

Religion and Politics in the Transition-process of South Africa: Outline of a Research Project

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I. Introduction (Wolfram Weisse)

The transition from apartheid to democracy was comparatively peaceful, but it would be improper if not dangerous to label this process a "wonder". With the saying "The greater the party, the greater the hangover" Adam, Slabbert and Moodley (1997) alert us to the fatal implications of a too euphoric assessment of the situation in South Africa in their newly published book "Comrades in Business". They propose a differentiated evaluation that with some reservations characterises the tense situation of this transition process well:

"Comparatively speaking, South Africa is doing remarkably well. Yet, for those caught up in the trauma of transition, it is like saying it is better being in a raging storm than in a hurricane. However, we argue while there is no room for easy optimism there is certainly no room for abject despair either. The new South Africa, unlike the Apartheid State, does not insult the intelligence, it challenges it. Overcoming obstacles to a prosperous democracy could not only be of enormous benefit to South Africa's inhabitants, but provide lessons to other countries in the world battling with similar difficulties" (Adam et al. 1997:1).

In order to arrive at an appropriate evaluation of the transition process in South Africa, we need greater analyses that focus on the situation at the end of apartheid. These will help to clarify why the transition process was relatively peaceful and organised, proving the prevailing opinion wrong that “a racial war” or the “eternal continuation of apartheid” was the only option. It is necessary to analyse and evaluate the crucial phase of the political transition from 1990—1994 and the developments after the first free elections in 1994.

The University of Hamburg has embarked upon a large multidisciplinary research project entitled “Radical Change in African societies and forms of coping”. Fourteen individual projects supported by over twenty researchers from seven departments of the University of Hamburg will investigate how African societies deal with transition processes. The large project will last nine to twelve years, but one of the systematic areas of investigation will focus on South Africa, and is entitled “Religion and Politics in Transition processes.” The South African part of the project consists of five research sections:

- Religion and Education in the South African Transition Process
- Churches in the South African Transition Process
- Islam in the South African Transition Process
- African Traditional Religions
- Magic and Witchcraft (refers only partly to the South African context).

These research projects relate mainly to a meso-level. We will not only concentrate on an internal analysis of religious institutions. Thus, the project *Religion and Education in the South African Transition Process* will analyse the relationship between religion and education and its influence on the political and economic development in the South African transition process from apartheid to democracy. At the same time, it will also maintain close co-operation with

projects of the other systematic research areas, especially those focusing on social-space, such as the project which will research the situation in the Cape flats, an area mainly populated by Muslims. All the research projects will incorporate a wide range of methods and disciplines through the project-leaders, collaborators and the research design. The disciplines involved will be economy and politics, sociology and education, theology, Islamic studies and ethnography.

We will concentrate on the role that religion played in the transition process—without neglecting its political and economic framework. Why did we choose this focus? Because religion in South Africa is not only important in the private realm, but have repercussions in the public and political sphere. I would like to give two examples:

The concept of apartheid was mainly developed, promoted and protected by theologians of the Dutch-Reformed Church (NG Kerk), in some cases even up to the end of white domination. Theological constructs referring to the meaning of the biblical “tower of Babylon” laid the foundation for the political notion of the Afrikaners that racial separation was an act enforcing God’s will. Johann Kinghorn’s contribution to this book points to the importance of such a theological approach for the support of the apartheid-politics by the Calvinistic Afrikaners in South Africa. We will extend his theory that the Afrikaners are political and theological “survivalists,” and evaluate its continuing validity in the relatively peaceful transition process to democracy in South Africa.

This question can only be answered fully in its broader context, which will have to include African Independent Churches (AIC) which can be viewed as the counterpart to the NG Kerk. For the members of the AIC it was an existential question of surviving the apartheid-era. Their role in the black communities, their political implications and their relationship to African Traditional Religions will have to be analysed to answer this question. An important aspect of the investigation will be their changing roles during the

transition process. Role-change is not only important for the evaluation of the NG Kerk and the AIC, but also for other religious communities in South Africa, especially the African Traditional Religion and Islam. Close to 30 % of South Africa's population are estimated to belong to the African Traditional Religions. Therefore it will be essential to analyse the role they played in the transition process, because there has only been little scientific research in this area. On the other hand, only 1—2 % of the South African population belong to Islam. Nevertheless we decided to integrate Islam into our systematic research area. Although they were mainly forced into a passive role during the apartheid-era, they still played a significant role (in form of a "neutral" acceptance but also in strong resistance against apartheid), which has hardly been researched in Europe. The role of the Muslims has become increasingly important in the public and political sphere after the end of apartheid. For several years now groups within the Muslim community they have become involved in fighting drug-trafficking and crime, which has become evident in the controversial movement PAGAD (People against Drugs and Gangsterism), itself contested within the Muslim community.

These references indicate the importance of religions in the public and political sphere in South Africa, because of the role they played in supporting or resisting apartheid. We have to analyse this role and investigate what and how these different religious communities contributed to the transition and consolidation phase in South Africa. In this research we will not follow the Huntington's "Clash of civilisations" (1996) thesis, but consider the communication barriers as well as the readiness for tolerance and dialogue within religious socialisation (Berger 1997). These questions of willingness for dialogue or detachment, which both influenced and were influenced by politics, will pervade the individual projects. For example, such an inquiry will be pursued in empirical studies of the project "Religion and Education".

Our South African project partners recommended to us to in-

clude this focus on religion in our research, and it was not difficult to find a prominent informant. Nelson Mandela has repeatedly highlighted the importance of religious communities for the transition process in South Africa. Mandela pointed out that religions were not only important in the struggle against apartheid but also for erecting a democracy: "In other words, the new democracy needs you: as an active participant in its consolidation, as a critical watchdog and as a crucial part of its spiritual guide. To us, the individual religious groups and the interfaith movement that South Africa has forged over the years will always be our source of strength" (Mandela 1994:134).

We are now ready to provide a more detailed outline of the individual research projects: Religion and Education; Islam; Changes in the greater geographical region of Cape Town; and African Independent Churches and African Traditional Religions. At the end of this sketch we will venture some principles for research co-operation with our South African colleagues.

II. Individual Research Projects

Religion and Education* (Peter Körner, Wolfram Weisse)

General background

Religion and Education were and still are, individually and in their combination, essential factors in the South African transition process. They have played a significant part in the development of society in the apartheid-era, in the political transition period 1989—1994, and in the period of formal democracy since 1994. Scientific research conducted thus far on the topic has ignored the context of the socio-economic and political context of religious education (and vice versa). In the studies on the socio-economic and political transitions in South Africa, education and religion are only treated on

* Presently, this particular sub-project has not received funding, but we include it here for sake of completion, and to get an overview of the larger questions being investigated.

the margin (with the exception of Hanf et al. 1978) and in the research on the role of education and religion the socio-economic aspects are treated insufficiently (e. g. Lienemann-Perrin 1992). Researchers with a strong Christian background classified apartheid as unjust and unchristian in the form of political and moral statements, but in their research they tended to neglect the socio-economic and political contradictions (with the exception of Nürnberger 1989 and 1991). This limited perception led to an overestimation of the capability of sustaining the apartheid system, and therefore misrepresented its role in the political negotiation process. Religious communities and religious movements in South Africa have an underestimated significance for the legitimation of power-structures in sociological research. On the one hand, religious groups became increasingly important in the struggle against racial oppression and the promotion for a peaceful transition in South Africa. On the other hand, they also—in the form of the Christian NG Kerk—played a key-role in the conception and legitimation of the apartheid state (de Gruchy 1979; Kinghorn 1986; Hinz/Kürschner-Pelkmann 1987; Rothe 1990; Villa-Vicencio 1990; Hallencreutz/Palmberg 1991; Chidester 1992; Graybill 1995).

The changes in the 1990's are perceived by many predominantly Christian denominations as a challenge to participate in the transition process (du Toit 1994; de Gruchy 1995; Dickow 1996). Intercultural and interreligious dialogue is seen as the basis for a stable, solid and peaceful development in post-apartheid South Africa (Weisse 1996). This perception was non-existent during the apartheid-era, because politically dictated segregation not only affected racial classification, but also oppressed "foreign" elements and promoted segregation of religious communities (Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, African traditionalists, etc.).

In practice, interreligious dialogue occurs in religious education classes in schools with an ethnic and religiously diverse student-population. During the apartheid-era the religious education classes in schools symbolised the main instrument to enforce the Chris-

tian-national interests. After 1990 the religious education classes became a "testing area" to teach communication and understanding in a multicultural and multireligious society (Mitchell 1993; Mitchell 1994 & 1995; Chidester/Mitchell et al. 1994; NEPI 1993).

Religious education can be perceived as a vehicle that promoted and enforced social and economic inequality based on racial classification (Kallaway 1984; Alexander 1990; Christie 1992). After the official end of apartheid these structures of inequality still "haunt" the education system. A thorough reform of the entire education sector will have to occur to succeed the structural legacies of the apartheid-system (Johnson 1995).

Even though the student uprisings in Soweto 1976 were a clear indication of a fundamental protest against the education system, most of the analyses on education in South Africa published up to the 1980's are based on the assumption that apartheid would continue (Unterhalter et al. 1991). Various social-scientific studies that indicated the probability of a fundamental change in South Africa were not recognised. The possibility now exists for linking a re-evaluation of educational approaches that opposed the apartheid-system with an analysis of the transition in society.

Objectives

Based on this background the goals of our research project can be summarised as follows:

The project is divided into three steps each lasting three years. It will analyse the complex relationship between education, religion and social transformation in a social-scientific, ecumenical-theological and religious-pedagogical study. Education and religion will be analysed critically in the context of socio-economic and political changes and vice versa.

On the socio-economic and political level we want to reconstruct developments in South Africa, so as to establish a background to evaluate the social functions of religion and education. This analysis will include a re-evaluation of studies in the field of political science

and a reconstruction of relevant macro-studies in South Africa. The main aim is to reach a differentiated understanding of transition and transformation in South Africa. We want to pursue the interests and field of action of relevant individual characters and groups to assess and identify the potential for transformation in the final phase of apartheid (ca. 1970—1989); the different options of political transition (1989—1994); and decision-making structures during the period of political democracy (after 1994).

The first three-year-long project will analyse the political, economical and socio-religious studies carried out before the transition from of a post-apartheid perspective. It will assess the full potential of transformation somewhat neglected in the studies before. The political, economic and social development in the final phase of apartheid will be reconstructed with a strong emphasis on the system-inherent contradictions that made political transformation in 1989 possible. Attention will be directed to the interaction of religion (esp. religious institutions) and education (esp. area of schooling) with social development and transformation. The research on the mutual connection of religion, education and social transformation will form the foundation for empirical studies. The results of these empirical studies will then again flow into the macro-analysis of the social transformations.

In the religious and socio-educational framework we want to locate the perception and comprehension of the transition on a concrete level, by analysing the religiosity of youths and religious education in schools. To date, there are no extensive studies in this area. The empirical studies will focus on religious education in schools because they formed an important paradigm for the segregatory educational system of apartheid. They will indicate the possibilities of overcoming segregation and the perception of difference in the transition process in South Africa. On the basis of qualitative social science we want to create a more complete image of the transition process, particularly how it was perceived by a heterogeneous student-body regarding religion, religious education and society. This

will be done through the help of interviews, authentic documents (e. g. films, student essays or pictures produced by students) and dialogue structures of religious education lessons. This will show how a part of the education system copes with the transition from forced homogeneity (apartheid) to heterogeneity in a democratic society. The religiosity of youths will show how strong the urge of students is for either segregation from or interaction and compromise with students of different religious backgrounds. Is it possible that the students relate the dialogue in the classroom to dialogue in the society? How far is it possible for them to perceive religious diversity and practise tolerance towards them?

Islam (Ursula Günther)

Introduction

Muslim groups initially appeared in public matters during the uprisings of the 1970's. Since that time they have claimed political and social responsibility and to be part of the formation of a rapidly changing society.

South African Muslims do not form a monolithic block, as they originate from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Muslims from south-east Asia, and their descendants mixed with other ethnic groups, became part of apartheid's "Coloureds", in contrast to the Muslims from mainly India who were classified as "Indians". The Muslim congregations and organisations have different religious orientations, including reformed, orthodox and Islamist. Additionally we find several influential socially orientated groups with different political trends. The relationship between some of the groups has become tense, and also somewhat hostile, after the end of apartheid.

The Muslims in South Africa constitute about 2—3 % of the entire population, and equal about 800.000 citizens (some estimates go up to 1.2 million). They face different conditions compared to

Muslim minorities in other countries. This even applies for some countries with a Muslim majority: South African Muslim women, for example, are not forced to veil their heads due to social pressures as in other Muslim countries, while women also preach in a reform congregation.

Objectives and approach

The main target of the project will be an analysis of political, social and religious structures, the scope of action and the influence on society by different Muslim groups and organisations in the crucial phase of the apartheid-regime (1976—1989). In order to reach a differentiated picture of the relevance of Muslim groups in the transition process of South Africa we decided to adopt an inner and outer perspective. This will bring together an Islamic, religious perspective with a political approach. In order to arrive at a complete evaluation of the relevance of Muslim groups and to consider its relevance for other countries, the analysis will be located in the historical, socio-economic and political context of South Africa.

Initially, we want to portray the individual Muslim groups and organisations in a differentiated way: their structure under the apartheid-regime, the actions, and if and how resistance against the regime was articulated. We will focus on the differences between “pure” religious orientated groups and those that deliberately adopted a political approach. The inner conflicts and tensions between the reformed, orthodox and Islamist groups within the Muslim community will be analysed. Of special interest will be the question as to which groups collaborated with the apartheid-regime, and which associated with the anti-apartheid organisations, and how this orientation was legitimated. This will show if the divisions within the current Muslim community are religiously or politically motivated.

A similar study will also be important for political changes after 1989. Between 1989 and 1994 the possibilities for active participation for ethnic and religiously marginalised groups increased, while simultaneously the solidarity with other religious and ethnic groups

against the oppressive apartheid-system decreased. Furthermore, the identity of the Muslim community was de-linked from its status as non-white citizens. Therefore, the process of identifying self and other religious and ethnic groups shifted and was re-established. Additional aspects and questions for our analysis will be:

- How did Muslim groups influence the negotiation process in the period 1989—1994?
- Were elements of the Muslim legal system implemented in the transitional constitution and considered in the protection of minorities?
- The formation of Muslim political parties, the voting behaviour of Muslims during the first democratic elections.
- The institutionalisation of Muslim groups in the context of reorganisation, which can be observed, for example, in the participation in local administration or the establishment of own media sources.

The interdependency of Islamic studies and political studies will be shown. On the level of institutions and organisations the following questions will be interesting:

Forms of organisation and aims, ideological orientation, social constitution, participation in anti-apartheid organisations (e. g. African National Congress—ANC, United Democratic Front—UDF, Pan African Congress—PAC) and in governmental structures (e. g. Three chamber parliament, local administration). This will provide evidence of the willingness for co-operation with the government.

From an Islamic studies perspective, it would be illuminating to compare the inner tensions and conflicts with other countries and regions where Islam is the dominant religion. In this respect we believe that an intensive observation of the Islamic discourse in and outside of South Africa will play a key-role. This will also help to explain the Muslim self-perception and image (e. g.: What role does the pan-Islamic element play in creating the South African

Muslim identity, which ignores national and nationalistic approaches in comparison to the universal Muslim approach? How important is the national South African context, regarding especially the different ethnic background and history of the Muslim groups, which led to different forms of Islam?)

One regional focus will be the Cape Flats as a spatial expression of urban development of religious identity.

This project will establish a differentiated picture of the socio-political functions of Islam for transition in South Africa and the democratisation process. Additionally it gives the possibility to find a new interpretation of Islam, which differs from the "traditional" perception of Islam. Depending on the outcome of social consolidation in South Africa, it is also possible that the South African variation could provide a model for other countries.

Social space processes in South African cities (Jürgen Ossenbrügge)

The problem of urbanisation in Third World countries has become more relevant in recent scientific research. The main reason for this trend are fast growth, especially of the big metropolitan areas and the problems linked to this phenomena such as high unemployment, poverty, hunger, increase of public violence, loss of social and cultural values, and environmental pollution.

The legacy of apartheid compounds the problems of the larger cities of South Africa. The "Apartheid City" is a unique, infamous and cynical way of locating space for political purposes. Spatial division was used as an instrument for enforcing a discriminatory and inhuman form of rule.

The social and regional segregation in South African cities can be valued as a macro-spatial evidence for Foucault's microphysics of power.

The debate that started in the early 1990's regarding the transformation of city-development can be characterised in two ways.

The first, based on liberal principles of reformation and optimisation of economic potential, was supposed to benefit the entire urban population through so-called “trickle-down-effects”. In this model, it becomes more relevant to increase the competitive nature of cities, supported by the norm of “non-racialism” (cf. Beavon, Corbett and Dewar in: Smith 1992). The following statement can be seen as a paradigm for this model: “The smooth functioning of cities is widely recognised as the key to economic growth in developing countries” (Corbett 1992:258). The structure of the transforming cities, which includes at the same time the localisation of fields of conflict, is characterised by Beavon as follows:

- the “grey” city-centres have the tendency to develop into slums;
- the “white” suburbs develop persistent mechanisms of segregation;
- the “black” townships face the problems of overpopulation, missing financial capacities and great deficits in the legitimisation of the political-administrative institutions;
- the mainly “black” squatter-camps lack legal legitimisation and basic infrastructures.

The second model of the city more accurately defines the legacy of apartheid. The main thesis of this position is that the ethnic categorisation of the city tends to disregard the underlying socio-economic reasons for development, covered as it is up by the discourse over distinguishable “races”. Articulated in the magazine “Urban Forum”, the model stresses that existing structural inequalities of the South African society and assumes that the growing economy will not solve the existing problem of social disparity.

Based on these two diverse positions, we find great differences in the evaluation of the general development of certain metropolitan areas. This diversity appears in specific evaluations of the general transformation problems, as well in actual attempts to find solutions for particular local problems. The focus of our research

will be on changes in the social and spatial segregation in society of Cape Town, regarding the basic needs of living and working. We want to investigate the forms of urbanisation through specific case studies that contributed to the general post-apartheid debate. One special emphasis will be the religious identity as a factor of residential segregation. We want to identify those transformation processes that promote a new social and spatial coherence. The analysis will be based on studies of residential segregation; developments in the informal sector; and interviews with political planners of the city regarding their plans and visions for the city.

African Independent Churches and African Traditional Religions (Andreas Heuser, Erhard Kamphausen)

This section outlines some aspects of the projects "Churches in the process of social, political and cultural transition in South Africa" and "The significance of African Traditional Religions for the transition process in South Africa".

Both research projects deal with the self-perception of different religious movements and aim to analyse their functions in and their contribution to social transformation processes in South Africa. The first project concentrates on the African Independent (Instituted) Churches (AIC), which from their beginnings generated a coherent symbol system expressing a potential opposition to white rule in church and society. At the present time they constitute the most dynamic Christian movement in Southern Africa with still increasing numbers.

The second project focuses on the role of the African Traditional Religions (ATR), a socio-religious phenomenon, which in the past has been either marginalised or misinterpreted in religious and social studies. Almost one third of South Africa's black population adheres in some way or other to practices and beliefs which are rooted in African Traditional Religions. Both projects are based on

the hypothesis that the religious movements AIC and ATR played and play an important (possibly ambivalent) role in the complex transition process from apartheid to democracy.

Concerning the analysis of the AIC we choose different methodological perspectives which are interrelated: In a historical analysis we intend to reconstruct the early history of "Ethiopianism" as the first manifestation of the search for ecclesiastical independence in South Africa (cf. Kamphausen 1976, 1985; Tembe 1985). This will be followed by an analysis of "Zionism", which today expresses the most vibrant sphere within the spectrum of the AIC (cf. Becken 1985; Kiernan 1977, 1994, 1995; Oosthuizen 1986; Oosthuizen/Kitshoff/Dube 1994; Daneel 1971, 1974, 1988, 1993). The "Zionist" churches differ to a larger degree than the "Ethiopian" churches from the traditions of orthodox or so-called mainline Christianity. They adopted and innovated elements of the given cultural resources and religious symbolism which they blended with biblical worldviews. In our research we concentrate on the "ibandla lama Nazaretha", one of the largest independent churches in Southern Africa founded by the "Zulu Prophet" Isaiah Shembe and which draws its main constituency from the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The history of the "ibandla lama Nazaretha", its structures of leadership and its rituals and belief system are well known to the researchers who are in close contact with representatives of this church and who are experienced in regular field research.

The project intends to carry out empirical studies to get closer insights on the role of the AIC regarding the present violent political conflicts in KwaZulu-Natal.

The research project on the ATR will be located in the same geographical area of KwaZulu-Natal. We interpret the ATR as a world view and life perception which, like any religious tradition comprises expressive symbols, rituals and myths that do not have a fixed meaning, thus empowering its adherents to respond creatively to new socio-historical contexts. Basic elements in the belief system of the ATR stress the reality of a supreme Divinity, creator and

source of all being and the veneration of ancestors. Ancestors are respected as the guardians of tradition who communicate their will to the living through visions, dreams and oracles. ATR emphasise the crucial role of the community (of living, dead and unborn) in which the individual personality is fully incorporated. Important religious functionaries are traditional healers who cure diseases by expelling evil spirits and other impersonal spiritual forces (“witchcraft”) which interfere constantly with human existence and constitute a threat to the integrity of community.

Apartheid preserved a certain notion of the ATR portraying them as backward and superstitious expressions of Bantu tribal religions. Until the 80’s the adherents of the ATR (“pagans”) were by and large perceived as some kind of “conversion mass”: It was believed that they had to be converted to Christianity in order to turn them into useful participants in South Africa’s modern economical and societal structures (Cook 1987). In the 90’s one observes a significant change in the public discourse concerning the evaluation of autochthone religious concepts in the reconstruction of a post-apartheid society. We assume that some of the basic assets of the ATR’s world perception will increasingly become relevant in the public and political debate. Reference can be made to holistic concepts of communal life, corporate personality (“ubuntu”) and the dignity which originates in the cultural identity based on the once despised African cultural traditions. The evolving discourse on “African Renaissance” seems to draw its power and importance from ATR’s rich pool of life interpretations and innovative potential.

We refer to earlier research methods which interpret the world view of the ATR as a complex religious-cultural ensemble that originates in historical transformation processes. We argue that ATR react to social transitions in a dynamic gesture legitimising these processes and even initiating them.

Both mainline churches and ATR do not make use of the reservoir of their religious forms of expressions in a static, timeless and a historic manner, but respond rather creatively by giving social changes

a consistent and controllable profile to its adherents (cf. Sundermeier 1975, 1990, 1994, 1996; Olupona 1991; Oosthuizen 1986, 1991; Comaroff/Comaroff 1993; Kiernan, 1977, 1994, 1995; Elphick/Davenport 1997; Chidester 1992, 1997; Uka 1991).

In our research we give preference to one of ATR's major subsystems ("healing") and focus on the role of its religious specialists: the traditional healers. Their self-understanding and function will be analysed in the social transition from apartheid to democracy. In this way our research will critically evaluate a once marginalised but now scientifically rehabilitated part of reality within the lives of numerous South Africans (cf. Kritzinger 1993; Kiernan 1994, 1995; Chidester 1996).

III. Co-operation with South African Colleagues (Wolfram Weisse)

Our research topics have been discussed, evaluated and improved in a very intensive exchange process with colleagues from South African universities and several NGO's. In this process we synchronised our research fields with our South African colleagues to cover more research areas and to avoid a doubling of research work. Therefore, for example, we decided to exclude the active research on the English-speaking churches, such as the Methodist church and the Anglican church, the church to which the prominent Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu belongs. The contribution of these churches to public life in the last decades is researched intensively within South Africa (e. g. de Gruchy, Cochrane) and we can use these sources for our own research and studies. In some of the projects, we have come across great interest among South African colleagues who are not able to devote themselves to such issues at the time due to more urgent current issues in South Africa. We will continue to engage them actively through the research process.

As part of the collaborative exchange, we are planning that some South African colleagues will come to Germany, do research

there and compare the findings to the South African situation (e. g. the research on Islam in Germany by South African colleagues).

We would like to emphasise the importance of co-operative research with our South African colleagues for the validity of research-work. Such a co-operation depends on a mutual and respectful dialogue: a “dialogical” research approach. Due to the dearth of literature on international scientific research co-operation I would like to give a short outline of our proposed research co-operation. A dialogical approach of research is characterised by participation and reciprocity, by process of orientation and co-operative interpretation and by equality and transparency in an interdisciplinary team.

1) Participation and Reciprocity:

Research contents and methods in the particular research fields will not be implemented without prior consultation with our South African colleagues, so that the interests and aims of both the South African and Hamburg researchers can be considered at a very early time. Research work is not restricted in one direction, e. g. the traditional pattern of European researchers going to Africa, collecting the data and producing books back in Europe. Basic research has to open up to fundamental questions that are posed and analysed in Africa as well as in Europe by European and African colleagues. The process must be guided by a participatory, co-operative and reciprocal ethic.

2) Process orientation and co-operative interpretation:

It is an essential aspect of our approach to maintain regular exchange about our work in a structured scientific process. In the age of modern communication it is possible to have a regular and quick exchange of papers and ideas over great distances. This will allow an immediate collective, comparative and co-operative interpretation and evaluation of collected information. This will allow us, and if necessary to correct, refocus or add to our research projects, something that was normally only done

after a three to five year research period. Minor questions and issues will be dealt with before the work-visits and symposia, so that these meetings can be more effective by focusing on the important questions and issues. The exchange will make a co-operative interpretation of the material possible on the basis of the actual research status. Thus we are able to include in the process different perspectives, including different theories, methods and disciplines. A competitive approach towards different ways of interpretation seems a better approach than falling back on abstract discourse-models.

- 3) Equality and Transparency in an interdisciplinary Team-Work: Such a research approach is only possible if based on teamwork that treats all members involved as equals while offering the advantage of the different disciplines involved in the research-process. This means in particular that all members involved in the research project will have access to the entire material collected during the research process and the right to comment on it. It also includes the self-imposed duty to write and distribute work-papers (progress-reports) and to comment on the progress-reports of the directly co-operating colleagues. This approach rests on transparency and active participation in the dialogue-process, irrespective of the differences of hierarchical position or discipline. The equality aspect will also play an important role in the evaluation of the material. We want to document the entire range of approaches and perspectives in a variety of joint publications in South Africa and Hamburg.

It should be possible on the basis of these briefly sketched principles of dialogue-orientated research to bring about change in the western research tradition that regards its own preconditions and aims as absolute. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu mentions in this connection the necessity for a conversion of the own view. It is fundamental for the sociological research to see things with "some-

body else's eyes": "This is not possible without a real conversion, a metanoia, a mental revolution, a change of the entire view on the social world" (Bourdieu 1996:284—85). He demands a "break ... with the common sense, with the usual ordinary and scientific reasoning", in order to establish the necessary "revolution of the personal view, to break away from the pre-constructed" (Bourdieu 1996:285). In this research-sketch and co-operation we are following Bourdieu and trying to go a step further with our international and dialogical research co-operation between colleagues from South Africa and Hamburg. The first step towards this research co-operation has been taken.

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