The German colonial civil administration used its Herero, and later Nama prisoners of war, for the building of railway lines between Usakos and Otavi and later between Lüderitz and Keetmanshoop. (Gewald, 2000, p.209)

Beside forced labor, the inhuman conditions within the camps was another aspect of the brutal rule by the Germans (BBC & Olusoga, 2004; Gewald, 2000; Zimmerer & Zeller, 2016). Imprisonment was characterized by a struggle against the extremes. Behind barbed wire, prisoners of all ages and sexes were cramped together – without proper food provision and no protection against the hot sun in the interior or the cold and windy conditions at camps located at the sea side (Gewald, 2000; Zimmerer & Zeller, 2016). Abuse and mistreatment by guards is also mentioned in the literature (Zimmerer & Zeller, 2016, p.81). Special reference is needed for the most infamous camp on Shark Island outside of Lüderitz. Until its closure in 1907 about 3000 prisoners of war lost their life on the island (Zimmerer & Zeller, 2016, p.81). The last camp was closed in 1908.

In 1915, the South African army occupied and defeated German South West Africa. In the following, the African people had to organize themselves in the new colonial administration of South Africa. The Herero were allowed to regain land and cattle, even if limited. They were confined to small reserves that did not at all match the precolonial situation (Gewald, 2000, p.224-

226). After 1915, a famine in the north of the country unleashed a wave of migrant workers from Ovamboland into the center and south of the country. Even more Ovambos came to satisfy the demand for cheap labor by the settler community. The extent of the migrant movement changed the social, cultural and political face of the nation (Gewald, 2003, p.212-239). As Ovamboland was only minorly influenced by German colonial rule, the incoming migrants shared a whole different memory of the past than for example the Herero or the Nama. They shared a collective memory that was not connected to suffering in the same way (Kössler, 2007, p.368). As it will be seen, this notion is important for the further analysis since it seems to influence the way German colonial heritage is presented by the Namibian state today.

In 1960, the *South-West Africa People's Organisation* (SWAPO) was founded on the basis of the *Ovamboland People's Organization*. In the subsequent independence movement for Namibia, the Ovambo-heavy SWAPO party launched an armed liberation struggle against the colonial state of South Africa. During that time the party was recognized as the “one particular liberation movement” and “only legitimate agency of the Namibian people” by the United Nations (Melber, 2007, p.62). The long road to freedom for Namibia ended with the transition to national independence in 1990. Since then, the SWAPO, under the leadership of president Sam Nujoma has been installed as the leading government party. Until today the political hegemony of the party has not been seriously challenged (Kössler, 2010, p.32).

## 2.4 POSTCOLONIAL MEMORY DEBATES IN NAMIBIA

At the heart of this research lies the fact that Namibia's history is contested by different population groups, like the state authority, the descendants of genocide victims and a German colonial elite (that achieved to also be a postcolonial one). The multi-layered and complex entanglement of these different viewpoints are the result of a fragmented experience of the past. Kössler (2007) explains:

It is the spatial/regional dimension where the fragmentation of Namibian history and memory practices is most tangible. This refers to differences of historical experience and in forms of collective identity formation that have important consequences for mnemoscape on a civil society and generally sub-national level. (p.367)

In this context, the complicated construct of different memorialization processes in Namibia can only be untangled when examining the influence of two major events in the young country's history: The Herero and Namaqua war and genocide between 1904 and 1908 and the liberation struggle against the South African Apartheid regime from 1966 onwards. Both events triggered various memory processes amongst members of different social groups in postcolonial Namibia. The descendants of the Germans, Herero and Nama relate to a shared colonial history that was acted out in the central and southern regions of Namibia. In contrast, the Ovambo, who are the dominant population group in the state-leading party SWAPO, were more affected by the liberation struggle against the Apartheid regime majorly fought on the northern borders of the country, including their native region Ovamboland. As a result, people from central and south Namibia anchor their memory a lot more to the (amidst the communities highly debated) genocide during former German colonial rule, while Ovambos and people from the north form their identity by relating to the memory of the heavy fights during the liberation war (Kössler, 2007, p.368).

A large body of research papers engage with these selective and fragmented understandings of the past and analyze how they contribute to a postcolonial debate. Generally, the latter highlights the narrow meaning of an official SWAPO narrative and how it misrepresents different communal memory practices that are spread over the country (Becker, 2011; Hamrick & Duschinski, 2017; Kössler, 2007, 2008; Melber, 2005a, 2005b; McConnell, 2000). The articles mostly take a top to bottom approach, examining how the memory politics of the state negotiate and form a political history and culture that sparks debate in civil communities in southern and central regions of Namibia. Here, the sources generally agree upon the fact that the formally acknowledged democratic Republic of Namibia projects a rather authoritarian strategy in creating an exclusive state narrative that officializes and seizes the otherwise highly contested terrain of understanding history.

Memory matters for the leading SWAPO party for one important reason. In times of the national liberation struggle against the South African Apartheid regime the SWAPO acted as a left-wing militant group, representing the freedom of the Namibian people. During this time the party closed historical ties with left governments and parties. After independence, the party changed its orientation "by implementing free market neoliberal economic policies" (Hamrick & Duschinski, 2017, p.440). This change of political direction and the fact that Namibia is still

strongly constricted by the legacies of apartheid making it one of the countries with the highest inequality in the world (The Guardian, 2017), are highly inconsistent with the party's former position of "socialism and left-wing populism" (Hamrick & Duschinski, 2017, p.441). As a result, memory politics are used to tighten the SWAPO's original political alignment (Hamrick & Duschinski, 2017, p.440-441). In instrumentalizing the fight against the Apartheid regime from exile, the SWAPO uses "selective narratives and memories related to the war(s) of liberation" to "construct or invent new traditions" (Melber, 2005b, p.92) that legitimize their position as the leading party of the Namibian people. By observing the performance of certain state owned heritage sites, this thesis analyzes if and how this authoritarian political culture manifests itself in public heritage sites of the country.

German colonial heritage plays an important role in the postcolonial debate. Central to its contestation are the different viewpoints from which the state and the communities approach the Herero and Namaqua wars and genocide. As already mentioned, the perspective of the state and the leading political party SWAPO is to politically inscribe a narrative on the memory landscape of Namibia that helps to build and legitimize the independent nation-state (Hamrick & Duschinski, 2017, p.440). This state narrative provides only very limited symbolic space for the commemoration of the victims of the 1904-08 genocide. Even if there are government opinions stating the Herero and Namaqua genocide is a "Namibian genocide" and a part of the struggle for liberation (Melber, 2005a, p. 142), the government's efforts to act out such an opinion are limited. Melber (2005a, p. 142) for example explains, that there was no governmentally initiated and sponsored event to commemorate the centenary of the genocide of in 2004. The first official monument honoring the genocide victims was not unveiled until 2014 when the genocide memorial was presented to the public during the inauguration of the adjacent independence memorial museum in Windhoek. The wording of president Pohamba's inauguration speech for the genocide monument was symbolic for how the state narrative is arranged:

Our people, from the turn of the 20th century, to the modern liberation struggle, resisted and fought bitter wars to dislodge the colonialists from our country. We fought with determination until final victory was achieved on 21 March 1990. We became the masters of this place, now and forever. (Namibian Sun, 2014)

The speech is illustrative of how the hegemony of the state narrative about the liberation war renders the genocide into an event of subordinate importance for today's nation state. Hamrick & Duschinski (2017, p.447) rightly state that there is no room for the suffering of Namibians in the glorifying story of the state. As a result, the state's passive position in acknowledging the importance of the German colonial time is opposed by the fight "for political recognition and legitimation on the terrain of memory" (p.451) by Herero and Nama communities.

It must be noted that this fight is fought on different fronts. In a more political sphere, different organized pressure groups such as Ovaherero Genocide Committee (OGC), the Ovaherero/Ovambanderu Council for the Dialogue on the 1904 Genocide (OCD-1904), and the Nama Genocide Technical Committee challenge the Namibian and German governments. They fight for monetary reparations, a wider official commemoration of the genocide and other aims such as the acknowledgement of pre-colonial land ownership (Hamrick & Duschinski, 2017, p.443). Even if those groups do not always agree with each other in political terms as they fight for their own recognition as victims, several landmark victories could be achieved in recent years. Examples are the mentioned establishment of the genocide memorial in 2014 and partial representation in the Independence Memorial Museum. The most notable contributions from the German side were the apologies for the genocide by the German government in 2004 and von Trotha's family in 2007, and the returning of 20 Herero and Nama skulls from Germany in 2011 (Hamrick & Duschinski, 2017, p.443).

On a more socio-cultural basis, the communities themselves reenact the memory that is somewhat lost in the official memory of the state. Here, annual festivities and commemorations come into focus. Besides the genocide centennial in 2004 different anniversaries were celebrated in Herero and Nama communities, such as the commemoration of the national hero Hendrik Witbooi at the anniversary of his death on 29th October in 1905 or the anniversary of the burial of Herero chief Samuel Maharero on the 25th August 1923 (Kössler, 2008, p.318). The purpose of such events is not only to reunify and tighten their bonds of memory and identity in context of the traumatic events their ancestors experienced during German colonial rule, but also to reclaim heritage sites that are of importance for them. Kössler (2008, p.318) explains about the annual Herero *Truppenspieler* parade in Okahandja:

In probably the best-known case, Herero Day in Okahandja, the ‘visit to the ancestors’ in the form of a colourful parade of *oturupa* (*Truppenspieler*s), followed by a procession of women in traditional dress along the graves of chiefs and other important personages in the erstwhile ‘white’ part of the town, serves as a means not only of commemoration but also of asserting the rightful claim to these sites, against the backdrop of a prolonged struggle with the municipality around the preservation of and access to the graves during the 1920s. (2008, p.318)

How Herero and Nama communities visualize and perform their memorialization of the genocide at certain heritage sites and how such presentations differ from heritage sites managed by German-Namibians will be discussed in the result section of this thesis.

German-speaking Namibians are the third major actor in the Namibian postcolonial debate. They spark the debate by contributing another contrasting perspective. Acknowledging the genocide is often a complicated topic for the about 30 000 German-speaking Namibians – not least because it created the favorable economic position most of them are in today. In being a postcolonial elite that owns a majority of Namibia’s commercial land (Melber, 2017) - land that before the 1904 war belonged to the Hereros – the German-speaking community tries its best to downplay, trivialize and even deny the atrocities of that time (Kössler, 2012; Schmidt-Lauber, 1998). Beside mentally shoving aside the question of genocide, German-Namibian memory politics are characterized by a strong persistence to protect every manifestation of their colonial roots. Especially since certain traditions, such as the rite to celebrate and honor fallen German soldiers at a colonial war cemetery at the Waterberg were banished by the state (Melber, 2005b, p.104), the German-Namibian speaking population is eager to reinforce their identity by protecting their “language and customs and nurture their cultural heritage” (Kössler, 2008; Marschall, 2010, p.31). The proud presentation of the German way of life in many *Heimatmuseen* in the country also falls into that category.





Figure 1: Colonial and Postcolonial architecture: The German Christuskirche and Independence Memorial Museum in the background (image taken by author)

The fact that the state decided against an extensive iconoclastic strategy to get rid of all colonial reminders after independence, meant that the most obvious markers of German memory remain intact to a large extent. As a result, the protection of German colonial monuments and other visual remnants is one of the greatest priorities for the German minority population. This idea can be acknowledged when examining their reaction to certain state initiatives. The academic literature provides different striking examples of that notion. Several sources elaborate on the controversy that flared up when the Kaiser Wilhelm street in Swakopmund was renamed into Sam Nujoma street (Kössler, 2007; Melber, 2005b). In the end, the protest of the German community was in vain. The German emperor's and war criminal's name for the main street of the arguably most German town of Namibia could not be rescued. An even more prominent example is the debate around the relocation of what Zeller (2000) calls "the most aggressive colonial symbol in all of Namibia" (as cited in Marschall, 2010, p.31) – the *Reiterdenkmal*. The monument that depicts a German soldier on horseback was located on a prominent spot of the city, on the same hill where a former concentration camp was located. Kössler (2007, p.374) explains: "The idea of moving the statue, in the course of erecting the proposed Independence Museum, from its present spot almost immediately drew angry protests, significantly directed, inter alia against a supposed stealing of 'our' history". Even after the rider was moved into the yard of the Alte Feste and the Independence Memorial Museum was built, does the central core of the city project a cityscape

that reinforces the perspective of the German colonist. Major structures like the *Christuskirche* (see figure 1) or the *Alte Feste* are manifestations of the German settler identity and markers of a collective memory that the German community will desperately cling to.

The rider is an illustrating example for what the whole controversy around the postcolonial memory debate in Namibia is about. The interpretation of German colonial heritage is bound to several different perspectives and identities. Whereas the statue projects the accomplishments of the German settler for the German community, it is a symbol of pain for the descendants of Herero and Nama genocide victims. While the state is preoccupied with creating a homogeneous narrative that builds a common Namibian memory apart from German colonial heritage, heterogeneous minority communities fight in their interest for the upkeep, respectively destruction of such colonial visual manifestations. They fight for greater representation and acknowledgement of their specific interpretation of history.

The postcolonial memory debate in Namibia shows how different actors, who relate their identity to various historic experiences, create an assemblage of memory practices and narratives. As the theory in chapter 2.1 suggests, the memory complex of Namibia is influenced by the infiltration of a dominant narrative by the state, but also by certain private memory initiatives within postcolonial communities that challenge it. Lowenthal's (1998) theory and the presented case of Zimbabwe (Mataga, 2018), which state that states create non-factual versions of the pasts to legitimize their political power, can be related to the memory politics of the SWAPO, who only highlight certain parts of Namibian history. On the private sphere, both the descendants of the genocide victims and perpetrators do contest the history landscape of Namibia with their own *lieux de memoire* and memorial practices. How this colonial memory complex of Namibia is visualized by the different parties is analyzed in chapter 4.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

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This master thesis focuses on the mode of presentation of German colonial heritage in Namibia. Since the country on the southwest coast of Africa presents a diverse structure of colonial sites – some institutionalized, others privately led by Namibians and/or German-Namibians – it is a very suitable example to explore to what extent a postcolonial debate in Africa mirrors itself in the performance of cultural heritage destinations. As a matter of fact, the ongoing and multi-layered debate around the memorialization of colonialism in Namibia, makes it relevant to research if the manifestations of this memory differ in their representations or if a rather homogeneous pattern is created by all parties involved. As a result, the research questions this master thesis poses, reads as follows: How is the history of German colonialism exhibited in the cultural tourism landscape in Namibia and what are the main differences in presenting the colonial past to create meaning in the present?

By combining conventional qualitative methods and therefore designing a qualitative multi-method approach, the ideal way to tackle the proposed research question could be found (Collier & Elman, 2008, p.781-782). Since there has not been much similar research that investigates the heritage presentation of Namibia with a “close up lense”, it was decided to acquire all data through visiting the destinations and talking to the most important actors firsthand. The qualitative methods chosen for the ethnography were an extensive (participant) field observation, expert interviews and a qualitative thematic analysis of pictures, documents and other written texts that were directly observed and obtained at the sites (Collier & Elman, 2008, p.781-782). This approach has not only been chosen because it yielded a reliable data set, but also because it enabled a contextual and diverse description of why and how the colonial heritage situation presents itself as it does. The research question demanded an approach that was suitable to examine the sensitive topic of colonial heritage from several different perspectives. A big advantage of this combined method approach is, that it is multidimensional and includes expert-insights and real-time observations from a diverse range of people and heritage destinations. In researching the different intricate political layers through different in-field methods, a more coherent end result could be yielded. However, since the outcomes of this research are limited to the confines of the material observed and the subjective interpretation of the researcher, a careful consideration of the yielded data set was necessary.

When it comes to the acquisition of the data, most of it was gathered during a research trip in Namibia which took place between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2019. During this period, heritage sites, memorials and museums were visited around the capital Windhoek, Swakopmund, Grootfontein, Tsumeb, Namutoni and the Waterberg Plateau where the Herero fought against the

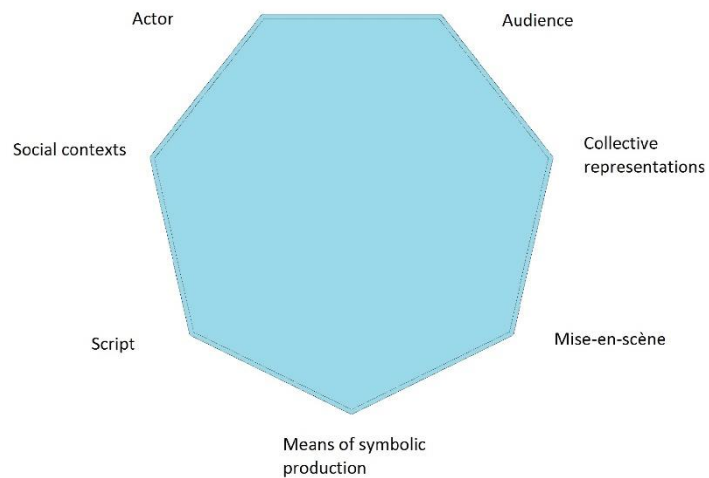


Figure 2: The Performance Heptagram by Hoebink (2018)

German *Schutzgruppe* in 1904. Because of their remote geographical locations, other relevant destinations like Lüderitz or Shark Island, could not be visited. To include them in the analysis, their relevance to the topic was to some extent discussed in the interviews. Both public and private tourism destinations were covered. Probably the most prominent examples for that, were the Independence Memorial Museum in Windhoek, the Swakopmund Museum which is the “largest privately-run museum in Namibia” (Scientific Society Swakopmund), and the Waterberg Plateau. Here, a walk on the Waterberg Wilderness history path, which takes visitors “back in history to a site of the Battle of Waterberg (1904) and to a camp for Herero refugees (1906) – events that influence Namibian-German relations till today” (Waterberg Wilderness), was undertaken.

All such cases were analyzed by putting emphasis on how they create their social performance (Hoebink, 2018). To do that, the different elements of the performance heptagram (see figure 2) were observed. To research the script, the textual and spatial components of the heritage site were examined. This relates to the text presented and the route the visitor has to take to view the means of symbolic production. The latter were analyzed by looking at the material objects and settings and what they actually present. The intangible ideas the physical components project were noted down. In museums, the mise-en-scènes were investigated in relation to how immersive or object-centered the exhibitions are. Moreover, the field research also considered so-called warm-up or cool-down spaces, which are formed by the outside settings and architecture of

museums buildings. How does the outside façade of a heritage site transfer the visitor from everyday life into a heritage performance and back?

With the postcolonial memory debate of Namibia in mind, certain important aspects were examined to answer the research question. Such components for example related to the questions of how the state incorporates German colonial heritage in its dominant liberation war narrative or to what extent the war and genocide find attention in heritage performances. Which ideas do the colonial objects present? Do textual scripts mention the genocide?

Beside the display elements, the reaction and interaction between visitors and the exhibition were under scrutiny as well. Every thought and observation of the researcher was documented in a field note sheet on site. Bryman (2012, p.93) therefore points out how important it is to “keep good field notes” and not relying on one’s memory. If that condition is given, the method of field observation yields detailed and complete data. After the visits the field notes were transferred into a more elaborate field note protocol, which is a major part of the complete raw data set.

To analyze the non-physical elements of the performance heptagram (social contexts, actors, collective representations<sup>8</sup> and audience), the mixed method approach also included expert-interviews. The expert interview is an augmented version of the semi-structured interview. Instead of looking for biographical information from the respondent, it aims to find out more about their “capacities as experts for a certain field of activity” (Flick, 2009, p.165). For the acquisition of interviewees, a diverse selection of suitable respondents was contacted after a thorough online research. Among others, this list included representatives from:

- University of Namibia
- Museum Association of Namibia
- The National Heritage Council of Namibia
- Scientific Society Swakopmund
- Namibia Tourism
- Waterberg Wilderness
- Hotel Heinitzburg in Windhoek (German-Namibian owner)

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<sup>8</sup> ideas, symbols and narratives the performance projects (Hoebink, 2018)

- Deutsch-Namibische Gesellschaft in Göttingen
- Basler Afrika Bibliographien

After reaching several interview agreements during this first phase, a second phase of snowball sampling (Bryman, 2012, p.716) helped to find more respondents. Here, the first interviewees helped to establish further contacts. Finally, a diverse selection of eight interviewees, who each has a unique connection to different heritage practices in Namibia, were interviewed. This sample covered both German-Namibians and African-Namibians who work with heritage and museums in Namibia, but also Namibian academics who deal with the history of Namibia as one of their primary research fields at their respective research center in Europe (see 8.1: Appendix). Most respondents were interviewed in persona at their working place. The respondents who could not be reached during the research trip in Namibia, were contacted and interviewed via Skype. The semi-structured interview sheet consisted of several questions that provided clear and interesting information about the colonial heritage situation in Namibia. When clarification was needed, suitable follow-up questions were posed. Afterwards, the recorded interviews were transcribed. The transcriptions are the second major part of the total raw data set. To ensure the privacy of the interviewees, fictitious names were used throughout the thesis.

To yield a third component of the raw data set, the content of different mediums was analyzed and included in the field note document. This sample consisted mainly of textual scripts presented on site, written documents provided by the respective institution (e.g. flyers, advertisements, websites), and visual content (e.g. videos and pictures taken on the research trip) acquired in the field.

This ethnography is chosen as it provides insights from several different angles and therefore draws a picture that combines expert opinion, but also direct observation through field work. The field notes provide data that helps to put the opinions and statements from the interviews into context. The aspects discussed in the interview therefore are strengthened by first-hand observations that were collected on-site. This makes the data set more reliable.

The analysis of the data sets was mainly based on two coding processes. First the total data set - the transcriptions from the interviews, the field note protocol and the content data - were revised through “open coding” (Benaquisto, 2008, p.86). While reading the raw data set several times, important passages were marked and termed with a specific ‘code’. Although this process was relatively open, the heritage and dark tourism theory from chapter 2 was used to connect the

data to relevant concepts like nostalgia, dialogic heritage model or official heritage. In a subsequent “axial coding” phase, codes that fit together semantically were connected to each other. In their totality they created different overarching themes, which form the main pillars for the presentation of the final results. They are the basis for the analysis and response to the research question.

## 4 MONOLOGUES WITHOUT THE DARK EDGES OF HISTORY

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Imagine a place where tourists camp on the site of a former concentration camp, where a statue prominently commemorates the perpetrators of a genocide, where a history of suffering seems to be lost and forgotten behind the glorifying images of liberation. In Namibia, German colonial history seems to be presented without elaborating on the events of death and violence of that time. The Dutch professor Ullrich Gehmeer who grew up in Namibia, gave significant insights during an interview into how German colonial history is overall presented in Namibia:

It's a representation of Imperial Germany without the dark edges - without the dark edges of defeat, without the dark edges of genocide and without the dark edges of the brown history that will follow up after the Weimarer Republik.

His statement is representative for the results of this research. Throughout the country, German colonial heritage is presented without elaborating on the more sinister side of German colonial rule. The horrors of genocide, concentration camps, land robbery, brown political interests and so forth are projected only to a limited, if any extent. The data yielded from field visits and interviews resulted in the realization that the cultural landscape of Namibia presents a superficial and romantic view of German colonial history. Similar as Lowenthal's (1998) notion of falsified history in the construction of heritage, Prof. Ullrich Gehmeer mentions Namibian heritage is linked to an "imaginary past". In his opinion, Namibian heritage projects a past that is not equal to factual history, and a past that the Namibian tourist industry can make its money with.

Even if the latter idea certainly contributes to the overall picture, the results of this research show that the reasons for this romanticized presentation of German colonial history is more complicated. With a look at the postcolonial memory debate of today, it must be said that the multi-layered negotiation of the Namibian memory complex creates different monologic narratives which leave out the dark events of German colonial history. However, such narratives are presented from different motives and with different results. To untangle this complicated construct of different narratives, one must examine in which ways the different actors include and visualize heritage in their memory practices. In this context it makes sense to first observe the memorialization practices of the highest authority, the Namibian state.



## 4.1 MEMORY LANDSCAPES OF THE STATE: CELEBRATING HEROES, FORGETTING VICTIMS

### 4.1.1 One Namibia, one Narrative

“One Namibia, one nation” – the prominent slogan of the SWAPO party could also read like the heading of this chapter. Similar to the Zimbabwean case that was discussed in the chapter 2.1, the Namibian heritage landscape is dominantly influenced by the government’s memory politics. To clarify, the SWAPO is highly focused on using heritage production to spread its own liberation war narrative. The theoretical assumption that public heritage sites such as state museums or public memorials always mirror the interests of the specific regime in power (see chapter 2.1), is certainly true in Namibia. In recent years the state has renewed its memory landscape especially in its capital Windhoek.

The most notable change in context of the new political narrative, was certainly the construction of the Independence Memorial Museum which forced the relocation of the *Reiterdenkmal*. This is also recognized by some of the interviewees. The German-Namibian scholar Dr. Heinrich Johannsen explicitly pointed towards the interesting narrative that was created when the colonial *Reiter* had to give way to an architectural complex created by the North Koreans, just to find itself in a corner of the Alte Feste where he slowly seems to deteriorate. As discussed in chapter 2, this simplistic act of swapping one politically important monument for another can be seen as an act of legitimizing a new power structure. In taking away the most striking colonial monument, the state showcases the hegemony of their own narrative. Not only because of that, does the Independence Memorial Museum serve as the most striking representation of the state narrative. Its museum performance can be seen as a micro-cosmos of how the state includes German colonial history in its own exclusive understanding of Namibian history – namely as a historical event that is important for the freedom of Namibians, whose context of suffering however, does not fit into the heroization and glorification of SWAPO’s victorious freedom fighters.

Similar to Hoebink’s notion (2018, p.2), who explains that the façade and immediate surroundings of a building introduce the visitor to the content of a museum experience, the exterior architecture of the Independence Memorial Museum sets the stage for the museum performance. The huge structure was built in a typical socialist-realist style by the communist North Korean

regime. Therefore, it clearly identifies with a far-left ideology of the communist allies the SWAPO joined in the liberation wars in Southern Africa in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The surroundings of the buildings are also strongly connected to the celebration of the freedom-fighters. Walking up the large flight of stairs at the outside of the museum, one is greeted by a large bronze statue of Sam Nujoma (see figure 3), a freedom-fighter and the first president of the Republic of Namibia (1990-2005) – supposedly right at the position were the *Reiterdenkmal* formerly stood. Wide structural pillars of the building create an open ground floor. These pillars feature different bronze murals on all three sides, all connected to the road to freedom and an independent Namibia. The glorification



Figure 3: Sam Nujoma statue in front of Independence Memorial Museum (image taken by author)

of that fight continues in the museum warm-up space when entering the golden elevators that take one into the exhibition.

The interior of the museum features an exhibition on three different floors. Here, a monologic story that revolves around the liberation narrative is presented. The latter is displayed in a celebrative manner, honoring the freedom fighters with statues, large paintings and different exhibitionary parts that present the SWAPO's fight for independence. Even if German colonial history finds its place in that presentation on the first floor of the exhibition, it is clearly overshadowed and encapsulated by the celebration of Sam Nujoma and his freedom fighters. The first and last room of that floor feature depictions of Sam Nujoma - a statue and portrait – both clearly in the center and direct view of the visitor. In the two rooms that are dedicated to the



Figure 4: Information-poor exhibition about German colonialism in the Independence Memorial Museum in Windhoek (image taken by author):

German colonial era, pictures and busts highlight the most important Herero chiefs and other resistance fighter. There are many different small pictures with short descriptions showing the cruelties of the Germans (including the concentration camps, the execution of Herero prisoners, German *Schutztruppe* firing squads), however there is no main textual script that puts these pictures into a context (see figure 4). The visitor must examine the small descriptions carefully to find out what is depicted on the picture. The genocide is not explicitly mentioned.

The second room, the “Chamber of Horrors”, a short dark tunnel which embodies vague depictions of General von Trotha, slave workers, crying faces, death people with ropes around their necks in its façade, does also only hint at the dark parts of German colonial rule. Despite this commemorative part for the victims of the genocide, the museum does not present a historical context that explicitly tells the visitor the extent of the genocide, who was responsible and who suffered from it.

In contrast, the presentation mode in the exhibitions about the SWAPO and their fight for freedom is more elaborate. Even if the rooms are still rather empty, it seems that the part presenting the Apartheid regime is covered in more detail. Suddenly, subheadings and subsections which describe certain problems the liberation fighters had to fight (Oppressive labor system, economic exploitation, racial discrimination) appear. Even if these headings are still only words in a mostly empty room, they present a certain form of contextualization. Interestingly, this part of the museum openly mentions their enemy - the Apartheid Regime – directly in a large heading, whereas the



German colonial state is never addressed in the same explicit way. The headings there, “Early Resistance” and “1904”, are only suggestive.

The Independence Memorial Museum showcases very illustratively how the state narrative incorporates German colonial history. It vaguely includes it as an era in Namibian history, but then also strongly trivializes it by over-emphasizing the glory of the SWAPO. In this presentation of glory, the themes of suffering or the extermination of Namibian people do not fit in. The observations suggest a romanticized presentation of history, that leaves the dark events of the German rule unspoken.

The fact that the glorifying state narrative is inconsistent with the sensitive meanings of the German colonial time has its effects on the public heritage landscape. Apart from the symbolic act of removing the *Reiterdenkmal* from its prominent location, German colonial sites and buildings (most of them national monuments) were left intact in their original state. Monuments like the *Alte Feste*, the *Christuskirche* and the *Curt von Francois Statue* in Windhoek, or the *Marine Denkmal* (see figure 5) and *Otawi Bahnhof* in Swakopmund still present the



Figure 5: Marine Denkmal with plaque in Swakopmund (image taken by author)



Figure 6: Plaque honouring German military victims in the Herero War (image taken by author)

perspective of the German colonialist. The *Marine Denkmal* and *Christuskirche* for example showcase plaques (see figure 6)<sup>9</sup> that commemorate German soldiers who died in the Herero-German and Nama-German wars. Until today, the government does not provide any other information on-site. The government does not complement the presentation of such monuments with information on the deaths and sufferings of the Herero and Nama during that time. Other sites like the *Otawi Bahnhof* in Swakopmund keep on existing without explicitly presenting their critical position in history. Dr. Heinrich Johannsen states how the building's dark history does not play a role anymore in its contemporary existence:

Es geht mich ja eigentlich auch gar nichts an. Aber sozusagen die Sichtweise auszublenden, dass das der Bahnhof war wo die Arbeiter aus den Konzentrationslager möglicherweise, möglicherweise verladen wurden, auf jeden Fall die Arbeiter aus Nordnamibia nach Swakopmund gebracht wurden um von dort das Schiff auf die Diamantenfelder...all das spielt überhaupt keine Rolle.<sup>10</sup>

As mentioned, this denial of historical information on the one hand seems to relate to the inconsistency between the triumphal state narrative and the theme of suffering. A state which instrumentalizes the glorious memory of a military success cannot allow a memory landscape to constantly offer information on the suffering and killing of the Namibian people. However, the field work also shows another dimension that contributes to the superficial presentation of German colonial heritage. The different experience of history in the north of Namibia where the wars with the Germans did “not take centre stage in quite the same way” (Kössler, 2007, p.368), leave the Obvambo-heavy SWAPO party rather indifferent about Herero interests and about an official memorialization of that era.

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<sup>9</sup> Translated from German in English the plaque reads: “Dedicated to the survivors of the Marine Expedition Corps in the fight to maintain the colony against the insurgent Herero 1904-05. Honour to the ones who were faithful to death!” (In the following the plaque lists the names of the ones that were killed)

<sup>10</sup> “Usually it is none of my business. But to hide the view that this was the train station where the workers from the concentration camps might possibly have been loaded, and where the workers from North Namibia certainly were taken to Swakopmund and from there to the ship to the diamond fields ... all this does not matter at all.”

#### 4.1.2 Beyond Glorification: The (non-) priorities of the state

The spatial difference of historical experience and identity formation influences the political priorities of the SWAPO party. The representatives of the party are mostly from Ovamboland, a territory that was only marginally affected by the German atrocities. Kössler (2007) explains in this context:

Actual colonial intrusion here occurred only after the end of German rule and did not lead to the loss of land; outright, intense warfare involving continuous suffering and harassment for the resident people, concentrated in the North above all during the final stages of the liberation struggle in the late 1970s and the 1980s. (p.368)

In being emotionally only partly attached to the German colonial era, the political priorities of SWAPO seem to somewhat deviate from the interests particularly of descendant communities of genocide victims.

When looking at memorialization practices of the state, it is obvious that the state is only concerned about strengthening their own position by mediating their own narrative. When asked about how the SWAPO projects German colonial history, Professor Ullrich Gehmeer explains:

SWAPO doesn't give a shit about the past. SWAPO doesn't give a shit about...umm...the genocide, the Herero genocide and the Nama genocide. SWAPO only gives a shit about the past in so far that it supports the continued control of the state by the party.

Memory practices that do not stand in connection with the liberation war are no priority for the state. Another notion illustrating the state's carelessness of history apart from their own, is the bad shape of the other few state museums next to the Independence Memorial Museum. While the latter is fairly well maintained, other institutions like the *Alte Feste*, the Owela Museum or even the administration building of the National Museums of Namibia seem deteriorating. This observation does not only relate to the fact that the museum buildings crumble from the outside, but also to the malfunctioning of certain elements of the exhibitions. For example:

The lights of the large room were not functioning, so that some dioramas stood in the dark. I was not even sure if this part should have been open to the public. The whole room seemed to be deteriorating. (Owela Museum in Windhoek, Field Notes, 16/03/2019)

Some devices are not working, and the small exhibition space generally doesn't look like it is maintained very well. It also can be said that there are too many topics presented in too limited space. Every topic is only slightly touched upon, without really going into detail. (Namutoni Fort & Museum, Field Notes, 11/03/2019)

The latter aspect also suggests that the SWAPO has difficulty in locating enough means and/or importance on employing museum professionals who know how to create an exhibition in a meaningful way. A professional and planned museum management that presents a didactic overview of the historical context generally seems to be missing.

It can be suggested that Herero and Nama priorities are not state priority. The neglect of Herero and Nama interests can be observed in the state's management of sites that relate to the atrocities of German colonial rule. Certain pressure groups, led by descendants of victims of the genocide, express the emotional pain that comes with the monologic presentation of monuments like the *Marine Denkmal* in Swakopmund. Such objections are seemingly not heard. The collective memory of Herero and Nama seems to be irrelevant to state officials. In this context, they seem to either do not care or do not know about the powerful symbolism and public image they project to the victims of the genocide in some of their actions. In this context, Ullrich Gehmeer suggests that the SWAPO is stuck in their own interests.

[...] You know next to the *Marine Denkmal*, you have this German architecture, which is the state house. That building is used by the former president as his holiday home when he comes to Swakopmund. But it's overlooking the Swakopmund Museum and what used to be the *Werft*, which was the place where one of the concentration camps used to be. So it's overlooking a concentration camp. So, you're actually asking for a government and an institution where the former president loves going on holidays to Swakopmund to go fishing to enjoy the German atmosphere. He stays in a German colonial building, right next to what

used to be concentration camp. He doesn't give a shit about the concentration camp. Probably doesn't even know that there was a concentration camp.

In his opinion, the SWAPO does not really care about implications with the Herero and Nama communities and therefore doesn't care about adding (more) representative narratives to important historical sites on the cultural landscape.

Moreover, interviewees pointed towards the state's deletion of tangible traces of Herero and Nama suffering. The demolition of Herero prisoner of war graveyards in Swakopmund regarding new housing projects for example, did not only deprave the Herero community of their culturally important custom of communicating directly to the spirit of their ancestors, but also deleted some remaining tangible identity markers. In destroying such sites, the state enlarges a wide forgotten heritage landscape of suffering. Instead of notifying and informing visitors about dark "absent heritage" (see chapter 2.1) the state uses it for other purposes without informing. Shark Island, where tourists unknowingly use an official campground on the same site where a Nama extermination camp was located (BBC & Olusoga, 2004), is just another example of how the meaning of death and extermination is lost in Namibia. The state's indifferent way of managing absent heritage sites that relate to the genocide contributes to the presentation of a romanticized history.

When it comes to German architecture and memorials, the SWAPO seems to take a slightly different approach. The symbiotic relationship that persists between the state and the German postcolonial elite, has clear effects on how identity markers of the German-speaking community in Namibia are managed. Several respondents more or less explicitly pointed towards the fact that both sides seem to need a good relationship to each other. Prof. Ullrich Gehmeer stated:

[...] Most German speaking Namibians are involved in business and they need a good relationship with the present government of Namibia and German businesses provide much needed income for the Namibian government. So there is a symbiotic relationship between the top SWAPO and German businesses, German-speaking businesses in Namibia.

Moreover, the respondents suggest that the relationship is strengthened by the importance of the German-speaking community for the touristic development of the country. In this context, Dr.



Heinrich Johannsen claimed that the German-speaking minority takes a key role in the tourism industry in Namibia, making them economically valuable for the state.

The fact that the government is dependent on the income from German businesses, especially regarding the benefits created in relation to German colonial heritage through tourism, might force the state to not only maintain German colonial memorials and architecture, but also to present such sites in a way that pleases the German-speaking minority in the country. As the latter tends to downplay, trivialize and even deny the atrocities committed by their forefathers, the state complies in not informing about them at relevant heritage sites all over the country (Kössler, 2012; Schmidt-Lauber, 1998). Apart from the *Reiterdenkmal*, which removal solely served as a symbolic act to reinforce the hegemony of the government, heritage originating from the German colonial era keeps being untouched and presented without elaborating on the dark events that happened during that time. How the German-speaking community itself contributes to this romanticized presentation of their past, will be explained in the following chapter by examining some of their private initiatives.

## 4.2 GERMAN PRIVATE INITIATIVES: FROM NOSTALGIA TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### 4.2.1 Colonial Nostalgia in German “Heimatismuseen”



Figure 7: Nostalgic warm-up element in front of Alte Fort Museum in Grootfontein (image taken by author)

It has been mentioned that the German-speaking community in Namibia strongly holds on to the colonial memorials and physical reminders of their forefathers. Their collective memory, that has

its foundation in the experience of the early settler community who arrived in the country encountering nothing but sand and fleas, is reinforced by visual markers on the cultural landscape. However, for the construction of their identity they cannot rely on the state to maintain and nourish their culture. As a result, they recreate their identity by following certain memory practices, including the creation of privately funded heritage businesses and institutions. As a postcolonial elite with good financial possibilities, the German-speaking community always had a better possibility to present itself via private initiatives than other groups of Namibian society. As a result, visitors entering the country are presented with a large amount of German tourism businesses such as restaurants, souvenir shops, hotels, but also museums.

In this chapter, the so-called German *Heimatmuseum*, serves as a sample to observe how the German-speaking community presents its own history in Namibia. With an eye back on the theory, Dorus Hoebink explains: “It is the interplay of implicit background contexts and explicitly theatrical techniques that shape social performances, museum performances included” (2018, p.2). With the aid of the different elements of the performance heptagram (Hoebink, 2018) both display methods and social backgrounds could be analyzed. The results suggest that German-Namibians might be subject to a strong feeling of nostalgia which lies at the heart of usually quite monologic museum exhibitions.

In the case of the German diaspora in Namibia, the nostalgia does not necessarily relate to the life under a certain a political system like communities who long for the Socialist past in a post-socialist Europe for example (MacDonald, 2013, p.25) as suggested in chapter 2.1. Their nostalgia also does not connect to a longing for life in Germany per se, but more to the achievements of the first German pioneers in Namibia. The life of the first settlers in Namibia forms the source of their collective identity today. Johannes Wieberle, board member of the Scientific Society of Swakopmund, stated in that context:

Umm, aber trotzdem...und ich denke unbewusst und nicht, nicht so gemeint ist das vielleicht auch auf privater Seite weil es meistens auch deutschen Hintergrund hat...[break]...nicht ne Glorifizierung, aber schon eben die guten Seiten der Kolonialzeit dargestellt werden [laughs] - also die guten alten Zeiten werden so ein bisschen dargestellt, ne? [...] Also so wie der Herero seine Vorfahrengeschichte hat, haben wir die auch. Und ich weiß das wird von vielen Deutschen so nicht gesehen aber wir sind nun mal Namibia,

ich bin die 4. Generation hier im Land ne? Und dann ist natürlich ein bisschen Nostalgie sogar da weil...ne? [...] Es geht nicht darum dass Europa ein toller Held im Hererokrieg war aber...ne? Man hat arm angefangen und hat halt etwas erreicht und das will man auch gewertschaetzt wissen.<sup>11</sup>

From his viewpoint, the historical reflection generally highlights the good old times of the past. The quite normal procedure of exile communities remembering the good sides of their ancestry by dismissing or ignoring the dark ones, often leads to conflict and implications with other communities in the same country who have a different perspective on the past (MacDonald, 2013, p.25). The German-speaking communities of Namibia take a nostalgic perspective on colonial history. They contribute to the emotionality of the memory debate in Namibia since they present displays that might be insensitive to Herero and Nama descendants who cannot locate their own perspective in the museums.

It also must be noted, that *Heimattmuseen* in Namibia are amateur museums. In this context, the presentation of nostalgia seems to be influenced by an unintentionality which bases on the lack



Figure 8: Random accumulation of objects at Tsumeb Museum (image taken by author)

<sup>11</sup> “Umm, but still ... and I think unconsciously and not intentional is that on the private side - because it also has German background ... [break] ... – it is not a glorification, but the good sides of the colonial era are presented [laughs] - so the good old days are presented a bit, right? [...] So, just as the Herero has his ancestral history, so do we. And - I know it is not seen by many Germans like that - but we are Namibia, I'm the 4th generation here in the country you know? And then of course there is a bit of nostalgia because ... you know? [...] It's not about Europe being a great hero in the Herero War, but ... you know? We started poor and have achieved something and you want to see it being valued.



of funds, expertise and space. The museums generally were founded by non-professional individuals who collected old colonial objects. The founders did not have any knowledge about how to create a proper exhibition. Today, most private German museums in Namibia do not have enough funds to employ a professional curator who



Figure 9: Imitation of an old German living room at the Swakopmund Museum (image taken by the author)

would be able to work on the historical context. The Swakopmund Museum, the biggest private museum in Namibia, for example, is still managed by an 80-year old part-time curator.

These social contexts manifest themselves at the museums in a certain way. The observations suggest, that the display modes of the museums are mostly based on an unprofessional and random accumulation of old German-Namibian objects (see figure 8) that provide little to no contextualization. The recurrent themes that are presented, mostly relate to the life of German settlers in the colony. Old ox-wagons, mining equipment, *Schutztruppe* uniforms or the *Kaiserreichsflagge* for example are typical objects that are proudly exhibited. The objects are mostly presented in a random spatial script that consists of different themed rooms. All museums that were observed also had an exhibition about the peoples of Namibia. Striking is that the different tribes are mostly presented in their traditional form and as colonized peoples. Traditional handicraft and clothing or pictures of their life in the bush dominate such presentations. Their influence as modern African people for today's life in Namibia is not displayed. As a result, the typical *Heimatismuseum* in Namibia presents itself from a clear German perspective that distinguishes itself from these other Namibians. Here, the projection of nostalgia is a clear focus.

Old living rooms (see figure 9) with pictures of the Kaiser on the wall are imitated, a German atmosphere and flair created. Overall, the exhibitions are object-centered and do provide

either only very little, or too much confusing and fragmented excerpts of textual script (see figure 10). As a result, the means of symbolic production are not able to project a cohesive narrative that educates visitors about how these objects stand in relation to the bigger picture of German colonial rule. The object-centered display mode contributes to the monologic perspective, which consequently creates a nostalgic version of history. Within this presentation of nostalgically

remembering the life of the early settler, certain historical and social meanings are lost. This idea especially relates to the dark sides of history and to the influence of other groups of society:

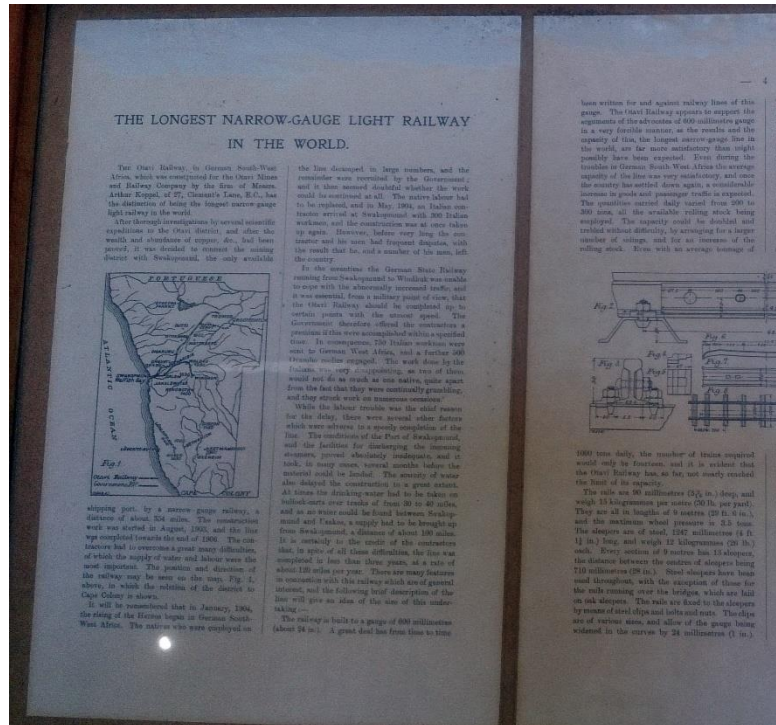


Figure 10: Textual script about the German colonial railway. Too much text and tiny letters (image taken by author)

The genocide is not mentioned throughout the museum. Here and there the conflict with the Hereros is hinted at. If you are not familiar with the history however, you would not know more about it after your visit to this highly object-focused museum. (Altes Fort Museum in Grootfontein, Field Notes, 09/03/2019)

A big conference room showcases a huge historical timeline about the development of the town. Under “1904” it does mention that Herero captives were kept in camps. However, it does not say “concentration camps”, neither does it elaborate on the bad conditions and victims of these camps. There is also a very small introduction plaque that mentions the names that the local African people used to describe the place before the Germans founded their settlement. Some might expect such information at the entrance of the museum, or at least in a way that the visitor can’t miss it. It is a museum in an African country! (Swakopmund Museum, Field Notes, 13/03/2019)

How did the German colonists acquire the land these ox-wagons worked on? In a fight against whom where the *Schutztruppe* uniforms used? What role did the African population play in the town's history? In an institution, where identity-building is based on nostalgically remembering and passively glorifying the life on an ancestry in exile, a dialogical approach to history seems not to be possible. The perspectives of other groups of society do not find a place in the ethnicized framework of *Heimatismuseen*.

Different notions relate to this idea. Several interviewees presented the idea of museums generally presenting the interest of their sponsor. Adilah Matondokwa from the Museum Association of Namibia stated:

In most cases a museum narrative is about what the sponsor wants to tell. It is about what the sponsor...it is about the person who gave the money...it is about their narrative. And so we can say so much about...umm...German museums or German owned museums in Namibia. It is about what story they want to tell [...] not because it is their history, but it is their interest. (personal interview, March 16, 2019)

In her opinion, the museums do not present the genocide, because it is not part of their exhibition. As already mentioned, *Heimatismuseen* want to project the good old times of German life in former German South West Africa. It is their way of nurturing and maintaining their cultural heritage. It is their way of making sense of the past. And it is their understandable reflex of a minority community living in exile.

According to the interviewees, space problems complicate the dialogic expansion of an exhibition. Johannes Wieberle gives reasons why he thinks it's difficult to include a wider historical context to the display at the Swakopmund Museum:

Wenn ich das jetzt dem Rahmen geben will im Museum - und Sie haben das Museum gesehen - muss irgendwas anderes weg, weil der Platz ist einfach nicht da. Also ich kann

nicht einfach sagen ja ich mach das jetzt dazu. Es wird mit irgendwas getauscht werden müssen. [...] Aber was opfert man dafür? Um jetzt mal negativ zu klingen.<sup>12</sup>

Including a main textual script with a narrative that mentions other perspectives of history means changing the whole museum set-up. Here, the question arises to what extent such problems are really unsolvable or if they are used as an excuse to not change the display mode.

The presented narrative of *Heimatismuseen* certainly does spark controversy in the postcolonial memory debate. Different actors - such as the Museum Association of Namibia or activist groups and individuals - pressure them to expand the perspective of the museums into including a wider representation of African communities and their understandings of history. Dr. Heinrich Johannsen, who tends to describe himself as an activist historian, states that the Swakopmund Museum is governed by a clear attitude of refusal, and that they ignore his own objections since 25 years. He mentions an “absichtliche Unabsichtlichkeit”<sup>13</sup> in their management. This clearly points towards a management that instrumentalizes their own unprofessionalism to justify their uncritical presentation of the past. Similar as the memorial practices of the state, the German-Namibian community seems to persist in their own presentation of the past.

#### 4.2.2 Colonial Heritage as Unique Selling Point in Tourism

The fact that a romanticized view of German colonial history prevails in Namibia, to an extent also seems to result from the high activity of German individuals on the tourism market. As already mentioned, a majority of (tourism) businesses in Namibia are founded by the German-speaking community. Their good economic status enables them to invest in businesses and present their culture better than other communities. Here, the trigger for presenting colonial heritage does not derive from nostalgic feelings for the past, but from the urge to make monetary income. Amidst their well-maintained architectural heritage and museums, they paint a picture of their own reimagined past and mediate it to the tourist, optimally in an attractive framework. Similar as in the *Heimatismuseen*, their version of the past romanticizes and partly glorifies the German way of

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<sup>12</sup> “If I want to include that in the museum - and you've seen the museum - something else has to go because the space is just not there. Well, I cannot just say yes, I'll do it now. It will have to be exchanged for something else. [...] But what do you sacrifice for it? To speak in negative terms now.”

<sup>13</sup> Translation: “deliberate unintentionality”

life in a foreign country. The dark events of German colonial history, speaking of genocides and concentration camps, are mostly conveniently misrepresented.

Different examples of practices, where colonial heritage is used as unique selling point have been observed. Here, it can be pointed towards a development where the German-speaking community has realized the potential of colonial heritage as an economically beneficial niche in Namibian tourism. Pierre Ruuste, general manager of the *Heinitzburg Hotel* which is housed in the old colonial *Heinitzburg Castle* in Windhoek, explains that the historic background of the hotel really appeals to German tourists:

The history of the hotel is one of our big drawblasters here. [...] Most of our clients that come here, I would say about 85% are from German heritage and they come here knowing that it has been, uh, an old castle and part of their heritage, it definitely plays a massive role within our, um, clientel.

This appeal seems not only to relate to German architecture. Sebastian Fuller, owner of Peter's Antiques in Swakopmund, is sure to fill a market niche by selling old colonial products (see figure 11) like the *Reichskriegsflagge* or badges and sticker with a connotation to German colonial times. He explicitly stated how rare such a service is in Namibia. A lot of respondents expressed the opinion that German-Namibian business owners are able to make use of a huge demand for German colonial products especially by tourists from German-speaking countries in Europe.



Figure 11: German colonial stickers and flags offered at Peter's Antiques (Images taken by author)



Direct information about such colonial products – no matter if framed in a hotel experience or in directly buying a colonial remnant like the *Reichskriegsflagge* – appears to be rare. Comparable to the limited contextualization of colonial heritage by the state and in *Heimatismuseen*, the businesses do provide only very little information about the products via a textual medium. The mediation of information mainly takes place via oral conversations with owners and employees of the businesses. Pierre Ruuste explains about the historic *Heinitzburg Hotel* that the interaction between people is the preferred way of presenting historical backgrounds. All his staff is briefed and trained in the history and in the running of the hotel: “We don't have any plaque set up, but information is accessible through our reception at all times”. Sebastian Fuller also stated how important it is to him to talk with clients directly about his products. His shop did not offer any elaborate textual descriptions.

As a result, it might be assumed that tourists - who do not ask about the history of certain products or touristic experiences - are kept in their ignorance. With a look at German farm experiences, Prof. Ullrich Gehmeier notes that tourists often forget about the critical meaning of certain touristic experiences. On the other hand, he understands why the business owners do not present it:

People love all the game reserves and game farms and game lodges and so forth and love the open spaces and they forget that the actual inhabitants of the land were driven off and were killed [...]. I can really understand why, if you're a German speaking Namibian and you have the benefit of having been given, through no fault of your own, except that you are the descendant of a German settler, that you have gotten, managed to get, this huge piece of land, say, in the area of Okahandja, that you decide to decide to transform your farm into a game farm and that you invite tourists uumm from one of the richest countries in the world to come and visit your farm and okay you may know that there may be some Herero graves on your farm or whatever. But it, it just doesn't register.

The details of history seem to be lost in an interaction that is based on creating a nice consumption experience on the tourism landscape. Only if clients ask about more complicated historical backgrounds of a product, hotel or guestfarm, they can be explained in a direct conversation.

The consumption of colonial heritage in tourism therefore seems to underlie a strong selectivity of narratives. Consumers are only informed about what the business owner wants to tell about his product. As a result of the strong hegemony of German-speaking businesses, tourists mostly come into contact with the German understanding of history – a perspective that apparently mostly leaves out the dark edges of colonial history. In this context, Ullrich Gehmeier hints at “an imaginary past of Strudel and Schwarzwaelder Kirsch Kuchen and the best beer available in Southern Africa”. By ignoring the narratives of the Herero and Nama, who do not have the same position on the tourism market, a feelgood atmosphere, that has nothing to do with factual history, seems to be created for the tourist.

However, this presentation is strongly challenged. The private business sphere of German-speaking Namibians stages its very own battles in the overall postcolonial memory debate. Certain businesses, like Peter’s Antiques in Swakopmund often seem to act in a - by the state tolerated - grey zone, that is highly challenged by Herero and Nama activists. In this context, businesses make profit from controversial products which are highly insensitive to the descendants of genocide victims. Probably one of the most drastic examples for that was introduced just recently, when Swakopmund businessman Norbert Sadlowski started to display a replica of the *Reiterdenkmal* at his Altstadt restaurant (De Klerk, 2019). The replica is just another case that showcases how difficult it is to deal with colonial heritage in Namibia. Different viewpoints interpret the replica in various ways. The owner says he wants to project the history of Namibia at his restaurant and that the *Reiter* is an important part of that history (De Klerk, 2019). Lazrus Meringa, Herero and chairman of the Namibian Genocide Association wants to have it removed as it is insensitive to the Herero community and projects an image of German supremacy. Adilah Matondokwa and the Museum Association opt for yet another approach:

I think there is...there is...umm...a big potential for German colonial heritage in Namibia to be used as a tourist attraction. Ummm...for example the replica of the *Reiter* statue, it is a good thing. Because like I said, tourist don't travel only for nature, but they also want to understand a place or culture or history. [...] But I would also advocate for business with responsibility. [...] So sometimes, people don't know. But we do know. So it is our responsibility as business people. If now you have...you found an attraction for people to

come to your restaurant, to your shop to buy products but teach them...it is also your responsibility to tell different narratives of your story.

The example is illustrative for the different layers of the memory complex. The state seems to tolerate this grey zone of selling critical colonial heritage. Both in regard to private businesses but also regarding their own public memorials like the *Marine Denkmal* in Swakopmund, they seem to have the volition to risk controversy for more tourism income. Here, their politics regarding Herero and Nama interests and a more dialogic memorialization of the past could be questioned. An active and planned focus on diversity and multiculturalism through heritage, similar to the cases of South Africa or Singapore which were mentioned in chapter 2.1, seems not to be implemented. In contrast, only the narratives by the most favored groups of society are presented. Such narratives clearly relate to the Ovambo state narrative and the ones that are presented by private initiatives of socio-economic elites, e.g. the German-Namibian minority.

### 4.3 THE VOID: AFRICAN PRIVATE INITIATIVES

Opposing to the omnipresence of romanticized and one-dimensionally presented German colonial heritage stands the vast absence of sites that present the Herero and Nama perspective. The field work and interviews in Namibia hint at a situation where only a very limited amount of colonial heritage sites do include the African perspective. As a result, the monologic presentation of the state and German-speaking communities is barely challenged by initiatives that project the dark side of history. This situation might mainly be a consequence of priorities, financial limits and a lack of awareness in Herero and Nama communities.

Herero and Nama initiatives regarding the memorialization of their heritage seem to be limited because they have many other issues to come up against. As illustrated in chapter 2.4, the genocide of 1904-08 still influences today's socio-cultural landscape of Namibia in so far, that many different social injustices for the descendants of Herero and Nama victims prevail. As a result, the fight for heritage representation is only a small piece of the overall fight for Herero and Nama rights. To illustrate that notion, it is necessary to consider the many different dimensions of that fight. Beside monetary reparations and the fight for pre-colonial land ownership (Hamrick & Duschinski, 2017, p.443), Lazrus Meringa lists other aspects that are on his agenda in his work as

chairman of the Namibian Genocide Association. Better living conditions for Herero descendants, the right of citizenship for descendants of Hereros who searched for refugee in South Africa and Botswana or the return of Herero skulls and artefacts from foreign museums are some of his priorities. The fight for more representation on the memory landscape of Namibia appears to be one of many activities.

The observations suggest that this fight is rather reactionary. Instead of creating their own visual heritage sites and businesses that present the dark side of German colonial rule, Herero and Nama activists try to change the memory landscape by demanding the removal of certain monuments. Especially critical German colonial monuments like the *Reiterdenkmal* replica or the *Marine Denkmal* in Swakopmund are in focus. Lazrus Meringa, chairman of Namibian Genocide Committee and Herero descendant, bases his demand for removal on the pain the narratives of such monuments cause for Herero and Nama descendants:

Yeah, the monument [*Marine Denkmal*] has to be removed [...]. There is a name called Otjihinamaparero and Onganjira. Those names are my great-grandfathers villages. So for me...for me it's very...it's very painful for me if I see my...my grandfathers, you know, villages is also depicted, its engraved on that monument. And every year the German community are commemorating...the...the...the...the German soldiers who took part in these atrocities, you know.

It's very insensitive to put such a monument [replica of *Reiterdenkmal*], you know, which is not really far from where the German descendant's also build houses on top of our ancestors' graves.

Despite these activist's struggles, Herero and Nama memorialization practices appear to be kept within their ethnic frameworks. It seems that the African communities have not found a way to position their own heritage and narratives on the national cultural heritage landscape.

First, this relates to the financial struggles these communities encounter. Interviewees pointed towards the bad socio-economic status of Herero and Nama communities in Namibia which hinders them to create their own cultural initiatives. Moreover, where there are no financial means, there is often also a lack of education. Adilah Matondokwa from the Museum Association

of Namibia for example suggested that most Namibians do not even know what a museum is. With no money and no knowledge about how to create a cultural attraction, Herero and Nama communities appear to be bound to mediate their stories within the ethnic borders of their community. Dr. Heinrich Johannsen explains:

Ich finde das Potential sozusagen afrikanische Geschichte auch losgelöst von Ethnisierung ist einfach enorm groß. Aber dafür braucht man natürlich sozusagen wie ein Stück weit Expertentum. Das muss nicht wissenschaftliches oder akademisches Expertentum sein. Und dann bräuchte es sowas wie die Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft in einer Herero Community. Weil das ist ja unglaublich was dort für historische Narrative und Geschichten...ummm...nicht nur existieren, sondern auch vermittelt werden...ummm, uhh...ummm, uhh...allein wenn man das Herero Radio anschaltet, das ist ja Wahnsinn. Aber...diese Dinge bleiben immer irgendwie in so ethnischen frameworks auch stecken.<sup>14</sup>

The lack of education and expertise might result in a limited presentation of stories – at least if examined from a national point of view.

By drawing back on the presented theory, it seems like Herero and Nama narratives bundled as heritage product seem to reach other communities and tourists only at organized celebrations and commemorations at selected dates and locations. Beside certain events like the annual *Truppenspieler* in Okahandja it is quite difficult to get in touch with the stories of these minorities of Namibian society. On certain days and selected sites (especially Okahandja) the rest of Namibia and the world are presented with the narratives of Hereros and Namas. During the rest of the year they seem to be not. As a result, the descendants of the victims of the genocide might only slowly be realizing the potential of heritage and tourism to reclaim their memory on a permanent national and even global stage.

In addition to the financial and educational blockade, there appears to be a blockade of awareness. The economic niche of presenting cultural attractions to visitors has mostly not been

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<sup>14</sup> “I think the potential, so to speak, of African history - also detached from ethnic boundaries - is simply enormous. But of course you need a bit of expertise. It does not have to be scientific or academic expertise. And then it would need something like the Scientific Society in a Herero Community. Because it is unbelievable...the historical narratives and stories ... ummm ... that do not only exist there, but that are also mediated ... ummm, uhh ... ummm, uhh ... when you turn on Herero Radio, that is madness. But ... these things somehow always get stuck in ethnic frameworks as well.”

realized, yet. In context of Okahandja, the place where Samuel Maharero and many other important Herero chiefs of Namibia's early history are buried (Bollig, 1997, p.37), Dr. Heinrich Johannsen explained how he was not able to find a Herero guide to tour a group of students around the graveyards:

[...] Und es ist mir nicht gelungen einen Herero sprachigen Führer zu engagieren. [...] Ich müsste nochmal mit den, einige meiner Kollegen sind in den Herero Genocide Commitees, ihnen nochmal klarmachen, das ist ja auch wie eine ökonomische Nische. Wenn es da sozusagen wie lokale Führer gibt.<sup>15</sup>

Additionally, he wondered why there is no permanent exhibition about the *Truppenspieler* event despite its vast popularity, also for tourists. The relevance of presenting their own connection to German colonial history seems to be recognized only very slowly. Lazrus Meringa elaborated on how he has only recently registered the potential of creating a genocide museum as cultural attraction in Swakopmund:

Maybe people didn't have the idea that they can make money out of that. There was also an international genocide conference here in Swakopmund, last month, whereby...uhhh, you know...international delegates and lawyers said, noo this Swakopmund is actually a historic place. Why is there no such a genocide museum? It's where I started to say, oouhh. Then I started to grab that idea, okay let me be the first person to, you know, to register and start a genocide museum.

Whereas the Museum Association of Namibia travels and coaches around the country to teach young Namibian people the relevance of a more dialogical presentation of colonial heritage, Mr. Meringa's genocide museum would actually be one of the first cultural attractions that creates a spot on the vast absent landscape of Herero and Nama heritage sites. It would be one of the first institutions to fully project the dark edges of German colonial rule and it would be one of the first

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<sup>15</sup> And I did not succeed in hiring a Herero-speaking tourist guide. [...] I would have to re-explain to them, to some of my colleagues in the Herero Genocide Commitees, that that is also like an economic niche. If there would be, as it were, local tourist guides.

to manifest a challenging spirit to the imaginary image of the past, that is projected on today's cultural heritage landscape of Namibia. The first fully planned dark tourism destination by a Herero would be initiated.

It already has been mentioned in the theoretical framework that the demand for such destinations is gradually increasing. As dark tourism is one of the leading contemporary travel trends, the museum will certainly attract many tourists. As presented in chapter 2.2, certain ethical issues surround the management of dark tourism destinations. Lazrus Meringa, who states he wants to project the "whole truth" about German colonial history, is therefore confronted with the question of how to present the topic in an ethical, educative and non-voyeuristic manner.

## 5 FILLING THE VOID: DIALOGUES OF THE DARK

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*Figure 12: Waterberg Wilderness History Path (image taken by author)*

The observations in the previous section clearly suggest that the colonial heritage landscape of Namibia is dominated by the monologic presentation of different narratives by the socio-politically and -economically most dominant groups in society. The narratives of the SWAPO and the German-Namibian minority – both partly glorifying and romanticizing – do not allow an elaborate and multi-vocal presentation of history. Because of different reasons, Herero and Nama descendants of the victims of the genocide are yet not able to present their case in society via heritage production. In a time where dark historic destinations are doing exceptionally well on the global tourism landscape, the Namibian cultural landscape focuses on hiding its dark edges.

Even if Lazrus Meringa's plan of creating a Genocide Museum in Swakopmund would provide the last missing perspective, the presentation most probably would be a univocal counterdraft of the other narratives. In contrast to such presentations, this chapter revolves around the potential of more dialogical dark tourism destinations, which present German colonial history in a more representative way for all parties. To do that, Harrison's (2013) dialogical heritage model (see chapter 2.1) serves as orientation. In the following, the history path at Waterberg Wilderness, a rare example of a heritage destination with a more multivocal display mode will be presented.

The assumption that there is great potential for dark tourism in Namibia does not only derive from the popularity of dark tourism as a contemporary travel trend (see chapter 2.2). The topic was discussed with all interviewees. Interestingly - just as the insights from the theory suggest – the opinions about dark tourism in Namibia oscillated between presenting several risks and



chances. Prof. Ullrich Gehmeier raised a more general concern about the concept of dark tourism in general:

I mean anybody...I mean if you would travel of your own volition to a place where people have been killed and massacred then there is something really wrong with you. [...] It's crazy! It's like saying: Go to Bergen-Belsen and have some great beer on the way. That's just...it's..it's depraved...it's demeaning to anyone who's been to Bergen-Belsen. It is demeaning to the memory of the past. It's..it's..if you want to go to dark places, if you want to go to the Killing Fields of Paul Pot, well then go. Don't expect me to think...no it's..dark tourism just shows how fucking depraved we become.

He seems to base his statement on the fact that western society – especially younger people in Europe – do not have a truthful understanding about what war meant to the people who had to experience it. Beside this ethical concern, another argument against dark tourism in Namibia obviously pointed towards the open wounds and sensitivity that surrounds German colonial heritage in today's postcolonial society. Johannes Wieberle questioned if it would be right to let tourists 'conquer' historical settings where ancestors died in battle. He therefore made special reference to the strong spiritual connection the Hereros have with their dead ancestors. On the other hand he wondered, if the Hereros would actually approve of dark tourism sites in the hope for a wider representation on the cultural landscape?

Ensuring a wider representation for descendants of genocide victims was also mentioned as a pro argument. Moreover, the interviewees mentioned the potential to create jobs and development and the need for a more educative experience to tourists. In the end, most interviewees agreed on the fact that dark tourism depends on the mode of presentation. The following aspects need to be taken into account: dark tourism sites and the presented information need to be well-planned, the emotionality of the debate considered, a voyeuristic display of violence avoided and the educational value highlighted.

The history path at Waterberg Wilderness is a good example of how other dark heritage sites in Namibia could look like. The Waterberg Wilderness Lodge is a private business belonging to a German-Namibian family. The hospitality business, which formerly was a German cattle farm, employs its staff from neighboring African communities and is one of the largest employer of the

region (Waterberg Wilderness). The history path, which is about 2 to 4 km (depending on how the visitor approaches the loop), takes the visitors straight to the place where the Battle of Waterberg was fought in 1904 and where a Herero refugee camp was located in 1906. Several large signs (see figure 13) lead the visitor along a trodden path and a clear spatial script through the savanna. This spatial script follows a certain historical chronology, starting with the earliest events of the past and ending in presenting their influence on the present. The signs are well designed and provide all necessary information about the Herero War and the refugee camp that was located there. The plaques “explain the unfolding of the shared history of Herero and Germans” (Waterberg Wilderness).

The different topics (e.g. From Conflict to War; Battle of Waterberg; The Otjosongombe Refugee Camp etc.) are presented by using pictures, a clear textual script in English and in German and sometimes maps which illustrate certain issues like the frontlines during the war more visually. The perspectives of both the Germans and the Herero are described in detail. The display mode of the signs is prepared in school-book style and really contributes to a didactic mediation. Moreover, there is a certain power of place, which seems to make the information provided more



Figure 13: Typical Display on the Waterberg Wilderness history path (image taken by author)

approachable. The fascination about actually being surrounded by the historic setting that is presented, might enhance the experience and might make it more valuable. In directly connecting the environment with information that provides different perspectives of the story, a certain more dialogical heritage display is achieved.

The information presented on the plaques does not shy away from explicitly mentioning the horrible events of German colonial rule. The pictures show wounded soldiers, the horrific conditions in concentration camps and the hanging of prisoners. The magnitude of death during the war is presented by numbers also. One sign states that nearly three quarters of the Herero people were killed (from 35000 to 60000). The textual script is not too long and presented in a well-readable size. In contrast to other museums and heritage sites in Namibia, the dark events are central to the development of the presented story. When it comes to the genocide question, the text avoids any normative conclusions. In contrast, it cleverly presents it as center of an ongoing postcolonial debate. About von Trotha's extermination order one of the sign states:

Till today historians argue whether von Trotha's so called blocking off (*Abriegelung*) and extermination order are merely an attempt to cover up for his military failure or whether they are proof of his intent to wipe out the Herero.

The genocide question is not presented from the point of a subjective opinion, but rather in a way that offers a starting point for the multi-layered postcolonial discussion.

It wouldn't be wrong to state that the history path at Waterberg Wilderness was the most dialogical presentation of history encountered during field research in Namibia. In referring back to Harrison (2013) and his dialogical heritage model, certain elements can be observed and compared. Even if the path is an initiative implemented by a business belonging to a German-Namibian family (Waterberg Wilderness), the presentation of history includes the perspective of all important actors. Also, the historical background blurs the boundaries between past and present (in pointing towards the effects the war had on Herero life today) and non-human and human actors (as the experience of the environment is an essential part of the experience). The fact that the German business employs Herero-speaking guides who are allowed to present the history path, points towards a democratic management of the heritage site.

The Waterberg Wilderness history path might provide a leading example of how dark historic sites in Namibia could be managed and displayed dialogically. As already mentioned, Namibia provides a range of dark sites that are lost or hidden within the romanticized heritage landscape. Former locations of concentration camps like Shark Island, preserved German colonial architecture (e.g. *Schutztruppe* military stations) or other important battlefields of the Herero and Namaqua wars could serve as settings for a similar dialogic preparation of the past. An initiation of such a development might not only be profitable as the demand for dark tourism would be exploited, but might also make the cultural landscape of Namibia a more democratic representation of the country's memory complex.

## 6 CONCLUSION: LET'S SAVE THEIR MEMORY

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This master thesis revolved around the representation of German colonial history in Namibia. It examined different contestants on the postcolonial memory landscape of Namibia and observed how they connect their memory to the display of German colonial heritage sites. Thus, the research questions this thesis pursued to answer asks: How is the history of German colonialism exhibited in the cultural tourism landscape in Namibia and what are the main differences in presenting the colonial past to create meaning in the presence? By considering public memory practices initiated by the state, but also private ones initiated by the two major opposing parties – the descendants of the German colonists and of the victims of the Herero and Nama genocide – the three most important perspectives were analyzed to answer the questions.

After a thorough qualitative multi-method research including field work and expert-interviews, different results answering the main research question were presented. The history of German colonialism is displayed without elaborating or showing any contextualized information on the dark events and meanings of that time. The overall picture romanticizes and trivializes German colonial history.

This main result underlines the heritage concepts that were presented in the theoretical framework. In a multicultural memory complex, a dialogical presentation of heritage is strongly dependent on the interests of the state and the most elitist groups of society. If there is no planned effort of presenting heritage in a dialogical way, the memory complex underlies the threat of being represented undemocratically. Only if all communities of a multicultural society – also the underprivileged ones – are included in decision-making about the identification, conservation and management of heritage, a pluralistic and representative image of a nation's history can be created. If the state focuses only on its own interests, important meanings are lost and an imaginary past - as Lowenthal (1998) suggests - is created. The latter seems to be the case in Namibia.

The state includes German colonial history in its own exclusive understanding of Namibian history – namely as a historical event that is important for the freedom of Namibia, whose context of suffering however, does not fit into the heroization and glorification of SWAPO's victorious freedom fighters. Especially the display of the Independence Museum Memorial in Windhoek and its surroundings do suggest so. The exhibition in the museum presents a monologic

story that revolves around the liberation war narrative. The exhibitionary part about German colonial rule does hint at certain dark events in showcasing pictures and objects, however never fully contextualizes the Herero and Nama genocide and war. A detailed textual script that educates visitors about the dark history is not provided. Even if German colonial history finds its place in that presentation in the exhibition, it seems to be trivialized by a lack of information and its encapsulation in a more elaborate celebration of Sam Nujoma and his freedom fighters.

A wider contextualization of important monuments and sites with connection to the former colonial rule seems to fail because of the inconsistency of the glorifying narrative with the theme of suffering, but also because the state's priorities seem not to be in line with the priorities of the Nama and Herero communities. The spatial difference of historical experience and identity formation of the Ovambos - who majorly represent the state-leading SWAPO party - seems to result in an indifference towards a proper memorialization of Herero and Nama past. In contrast, the fact that the government is dependent on the income from German businesses might force them to not only maintain German colonial memorials and architecture, but also to present them in a way that pleases the German-speaking minority. As a result, the dark memories of genocide and war seem to gradually be lost on the public sphere.

The private sphere is characterized by a wide landscape of German-Namibian initiatives and an absence of sites that present the Herero or Nama perspective. The German-Namibian minority makes use of its well-maintained socio-economic status and presents their heritage narrative wherever they can. Their monologic presentations mostly revolve around a romanticized image of the first settler generation. In this context, the many *Heimatismuseen* contribute to their identity formation in providing a nostalgic view of history, that lacks in presenting the dark events of it. Additionally, an urge to use colonial heritage to generate income in tourism could be identified. Such tourist products and experiences strongly embody the German-Namibian narrative. To make consumerism more attractive, such presentations logically often leave out or at least trivialize the dark events of history.

The Nama and Herero communities on the other hand, do only rarely present their realms of memory outside of their own ethnicized social frameworks. Different boundaries seem to hinder them to visually project their narratives on the national heritage landscape. The first obstacle seems to be their generally low socio-economic status which also influences a certain lack of education and expertise. Secondly, it seems like they distribute their energy on several different aspects in

their fight against social injustices. A wider memorialization of their story on the national heritage landscape is only one of many goals on the agenda. Finally, a certain lack of awareness about the potential of colonial heritage in tourism could be identified. The Nama and Herero communities seem to have not yet realized that presenting their narratives for tourists could be a market niche. The absence of initiatives talking about their version of history contributes to the romanticized presentation of the past, as they – in their status as victims - would most likely present the dark sides of history.

Overall, it was examined that Namibia mostly does not contribute to the global dark tourism trend. Dark meanings are lost all over the country as heritage is mostly presented only from one perspective. However – even if rare – there are destinations that present German colonial history in a more dialogic mode. In this sense, especially the Waterberg Wilderness history path can be used as an example of how to present the dark history of the country in a way that increases the educational value for tourists, but also does not hurt the feelings of certain parties. Similar as the Waterberg battlefield, former sites of concentration camps for example could be transformed into sources for a dialogic mediation of dark heritage. For this to happen however, many obstacles would have to be taken. As the state is stuck in their own narrative, the private sphere would first need to grow awareness about the potential of presenting (dark) history dialogically. If planned well, the current absence of the dark could serve as an opportunity to create a valuable dark tourism landscape that includes all perspectives.

To follow through with the research, a qualitative ethnography including the conduction of interviews and field work in Namibia was adopted. The methodological framework worked exceptionally well, since a diverse and multidimensional data set could be yielded. The firsthand insights from field work in Namibia were supported by the opinions of interviewees who are (or were in the past) directly influenced or actively engaging in the contestation of Namibian heritage. The sample of both interviewees and heritage destinations was large enough to find logical overarching themes. The careful and multiple consideration of the two subsequent coding processes – open and axial coding – were sufficient to achieve a saturation of the data set.

However, it must also be noted that the scope of this thesis was limited to a certain timeframe. Consequently, the analysis was limited to the confines of the material observed within that frame. As a result - and in being a research that is based on the interpretation by the researcher - a careful consideration of the yielded data set was necessary. Especially in context of field work,

which was restricted to a research trip of only 10 days, more time would have been useful. As distances between certain destinations are mostly very large in Namibia, only a handful of locations could be visited. It would have been wishful to extend the trip, so relevant destinations like Lüderitz and Shark Island could have been observed in real time, as well. As both destinations are important focal points of the conflict between the Germans and the Nama people in Southern Namibia, researching them would have yielded more reliable insights into how the Nama are represented in Namibia.

Even if awareness about the importance of a proper memorialization of the genocide is slowly growing in Namibia and also in Germany, the results show that the descendants of the victims of the genocide still struggle for a wider recognition regarding their heritage, but also other social aspects. When looking at the results and the fact that the memory of the Herero and Nama descendants is only minimally represented in the cultural landscape of Namibia, it clearly must be stated that more academic work on the unequal memory complex in Namibia is desirable. In this context, research topics could go in many different directions. A continuation of this thesis, focusing on certain subthemes would contribute to the scholarly discussion in more detail. Possible research questions could revolve around a further analysis of the SWAPO's political decision-making in heritage questions and how it is influenced by their relationships to the different communities. More broader researches could revolve around topics like postcolonial narratives in travel guides or motivations and demands of tourists in Namibia. Would tourists actually be interested in more dark tourism destinations? How then can the Herero and Nama perspective be presented more dominantly?

Awareness needs to be raised. And the Herero and Nama narratives in Namibia need to be enlivened at heritage displays – not to give tourists a more interesting time, but to give back to the Herero and Nama communities. To do that, heritage monologues need to be changed into dialogues. Heritage should be presented as a medium for multi-vocal stories where every stakeholder is represented equally and where its display and management is democratically decided upon. The Herero and Nama already lost most of their people, their rights and most of their land. Let's save their memory.



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## 8 APPENDICES

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### 8.1 OVERVIEW OF INTERVIEWEES\*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Lazrus Meringa</b>	Herero Activist, Chairman of Namibian Genocide Association and founder of the Swakopmund Genocide Museum	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2019	Skype Interview
<b>Prof. Dr. Ullrich Gehmeer</b>	Namibian History Professor at University of Leiden	29 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Leiden, The Netherlands
<b>Dr. Heinrich Johannsen</b>	German-Namibian Historian at Centre for African Studies in Basel	22 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Basel, Switzerland
<b>Pierre Ruuste</b>	General Manager at Heinitzburg Hotel in Windhoek, Namibia	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Windhoek, Namibia
<b>Adilah Matondokwa</b>	Historian and employee at Museum Association of Namibia	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Windhoek, Namibia
<b>Sebastian Fuller</b>	Peter's Antiques in Swakopmund, Namibia	15 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Swakopmund, Namibia
<b>Johannes Wieberle</b>	Board Member of Scientific Society of Swakopmund	14 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Swakopmund, Namibia
<b>Rinos</b>	Guide at Waterberg Wilderness	10 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Waterberg Plateau, Namibia

\* pseudonyms were used to protect the privacy of the respondents

## 8.2 INTERVIEW GUIDE

### **Your Practice**

- 1) Could you please introduce yourself and shortly explain your work at the ...?
- 2) What relevance does German colonial heritage play in your practices?

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

- 3) What specific challenges do you encounter in your practices when dealing with colonial heritage?
- 4) How do these challenges influence your practices?
- 5) To what extent do you think promoting colonial heritage could be a chance to create a greater tourism flow in Namibia?
- 6) Is a greater focus on presenting the sites to tourists realistic? Why? Why not?

### **The Tourism Landscape**

- 7) How would you describe the way colonial heritage is represented on the tourism landscape of Namibia?
- 8) What differences in its presentation do you see between private businesses and public institutions? What commonalities?

\*during the interview certain sub-questions (which depended on the answers of the interviewee) were posed whenever possible

## 8.3 CODE LIST

### The Heritage Conflict (\*Use for 2.4)

- Presentation of German colonial heritage emotional topic
- Debate mostly because of different viewpoints
- Opinions vary between Namibians what to do with German colonial monuments
- Opinions depend on their relation to, profession and interest in heritage
- Newspaper articles reporting about conference reflective for conflict in Namibian Heritage sector
- Intercultural communication problems between communities in Namibia
- Bringing the different sides together
- MAN mediates between communities
- Difficulty in mediating the aim of inclusiveness
- MAN often misunderstood
- Communication with different stakeholders important
- Giving out grants museums from both sides
- Language difficulties make conflict more complex
- There are people who want to add things to German colonial heritage
- There are people want to destroy German colonial heritage
- No trust between the communities
- Namibians are mostly not trained
- Teaching Namibian youth about heritage
- Bringing communities together
- Creating trust between communities
- Understanding culture of the other
- Making museums relevant for the future
- Debates are part of healing of the nation
- Representing heritage without political and subjective opinions
- Genocide debate very tedious and emotional
- Biggest challenge to present colonial heritage in all its facets

### Analysis: Presentation without dark edges

- Superficial and romantic presentation of German colonial heritage
- Brown past of Germans in Namibia forgotten
- Namibian Tourist industry constructing a romantic Germany in Namibia
- Represented past not equal to true historical past
- Representation of German colonial history unquestioned
- representation of Imperial Germany without the dark edges.
- People don't want to know about historical context
- Tourists want to have a good time only
- Tourists do not know about genocide
- Colonial architecture adds to marketability of Namibia for the German market
- A lot of colonial architecture used for tourism
- Buildings more used for marketing than actually being used for touristic purposes
- Colonial Namutoni Fort part of big tourist resort

#### **Solutions**

- Important to contextualize objects
- Up to the museums to add text, descriptions, context
- Change has to come from German or Herero community
- Up to the museums to change display techniques
- Important to present all historical narratives of Namibia
- Thriving towards a multi-layered narrative
- Narratives can also be on brochures, cds, tablets
- Museums should tell different narratives
- Incomplete narratives in museums and at monuments
- Challenge to find a way of presenting multi-layered narrative
- Government and Namibian need to become conscious the imaginary presentation of the past
- Colonial heritage as important as the modern or African heritage because it tells story of the country.



## Theme 1: Presentation of the state

### REPRESENTATION OF SWAPO NARRATIVE

- State narrative focuses on fight against apartheid regime
- Right now a one-sided story is presented
- Politics part of display of state museums
- Museums always mirror current politics of country
- Politics play big role in African museum displays
- Swapping narratives for one another in museums politically useful
- State narrative incomplete
- Independence museum simplistic counterdraft to a colonial museum
- Mentions removal of Reiterdenkmal in 2013
- Dynamic of Reiterdenkmal example for basic features of memorialisation politics
- Removal of Reiterdenkmal symbolic act, but not important as Christuskirche and Alte Veste are still there
- Reiterdenkmal not contextualized for a museum audience explaining memorialisation politics
- Narrative of Reiter, which had to go because of a museum build by North Koreans, the essential narrative
- National Museum could open its strict postcolonial liberation narrative
- Apartheid regime presented in more detail
- Enemy “apartheid regime” in the heading
- German Colonial Rule never used in heading
- Maybe too early to open postcolonial liberation narrative
- Genocide is a Namibian genocide
- Genocide a Namibian issue, not a Herero issue
- Genocide only small part of liberation narrative
- Nothing about German period in Independence museum
- Narratives only about the sponsor
- Independence museum socialist realist architecture
- Large bronze statue Sam Nujoma stands where Reiterdenkmal formerly stood
- Bronze murals: road to independence
- Genocide monument = representation for Hereros
- Genocide monument = violence of Germans depicted
- Golden elevator = celebration
- Restaurant décor = typically African
- Sam Nujoma and Namibian flag in center of first room
- Portraits of resistance fighters against both colonial rules
- Large paintings of fighters against both colonial rules = pompous depiction of resistance
- Highlight objects: Herero busts
- Pictures with descriptions: German colonial rule shown in all its intensity
- Dark tunnel section
- Heading “1904” – no other text
- Horrors of German colonial rule integrated in the setting
- Breaking with neutral presentation mode
- Section engages visitor more emotionally
- Von Trotha clearly depicted as the villain, representative for Germans
- Commemoration and reflection instead of celebration
- First floor ends with Sam Nujoma and SWAPO celebration
- German colonial rule only small part of the main narrative
- Two other floors about liberation fight against apartheid regime
- Glorification of SWAPO
- More objects on second and third floor
- Huge panorama ends museum experience
- Mirrors narrative: one fourth about fight against Germans, rest about SWAPO and liberation
- Celebration of SWAPO and its political regime
- Independence museum talks too much about war for independence
- Achievements of Hendrik Witbooi not really shown in Independence museum
- State museums present clichés and glorification of SWAPO
- German colonial times neglected in state museums

### SWAPO AND GERMAN-NAMIBIAN RELATIONSHIP

- Connection: government and German side
- German businesses and Namibian government need good relationship to each other
- Symbiotic relationship SWAPO and German-speaking Namibians
- Erasure of German past in Namibia will never take place

- German period is untouched
- Curt von Francois statue in Windhoek
- Erasure not possible, because tourists come to see German colonial heritage
- German colonial buildings used for tourism and beneficial to the country
- Swakopmund Municipality and Scientific Society working together
- Independence museum inbetween German colonial heritage landscape

#### **HERERO INTERESTS NOT SWAPO INTERESTS**

- State built houses on Herero graveyards
- Insensitive to Hereros to declare Marine Denkmal a National monument
- State builds on Herero graveyards
- State action vs Herero beliefs
- Herero interests not priority of politicians
- school curriculums deliberately neglect genocide
- Politicians own land, that was taken from the Herero by the Germans
- State action on Himba graveyards
- Symbolic power of Marine Denkmal's location
- SWAPO = Ovambo people
- Politicians don't care about properly projecting true past
- SWAPO doesn't care about genocide
- SWAPO past not Herero past
- Former president makes holiday in the colonial state house in Swakopmund next to the Marine Denkmal and a former concentration camp
- Does not want to destroy his holiday home
- President probably doesn't even know about former concentration camps
- Reparations not distributed to Hereros
- Ovambo people in control of government
- Minorities Herero and Namas are not very influential in politics
- state deletes history about genocide
- It's in nobodies interest to present German colonial heritage in a more didactic way
- Government does not care about multi-layered presentation
- Marine Denkmal does not commemorate Herero victims
- Marine Denkmal Location: Next to State house and right in the center of town
- Marine Denkmal well maintained
- Graveyards of Herero chief in Okahandja partly not maintained
- Graveyards blocked by government buildings for white civil workers
- Hereros forget about graveyards when not maintained
- Genocide has its place in liberation narrative
- State also stuck in its own interests
- One-sided presentation on Marine Denkmal
- Names of Hereros not depicted on Marine Denkmal
- Alte Feste sign commemorates German soldiers
- Marine Denkmal presents one-sided story
- Marine Denkmal commemorates fallen German soldiers in Herero War
- President makes holiday in colonial state house and next to Marine Denkmal
- Question of Marine Denkmal no priority to municipality
- A Namibian narrative needs to be added to German colonial monuments
- Very painful for Hereros
- Need for putting up monuments for them
- There is nothing for Herero community on such monuments
- Swapo narrative, liberation war overshadowing German colonial history in school

#### **PROFESSIONAL STATE MEMORALISATION NOT FIRST PRIORITY**

- Not many state museums in Namibia
- Alte Feste seems deteriorating – renovations needed
- Alte Feste being renovated since 4 years
- A nearly fully black town council honours former white mayor
- Decline in maintenance in state owned buildings
- Most monuments only presented from one side
- Schools do not make history relevant to young people
- Museum visits should be included in school curriculum

- Independence museum does not provide enough text and context
- Critique about Independence Museum: Typos and flaws in context
- Really bad that expertise is also missing in state museums
- A lot more private museums than state museums, even if state has more money than private individuals
- More context in private museums
- Rooms rather empty
- Textual script first room: only names
- Big headings and small picture descriptions
- Empty rooms, walls carry content
- Content picture heavy. Some objects
- No main textual script
- Technique not working, empty frames
- No main explanation of historical background
- Gallery-like presentation: neutral and one-dimensional
- Still only limited contextualization through text
- Lack of historical context and didactic value
- Namutoni museum very small
- More modern presentation mode
- Namutoni museum: Devices are not working
- Too many themes only slightly touched upon
- Schutztruppe paraphernalia without text
- Themes and objects lack a connection
- State museums: better concept than Heimatmuseen, but not well maintained
- Museum badly maintained
- Mental overload, too much text
- Exhibition mentions that it was sponsored by embassy of Finland
- Tribes depicted as bush people: straw huts etc.
- Namibians depicted as colonized people
- Bad maintenance: lights not functioning, whole room deteriorating
- Old German colonial letterbox in reception
- More immersive than other museums
- Large headings and a lot of text that contextualizes sections
- Text connecting past to present, from early history to presence
- Herero part: Feat of Hereros presented in a long text, that can't be missed
- Visitor has to read a lot before reaching passage about war and concentration camps
- Numbers of deaths presented
- Genocide not mentioned
- Hidden text about Truppspieler in Okahandja
- San section elaborates on San as work slaves under Germans
- Main texts in view of visitor
- Explanation on how exhibition works
- Acts of violence or murder not visually depicted
- Quite immersive setting: taking visitor into traditional village
- Mix of text, classical presentation of objects in glass cabinets and immersive setting

## Theme 2: The German perspective

### OPINIONS BY GERMAN-NAMIBIANS

- German colonial monuments should not be destroyed
- German colonial monuments part of history
- Marine Denkmal is beautiful and should stay
- Marine Denkmal creates controversy
- German colonial monuments important parts of history
- Think positively about Heimatmuseums
- Museums need to mediate information
- Museums need to project a mix of old things, but also innovative exhibitions
- Difficulty of representation without offending anybody
- Says that genocide is not depicted wrongly, it's just not there because of nature of the museum
- Need to include municipality in decisions about what to present

### **OBSERVATIONS**

- A lot of museums in Namibia Heimatmuseen of German-speaking minority
- Strong German elite in the private sector
- German-Namibians present one-sided narrative leaving out Angola War and Apartheid regime
- German-speaking minority key role in tourism development in Namibia
- German-speaking minority key role for economy of Namibia
- German-speaking colonial elite is a postcolonial elite today
- German-speaking minority intellectual and ideological different opinions than European cultural scientists
- Scientific Society does cut out/deny history of Otawi Bahnhof, even after public pressure
- Normal for German descendants to present the past nostalgically
- Most private museums managed by Germans
- Some People think displaying a Schutztruppe uniform a glorification of colonial Germany
- Other People think displaying a Schutztruppe uniform is a representation of history
- Tsumeb museum more elaborate than other Heimatmuseums

## **2.1 Nostalgia in Heimatmuseen**

### **ONE-SIDED, NOSTALGIC PRESENTATION**

- Biggest challenge: including other narratives in museums like Swakopmund Museum
- Swakopmund museum narrative incomplete
- Swakopmund concentration camp missing in narrative
- Swakopmund: attitude of refusal when it comes to present more historical context to Herero War e.g.
- African names of Swakopmund mentioned only in a half sentence in the museum
- Conflict about museum space for local communities in Swakopmund Museum
- Multi-layered narratives of objects not told in private museums
- Nostalgic look back
- Explaining historical context not the main priority when Heimatmuseen were founded
- People think genocide is not represented
- Heimatmuseum Flair should not be changed
- Private German museums do not glorify, yet definitely show the good old times
- Nostalgic view to the past has to be understood
- It's not about celebrating the Europeans in the Herero War
- It's more about the appreciation of one's roots
- Private museums need to expand point of view to be interesting for all population groups
- Already good museum reviews from Non-Germans
- Heimatmuseen housed in colonial buildings
- Receptionist: Old German speaking lady
- Regional identity
- Nostalgic view of life in German Grootfontein
- Themes: Agriculture, industry, history, military
- Genocide never mentioned
- If not familiar with history, visitor would leave without knowing about violence of German regime
- German locomotives and German colonial building as warm up
- Big colonial sign introduces new theme
- War objects and Kaiser paraphernalia
- Field guns of British and Germans
- British and German side presented
- Narrative of field guns more about technological features
- Everything presented from German viewpoint
- Warm up: old colonial building
- German atmosphere around museum
- Messages on building: encourage education, build on heritage
- Namibian flag over museum
- Longer explanations present a one-sided narrative
- German colonial themes: town history, German colonial state practices, connection to African tribes
- Most objects donations
- Imitation of town settings: immersive part
- Taking one right into past way of life in German Swakopmund
- Timeline of town: presentation without the dark edges
- Small plaque explaining African connection to the area: very small and hidden
- Town presented as a German town, African people not really represented in depiction of town life
- Commemoration plaque for Hereros: mentioning misdeeds only shortly and without numbers and the magnitude
- Presenting harmonized view of history
- Nama do not achieve same attention

- Addressing Herero as former opponent
- Kaiser and military paraphernalia
- Nostalgic view on military past?
- Kaiser and Schutztruppe objects without telling visitors about the misdeeds they produced
- Section “Kaiserliche Staatsbahn” does not explain how it relates to the deaths of thousand African workers
- Beside imitated settings, atmosphere neutral
- Its about admiring historic objects

#### **UNPROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT AND DISPLAY**

- Heimatmuseen are generally chaotic
- Heimatmuseen: not reflective, naïve, unintentional, crude mix
- Swakopmund Museum: unprofessional and conceptless presentation
- Swakopmund museum bigger, but context of Heimatmuseum still perceivable
- Swakopmund museum: Different presentation of information in booklet
- Presentation of Swakopmund chronology in museum disastrous
- Innovation and change needed
- No concept
- Needs more elaboration on why it is showed in certain ways
- Old towing vehicle without description
- Open spatial script with themed rooms
- Object-focused presentation
- Objects seem randomly arranged and crowd rooms
- Exhibiting everything that relates
- Text only descriptions of objects
- Too short textual elaboration only in first room
- If text, then small and hidden
- Heimatmuseum = random accumulation of objects
- No elaboration on what rooms show
- Objects do not tell a story
- Conceptless presentation
- One rooms with big headings and a little more elaboration on objects and pictures
- Critical objects like Kaiserflagge or weapons without explanation of historical context □ should not let them speak for themselves
- Spatial script: direct but no chronology
- Museum object-centered
- Classical canon – power of objects
- Main textual script on DinA 4 pages about war history of Tsumeb WWI
- Textual script not to miss
- Textual script descriptive, a lot of numbers
- Both German and British side represented
- Information fragmented, text too small and too long
- Mining history: lack of organization
- Random accumulation of objects etc
- Mental overload, object overdose
- Textual scripts too small and hidden
- Main text not in direct view of visitor
- No consistent concept
- Text not directly connected to their respective objects
- Lack of organization and professionalism
- Object-centered museum
- Objects mostly not connected to historical context
- Presentation mode like other Heimatmuseums
- Objects attached to short descriptions
- Objects describing context (e.g. signs)
- Semi-open spatial script
- Textual main script: sometimes there, sometimes not
- Different sections on colonial state: no textual elaboration, very classical
- No headings
- Original signs contextualize sections
- Sections mixed with objects from Apartheid regime
- Random accumulation of objects

#### **SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS**

- Heimatmuseen have different professionalism and intention than other forms of museums

- German-speaking elite more financial possibilities to present themselves than other population groups
- General: anti-intellectual attitude of museum boards
- Swakopmund Society and Museum strange and hybrid organization
- Swakopmund Society and Museum no expertise
- Swakopmund Society and Museum works with interns from Germany
- Lack of resources and expertise not only reason for unprofessionalism
- Privately owned museums stuck to the German heritage way more than the state
- Private museums cannot afford to change displays
- Private museums often keep every object in exhibitions
- No space for exhibition narrative
- Question of museum funding
- No non-german speaker works in German museums
- Narratives = interests of managers
- Narratives limited to what managers know
- Missing expertise reason for missing historical context in museums
- Museum workers mostly volunteers
- Historical context of products often not known by museum workers
- Lack of finance to employ professionals
- Elaborate display depends on financial possibilities and expertise of managers
- Swakopmund Museum in need of a fully employed curator
- Depends on finances of museum
- Swakopmund museum was founded on the basis of German colonial items
- Museum had to be extended after many other objects were collected
- History of museum reason for today's display mode
- No professional curators, no expertise
- Expanding private collection turned into museum
- No expertise to work on historical context
- 80year old part-time curator
- Need for new curator with ideas and expertise
- Need for funds to create something new, to change the old display regarding space and technique
- Dependent on donations
- Space problem. Presenting more context means something else has to go
- Challenge to find a way to include certain things
- Lack of Context not indignation – more an unawareness and lack of knowledge
- Government not cooperative in certain issues
- Better change nothing of the museum than the wrong way
- Change of museum has to be planned with professional
- Unaware of sensitivity of certain things
- Social context: no expertise, no money
- No professional curator
- Audience not only German
- Museum experience presented from a German perspective
- Schools take students to the Swakopmund museum

#### **EXHIBITIONS ABOUT AFRICAN PEOPLE IN HEIMATMUSEEN**

- Swakopmund Museum added People of Namibia exhibition
- Critique African peoples depicted in their traditional form
- Agrees, but says that the museum shows the past
- Africans presented in their traditional ways
- Part seems added
- Herero War mentioned, but not historically explained
- Exhibition about German Grootfontein separate from exhibition about Africans
- Khorab Room presents African tribes
- Big heading in direct connection with objects
- Textual scripts DinA4 pages with a lot of information, short descriptions of objects
- No consistent pattern of presentation for every tribe
- Conflict with Germans not mentioned
- Khorab room separate from exhibition about Tsumeb
- Not depicted how these tribes influence Tsumeb
- Not clear how Khorab room fits in
- African population not integrated in town history
- Explicitly mentioning educational experience of People of Namibia exhibition
- People of Namibia exhibition more modern presentation mode (audio-visual elements)
- Well-designed information plaques: text well readable and good length
- Exhibition presents African tribes only in their traditional form

## 2.1 “Selling” critical heritage to attract tourists

- Using colonial heritage to attract tourists
- Colonial items in offer mostly do not have any explanation
- Germans using colonial items and monuments for tourists
- Using critical heritage for money happens all over the world
- German-speaking tourists interested in colonial items
- Colonial items matter of supply and demand
- Tourists interested in German colonial heritage
- History of hotel attracts tourists
- Hotel guests love blend of history and modern rooms
- 85% of guests are German
- German hotel guests like to stay at an old castle that is part of their heritage
- Talks about (romantic) colonial background of the castle
- Historical background at Heinitzburg mostly presented verbally by staff
- Personal presentation by staff
- They combine their presentation of history with humor
- Heinitzburg Hotel: family touch and history
- 100% German values in service at Heinitzburg Hotel
- Traditional German dishes at Heinitzburg Hotel
- Proud of the pristine German service at Heinitzburg Hotel
- German signature menu, complemented by other European styles
- There is no sign that explains history of the castle
- All historical information accessible through reception
- German colonial architecture as marketing tool used by tourism agencies
- Different opinions about legitimacy of monument replica
- Herero fighting for removal of monument in contacting police and going to court
- Replica of Reiterdenkmal politically insensitive
- Colonial photographs in public insensitive for Hereros
- Replica's Closeness to destroyed Herero graveyards insensitive
- Original Reiterdenkmal erected on top of former concentration camp in 1912
- Replica near Herero graveyard insensitive
- Restaurant owner: Reiterdenkmal part of history
- right of restaurant owner
- German colonial products as source of getting thrills
- Namibian shops as source for Nazi paraphernalia
- Tourists take Nazi paraphernalia back to Germany
- Imperial Germany theme for social institutions like beer taverns
- Tourists can buy imperial products
- German products (beer, strudel etc.) loved by tourists
- Namibia playground for imperial mind of German tourists
- Instrumentalization of Reiter in beer advertising in the 60s
- Replica of Reiterdenkmal serves economic purposes
- Replica of Reiterdenkmal in postcolonial context of Namibia scandalous
- Replica of Reiterdenkmal product of demand of tourists
- Replica of Reiter a good thing
- Monuments presenting highlights of history
- Tourists still want to see the Reiter
- Reiter icon of Windhoek
- Advocates for business with responsibility
- Information about colonial items needed
- Real colonial items can be exciting way of teaching history
- Let visitors give opinion about colonial products and sites
- Peter Antiques unique selling point: German colonial literature and products
- Personally interested in German colonial history
- Colonial items bought from Namibians
- Peter Antiques: no online shop
- Important to talk to customers about products
- Items bought from old farms and households in Namibia
- German colonial time important time for Namibia
- Certain things should stay as identity marker
- Colonial time part of identity of German Namibians

- Selling products because colonial time historically an interesting time
- Likes to read about former life of early settlers
- Very happy to work with customers with same interests
- Critical customers do mostly ignore the tension of colonial products – some do comment
- Interested customers are happy that some of the products still exist
- There are politically motivated customers, but not encouraged
- Products solely sold because of nostalgic and historical reasons
- Critical German colonial product = unique selling point
- Critical German colonial product = market niche
- Only shop selling Critical German colonial products in Namibia
- Critique leaves question of how to present products more intelligent
- Market potential
- Selling colonial products legal
- Original objects and literature very popular
- Getting more difficult to find original products
- Educational value important
- Privately owned architecture is better maintained
- No mediums of discourse in shops and museums

### **Theme 3: The Herero perspective**

#### **FIGHT FOR HERERO RIGHTS**

- Personal connection to genocide
- Fighting for Namibia
- Fighting for more awareness about the genocide
- Fighting for restitutions from the German government
- Fighting for Herero land
- Herero descendant of important chiefs
- Social inequality in Swakopmund
- Bad living conditions for Herero descendants
- Fighting for proper housing for Herero descendants
- Namibian and German states need to help
- Fighting for citizenship for Hereros who searched for refugee in South Africa and Botswana
- Helping descendants of genocide
- Fighting for foreign museum to return Herero skulls and Artefacts
- German-Namibians deny genocide in Namibia
- evidence of genocide
- Search for documents that depict genocide
- genocide not mentioned enough
- Herero strong connection to dead ancestors
- Fighting to retrace war crimes
- Fighting against actions by the state
- Denial and Loss of Memory from German side
- State narrative deliberately incomplete
- Missing empathy by German-Namibians
- Herero lost all their land
- Nobody speaks up for the Herero

#### **FIGHT FOR HERITAGE REPRESENTATION**

- Fighting for removal of Marine Denkmal
- German community meets at Marine Denkmal for commemorations
- Personal connection to Marine Denkmal – villages of grandfather's engraved
- Insensitivity of Marine Denkmal
- Marine Denkmal needs to be removed
- Marine Denkmal needs to be in a museum and out of public
- Painful for Hereros to see Germans commemorate soldiers at Marine Denkmal
- Wish of Marine Denkmal in a museum, not in the public
- Hereros forefathers worked on colonial buildings
- Herero POWs built colonial buildings
- Fighting for removal of Marine Denkmal
- Reiterdenkmal should be in a museum



- Act of resistance. Covering the Marine Denkmal in Plastic
- Opting for removal of Sam Nujoma monument
- Appreciation for Genocide monument
- Herero activists sprayed Marine Denkmal
- Marine Denkmal: Red paint – Herero blood
- Museums should be both for domestic and international tourists, but also Namibians
- Negative effects that most monuments are only presented from one side
- Herero sprayed Marine Denkmal with color □ political statement

#### **FILLING THE VOID: NEW AFRICAN INITIATIVES**

- Planning Genocide Museum
- German communities do not talk about genocide
- Lack of mediums that project genocide
- Wish for mediums that project genocide
- Wish to depict whole truth
- Initiative: museum that depicts whole truth
- Importance to create awareness for locals (also German-Namibians)
- Full depiction for better future
- Fighting against government for more awareness
- German Commemorations too painful
- Swakopmund Genocide Museum as Dark Tourism destination
- Wish to project genocide
- Part of income from museum to renew Herero graveyards
- Graveyard tours
- Using art to project history
- Projecting Swakopmund Genocide Museum to be a big tourist attraction
- Sees big economic potential in genocide museum
- African-Namibians not aware of economic potential of dark tourism
- Need for Genocide Museum
- Thinking about graveyard tours
- Herero Truppe as tourist attraction
- True past is not told at Herero Truppe commemorations
- Okahandja special place because of Herero memorials and graveyards
- African initiatives reclaimed Okahandja as place of memory
- Did not manage to organize a Herero speaking tourist guide for Okahandja
- Travel guides do not mention African cultural presence in Okahandja
- Travel guide focuses on Okahandja in relation to German missionaries
- Makes clear to Herero that tours to Herero graveyard economic niche
- Herero Truppspieler touristic activity arranged by Herero Genocide committee
- Asks why not permanent exhibition about Truppspieler
- Museum Association should coach to present Okahandja as a place of African history
- Potential of African history extremely big
- Scientific Society of Herero Community needed
- Experts in Herero community needed
- Herero narratives mostly exist and are mediated only in Herero communities
- Herero narrative stuck in ethnic framework
- Local people get more susceptible to German colonial heritage through to tourism potential
- It will never pass enough time to understand what had happened
- Enough time has passed to appreciate the historical side of the past
- Aiming to make history an interesting topic for young people in Namibia
- Most Namibians don't even know what a museum is
- Involving communities in development of museums
- Providing professional knowledge about museums to communities
- Promoting ownership
- Providing training for museum development
- Challenge to convince non-german locals of relevance of colonial heritage
- Only few non-German speaking locals deal with the topic
- Only few non-german speaking locals want to keep German colonial heritage intact
- Namibian tour guides focus on the nicer stories
- Tours: Harsh facts are left out
- German colonial heritage embodies narratives that are not only important to German Namibians or tourists
- Namibians need to learn to be comfortable with dark history
- Namibian nature is to not talk about dark history
- Responsibility of Namibians to tell tourists different perspectives about colonial sites

- Herero guides take tourists on tours at Waterberg
- Maybe Hereros want people to talk about dark history
- His historical explanation has flaws
- History path make people learn about suffering of Herero, the war and refugee camp
- Challenge for guide to learn and express history accurately
- Hereros would like to represent their history more, but have no money

## Theme 4: Dark Tourism

### PRO ARGUMENTS

- Violent relationship central to Cultural Landscape
- Colonial heritage already used as a tool for tourism promotion
- New Age: people want to be knowledgeable
- People want to know about both good and bad things
- Worth investing in colonial heritage
- There is a potential for Dark Tourism
- There are places in Namibia with potential for Dark Tourism
- Worth marketing Dark Tourism
- More historical context could be presented at German colonial heritage sites in Namibia
- Big potential to use German colonial heritage to import tourists
- Fascination about dark historical events everywhere in the world
- Enormous potential for Dark Tourism
- Fascinating to stand on battlefield and fantasize
- Controversy good for attracting tourists
- Visitors very interested in German colonial heritage
- Potential to create jobs and development
- Waterberg or old train tracks in Namib desert as Dark tourism destination
- Both German and African tourists are interested in the culture and history of Namibia
- Genocide might get more representation
- Colonial narratives start to mention genocide
- Creating more awareness about culture, not only wildlife and nature
- German colonial heritage an important heritage landscape in Namibia that attracts tourists to Namibia.
- Germans can relate to Namibian culture through to colonial heritage
- German tourists most important tourist when looking at numbers
- Waterberg teaches new generations how life was in the past
- Promoting colonial history is positive for German tourists
- Tourists can learn about Namibian history
- More information and more promotion brings in more tourists
- Important that tourists are informed about the dark sides of occupation
- More information needed for tourists

### CONTRA ARGUMENTS

- Against dark tourism and promotion of voyeuristic experience of violence
- Dark tourism matter of how it is presented
- Presentation like Waterberg Wilderness history path makes sense
- Problem of how audience reflects on presented information
- Atmosphere in Namibia still critical = Open wounds
- Difficult to announce such Dark Tourism destinations extravagantly in the public
- Promoting German colonial heritage not so good
- Namibia should not build on the colonial past but on today's free Namibia
- Namibia should promote open-mindedness, hospitality etc.
- Using the language and architecture to attract German tourists makes sense
- Too many open wounds to promote Namibia as dark tourism destination
- Debate around German colonial heritage too emotional
- Dark tourism doesn't feel right
- War lives on in Hereros
- Herero important connection to ancestors would be hurt

### HOW TO PRESENT

- Dealings with Dark Tourism should be carefully planned
- Moderate approach to Dark Tourism recommendable
- Important to engage with colonial history to represent it the right way
- Needs to be well planned

- Promotion and representation of destinations needs to be carefully planned
- Exploiting dark tourism potential without offending anyone
- Skeptical about promoting it bigly
- Promoting Battle of Waterberg tour insensitive
- Giving information important, using dark history as promotion tool rather strange

#### **DARK TOURISM - WATERBERG HISTORY PATH**

- History path explains historical context of Waterberg
- History path explains history
- History path at historical important location
- Information presented by main text and illustrations with descriptions
- Path not well maintained
- Explicitly stating path is about history of Herero
- Sign makes clear that dark edges are not left out
- Focus on explaining Herero conflict
- Presentation with didactic value
- Seem to be different opinions on how conflict started
- Only the number of killed German civilians stated
- Information, together with view over the battlefield creates experience
- Herero strategy explicitly stated
- Von Trotha's failure explicitly mentioned
- Detailed information about frontlines in the battle
- Both sides are well presented
- Kalahari as executioner minders guilt of Germans
- Text questions historical notion that Germans blocked Kalahari
- Von Trotha's extermination order explicitly mentioned
- Von Trotha's intention questioned
- Genocide covertly questioned
- Herero ambushes mentioned
- Illustrations show violence
- Quotes complement presentation mode
- Presentation complemented by original remnants of a house
- Detailed explanation and illustration of the house
- German missionary gets his own sign □ explaining the remnants
- No Herero gets an own sign
- Text dissociates camp from Third Reich camps
- Second Reich camps had different intentions than Third Reich camps
- Text historically debatable
- Word genocide never used
- Magnitude of horror not concealed
- Elaborate presentation of history
- No other tourists on trail
- Wildlife and nature more popular
- Building no connection to German colonial era
- Connects art to social and political issues
- Says it is not possible to say who was wrong between Germans and Herero
- Hereros celebrate their history in the street

#### **Non-relevant Codes**

- Herero descendant
- Family history noted down by German missionary
- Explaining about his family
- German elite and land
- Explains that Herero war was a war of resistance for Hereros
- Acknowledges right of every Namibian
- Police arrested him
- If government acts against law, citizen can do it as well
- European museums do not depict whole truth
- Fighting for citizenship for Hereros who searched for refugee in South Africa and Botswana
- Acknowledging rights of all people

- Proposal of Herero Denkmal in Swakopmund
- Explains personal connection to Namibia
- Left Namibia because he refused to serve in the war
- Researched Herero refugees
- Worked on Herero history
- working on genocide damaged him psychologically
- Hate for tourism in Namibia
- Hate for tourists who do not care and understand historical context
- Tourists not interested in Herero context
- Illegal things in Germany are still legal in Namibia
- South African English-speaking Union past was destroyed
- Germany is aware of its past.
- Germany is the largest contributor of foreign aid to Namibia
- German reparations do not give the land back to the Hereros
- Detests dark tourists
- Traveling to dark places is wrong
- Dark tourism demeaning to anyone who was part of dark events Colonial family history
- Afrika Bibliographien works like a National Library in Exile
- Colonial visuality does not play a big role at Afrika Bibliographien
- Production of banners important for tourism
- Decolonialization of knowledge regarding Namibia
- Encouraging work that relates to African themes and interests
- Focusing on archives of African citizen
- German colonial documents, archives secondary focus
- Many themes regarding tourism and Namibia not embraced by cultural sciences
- Collecting flyers from touristic institutions in Namibia
- Colonial and postcolonial narratives in Namibia travel and image guides topic to research
- Research topics about Cultural Representation of German Colonialism in the predigital era
- Colonial state invested in more than elaborate production of poststamps
- Colonial monuments on post stamps
- Popularization of colonial narratives through who?
- Depictions on post stamps often by German artists
- Unbroken paradigms in image production since 100 years
- Question of how to present colonialism as an epoch
- Discursive attempt of presenting colonialism
- No scientific context at Scientific Society Swakopmund
- Museum Association too small for too many projects
- Guided a tour himself in Okahandja
- Alte Feste – colonial military building
- Conflicts between him as academic and Scientific Society Swakopmund
- Genocide committee will claim Otawi station, building of colonial work in concentration camps
- Father was major of Swakopmund
- Talks about management position at Heinitzburg Hotel
- Castle on a hill
- Raith family built boutique hotel in the castle with modern rooms
- No connection between original owner and today's owner at Heinitzburg Hotel
- German architecture moved into being privately owned
- The government will privatize more colonial buildings
- Modern museums in old buildings are not always perceived well in the public
- MAN responsible for museum development in Namibia
- Assist in creating museums and exhibitions
- Genocide one working area of MAN
- Getting detailed information about objects from communities
- Mutual relationship: exchanging knowledge between MAN and communities
- Museum on how nature influences culture
- Curator salary in Namibia comes from entrance fees
- Museum social place for the communities
- Museum a interactive place: working on crafts
- MAN does not have authority to enforce actions
- MAN can influence museums only by trainings
- Working on relationship with Ministry of education to influence state work with museums
- Encouraging interactive museums
- Active learning in museums
- Encouraging multimedia devices in museums
- Technology must be affordable and maintainable by museum workers
- Namibians are reactionary nation

- People think German monuments project German superiority
- MAN gives funding for regional museum development
- Conference called Past Presence Future of Namibian Heritage funded by Basel University
- Heated debate at conference
- Projects that bring different interests together
- Working with young people
- Competition between different schools
- Youth getting to know Namibia
- German schools participate in school project
- Narratives are everywhere about what the sponsor wants to tell
- Need to learn from each other
- One-sided stories are boring
- History is not about fact, but debate
- Family history: descendant of German settler
- Personally interested in history
- Swakopmund important part of colonial history
- Sees himself as potential dark tourist
- Mentioning of genocide question in Germany puts Namibia on the map
- manages strategies and finances of Swakopmund Museum and Sam Cohen Bibliothek
- Scientific Society maintains archives related to German colonial heritage
- Politically incorrect objects were taken away after independence
- Would be difficult to present that Germans saw Hendrik Witbooi as equal to them
- German-Namibians are Namibians
- Explains history of Waterberg
- Reparations from German state do not arrive in the hands of Herero
- Does not know about differences between private vs public
- Second part: dioramas about nature
- Events at Waterberg influence Namibia today
- Touristic information on signs
- Pictures visualize text
- Very dark reception
- Museums should be inclusive for all Namibians
- Challenge of how to convince locals without the profession
- German Namibians cannot project the dark side openly
- Most museums in Namibia not many visitors
- Most tourists in Namibia are German
- Angola wants to engage in dark tourism
- Herero people and German Namibians present it differently
- Government illegally removed Reiterdenkmal
- German community's right to object was not granted
- State acting unconstitutionally
- Heinitzburg Castle is protected
- German colonial items – ox wagon e.g.
- Mix of gallery and museum
- Spatial script strict as a result of building structure
- Doesn't understand politics in Swakopmund
- Spatial script somewhat arranged in chronological order
- Wall colors also distinguish themes
- "pre-colonial history" theme: setting strongly depicting more primitive lifestyle in nature
- Fort used for tourist accommodation and leisure activities
- Fort from colonial times to national monument to tourist resort
- Black and white picture front creates setting
- Themes relate to different aspects of Etosha National park
- Today Swakopmund Museum has many other exhibitions as well
- New opinions encouraged
- Says they want to make it the right way
- Themes: war and mining history of Tsumeb, African tribes of Namibia
- Private museum with lot of different themes
- Not typical Heimatmuseum
- Owela Museum part of National Museums
- Themes: ethnic groups of Namibia, flora and fauna of Namibia
- Showing how people work in the museum
- Spatial script semi-open: order of rooms not chronological
- Rooms themed after tribes