Basic Income Grant Towards Poverty Alleviation In Namibia

A discourse analysis of conceptions of poverty and poverty alleviation within the BIG Coalition

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Master (one year) Thesis in Social and Cultural Analysis Year 2010

ISRN: LiU-ISV/SKA-A—10/07–SE

Linköpings universitet
Institutionen för samhälls- och välfärdsstudier
**Titel**
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**Sammanfattning**
Abstract
Namibia is one of the most unequal countries in the world and has high rates of poverty. In the thesis the proposal for a basic income grant as a strategy for poverty alleviation in Namibia is analyzed. The study is based on six interviews with the Basic Income Grant Coalition in Namibia and their four publications. The theoretical and methodological framework is Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis and social theory of discourse. Conceptions about the economical and political situation of Namibia in relation to inequality are discussed, as well as the image of the desired citizen in neo-liberal societies. Poverty is conceptualized as a trap where the BIG is regarded as a way out from poverty to a situation of confidence, engagement and economic activity. Contemporary classifications and means testing for social grants are problematized as inefficient and discriminative. The BIG is regarded as right in the context of the big inequalities in Namibia. It is suggested that the BIG Coalition with the proposal for the grant also offers alternative conceptions about Namibia and about the possibilities for change in the situation of poverty.

**Nyckelord**
Keywords
Poverty, poverty alleviation, poverty reduction, basic income grant, Namibia, critical discourse analysis, citizen
Preface

During the time of my stay here in Namibia, the country celebrated twenty years of independence. The weeks before the 21st of March was occupied with seminars, lectures and public discussions about the value of this day, or rather, the value of the two decades since independence. I found myself in the middle of a celebration I did not fully get all the dimensions of. The time here in Namibia has however widened my understanding of the importance of the day and of the twenty years there after. It feels like a privilege to be here in Namibia, especially during the time of the celebration when different historical epochs somehow meet and are valued and reflected upon.

I am grateful to a number of people.

First of all, I would like to thank the staff at the Desk for Social Development in Windhoek who helped me with so much during my search for informants. Many thanks to all the informants who gave me some of their precious time for the interviews.

I would like to thank Magnus Berg, at the University of Linköping, for all the good advices concerning the thesis, as well as the time here in Namibia. But especially, thank you for everything that you have done for the exchange program.

Tom Fox, Volker Winterfeldt and Lucy Edwards, thank you for the guidance and kind support during the time in Namibia and at the University of Namibia.

Kenneth Petersson, at the University of Linköping, I would like to thank you for your advices before the writing of this thesis.

The Linnaeus-Palme Grant and Swedbank’s- Sparbanksstiftelsen’s Alfa International Grants, thank you for making this exchange possible.

Elise Jansson, I am so grateful for all the good and many conversations we have had about our work with our thesis and our stay in Namibia. Thank you for a wonderful time in Namibia and for everything that we have shared. I’m so glad that we did this, together!

Caroline, Joakim and Elise thank you for your friendship, for the good time we have had in the house and on our trips around Namibia. Better housemates do not exist!

Family and friends in Sweden and in Namibia, thank you for your friendship and for your support and encouragement.

Sofia Littmarck
Windhoek, 17th of May 2010
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AVR - Antiretroviral (treatment)
BIG - Basic Income Grant
CBN - Cost of Basic Needs
CCN - Council of Churches Namibia
CDA - Critical Discourse Analysis
DiSD - Desk for Social Development
ELCRN - Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LAC - Legal Assistance Centre
LaRRI - Labour Recourse and Research Institute
NamPost - Namibian Post Office
NAMTAX - Namibian Tax Consortium
NANASO - Namibian Network of AIDS Service Organisations
NANGOF (Trust) - Namibian Non-Governmental Forum (Trust)
NDP3 - Third National Development Plan
NGO - Non-Governmental Organization
NUNW - National Union of Namibian Workers
NYC - National Youth Council Namibia
RPRP - Rural Poverty Reduction Program
SIDA - Swedish International Development Authority
SVT - Sveriges Television (The Swedish Television)
SWAPO - South West African People Organization
TB - Tuberculosis
UN - United Nations
VAT - Value Added Tax
WCC - World Council of Churches
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Introduction

Very recent, on the 21st of March this year, Namibia celebrated twenty years of independence. These twenty years are often brought up in public discussions and debates as well as in conversations I have had with people here in Namibia about poverty and poverty reduction. Namibia is today a country with very high levels of poverty, yet classified as a middle-income country. The gap between rich and poor is big and Namibia is in fact one of the most unequal counties in the world. Before independence the Namibian people suffered from colonialism and apartheid. If twenty years is a long time or if the country still is in the beginning of creating a state with security for the people, are questions that are asked. Could twenty years “excuse” the high poverty levels or could more have been done for the people during these years? There are different answers to this depending on from which point you look at it. Twenty years is a short time compared to the many years of colonialism and apartheid, which left a lot for the country to deal with. However, the independence did not bring any major changes for the poor and has still not done that up to today.

The question about the poverty level is however debated and many civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations are working to find ways to reduce poverty and inequalities and bring about change in the society. In this thesis I focus on the Basic Income Grant (BIG) Coalition in Namibia and their proposal for a basic income grant in the country as a means for reducing poverty and redistribute income. Just a few months before I started with my fieldwork, the BIG Coalition’s pilot project in Otjivero-Omitara was closed. The last report from the project was published about six months earlier, which together with other publications from the coalition, as well as interviews I have done, constitute the material I analyze in this thesis.

The Namibian government has heard the proposal, but has not given any signs of actual plans to implement it. The pilot project is however not regarded as the last word said from the coalition who today works on new strategies for the BIG to be implemented for all Namibia’s two million citizens. The idea of a basic income grant for all citizens without any demands of counter-claims is in many countries of the world controversial, as well as in Namibia. The ideas that build up this proposal are therefore particularly interesting to study and are also a focal point in my analysis.

Purpose

My purpose is to study how the Basic Income Grant Coalition speaks about their proposal and project for a basic income in Namibia with a focus on how they conceptualize, relate to, reject or try to transform structures, discourses and ideas about poor, poverty and poverty alleviation in Namibia, and further, how this can be related to structures in the Namibian society.

Questions relating to this purpose are: - How is the situation of poverty and poverty alleviation in Namibia described related to the BIG proposal? - How are poor and their situation of poverty conceptualized with a relation to the BIG proposal? – What ideas about the relation between the citizens and the society are expressed in relation to poverty alleviation and the BIG proposal?
- How can the proposal for a basic income be related to structures and social processes in the Namibian society?

**Demarcations and Material**

I have with my purpose delimited the areas that I include in my thesis. I focus on the language and the ideas behind the proposal, what ideas that make it possible, how it is argued for, and how that can be related to the Namibian society. I will not make an evaluation of the BIG proposal or study how it could be implemented in Namibia, nor will I present all the results the BIG Coalition has found from the pilot project. I instead focus on some dimensions that I have seen have an important role in the material. I will also relate them to social structures and processes in the Namibian society through integrating theories about contemporary societies.

Even the material as such delimits the area I study to the coalition’s views and to the texts that the coalition has produced itself. The material I use in this thesis are the four texts the BIG Coalition has published at their website. It is one resource book from 2005, one presentation for the UN in 2007, and two reports from the pilot project written in 2008 and 2009. I have also done six interviews with seven representatives from the different organizations within the coalition. I will further describe the procedure of my interviews and the nature of the texts below in the method section.

**Disposition**

In order to answer the purpose, I will begin with a background to the situation of poverty and inequality in Namibia and to the contemporary poverty reduction strategies in the chapter *Poverty and Inequality in Namibia – A Background*. In the following chapter *Basic Income Grant Coalition in Namibia*, I give a background to the BIG Coalition and its pilot project. The third chapter, *Theoretician Reflections and Earlier Research* deals with my theoretical framework, which is the critical discourse analysis (CDA). In that chapter I discuss my use of the theory of governmentality for an understanding of how the subject is conceptualized in the contemporary neo-liberal societies. I also discuss the situation of civil society in the neo-liberal context and end the chapter with a short presentation of the general idea of a basic income grant. The final chapter before the analysis is *Methodology* where I discuss my approach regarding my material and procedure in collecting the material. I also go deeper into how I have used CDA in my analysis of the material. I end the chapter with reflections over my role as a researcher, with a focus on the situation of being a Swedish student studying the Namibian society, and last my ethical approach.

The *Analysis* begins with the section “A Rich Country With Deep Inequalities” where I discuss how the coalition describes the situation of, and politics around, poverty and inequality in Namibia today and how it opens up for change in the material. In the second section, “The Active (Poor) Citizen”, I discuss how the coalition describes the poor and the situation of poverty related to the impacts of the BIG. I also relate this discussion to the image of the desirable citizen in contemporary neo-liberal societies. In “The Relation Between the State and the Citizens”, I discuss how the BIG Coalition discusses the relation between the state and the
citizens concerning BIG as a right for all and where they disaffiliate with means tested grants and classification of people. In the final section “A Final Discussion” I end the thesis with a summary of the analysis and conclude with a discussion of my results.

**Poverty and Inequality in Namibia – A Background**

Namibia has been an independent country from colonialism and the apartheid system for twenty years this year. The inequalities in the country are largely an heritage from the colonial time, but according to Henning Melber, the development since independence concerning equality, poverty alleviation and social security has not gone in the right direction and the politics have not always supported those most in need, but favoured the wealthy.¹

If measured per capita, Namibia is a middle-income country.² However the statistics show that the resources are not equally spread over the population or the country. The poverty level is in fact very high, but there are many various figures on how high it really is. This can perhaps be explained by the different methods used for measuring poverty.

The latest report on poverty in Namibia is *A review of poverty and inequality in Namibia* from the National Planning Commission and Central Bureau of Statistics. This review was published in 2008 and the statistics was collected during 2003/2004. With the review a new method for measuring poverty in Namibia, Cost of Basic Needs (CBN), was used, where in previous reports a calculation using a relative share of food expenditure in a household was used to measure poverty. With the new method, CBN, a poverty line is set after the cost for a food basket enabling a household to meet a minimum level of nutritional requirement. After that the expenses for the necessary non-food items are added. Households who spend more than this are considered as non-poor and households who spend less are considered as poor. According to the review the CBN better capture informal activities and own production, and thereby is more suitable for developing countries. CBN has however a money-metric approach, which thereby doesn’t include other possible dimensions of poverty.³ In the latest report, 27,6 percent of the population was regarded poor and 13,8 percent of the population was severely poor. Poor households spend less than N$262,45 per adult and month and severely poor spend less N$184,56 per month and adult.⁴

The report shows that there are more women considered as poor as well as severely poor, 30,4 percent poor women compared to 25,8 percent men, and 15,1 percent severely poor women and 12,9 percent severely poor men. The review also shows that there are more incidents of poverty

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¹ Henning Melber, (2007a)"Poverty, politics, power and privilege” in Henning Melber (red.), *Transitions in Namibia*, (Uppsala, 2007), p. 110f
⁴ Ibid., p. 6
in the old and young ages of the life, which is explained by the better opportunities to get a job in
the middle of the life.\textsuperscript{5}

According to the review, the poverty levels are much higher in the rural areas than in the urban
areas, 38,2 percent poor and 19,1 percent severely poor in the rural areas compared to 12,0
percent poor and 6,0 percent severely poor in the urban areas.\textsuperscript{6} It is also of importance to look at
the differences between the different groups within Namibia since poverty is not equally spread
over all ethnic or language groups. The measure is done after what main language that is spoken
in households. Oshiwambo is the largest language group in Namibia and has the highest poverty
share of all language groups with 50,5 percent of all poor. The Khoisan language group is a small
language group but has the highest levels of poverty within the language group with 59,7 percent
poor and 39,0 percent severely poor. The Oshiwambo language group has a share of 28,5 percent
poor and 8,11 percent severely poor within the group, which is close to the average poverty level
in Namibia. Other language groups with high incidents of poverty is the Nama/Damara group
and Rukavango, while groups who has English, German and Afrikaans as their main language are
the least poor.\textsuperscript{7}

These statistics show that the incidents of poverty are not equally spread over the country or
the population and the Gini-coefficient for Namibia was 2003/2004 0,63 which points at a very
unequal country. The Gini-coefficient measures the share of consumption expenditure in a
country and takes a value between 0 and 1. If a country would be totally equal between all
households it would measure 0. However, in Namibia 40 percent of the households with the
lowest expenditure (51,97 percent of the total population) consume 8 percent of the total
consumption in the country, while the richest 10 percent of the population (5,62 of the
population), consume 53,01 percent of the total consumption. This places Namibia as one of the
most unequal countries in the world.\textsuperscript{8}

Poverty is connected to many dimensions of society such as HIV/AIDS. According to Lucy
Edwards, poverty and social inequality are the structural drivers behind the spread of HIV/AIDS
but she also points at how HIV/AIDS at the same time increases the levels of poverty through
economic losses in the households due to increased levels of mortality. Namibia is ranked as one
of the five most AIDS-affected countries in the world with 19,9 percent of the population
infected with HIV and where poor, women and the youth are the most affected groups. Edwards
sees a clear link between the fact that HIV/AIDS strikes poor countries as well as the poorest
people hardest and the high inequalities on global, national, local as well as on household levels.\textsuperscript{9}

Poverty levels also have the obvious link to the unemployment levels in Namibia even though
employment per se does not imply salaries high enough for a reasonable living standard. The

\textsuperscript{5} Central Bureau of Statistics/National Planning Commission, (2008), p. 8f
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 9f
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 13f
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., p. 34ff
(ed.) Transitions in Namibia, (Uppsala), p. 230ff
figures concerning the levels of unemployment depend on how employment is measured and defined. According to Herbert Jauch, Lucy Edwards and Braam Cupido, the unemployment rate is 34-37 percent, where 70 percent of the unemployed are women. Because of the lack of social security net many women thus depend on others for their livelihoods. In addition, substantially fewer women than men work full-time.\textsuperscript{10}

\textbf{Contemporary Strategies for Poverty Alleviation and Development}

With the dimensions of poverty and inequality presented above, I will in this chapter give a background to some of the measures that have been taken to reduce poverty in Namibia.

\textbf{Vision 2030 and National Development Plan}

Namibia Vision 2030 is a vision and a long-term plan for the development of Namibia based on eight main goals and objectives aiming at 2030. The objectives cover most aspects of the Namibian society, as well as the poverty. One of the objectives for the vision is to “(e)nsure that Namibia is a fair, gender responsive, caring and committed nation, in which all citizens are able to realise their full potential, in a safe and decent living environment.”\textsuperscript{11} The objective has a sub-vision specific for poverty reduction: “Poverty is reduced to the minimum, the existing pattern of income-distribution is equitable and disparity is at the minimum.”\textsuperscript{12} In the section for poverty reduction it is noted that the economic growth of the country not necessarily guarantee a poverty reduction. Minimising the disparity in the distribution of income and ensuring all Namibians a decent income are some of the many objectives for the vision regarding poverty reduction.\textsuperscript{13}

The \textit{Third National Development Plan} (NDP3), has the aim to translate the \textit{Vision 2030} into a more concrete plan and actions, and to make it possible to achieve the goals. In the NDP3 the strategies for social welfare in Namibia are more evolved. Among other things, the plan points at increasing the amounts of the welfare grants already implemented (see below), synchronizing the welfare strategies and at introducing special rates for people who cannot afford basic services such as water and sanitation.\textsuperscript{14} According to the NDP3 Vol1, the millennium goals for 2015 is to reduce the population living in relative poverty to 19 percent and people in extreme poverty to 4,5 percent (measured by how much of the total expenditure used for food).\textsuperscript{15}

The NDPs and the \textit{Vision 2030} has however received critique for putting up unrealistic plans and for not even closely achieving the goals. Melber means that little has been done to control

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{10} Herbert Jauch, Lucy Edwards & Braam Cupido, (2009), \textit{A Rich Country With Poor People}, (Windhoek), p. 36ff
\bibitem{11} Office of the President, (2004), p. 40
\bibitem{12} Ibid., p. 104
\bibitem{13} Ibid., p. 101-108
\bibitem{14} Office of the President/National Planning Commission, (2008), \textit{Third National Development Plan} (NDP3) Vol1, (Windhoek), p. 209f
\bibitem{15} Ibid., p. 299
\end{thebibliography}
whether the goals actually are achieved and that some of the expressed critiques are about the focus being too much on reviewing the plans rather than actually implement them.\textsuperscript{16}

**Poverty reduction programs**

Namibia has and has had some programs for reducing poverty, for example the Rural Poverty Reduction Program (RPRP) that was implemented between 2005 and 2009. The aim with the program was to reduce poverty in the rural areas through supporting the land reforms, to develop access to water and roads, and to invest in rural economic development such as small enterprises, and develop community based tourism.\textsuperscript{17}

In the NDP3 Vol2, the programs implemented for achieving the visions are presented and, among many others, the Poverty Reduction Program with the aim to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger focusing the rural areas. The program has three components: increasing the proportion of individuals with appropriate and affordable shelter, improved access to sanitation and microfinance for stimulating income-generating activities.\textsuperscript{18}

**Contemporary social grants and benefits**

Beside visions and programs Namibia has four main social benefits, which are; maternity leave, sick leave, death benefit and medical benefit stipulated in the Social Security Act from 1994. The benefits are all connected to formal employment, which means that the grants only are paid out to employees. The maternity leave, for example, guarantees the right of four payable weeks before expected birth and eight weeks after actual birth for an employed woman.\textsuperscript{19} There is also a national old age pension of N$450 (≈SEK450) a month to persons above the age of 60 years. According to Jauch et al., there are several new grants introduced in the country such as child support.\textsuperscript{20} However, since Namibia has very high rates of unemployment and many people have informal employments, very few can get assistance from most of these benefits and many people are therefore left outside the social security net.

**Basic Income Grant Coalition in Namibia**

It is in the context of the high poverty levels and inequality in Namibia that the Basic Income Grant Coalition works for to the government of Namibia to implement a basic income grant for all Namibian citizens. I will in this chapter give a brief background to the coalition as well as to the proposal and the pilot project in Otjivero-Omitara.

\textsuperscript{16} Melber, (2007a), p. 113ff
\textsuperscript{17} Office of the President/National Planning Commission (2006), *Rural Poverty Reduction Program (9 ACP NAM 012)*, (Windhoek)
\textsuperscript{18} Office of the President/National Planning Commission, (2008), *Third National Development Plan (NDP3) Vol2*, (Windhoek), p. 112ff
\textsuperscript{19} Social Security Act, (1994), p. 28f
\textsuperscript{20} Jauch et al., (2009), p. 52f
The NAMTAX Consortium’s Proposal for a Basic Income Grant

In 2002 the Namibian Tax (NAMTAX) Consortium proposed to the Namibian government to consider and give further research on a minor basic income grant in Namibia. The NAMTAX Consortium was appointed by the Namibian Government in 2001 to, among other things, review the tax system and give recommendations for improvements.21

The proposal implied a grant for all Namibian citizens from the age of 6 years until pension to redistribute income in Namibia and to reduce the high levels of poverty.22 The consortium argued that a universal basic income grant of N$70 (=SEK70) per month to the Namibian citizens would be the most suitable, efficient and sustainable solution for the money to reach the poor. According to the proposal the grant would be financed mainly through an increase in Value Added Tax (VAT), which means that those who spend more contribute more to the grant while those who spend less benefit more from getting the grant. However, everyone would contribute to it and get money back from it, though, according to the consortiums estimations, 85% of the population would get more from the grant than they would pay for it.23

The BIG Coalition

Building on the NAMTAX proposal the Basic Income Grant Coalition was established in the beginning of 2005 to work united for a basic income grant. In the forefront of building the coalition was the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), which also hosts the Desk for Social Development (DfSD) where the main work for the basic income grant proposal runs.24

The BIG Coalition unites in the work for a universal basic income grant of at least 100N$ (=SEK100) per month for all Namibian citizens as a civil right. In the proposal the grant should be paid out until the age of 60 years when the right to a pension comes into effect. The coalition also unites in the claim that the grant should be unconditional and financed through a reform in the tax system. The base for this proposal is, according to their website, their assurance that reducing poverty and inequality should be a top priority in Namibia and that social justice is a prerequisite for reaching economic growth. They also see that poverty reduction go hand-in-hand with reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and that the BIG grant can promote economic empowerment and free people from the immured situation of poverty.25

The coalition consists of individual organizations as well as umbrella organizations from the civil society. These are:

22 Ibid., p. 16
24 Basic Income Grant Coalition, http://www.bignam.org/, from the Internet 13th of March, 2010
• ELCRN, already mentioned above, who got its present name after independence in 1990, but was built up from German missionaries in 1842. ELCRN runs different projects around Namibia and the work in the BIG Coalition is one of them.\footnote{World Council of Churches, \url{http://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/regions/africa/namibia/evangelical-lutheran-church-in-the-republic-of-namibia.html}, from the internet 10\textsuperscript{th} of March, 2010}

• The Council of Churches (CCN) is an ecumenical organization that was founded in 1978 and, according to them, serves to unite and care for the different Christian churches and the people in Namibia, in faith and in socioeconomic issues for vulnerable people.\footnote{World Council of Churches, \url{http://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/regions/africa/namibia/ccn.html}, from the internet 10\textsuperscript{th} of March, 2010}

• The Namibian NGO Forum (NANGOF)/(NANGOF Trust) was founded in 2007 and is an umbrella organization and a platform for different NGOs in Namibia. Through combined recourses the network works for different development issues as well as possibilities for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to work in Namibia.\footnote{Namibian NGO Forum Trust, \url{http://www.nangoftrust.org.na/?page_id=2}, from the internet 13\textsuperscript{th} of March, 2010}

• The Namibian Network of AIDS Service Organizations (NANASO) is a network organization that works with HIV/AIDS related questions in Namibia. They work with institutions such as the United Nations (UN) agencies, different institutions in the government of Namibia and other NGOs working with HIV/AIDS.\footnote{Namibian Network of AIDS Service Organizations, \url{http://www.nanaso.com/}, from the internet 10\textsuperscript{th} of March, 2010}

• The union federation – the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), is the largest trade union in Namibia representing about 70 000 workers and is an affiliate to the ruling party South West African People Organization (SWAPO).\footnote{Herbert Jauch, (2007), “Between politics and the shop floor”, in Henning Melber (ed.) Transitions in Namibia, (Uppsala), p. 50}

• The Labour Recourse and Research Institute (LaRRI) was founded in 1998 to give support and service to the labour movement in Namibia concerning research, information and education. The research is today on gender issues within trade unions, globalisation, structural adjustment programs, collective bargaining, export and more. LaRRI also provides information about these topics, HIV/AIDS and health etcetera.\footnote{Labour Recourse and Research Institute, \url{http://www.larri.com.na/}, from the internet 10\textsuperscript{th} of March, 2010}

• The Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) mainly works with human rights in Namibia and is based on donations from different international organizations and individuals. They call them selves a public interest law firm and work with cases that have public interests and have a wider impact on the community. LAC also works with research and information about related issues.\footnote{Legal Assistance Centre, \url{http://www.lac.org.na/about/default.html}, from the internet 10\textsuperscript{th} of March, 2010}
The National Youth Council Namibia (NYC) became an active part of the BIG coalition in 2009.\textsuperscript{33} The council was established in 1994 to work for the youth in Namibia.\textsuperscript{34} They work with objectives such as empowerment of the youth, projects and education for young Namibians and also work with and give advices to politicians in youth matters.\textsuperscript{35}

**The Pilot Project In O\textsuperscript{t}jivero-Omitara**

Otjivero-Omitara lays 100km east from Windhoek and was, for two years, between January 2008 and December 2009 the village in which the coalition had its pilot project. The project is by the coalition regarded as the first step towards an implementation of the basic income grant for all Namibians.\textsuperscript{36} It is also seen as a way of showing the government that the grant could be transformed into a national programme and what positive effects that they mean would come out of a grant. The project was, according to the BIG Coalition’s website, set as an example of how economic redistribution and poverty alleviation actually can be done through direct action.\textsuperscript{37}

According to the coalition, the Otjivero settlement in the district Omitara was picked for its accessibility close to the capital Windhoek, for the size of it and for its high poverty levels. The settlement has a bad reputation for being a place for criminality. According to the coalition the settlement has many times been in conflict with farmers because of illegal hunting and collection of firewood. The settlement also suffers from high levels of TB and HIV/AIDS.\textsuperscript{38}

During the project every citizen under the age of 60 in the settlement got the universal grant of N\$100 every month without any counterclaims. The grant was paid out through the Namibian Post Office (NamPost) and an identity card called “smart card” connected to a saving account at NamPost. According to the BIG Coalition it was by this method possible for the receiver to decide how much of the grant he or she wanted to withdraw from the account or save.\textsuperscript{39} Different organizations and churches, business and individual donors, in and outside Namibia, financed the project.\textsuperscript{40}

The BIG Coalition regards the project as a success. According to their research the household poverty dropped, the levels of child malnutrition went down, people used the local clinic and

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\textsuperscript{34} National Youth Council Namibia, http://www.youthcouncil-namibia.org/, from the Internet the 13\textsuperscript{th} of March, 2010

\textsuperscript{35} National Youth Council Namibia, http://www.youthcouncil-namibia.org/page.php?p=about, from the Internet 13\textsuperscript{th} of March, 2010


\textsuperscript{37} Basic Income Grant Coalition, http://www.bignam.org/page5.html, from the Internet 13\textsuperscript{th} of March, 2010

\textsuperscript{38} Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2008), p. 15ff

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p. 17ff

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. VIIf
could pay for their visits, HIV positive persons had food to eat with their ARV-treatment (which is a necessary condition for the drug to take effect), small business were established and poverty-related crime went down. They also found, among other things, that parents could pay their children’s school fees and school uniforms.41

The pilot project has been well reported from in different medias around the world, among others the Swedish television, Sveriges Television (SVT), which in April 2009 reported from the settlement during the project.42

Theoretical Reflections and Earlier Research

For analyzing how the BIG coalition speaks about their proposal and conceptions about poverty and poverty alleviation, the critical discourse analysis is my primarily base. I will in this chapter discuss the theory on with the analytical approach is built on. I will also discuss the theory of governmentality and earlier research and perspectives on the idea of a basic income grant.

**Critical Discourse Analysis as a Theoretical Framework**

The framework for my study is Norman Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis (CDA) and social theory of discourse. As Marianne Winther Jørgensen and Louise Phillips notes, the main focus within the CDA is to study the linguistic and discursive dimensions in social and cultural phenomena in the society, as well as the processes of social change.43 How openings for social change are created is central to my study as well as the relation between the use of language and social structures in social change.

I will base my discussion on Fairclough’s social theory of discourse which is three-dimensional consisting of text, discursive practice and social practice. Firstly, discourse is a form of social practice; an act in a relation between people. It is in the use of language through which people create a relation to the world and to each other. It is a way of representing the world and making it meaningful and is thereby not a reflex of the world or reality. There is however a dialectical relationship between the social structures and discourse. The social structures and practices are formed by the discourse while they at the same time are a condition for the formation of discourse.44 Language is in Fairclough’s terms a part of the society, a socially conditioned process, that is, conditioned by other parts of the society. There is not an external relation between language and society, but an internal dialectic relationship.45 This perspective on discourse, as both

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42 Sveriges Television, Korrespondenterna, (April 2009), http://svtplay.se/v/1528999/korrespondenterna/heja_bya_far_medborgarlon?cb.a1364145,1.f,-1/pba1364142,1.f,-1/pl.v,,1528999/sb,k103503,2.f,-1, from the Internet 13th of March, 2010
45 Norman Fairclough, (1989), Language and power, (Essex), p. 22ff
reproducing social structures and as opening up for change is important since I study the language of the BIG coalition and how they speak for the BIG proposal to be implemented.

Discursive practise is the production and consumption of texts, that is how the text is built up and how it is received, where I will focus on the former. Discursive practice is a social practice and, as Fairclough emphasizes, it’s important to see the relation between the social and the discursive as dialectical to not fall in to regarding any of the dimensions as determining the other. Discursive practice contributes to reproducing the society, social identities and systems of knowledge, but also contributes to transformation of the society through for example interdiscursivity (which I will discuss later) and change in the construction of the texts.46

For studying how possibilities for change are created, the order of discourse is an important dimension. It is what Fairclough calls “(...) a network of social practices in its language aspect.”47 As Winter Jørgensen and Phillips points, the order of discourse signifies the field of different discourses attempting to be established. It is thereby an area of potential conflict.48 It is the conflict that opens up for change. The order of discourse organizes the social and how we can use the language, that is, what we can say in and about different areas of the social. It is not purely influenced by linguistics, but is also organized by other social elements and is a social organization.49 This perspective on language and on the social is important for understanding how ideas about poverty and poor are organized in the empirical material and how aims to reorganize the order can point at possibilities for change.

This brings us over to another aspect of importance for my study, which is how the use of language can be related to social practices and structures that surround and influence the coalition, some of which the coalition also tries to change. This is partly a matter of ideology, which in Fairclough’s terms is embedded in discourse and arises in societies as relations of domination between different groups as class, rich and poor, gender, and so on.50 Ideology takes the form of common-sense assumptions about what is considered as normal, natural and right at a given time in a given society. Power underlies these conventions as they legitimize existing social relations and orders as “normal”.51

Hegemony can be understood as the power over society, which always is in struggle with other economic, ideological or political ideas about how the society should be understood.52 As Fairclough argues, the hegemonic practice and hegemonic struggle takes the form of discursive practice in the use of language wherein the negotiation and the reproduction of power relations also takes place. Social and cultural change is mainly changes in discursive practice.53

46 Fairclough, (1992), p. 64f
49 Fairclough, (2003), p. 24f
50 Fairclough, (1992), p. 87ff
52 Fairclough, (1989), p. 2
Hegemony takes place in different practices and areas in society. I study how the use of language implies and expresses a struggle about definitions of society, poverty and poverty alleviation, which further has implications for how measures are taken in the society. As Fairclough points out, a naturalized discourse is effective in sustaining and reproducing hegemony. The hegemonic struggle then is about questioning the hegemony and to replace it with other conventions. How this is done is an objective for my analysis. As the grant by many is regarded as a controversial method for poverty alleviation, the coalition somehow has to change the order of discourse and thereby the hegemony. That must also be studied in relation to existing social structures, political ideologies and power relations.

Development can be seen as a battleground where ideas about what development is and how it should be organized are in constant struggle. As Fairclough, Anthony J Bebbington, Samuel Hickey and Diana C. Miltin are inspired by the Gramscian perspective on hegemony. They see “(...) the civil society as constituting an arena in which hegemonic ideas concerning the organization of economic and social life are both established and contested.” In other words, the civil society is part of the hegemonic struggle for power in the society. Bebbington et al. also mean, like Fairclough, that the state and the civil society are equally constitutive rather than separate entities and that both are shaped in relation to structural as well as historical forces.

Another matter of importance for my study is the understanding of the subject as I study how poor are depicted. Discourses contribute to the construction of social identities and to subject positions for social self and types of self, Fairclough argues. He has a dialectical approach where he sees the social subjects as formed by the discursive practices, but also capable of changing and restructuring the discursive practices. The subject is in other words not determined by the discourses. Although subjects are ideologically positioned, they can also act creatively and connect different positions and discourses in their own way and through that restructure positioning practices and structures. Transformation by the subject is therefore possible.

I will now develop my theoretical framework concerning the subject in the next section.

**The Subject Within the Governmentality Theory**

I will primarily use the governmentality theory for an understanding of how the subject, the citizen, is conceptualized in contemporary neo-liberal societies, which has effects on how poor

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55 Ibid., p. 94
57 Ibid., p. 7
58 Ibid., p. 7
59 Fairclough, (1992), p. 64
60 Ibid., p. 45
61 Ibid., p. 90f
are conceptualized. I will not focus on the technologies for governing, even if I initially need to mention them here, but rather focus on what hegemonic conceptualizations the mentality brings with it. The theory can also give an understanding for how the relation between the state and the citizen is conceptualized in contemporary societies.

The governmentality theory was first introduced by Michel Foucault and, as Jonna Johansson notes, many scholars have after him developed the theory. According to Johansson, the interest for governmentality studies has increased with the dismantling of the welfare states and the upcoming and increasing importance of the neo-liberal politics. The neo-liberal ideas were initially developed in western societies with the problematization of bureaucratic and professional power during 1970s. At that point the welfare politics were questioned and a reducing of costs became a goal. The neo-liberalism is positioned as critical to political government, but has adopted the principle that when a government failures to reach its goals, new strategies of government has to be developed.

Governmentality is a political process, but especially, as Johansson defines it, an art of guiding people to act as well as motivate them to act and is further a power without violence or direct force. What Johansson sees as a fundamental principle of governmentality in contemporary society is that the citizens are expected to make themselves competitive on the labour market. The modern government is not only perceived by the state, it’s a matter of self-government. This makes it interesting to use even for studying conceptions and ideas about the subject within a civil society organization. The ideas don’t stay inside the government.

I will study some ideas within governmentality and how they may influence the notion of poor, poverty and poverty alleviation on a civil society level, rather than the actual government. My view is that government not necessarily has to be a conscious goal, but rather an effect of conceptions about citizens and how their life is best improved. I would however like to add that I don’t regard the mentality as determining for how ideas about poverty are perceived in a neo-liberal society. It is rather, with a Fairclough approach, a matter of constant struggle about how the ideas should be understood, reversed, written off or be accepted. I see the governmentality theory as a potential way for understanding how ideas about poverty and especially poor are expressed and negotiated in struggle in contemporary Namibia.

Self-government and empowerment

According to Johansson, building on Rose, the modern politics aim to create moral subjects where the welfare is a private rather than a public concern. It is about creating good citizens and convincing citizens to take responsibility for their own lives and to be “the self-policing subjects”

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64 Johansson, (2007), p. 29
65 Ibid., p. 28
66 Fairclough, (1992), p. 50
who govern over themselves in a desirable direction. Peter Triantafillou and Mikkel Risbjerg Nielsen argues that techniques for building the self are intertwined with political aims in the society and these techniques for control and government rather lies in shaping norms and conventions of the subject, than in force and violence. It is these norms that interest me in particular. The conceptions of citizens and citizenship are important when studying poverty and poverty alleviation for understanding how “the poor” are depicted and understood, which has effects and consequences for what measures that are taken in the quest for poverty reduction.

Barbara Cruikshank develops what she calls the discourse on “self-esteem”. The concept sets a link between the individual and the society as a unit with common goals. The building of people’s self-esteem is here seen as a way of solving social problems such as poverty, crime, drug abuse and “chronic welfare dependence”. Cruikshank argues, like Johansson, that democratic government depends on individuals that recognize and act upon their own subjectivity to govern themselves, and that the individual links its personal goals to the goals of the society. This extends the political goals of participation, empowerment and collective action to the individual. A good citizen in a democracy is thereby an active, responsible and participative citizen. Self-esteem is a technology of citizenship in democratic states, which together with other citizenship technologies is developed in for example social movements and science of human development. The happy and active citizen is here a goal, as well as to get citizens that act as “their own masters”. It is this, the image of the good citizen, that I want to draw on.

Triantafillou and Risbjerg Nielsen discuss the politics of empowerment and participation, where the former might be more common in Namibia, and how it is practiced in the work for social and economic development in the “third world”. They argue that a reorientation has taken place after decades of failure of development strategies focusing on the macro-economic level such as agricultural production and water supplies. The reorientation within the development strategies implies a focus directly on the poor people and an aim to create opportunities for the people or the community to bring about change themselves. The interventions aim to empower individuals and communities with what Triantafillou and Risbjerg Nielsen call participatory practices, promoting the poor to be active and responsible citizens that, with own means, improve their lives. What they, however, argue is that the empowerment of people does not per se remove the power relations. It is nothing that happens by itself. Empowerment needs to be guided to reach the requested results. Empowerment strategies may not have the explicit aim to

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70 Ibid., p. 247
71 Triantafillou & Risbjerg Nielsen, (2001), p. 64f
72 Ibid., p. 74
govern, but I argue that the concept produce similar aims for, and images of, the subject that is the active, creative, responsible and engaged citizen.

In the context of poverty reduction the idea of empowerment has been influential in Namibia within the civil society as well as in government policies. One of many examples is Anna Muller’s and Diana Miltin’s study of a project addressing urban shelter poverty. They found that a self-help strategy was used in many different ways and areas, and that the approach in the project was that the locals themselves had to define what was best for them. They also found that one strategy was to try to build up a power within the collective to enable community action.\(^73\)

Verónica Shild discusses what she calls the “empowered consumer-citizen” from a Chilean perspective. Compared to the market-citizen, the empowered consumer-citizen is more included as a welfare consumer in the neo-liberal order. She describes neo-liberalism, not only as a political economic reality, but also as a project for transforming the society by the rules of the market, which also depends on citizens that regulates themselves.\(^74\)

**Neo-liberalism and the Civil Society**

Bruce Frayne sees a rapid change in Namibian national ideology from Marxist-Leninist to an open market approach of today. He is concerned about how the government will solve the problem of the increasing poverty and inequality using the market as a tool for economic redistribution. Decentralization and fiscal autonomy is today used as means for development with a focus on economic growth and efficiency. At the same time, Frayne notes, Namibia attempts to build up and adjust the public service in the postcolonial situation of today, promoting active and democratic participation in planning and development for a more equal society. Frayne sees a contradiction in the national ideology between the ideology of equity and justice on the one side and the open market approach on the other. He means that, so far, this combination has not had any positive impacts for the majority of the Namibian population.\(^75\) Robert A. White argues that the neo-liberal order has together with structural adjustment programs actually brought greater poverty and dependency in developing countries. He means that the order of the free-market was, after times of corrupt leaders and one-party governments in African as well as South Americans countries, regarded as the way to freedom, but White continues with arguing that neo-liberalism “(…) succeeds only to the extent that its ideological assumptions are excepted.”\(^76\)


Like Frayne, Melber is critical to how the redistribution of wealth has been promoted in Namibia. The tax system has not met any expectations of economic redistribution, but has instead favoured the wealthy and well off. Frayne suggests that the divide between rich and poor can be understood as a result from a new economic colonial order based on the neo classic conceptualization of the free market, not only globally between developed and developing countries, but also between the urban rich elite and the rural poor within Namibia.

SWAPO, the ruling party, holds a strong governing in Namibia and the opposition parties are weak. According to Melber it is rather the non-governmental organizations and civil non-party agencies that have the role of political opposition and they evolve the democratic process more than political oppositional parties do in Namibia. However, Bebbington et al. question whether the NGOs, globally, really are development alternatives today in the context of the hegemony of the neo-liberal order. Building on Cowen and Shenton, Bebbington et al. give two definitions of development: “little d” development as an unintentional and immanent process of, for example of capitalism and the neo-liberal ideas, and “big D” Development as an intentional process referring to interventions mainly in the “third world” after the colonial times. The distinguishing between different types of development should not leave out the important relations between them. As Bebbington et al. write: “Rather, it offers a means of clarifying the relationship between development policy and practice and the underlying processes of uneven development that creates exclusion and inequality for many just as they lead to enhanced opportunities for others.” The (D)evelopment is more common to be discussed in relation to NGOalternatives for intervening, such as project planning. However, NGOs can also present alternatives in relation to (d)evelopment, that is, the underlying processes, as suggesting ways for organizing the policy and economy in the society.

Bebbington et al. argue that it has been hard for the NGOs to avoid the deepening of democratization-cum-neoliberalization agenda of today, much because the neo-liberalism has incorporated some of the NGOs terminology around democracy, empowerment, poverty, participation and rights. Interesting is, as White argues, that the new social movements are trying to work against the effects of neo-liberalism, such as alienation and individualism, through a new social morality based on citizenship, participation, dialogue and human rights.
The Idea of a Basic Income Grant

The idea of a basic income grant is not new and I will in this section present some basics about the idea. However, much of the literateur written about a BIG is written from a western perspective, implying a much higher basic income grant than what is in question for Namibia.

The principles of a basic income has been suggested by different organizations and political parties around the world, but has not yet been fully adopted. Ailsa McKay means that the deep-rooted connection between work and pay, and the high value that work has in contemporary societies are some of the main reasons why a basic income has not yet fully been endorsed. The faith in work comes from the faith in the labour market as the primary source for economic and social well being. She means that a citizens’ basic income in many people’s eyes is as giving for nothing. It is also argued that it would have negative impacts on work incentives and be costly.85

“A basic income (or demogrant) is an income paid by a political community to all its members on an individual basis, without means testing or work requirement.”86, Philippe Van Parijs argues. He further describes the basic concepts as an income that should be paid out in cash regularly, individually and should be used as a supplement to, and not a substitute for, other welfare strategies such as free education. The income should be paid out at the same level for all recipients, rich or poor, irrespective of income level and since it’s funded by the tax system, it doesn’t make rich richer. Some argue for the grant to be a citizen right connected to the citizenship, as other rights, while other argue for it to be seen in a wide sense, including all legal permanent residents.87 Carole Pateman argues for a basic income as a way of strengthening the individual freedom regarding self-government and autonomy, which is central in democracies.88

Erik Olin Wright writes from class perspective and means, among other things, that a basic income could balance the power relations between employers and employees through the increased bargaining power of the employee.89 McKay, as Olin Wright, acknowledges this dimension of a potential balancing of power, but adds a gender perspective to the discussion. A basic income, she argues, can have an influence on women’s possibility to make more independent choices about their lives and have an effect for the power relations between women and men in the households.90

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87 Ibid., p. 8ff
Methodology

In this chapter I will discuss my approach and procedure in my work with the thesis. I will begin with reflections over my collection of material, such as my procedure during the interviews. After that I describe the nature of the publications that I have analyzed. I will discuss how I have used CDA as a method for analysing the empirical material and I end this chapter with reflections over my role as a researcher as well as my ethical approaches.

Reflections Over the Material and Procedure

In this thesis I analyze both publications from the BIG Coalition and interviews with different representatives from the organizations within the BIG Coalition. I don’t see any hierarchy between the different materials, but rather see them as a compliment to each other, contributing with different perspectives and angles. There are of course differences between them regarding production and function. This is something I will look closer at in the following sections.

Doing qualitative interviews

I was during two weeks in the end of March 2010 interviewing seven different representatives from the different organizations within the BIG Coalition, as well as the DfSD where the main work for a BIG in Namibia is carried out. The representatives are all engaged in the BIG Coalition and the proposal for a basic income. My aim was to capture a representative image of the coalition’s views around the BIG proposal and that I believe is possible out of these six interviews and the four publications. My initial plan was however to interview one representative from each and every organization within the coalition. That appeared to be impossible due to different reasons such as lack of time available for the representatives, difficulties with reaching the representatives and shifts in staff in the organizations.

The six interviews were done with seven representatives which where from ELCRN, CCN, NUNW, NYC, NANGOF Trust and the DfSD, wherein the latter I interviewed two informants in the same interview. The interviews were all done at the informant’s offices and lasted for about 35 minutes and 65 minutes each.

I don’t lay any focus on the informants themselves as individuals, but rather regard them as representatives for the organizations in which they work. This was something that I also was explicit about before the interviews. To regard the informants as representatives implies that I asked for the organizations views and opinions and what was said during the interviews is analyzed as the views of the organization.

I chose to do qualitative interviews with a semi-structured character. This means, in accordance with Allan Bryman’s definition, that I had themes and questions that where open for changes in the structure so that the informant could answer freely and so that new important themes could be brought up. I regarded this as the most suitable interview technique since I

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91 Alan Bryman, (2001), *Samhällsvetenskapliga metoder*, (Malmö), p. 301
wanted to get knowledge of the important issues on the field and issues regarded to be important on the field. For the interview I brought a guide that I used get a structure in the interview, but I experienced that it wasn’t be possible or even desirable to follow this guide too strictly. Instead I tried to follow the informant with attendant questions and used the guide to include all themes. Although the themes were the same in every interview, the questions varied with how the informant answered and covered themes in their answers.

In one of the interviews I interviewed two informants at the same time. This can be regarded as a group interview. According to Steinar Kvale, the advantage with this kind of interview is that you have people that can inspire each other and come with spontaneous statements, but that they also can be difficult to analyze. My experience was however that the interview came out very similar to the others, with the advantage of the informants filling in and giving further thoughts and views to each other’s statements.

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. As Kvale notes, to transcribe is to take the context away from the conversation. Every transcription is an interpretation of the meaning of what was said and thus becomes a construction. The spoken language is also translated into written language with other rules and conventions and the body language removed from the text. I chose to transcribe the interviews word-for-word and for example noting when a word was emphasized with italics to give the situation of the interview as much justice as possible.

The nature of the texts

The materials I have used also consist of four publications from the BIG Coalition. These texts differ from the interviews in the way that they are made for engaging people, spread information, and lobby institutions, such as the government. These publications are one of the main tools for the coalition to spread information and influence politicians and other affluent persons and institutions. In contrast to the interviews, these texts are produced with the concrete aim to influence. That aim can of course also be seen in the interviews, but the big difference is that I was there and somehow led the conversation in the situation of the interviews.

The first of the four published texts from the BIG Coalition, *The Basic Income Grant in Namibia, Recourse Book*, is what they call a resource book from 2005. Beside presenting the basic statements for the proposal the anthology inserts different texts presenting angels of the BIG proposal, for example the NAMTAX proposal and texts about the statistics on which they base the proposal.


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93 Ibid., p. 147-154
94 Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2005), Haarman, Claudia & Haarman, Dirk (ed.), *The Basic Income Grant in Namibia* (Windhoek)
Research Paper. In this text the coalition presents statistics on the poverty situation, on which they base their arguments, as well as current strategies to address the poverty.\footnote{Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2007), Z. Kameeta, Claudia Haarman, Dirk Haarman & Herbert Jauch, \textit{Presentation to the United Nations Commission for Social Development}, (Windhoek)}

The first report from the pilot project in Otjivero-Omitara, \textit{Towards A Basic Income for All. Basic Income Grant Pilot Project Assessment Report}, carried out by DfSD and LaRRI on behalf of the BIG Coalition, was published in 2008 after the first six-month period. In this report the authors present the idea of a BIG in Namibia as well as the main results from the pilot project.\footnote{Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2008)}

The second and conclusive report from the pilot project \textit{Making the Difference, The BIG In Namibia. Basic Income Grant Pilot Project. Assessment Report}, was published in the beginning of 2009, carried out by DfSD and LaRRI on behalf of the BIG Coalition. This final report in many ways resembles with the first one but is extended and presents more definitive results.\footnote{Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2009)}

\textbf{Using Critical Discourse Analysis as A Method}

I will here describe how I have analyzed the material that was presented above. The dimensions of theory and methodology within CDA are closely connected. I however choose describe the methodology separate to be able to connect the use of CDA the other parts of my approach and procedure.

The advantage with using Fairclough’s CDA is that he provides analytical tools for analysing the relation between the text and the surrounding social structures and social practices, which is central in my analysis. This is built up through the three-dimensional conception of discourse: the text, the discursive practice and the social practice. Fairclough describes the practice and method of discourse analysis as the “(...) linguistic description of the language text, interpretation of the relationship between the (...) discursive processes and the text, and explanation of the relationship between the discursive process and the social processes.”\footnote{Fairclough, (1995), p. 97} This relation captures well the procedure and my approach to the analysis. Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis offers many tools and categories for analysing these dimensions, but as he notes, it’s a matter of choosing some major tools that are relevant for the particular analysis.\footnote{Fairclough, (1992), p. 231f} I will here discuss how I have used the, for my study, most central and important tools and categories.

I began the analytical process with close readings and deconstruction of the empirical material. To organize my analysis I initially looked for how different \textit{nodes} build up the BIG proposal. I have adopted the analytical tool \textit{node} from Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe for its applicability in the beginning of the analytical process. Nodes have a prominent role and are privileged signs, which organize discourses.\footnote{Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, (2000), p. 35} Through defining nodes and how they are built up in the material, I
could do a selection of themes and categories in the analysis. I deepened the analysis of the themes through a close text and discourse analysis, which I will discuss below.

On the level of the text I have closely studied how the text “as text” is built up. I have adopted the tool *chain of equivalence* from Laclau and Mouffe, which I have used to explain how signs are connected to each other and through that relation build up meaning of central signs in the text.  This is closely related to Fairclough’s tools: *word meaning*, which defines how different meanings of words are in struggle; *wording*, which is a tool for analysing how meanings are given words and; *rewording* which focus on how meanings are given new words. With these three tools I have been able to analyze the power in the constructions of meaning, which is important for studying hegemonic struggle since the restructurings of a word meaning can change the orders of discourse in the material. With these tools I have been able to describe how different central conceptions are constructed and changed in the material.

Another important tool on the level of the text is *metaphor*, which I have used especially in the relation to how the situation of poverty is described. Through the use of metaphors we signify the world in one way and exclude other possibilities. Metaphors structure, in a pervasive way, our way of thinking about our reality, knowledge and how we act, Fairclough argues.

Primarily in the context of the how poor are described, the analytical tool *transitivity* has been useful to capture types of processes and how they are connected to modes of action. With transitivity the relation between the object and the subject is analyzed, which deals with the subjects level of activity. This can be related to responsibility and agency of the subject.

As might have been clear already, the level of the text cannot be separated from the level of the discursive practice in the actual analysis. How the text is linguistically built up has direct impact on the level of discursive practice as it builds up the meaning of the text. This means that you study both levels at the same time, and together with the social practice.

With *intertextuality* I have studied how texts are inserted in the empirical material and what impact that has on the meaning of the text. This is on the level of discursive practice. As Fairclough puts it, all texts are built upon other previous texts and change comes through new combinations of texts. There are power relations in the possibilities to combine texts why Fairclough connect the production of texts and intertextuality closely to hegemony. I used intertextuality to look at how the coalition builds up their arguments and views through insertion of other texts, which points at how they try to create change in the text. I have used the variant *interdiscursivity* in a similar way. The coalition sometimes builds their arguments on other discourses to show what they disaffiliate with. Interdiscursivity, as well as intertextuality, has a close relation to the orders of discourse, and to change of orders of discourse when the
discourses or texts are combined in a new ways. Discourses can be articulated or rearticulated in a text in the struggle for getting one view accepted.107

Closely related to interdiscursivity is genre, which is a type of interdiscursivity. Different genres, as Fairclough argues, are associated with and connected to different social practices and activities.108 I use genre to look at how the coalition presents their arguments and views through genres such as an “academic genre”, which is connected to a certain “status” derived from the academic world and practices.

One final analytic tool on the level of discursive practice is problematization that I have used to look at how the coalition focus on and questions different aspects of the society and replace them with their solutions. Change, Fairclough argues, lies in how the solution is built up through putting together existing conventions in a form of transgression and crossing boundaries.109

Social practice and discursive practice cannot be separated in the actual text. Though, in my interpretation, the analytical division stresses the importance of the language for the construction of the social. I have analysed the social practice by looking at the social structures and cultures that surrounds the discursive practice. This is a matter of analysing what structures that are referred to in the material, but also an interpretation of what structures that may be relevant for the specific discursive practice. As Winter Jørgensen and Phillips argue, this part of the analysis needs theories for explaining the structures and the relations between them and the text.110 I have for example used the governmentality theory for understanding how hegemonic ideas about the subject and government may influence how the coalition argues for a basic income.

**Doing Research - Some Reflections**

It is of course a special situation to, as a Swedish student, write about Namibia - a country far away from the society that I am used to write about. The differences may not be as big as I first imagined them to be, but at the same time there are some very important differences that the two societies don’t share. Can I, who haven’t lived during the time of apartheid or colonialism, ever understand the Namibian society? The reading about Namibia can and will never be enough. It is of course impossible to gain the same understanding about the Namibian society after a few months in the country, as I have about the Swedish society in which I normally live. This however, might as well be a resource as I don’t have all the inhabited perspectives and ways of studying the Namibian society.

The research in Namibia has made me understand how westernized many of the influential theories of today are, and how the western context often is taken for granted. Although, I have also realised how influential the globalisation is and that there are much in common concerning

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107 Fairclough, (1992), p. 124
108 Ibid., p. 124ff
109 Ibid., p. 96f
conceptions such as poverty and welfare. I have often had to reflect on whether different theories or earlier research are possible to apply on my thesis.

I would also like to mention something about how I view my role as a researcher concerning the interviews. As Bente Gullveig and Alver Ørjar Øyen put it, the researcher in qualitative research is a part of the material through the interaction in the interviews. I, as the researcher, am active in the conversation and by that naturally influence the material.\(^\text{111}\) This perspective follows into the analysis of the material. As Fairclough argues, there is never one meaning in a text, there are always many.\(^\text{112}\) When analyzing a text I as the interpreter become part of it and create the meaning of it. This however, does not mean that I “make up” the meaning of the texts I study, but that I am an active part in the understanding of it. Coherence of a text is, as Fairclough puts it, not a property of the text itself, but something the interpreter gives to the text.\(^\text{113}\)

In a discourse analysis, the aim is not to “go behind” what is said to look for the reality or the truth. It is always the discourses themselves that are the focus for the study. Seen from the perspective that the reality is socially constructed and that truths are discursively produced effects, what are then the results of the research? I agree with Winter Jørgensen and Phillips when they argue that the knowledge produced is one perspective among other perspectives on the world. This however does not mean that all results from research are equally good. Their solution is to keep a theoretical and methodological consistency through the research. By doing that I can show from what perspective I study at the material, which make my research more transparent for the reader.\(^\text{114}\)

**Ethical Reflections**

My base for my ethical approach and considerations are four ethical principles, which are partly presented by Kvale. The principles concern the importance of information about the thesis to the informant; that the informant should be sufficiently informed about the thesis before giving his or her consent to be interviewed; issues concerning the usage of the interviews, which in this case means that I will only use the interviews for this particular thesis, and last; confidentiality issues which I will discuss further below. I informed the informants about the thesis and ethical issues by email before the interviews, at the time of the interview, and also left them a letter. Among other things, I informed about their right to withdraw their participation and that my supervisor and me where the only ones who would have access to the interviews.

In the information I gave the informants I told them that I would not use their personal names but the name of the organization. According to the principle of confidentiality, private data that can identify the informant should not be used.\(^\text{116}\) I however knew from the start that


\(^{112}\) Fairclough, (1992), p. 75

\(^{113}\) Ibid., p. 134


\(^{115}\) Kvale, (1997), p. 107-113

\(^{116}\) Ibid., p. 109
hiding whom I had interviewed would not be possible or even necessary. The persons I have interviewed are public persons who often can be seen in media and public events discussing the issues brought up in the interviews. Nonetheless, to avoid a focus on the individual I early decided to not use their personal names in the thesis as I interviewed them as representatives of the organizations they work in, something I also told the informants about from the beginning.

I would finally like to add the fact that I refer to reports and articles produced by LaRRI, who is a member in the BIG Coalition and is a co-author in some of the texts I analyze. I am well aware of the duality of the situation and have had that in mind during the analysis. I would like to stress that LaRRI are important contributors to the research about the contemporary Namibian society and that it would be a mistake to avoid the texts, even if they of course must be treated in a critical and reflective way in this thesis, due to the dual positions.

Analysis

In order to analyze how the BIG coalition speaks about a basic income and how they conceptualize poor, poverty and poverty alleviation, I have primarily localized central nodes that build up the proposal in the empirical material. The material consists of six interviews with the BIG Coalition and their four publications. These important nodes are the base after which the selection and categorization was done. Through studying how the language builds up these nodes, how the nodes are connected to different conceptions and how they relate to social structures outside the material, I could develop three different analytical themes, which are described and analysed in three different headlines in the analysis. The three dimensions of discourse: the text, the discursive practice and social practice are integrated in the sections of the analysis with the aim to create an understanding of the relations between them.

The analysis begins with “A Rich Country With Deep Inequalities” where I discuss how conceptions about inequality, poverty and poverty alleviation are related to the economic and political situation of Namibia today. How poor and the situation of poverty is conceptualized has an important relationship to how poverty alleviation is structured, which I discuss in the theme “The Active (Poor) Citizen”. In the final section called “The Relation Between the State and the Citizens”, I connect the dimensions of the earlier themes and analyze how conception of poverty alleviation and the BIG is constructed from ideas about the relation between the society and the citizens, concerning the BIG as a right and the problematization of control and classification.

A Rich Country With Deep Inequalities

In this first section of the analysis I will discuss how the coalition talks about the political and economic situation and potential of Namibia today. This theme is derived from a node that focus the Namibian society connected to nodes as inequality and past and present politics. I have seen in the empirical material that the BIG Coalition opens up for the possibility of change and for a BIG in Namibia by two main perspectives. These deal with redistribution of wealth and the
responsibility and possibility of contemporary politics in Namibia. This will be developed in two parts.

**A country that can afford**

I will in this chapter discuss the dimension of inequality and how the coalition discusses the potentials in Namibia. In the interviews as well as in the publications, Namibia is often referred to as a rich country with lots of resources such as minerals, gold, fish and meat. It’s also noted that Namibia has a small population and that the country has the resources to provide for all of the Namibian citizens. The coalition has an understanding of Namibia as a country that can pay for the grant. In this quotation the informant is referring to the NAMTAX proposal and how it was motivated.

Because you know Namibian is a very big country and it’s rich with minerals so to say. Rich with minerals and the population is so small and there is unemployment. About 51% of the people are unemployed, and that huge gap.\(^{117}\)

The contrast between the country as rich on the one hand and the high unemployment rates on the other is here illustrated through the signs “big” and “rich” and the “small” population, and the high unemployment rate. What is described here is a paradox in the situation of the rich country and the high unemployment rates. The sign “huge gap” however gives an image of that contrast and explains what looks like a paradox. The gap is a matter of big differences between those who gain from the wealth and growth and those who don’t. That is something that is developed in the following quotation. The informant is talking about what needs to be done in relation to redistribution in Namibia and defines the objectives.

Because you are talking about a relatively rich country in terms of land. But in terms of population it’s small. It’s a country that in fact manages to generate good wealth, but the problem is distribution of this wealth. So now you need to move maybe for a more radical approach where you go for a full-scale redistribution of the wealth and by so doing you would hopefully narrow the gap between the have and the have-not.\(^ {118}\)

The “gap” is also mentioned here. The use of “in fact” connected to the country generating good wealth, disaffiliates with the notion of Namibia as a poor country. Namibia is described through the signs “rich” and “generate good wealth”, while the problem is connected to “distribution”. The problem is thereby transferred from the country as such, to the distribution of the wealth. The country is regarded as having the potential to provide for the citizens, the problem is how the wealth it is distributed. This is something that becomes even clearer in the following quotation.

I mean counties like Sweden, Denmark, others that was supporting us pulled out of this country, said that ‘you are rich’. And they are right. Our capital is two thousand US dollars per annum, so they are right, we are rich. What we have to do is we take from the rich and give to

\(^{117}\) Interview with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, 18\(^{th}\) of March, 2010

\(^{118}\) Interview with the Namibian Non-Governmental Forum Trust, 19\(^{th}\) March, 2010
the poor and that’s what the basic income model is being on. It’s to tax the rich so that we can subsidize the poor.\textsuperscript{119}

That countries like Sweden stopped giving aid to Namibia is here presented as understandable since, as argued, there is money in the country already. The problem is not defined as the lack of money, but that the money is not equally spread over the country. What I see here is that the coalition tries to rearticulate and reposition where the problem is, to show that Namibia can afford redistribution.

Through defining the place of the problem, as the inequality, the meaning of “sustainability” is possible to rearticulate as well. The informants in this interview are here talking about the profits banks do in Namibia and question the fact that BIG by some is regarded as an unsustainable solution to poverty.

And people still tell us this thing (the BIG, my remark) is not affordable. It’s not sustainable. Poverty in this country is not sustainable. That’s the reality. We cannot sustain the levels of poverty we have in this country.\textsuperscript{120}

In the quotation the word meaning of the moment “sustainability” is changed. Sustainability is not about lack of money; it’s the poverty that is unsustainable. It’s thereby not the BIG that is unsustainable but the poverty, the collation argues.

By moving the problem-focus from lack of money in the county to the inequality and by moving the focus of what is unsustainable from the BIG to the poverty situation, the BIG coalition opens up for possible change in conceptions about the possibilities for Namibia as well as for the BIG proposal. This is a matter of what ideas, what knowledge, about Namibia that should be the one controlling the outcome of the BIG proposal. What is going on here is, with Fairclough’s terms, a hegemonic struggle about what perspective on the economic situation that should be the leading one. By integrating the judgements done by Sweden and Denmark regarding the wealth in Namibia they, in the empirical material, transform the ways to define possibilities at hand and thereby there is a change in the orders of discourse in the material. The opening for change lies in the inserting of, in the material, other ways of defining the situation of Namibia today. This gives a picture of Namibia as country that actually can afford a BIG.

**Past and present politics**

Very central in the empirical material is how the inequalities in Namibia are conceptualized. The reason for the gap between rich and poor is explained partly by the history of colonialism and apartheid, but also by the politics after independence. This dual explanation for the inequality can be seen in this quotation from the first assessment report.

Namibia is rich in economic and social potential yet a large portion of the population is poor and faces chronic economic insecurity. Namibia is also a country with one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world. The huge socio-economic disparities are largely a reflection

\textsuperscript{119} Interview with the Desk for Social Development, 30\textsuperscript{th} of March, 2010

\textsuperscript{120} Interview with the Desk for Social Development, 31\textsuperscript{st} of March, 2010
The “socio-economic” situation of Namibia today is here connected with the signs “colonialism” and “apartheid”, but also to what has happened since independence. The poverty situation is here explained not only by the consequences of the past, but also by the politics of today. The politics of today, in combination with the history, is often referred to as one part of the economic situation in Namibia, and the dual presence of the past and the present is visible even here. The context around this quotation is the widening inequalities and I have just asked the informant to describe the inequalities in Namibia today.

I think what has happened also was that obviously historically. The whole ideology of apartheid was really based on enforcing those inequalities. But maybe it is also an inefficient condition twenty years after independence to still blame apartheid for those inequalities, but there is a basis for them. But what was also happening, the meantime was that coming with the coming of independence you had these parasitical bosses. Most of them predominantly black, where paid like very high salaries, huge salaries, and this helped to widen the gap. So that was also some of the factors that really led to widening that gap. The apartheid gap was there but consequently what we did after independence contributed to that widening of the gap.

The historical inheritance of apartheid is here worded as “obvious”, but is at the same time undermined by the twenty years of independence. The apartheid is instead seen as a foundation for the inequalities of today on which what has happened since independence is built on. It is here added that it might be “inefficient” to “blame” apartheid today. The word “maybe” questions the first “obvious” relation to the history of apartheid as the reason for the inequality of today. This is what Fairclough calls objective modality, where the subjective basis is left implicit. This kind of modality often implies power. In this case the question is if “blaming” the past is “efficient” today, which points at a struggle between the two explanations and to a duality. The past is present, but it is on the same time not regarded as pragmatic to focus on the past. Instead the focus is transferred to what has happened since independence that “contributed” and “led” to the widening of the gap. The past is paid attention to, but the present is at the same time in the focus for efficiency in the context of poverty alleviation.

The BIG Coalition’s focus on the contemporary politics for the issue of inequality is also expressed here in this quotation. “Our politicians are at the moment highly influenced by the rich. Their policies are for the rich and therefore they are not thinking about policies for the poor. That’s the problem.” The “problem” is defined as the politicians favouring the rich and neglecting the poor. The problem of inequality is regarded as a problem of contemporary politics. While disaffiliating with the history as determining the present as well as the future of Namibia, they open up for the possibility of change in Namibia. When the history doesn’t determine the

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121 Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2008), p. 12
122 Interview with the Namibian Non-Governmental Forum Trust, 19th March, 2010
123 Fairclough, (1992), p. 158f
124 Interview with the Desk for Social Development, 31st of March, 2010
present, then it’s actually possible to do something about the future. Namibia is so to speak not fully caught in the hands of the past.

How Melber describes some of the elite’s attitude to inequality today can give a clearer picture of what social structures the coalition may be referring to. Melbers means that the new postcolonial elite tends to blame the structures of apartheid for the exclusion of poor and marginalised in Namibia today. He however argues that that is not anymore a correct explanation of the inequalities of today. What he instead sees is structures of self-enrichment in the leading classes and a lack of political will to serve the poor or to redistribute wealth in postcolonial Namibia. 125

The coalition argues that there is money in the country, but which needs to be redistributed. They also argue that the inequalities of today not only are determined by the history, but also something that is constructed today. By placing the economic and political possibilities to change high, the coalition restructure the orders of discourse and thereby opens for looking at the BIG as a potential solution.

**The Active (Poor) Citizen**

The image of the poor and their situation has ha central role in the empirical material. Poverty as a trap is further a central node in the material, which is connected to nodes as confidence and empowerment that points at solutions to the trap. In this section I discuss how the subject, the poor, are conceptualized which I also will relate to conceptions of citizenship. How poor are conceptualized has consequences for how poverty reduction is organized, which I primarily will connect to the images of the citizen within governmentality. This can give an understanding of social structures and conceptions of the citizenship in contemporary liberal societies.

**Poverty as a trap and a vicious circle**

The state of poverty is often described as a trap or a vicious circle, as something that the poor are caught in and unable to, by own means, leave. Poor are described in a passive way and the trap is something they are subject to. The metaphor is sometimes used explicitly and sometimes it’s the mechanisms of a trap that are used to describe the situation of poverty which more takes the form of a vicious circle.

This quotation is from the resource book where the coalition responds to the critique of the possibility of dependence on the grant.

(…) the opponents seem to assume that the poor they speak about are free to act and to make choices. When people argue like this, they prove that they don’t know what it means to live in poverty. Poverty is a trap, it’s the ultimate state of being dependent, it is a stage where you do not have a choice and the freedom to act (…). 126

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126 Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2005), p. 5
“Poverty” is here connected to the inability to make “choices” and have “freedom to act”, which is also connected to poverty as a “trap”, primarily described as a state of “dependence”. The metaphor is powerful. As Fairclough notes, when we use metaphors we signify the world in a specific sense, and leave out other ways of constructing and understanding it. Metaphors through that structure our systems of knowledge.\textsuperscript{127} When poverty is signified as a trap, it brings with it all the things that we associate a trap with. A trap can be interpreted as not only something that you can’t get out from, but also something that you may have been fooled into. The metaphor implies a passivity of the one the find him or her self in it and the trapped is a victim of the trap. In the quotation, the metaphor trap connects, besides to dependency, to not having a choice or freedom to act. This shapes the image of poverty as a state of passivity and paralysation.

I the quotation the coalition also places themselves in the position of having the knowledge about what it means to be poor and that others, the “opponents”, who think that poor do have the freedom to chose, don’t. This strengthens their statement and their concept of what it is to be poor in the text. The concept of poverty is here rearticulated as the inability to make choices and the lack of freedom, which rearrange the orders of discourse about poverty in the text. This can be analyzed as an articulation in the hegemonic struggle about how poor and poverty should be understood, as well as how it through that should be alleviated.\textsuperscript{128}

The metaphor trap is in this quotation developed into a verb that also can be connected to the metaphor vicious circle.

Workers in households that do not have access to safety nets cannot afford the risk that the few resources they have available will be squandered in futile job search-and this insecurity traps them into poverty. The Basic Income Grant is not so much a safety net but rather a springboard that lifts the poor to more sustainable livelihoods.\textsuperscript{129}

The use of “trap” is in this quotation connected, in a chain of equivalence, to the disability to take a “risk” and to “insecurity”. Poverty is here the agent that “traps” people and this underlines image of passiveness of the poor. The “trap” of poverty is here also presented as the disability of investments in future income, which must be done through risk-taking. In contrast to the trap, the basic income grant is connected to the words “lift” and “sustainable”, enabling the poor to take the risks in investments for the future. Lifting can be understood as something that must be done from the outside, here by the grant, and while lifted the people can by own means take risks of searching for a job.

How the vicious circle operates is described in this quotation from the BIG presentation for the UN. The emphasis on investments is also visible here.

The poor have to spend hours securing their survival for the next day by collecting water and firewood and trying to obtain some food. These daily survival struggles absorb time, labour and other resources, which could be used for productive economic purpose.\textsuperscript{130}

\textsuperscript{127} Fairclough, (1992), p. 194
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., p. 93
\textsuperscript{129} Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2009), p. 87
\textsuperscript{130} Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2007), p. 8
“The poor” are here described in a passive form through the word “have to”. The situation of poverty precedes the action, determining what they have to do. The poor are by that represented as unable to act outside the situation or do anything about it. Being poor is also described as struggle to survive, which makes it impossible to engage in economic and productive activities that could lead people out of the poverty. The poverty is articulated as a hinder for productive activity, but the word “absorb” indicates that there are possibilities for activity that are taken away by the conditions of poverty, that is the survival for the day.

The metaphor “trap” includes the inability to be economically productive and to take risks in the search for work. It is also described as hindering freedom and the possibility to make choices. The use of the metaphor trap is important since it is constructing one dimension of how the conception of poverty is understood within the coalition. It’s also an important part of the how the proposal is built up since the BIG is represented as a tool for lifting the poor out of the trap, that is to reduce poverty.

The image of poor as passivated in the condition of poverty can possibly be understood in the context of the search and desire for active and engaged citizens of contemporary societies. The poor are here related to the image of the desirable citizen. As Cruikshank, argues, “social problems” are defined in contrast to the achievements of the active citizen. The image of the “good citizen” defines at the same time the poor as subjects in need for poverty alleviative strategies. As “caught” in the trap they cannot, so to speak, leave the situation themselves, but need interventions from the outside.

Dignity and confidence

In this part I will discuss how the BIG is regarded to reduce poverty with a focus on the individual. This quote from one of the interviews shows how the central word confidence is used.

People now gain confidence of themselves. Their integrity is being boosted. So it has definitely showed that the lives of people have changed.

This quotation describes one of the results the coalition sees from the pilot project where confidence as well as dignity is seen as a way out of the trap of poverty. This is an important dimension of the conceptualization of poverty. The BIG is described as a way of giving people a sense of dignity and confidence, which is connected to responsible behaviour and engagement. The situation of the poor is also compared to what I interpret as the image of the ideal citizen.

The informant is here talking about what the BIG could do for the poor. A link is set between poverty and a lack of confidence to engage in civic rights and responsibilities.

Whether you like it or not I think poverty do creates complexes, perhaps psychological complexes amongst the poor. You know, they do not feel as confident to engage fully as citizens of our country. They don’t feel as confident in a classroom when they are sitting next to other kids who come from households where they are having shoes and socks and school uniforms and textbooks and all of this kind of things so… So I do think that sometimes the

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132 Interview with the Council of Churches Namibia, 24th March, 2010
poor disengage from their civic responsibilities and from their civic rights simply because their poverty doesn’t give them confidence to be able to do so.133 “Poverty” is here described as diminishing the feeling of “confidence”. It is the poverty that shapes the complexes, not the poor themselves who ascribes a passive role. With the use of Fairclough’s tool transitivity, through which one analyzes the agency in the relation between the subject and the object, the activity of poor can here be analyzed. The poor are not described as the actual agents, but as objects for what the poverty does to them. The poor are thereby divested from responsibility and form agency in their own life.

Confidence is also seen as a condition for being able to engage in civic rights as well as for responsible behaviour. In the quotation the poor are described as “disengaging” from “civic responsibilities” and “civic rights”. The word “disengaging” implies that there is something to disengage from, which can be analyzed as the poor standing back from what is otherwise seen as a “normal” condition for citizens. The poverty is seen as a hinder, through the lack of confidence it creates, for what citizens otherwise do as citizens. The image of the ideal citizen as a citizen who is taking responsibility and engages in its rights, is constructed in the quotation through the descriptions of what the poor cannot do.

While poverty and lack of confidence is regarded as holding the poor back from engagement, trusting the poor is described as a way to build up a feeling of dignity. This quotation is from the final assessment report where dignity and dependency is discussed in the context of the pilot project.

Trusting poor people to spend an unconditional grant wisely restores dignity, is empowering in ways which government-administered alternatives are not, (…). Indeed, there is a strong case for assuming that providing people with a BIG not only improves their material circumstances, but promotes dignity and socially responsible behaviour.134

The chain of equivalence is here set by the signs “trust” and “unconditional grant” which is seen as “restoring” and “promoting” the “dignity” and “socially responsible behaviour”. Giving the trust to the poor that they will use the money wisely, without any means testing, is here seen as a way of building up a dignity and also a socially responsible behaviour. The unconditional grant is so to speak, regarded as a way of guiding the poor in the right direction, but without any control or conditions attached to it. The responsible behaviour can be interpreted as a quality in everyone with the “right” conditions.

Lack of confidence as well as lack of dignity is seen as a hinder for taking social and civic responsibility as well as engagement in people’s civic rights, while the trust in people using the grant wisely is described as way of giving dignity to the poor people. This reasoning motivates the proposal for a universal and non-means tested grant. Both through what is lifted forward as important and good effects of the BIG, and what the poor are held back from doing, the image

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133 Interview with the National Youth Council Namibia, 16th of March, 2010
134 Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2009), p. 41
of what good citizens “are” is also constructed. The BIG is presented as a way of promoting the poor to become engaged and responsible, but also as citizens with confidence and dignity.

I believe the conception of dignity and confidence can be related to what I earlier discussed as the discourse on self-esteem developed by, among others, Cruikshank. Within the discourse, the self-esteem calls upon individuals to participate, to act and to act responsible. The discourse is built up around self-esteem as something the individual owes to the society for a real and functioning democracy, Cruikshank argues. The good citizen is a citizen that develops not only its personal responsibility, but also the responsibility over the society.\footnote{Cruikshank, (1996), p. 231ff} I mean that there is an interdiscursive relation in the image of what a good citizen is, as well as what a good life is, in contrast to the poverty, where the notion of the citizen is absorbed in how the BIG is motivated.

There is also a connection through what techniques that are regarded to promote citizens to reach a good life, which is building self-esteem or here confidence. I would however like to add that this doesn’t imply that there is an aim to govern. In fact, I believe there is not such an aim.

\section*{Empowerment}

In contrast to the poverty trap in which the poor are described to find themselves in, BIG is regarded as a way out of the immure situation. The poverty may trap the poor in a vicious circle, but the coalition also sees an important quest and will to actively search for a way out of the trap and to do something about the situation. One important way out is what the coalition describes as empowerment, which I will discuss the dimensions of here.

The following quotation is from the final assessment report where the questions of dependence and dignity are discussed. The quotation indicates how the BIG is regarded to reduce poverty. “The experience of the BIG pilot suggests that the universal cash grant liberated people and the community from individually and collectively draining and devastating impact of poverty.”\footnote{Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2009), p. 41} The use of the word “liberated” is here connected as the opposite of the words “draining” and “devastating” which are dimensions of poverty. The metaphor “draining” can also be linked to the metaphor trap that I discussed earlier. The metaphors refer to a state or a condition that is very hard to leave. The grant is however connected to the moment “liberated” as a possible way out of the poverty. The metaphor of poverty as a trap is further developed in this quotation from the resource book where the metaphor “escape” is used. The quotation is from a section where the possible impact of the BIG is discussed.

> Thereby, money of the working poor would be freed for economic investment, to productively use their own resources and potential in the economic realm, and ultimately offer the chance to escape the vicious circle of poverty.\footnote{Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2005), p. 40f}

The way out from poverty is first of all activities. A chain of equivalence is built up by the signs “economic investments”, “own resources and potential” and, as a result, the “escape” from
poverty. Productivity and economic investments are thereby seen as the way to break the vicious circle and to lead the poor out of poverty. In the quotation it is also suggested that the “resources” and “potential” already are there, in the people, but needs some intervention to be freed. The role of the BIG can here be interpreted as a door opener for the people to be able to invest whereas the investments production is regarded as the way out of poverty.

The concept of empowerment plays an important role in how the coalition pictures the grant to work for poverty reduction. The one hundred Namibian dollars are not much money as such. It is rather the outcomes of the one hundred dollar that are highlighted. The role of empowerment within the project is also emphasized in the quotation below where the project for a BIG in Namibia is presented. “Primarily it is not a welfare programme but an empowerment programme for economic activity.”

The following text the BIG Coalition disassociates from the conditional and targeted grants, which the coalition argues don’t give the same income security as the BIG. The welfare label is in the quotation rejected, while empowerment for economic activity is promoted. It is the empowerment that comes with the grant that is of importance, which is the economic activity. I interpret the rejection of the welfare label and the emphasizing on economic empowerment as a way of highlighting what the grant does, that is not only “giving” but that it primarily has stimulating effects.

This can be understood in the context of the neo-liberal climate of today where welfare strategies often are rejected as inefficient that risks to lead to passivity of the recipients. In line with the governmentality idea, the coalition emphasizes on the BIG as a strategy for creating active citizen and rejects the welfare label. As Bebbington et al. note, it’s difficult for the civil society of today to work beyond the neoliberal thinking, especially since both parts use the same key terms, such as empowerment. In relation to the hegemony of the neo-liberalism, I believe, it also becomes important for the coalition to emphasize that the idea of the grant is not “just” giving, but also an empowerment strategy. It is however the idea of what type of citizen the grant could create that goes in line with the mentality of governmentality. It does not inheritably imply a wish to govern.

The notion of an immanent potential for activity and productivity is getting clearer in this quotation from one of the interviews where the effects of the grant are discussed.

It (the BIG, my remark) empowers people to use their talent, because people are talented, but the fact that they don’t have money, they are just sitting there. So, now, we saw it in Otjivero, that these people that are regarded as very poor, unintelligent, once they got that hundred dollar, you will not believe it what people are doing and what they are planning to do. So it is empowering people.

The concept of “empowerment” is built by the words “use their talent”, “doing” and “planning” which are all verbs that indicate action. Empowerment is contrasted to the sign “just sitting

138 Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2007), p. 23
139 Rose, (1996), p. 51ff
140 Bebbington et al., (2008), p. 15
141 Interview with the Desk for Social Development, 31st of March, 2010
there” which is regarded as a property of poverty. The wording of poor as “unintelligent” is here rejected through the notion that they do have the talent, but which is repressed by the condition of poverty. The grant thus elicits the talent and “empowers” the people to use the talent. The word empower also presupposes that there is something to actually empower. This notion of a latent activity and a will to engage of the poor is consistently expressed by the coalition.

Beside the many health and education related improvements in the settlement, the economic activity has a central role in how the pilot project, as well as the idea with the BIG, is presented. Very often examples from the pilot project are used to reinforce the statement. People have created business and started different projects for increasing the income.

You can come out of the situation (of poverty, my remark). And then there was also the case of the guy who started a barbershop business with his hundred dollars. He was able to buy a shaving machine from the one hundred dollars and he now started his barbershop and he shaves the hair for twenty dollars.142

This quotation is one example of many stories of success from the pilot project where the coalition has seen that people have created opportunities to do more and earn more out of the small sum of money. On the opposite side of the situation of poverty is the ability to invest for more income. The examples of how people have invested in different businesses are many, both in the texts and in the interviews. I sometimes asked for examples of different aspects in the interviews to clarify what the informant meant, but very often they where given without my request.

The use of examples legitimizes and confirms what is stated. Discursive practice, as Fairclough argues, is constructed through different conventions used in the struggle for hegemony.143 With genre Fairclough tries to capture specific use of language, which, according to Winter Jørgensen and Phillips, constitutes a specific social practice.144 The use of examples can be connected to the genre of scientific traditions where giving “proofs” of what is stated is important to gain trustworthiness. By giving examples, such as referring to research, the coalition enrols itself in an accepted and respected tradition. In the quotation above the statement that it is possible to get out of the situation of poverty is verified through the example of the man who started a barbershop with the grant.

The empowerment process is often described as a process where the people themselves are active and engaged in creating change. The coalition also found that the community became very active and engaged with the project. That can be seen in this quotation from the first assessment report. The empowerment is described as something that happened without any interference from the outside.

With the registration for the BIG pilot, the community Ojivero-Omitara embarked on a process of mobilisation and self-empowerment. It is important to stress that this was an

142 Interview with the Namibian Non-Governmental Forum Trust, 19th March, 2010
143 Fairclough, (1992), p. 67
Another dimension of empowerment is here added, the “self-empowerment”, which is connected to an “organic process”. The coalition finds it important to emphasize on the fact that the “mobilization” is something that happened without any “interference” from the outside. I am going to start with the metaphor “organic”. It can be referred to as a “natural” process, something that happens by itself, without anything added to it. It has, I would like to claim, a rather positive connotation. The use of the word “mobilization” can be referred to going together, to put all available resources together, and is a term that suggests energy. As the coalition stresses and emphasizes that the citizens in the settlement are active, that there is a will to be active and that the community empowered themselves, they at the same time construct the image of how a desirable development can be framed and what a successful development “is”. A successful development where the citizens in the project themselves are active and engaged in the project.

The coalition has found and stresses, that the people are active and create opportunities for further economic income by the grant. The grant helps people to be able to pay school fees, go to the clinic and to buy food. But very often the main results are pictured to be the economic activity that the grant stimulated to, in the pilot project. With the emphasis on empowerment and economic activity the focus is placed on the individual “poor” to activate him or her self out of the poverty. It is the individual, or a local community, who has to be empowered and to use the empowerment for creating his or her own welfare. The BIG is so to say the trigger for that process.

Triantafillou and Risbjerg Nilsen argue that empowerment projects often are projects that seek to create individuals that take care of their own life. The failure of macro-economic development strategies has turned the focus to the individual’s own potential to improve his or her own life with the aim to make individuals who can look after their own welfare. How the results of an implementation of the grant are discussed in the empirical material in many ways resemble with what Triantafillou and Risbjerg Nilsen have seen. The coalition shows how the citizens in the settlement become active and engaged in their welfare and use the money to start activities that can generate more money. However, the proposal of a grant as such does insert another dimension to the discourse of empowerment. It is not only about making people to take care of themselves. It is at the bottom also a lifetime support and small economic addition that is not dependent on any counter claims of activity. Nevertheless, the expected, as well as the presented, results confirm or legitimize the grant in the discourse of empowerment and self-helping citizens in a society where the self-helping citizen is desired.

145 Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2008), p. 44
146 Triantafillou & Risbjerg Nilsen, (2001), p. 63ff
The entrepreneur

This section goes deeper into how the poor are conceptualized and what goals for poverty reduction that are highlighted as positive effects from the BIG. I here focus on the image of poor as potential entrepreneurs. The grant is by the coalition seen as a starting point for the poor to start up business, even in a small scale. Many of examples that the collation presents show that people have set up small business and started with productions with the grant.

The image of poor as potential entrepreneurs is often contrasted to an image of poor as lazy or dependent. This quotation shows how the coalition speaks against that picture of poor.

Since the introduction of the BIG, the majority of the people have been able to increase their work both for pay, profit or family gain as well as self-employment. This finding is contrary to critics’ claims that the BIG would lead to laziness and dependency.\(^\text{147}\)

The coalition shows that people have increased their “work” and “self-employment” with the money. This is contrasted to what they present as the critics’ view, that the grant would make people avoid work with the result of dependency on the grant. The coalition gives another picture, one of active and enterprising people who make more out of the grant. The notion of poor people is in the text worded differently, from people as lazy and dependent to people who work more after the grant. This is what I analyze as the image of the entrepreneur.

Dependency is contrasted to entrepreneurial activities, which hints what a desirable activity of a citizen is regarded to be, and what isn’t, in the society. The coalition’s work aims to convince the government, as well as critics, that the grant is a good idea so that the grant could be implemented. Fairclough means that hegemony is about creating alliances through getting peoples consent for how the world should be viewed or structured.\(^\text{148}\) A basic assumption in Fairclough’s social theory of discourse is that discursive change is about combining discourses in new ways and by that change the orders of discourse.\(^\text{149}\) The coalition here tries to show that the critics are wrong, that the poor do become active and creative. While doing that, they reproduce and build on the image of the desirable citizen, but at the same time connect the concept of the grant with the concept of the active citizen. Through that they can break the equivalence set between the grant and the potential of laziness and replace it with another, which is the one between the grant and entrepreneurship.

The quotation below further shows how the notion about poor as potential entrepreneurs is presented through integrating the critique, but at the same time rejected.

(…) there are quite good revelations in our report which suggest that a lot of people that has received this thing, the grant, has actually started to create bits and pieces of smaller business initiatives (…) That in my view also squarely defeats the arguments of dependency because in that instance, as it has been proven, people stood up and created initiatives that gave themselves income generating or income earning.\(^\text{150}\)

\(^{147}\) Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2008), p. 10
\(^{148}\) Fairclough, (1992), p. 92f
\(^{149}\) Ibid., p. 97f
\(^{150}\) Interview with the National Union of Namibian Workers, 29th of March, 2010
“Dependency” is here refuted through the experiences from the pilot project, where the image of poor as becoming dependent is replaced with the examples or “proofs” about the poor starting up business. The poor “stood up” and created income opportunities. The results from the research legitimizes their statement and rearrange the order of discourse, saying that people on the contrary do more and not less with the grant. The people of Otjivero-Omitara have thereby demonstrated that there are wider benefits to be derived from putting cash into poor communities.

The coalition here integrates the notion and discourse of what a desirable citizen is. According to Frayne, Namibia is today a country where the free and open market is dominating and seen as a way for reaching equality and justice. In that context an active citizen who can support him or her self through economic investments and contribute to the growth through creating business is desirable. As Johansson argues, building on the governmentality theory, the modern state tries to create individuals that are active and entrepreneurial. The fact that the coalition can show, through examples, that people created business and increased the economic activity legitimizes their proposal in a society where just that is sought after.

**The Relation Between the State and the Citizens**

In the earlier sections I have dealt with the perceptions of Namibia as a country and its potential, and further with how the poor are conceptualized and described as well as the situation of poverty. In this section of the analysis I connect the two sections and develop what I in the material see as the relation between the state and the citizens. This relation is built up on primarily two important nodes, which are the BIG as a right and the problematization of classification of poverty. The section deals with how the BIG is conceptualized, but also how poverty alleviation with the BIG should be performed. In this section I integrate theories about the neo-liberal societies with a focus on the relation between the society and the citizens.

**BIG as a civil right**

I this section I will discuss how the coalition regards the BIG as a right. The BIG proposal has met critique for suggesting a grant that doesn’t imply any counter claims. This is often referred to in the interviews as well as in the publications. They describe a culture where it’s not seen right to get something without first working for it. However, the coalition sees it from another perspective where the grant is regarded as a right and not something given for free. Already in the first published text from the coalition, it is stated that the grant is a right: “As BIG is a right, each and everybody has at least some income.”

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153 Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2005), p. 38
Everyone in Namibia does however not like the idea that the BIG should be universal, given to everyone without any means test, the coalition argues. The collation often refers to what they see as a common position in Namibia, which is based on a premise that work always should forego income. The coalition however points at the lack of job opportunities and the unemployment rates in the country.

The informant is here referring the premise to the time in exile many of the contemporary political leaders were situated in during the fight for liberation.

In exile people had a mentality of..., everything that you had, you know, you had to strive for it, to fight for it. It was, you know, they had to work for it. And that I think to a large part, that is the mentality in Namibia. (---) If you want to eat, you know, you need to be able to work for it.154

The “mentality” is connected to what happened in the past and to the need to fight for what you get. There is an equivalence set between the possibility to “eat” and to “work” for it, and the equivalence excludes the possibility of giving or getting without working for it within the mentality. The approach that work must constitute the livelihood is by the coalition expressed as a common view in Namibia. This can be referred to the high value work has in the modern society. McKay sees a fear for expenditures on welfare and for losing work incentives related to basic income proposals in contemporary capitalist societies. That the work question has such a focus in debates about the basic income grant can be understood through the contemporary faith in the labour market as the solution for economic and social problems where individual welfare is regarded as primarily promoted by the structures connected to paid work, McKay argues.155 The fact that there is few work opportunities is often refereed to by the BIG coalition. The problem for Namibia, as I described early in this thesis, is that there are very few work opportunities and that the unemployment rate is 34-37 percent of the population.156 This makes it hard for many to actually get a job.

In the following quotation the inequalities in Namibia are used as an argument against the position that the grant would be as giving for free. Other discourses or notions about the grant than the one the coalition agrees with are here inserted.

I disagree with the notion that basic income grant is giving people things for free. And that is exactly how prime minister described it. He said it’s not a good approach, because it’s like giving people things for free, but from my perspective, what I am saying is when Namibia has the highest income inequality in the world, where we have a situation where there are still communities that haven’t been able to feel the impact of independence. And statistics are telling us that the poor are becoming poorer and the rich are becoming richer.157

The inequality in Namibian is here referred to and used as an argument against the giving for free notion of the grant. It is also argued that some parts of the country have not had the possibility to feel the difference in relation to the time before independence. There is some degree of

154 Interview with the National Youth Council Namibia, 16th of March, 2010
156 Jauch, et al., (2009), p. 36ff
157 Interview with the National Youth Council Namibia, 16th of March, 2010
intertextuality where the statistics are used to highlight that Namibia is the most unequal country in the world. This can also be referred to an academic genre where arguments are built up by “proofs”. The genre brings with it some of the status that the academic tradition has.

As I interpret the quotation, the coalition argues that the poor people, as well as other citizens, have a right to get something out of the development after independence, to feel the difference. The quotation shows how the condition of Namibia is a reference point in the struggle for getting the grant accepted as a right for everyone in a country where the inequalities are very high. The coalition rewords the meaning of the grant into a right and as a human right. This can be seen in these two quotations.

It’s not a privilege. It’s their basic right. Basic human right, you see, to have some basics.\textsuperscript{158}

It is not a gesture or an act of charity that potentially degrades. It is providing people with a right.\textsuperscript{159}

It is here a matter of interdiscursivity. The coalition brings in wordings from other discourses to reject them and to show how they conceptualize the grant. The coalition rejects the wording of the grant as a “privilege” or “charity” and rewords the grant into a “basic right” as well as a “human right” in opposition to the former wording. The words “privilege” and “charity” gives the notion of someone giving to another, as a good gesture or something that the poor should be grateful and thankful for. “Basic right” as well as “human right” are, on the contrary, words that imply something that should come with being a human or being a Namibian. It is nothing someone gives to another but something coming with the state of being a human being. The grant is by the collation worded as a right, and reworded from the meaning of charity.

As Fairclough notes, when the word is changed for a meaning, even the meaning is changed. Different words have different ideological significations related to different discourses.\textsuperscript{160} The hegemonic struggle about how the grant should be conceptualized and understood is important in the coalitions work for creating acceptance for the grant, for creating alliances, so that it can be implemented. A human right has a certain status and is harder to reject today, and therefore the wording of the grant as a human right is powerful, not only because that is what the coalition see it as, but also because it speaks to people’s consciences. A similar way of arguing for a basic income grant can be found in Pateman. She argues for a basic income as a democratic right and political right and uses, as the BIG coalition, the definition “basic right” meaning a fundamental right to fulfil at least a decent but modest life. Pateman also compares the basic income as a right with the right to vote in democratic countries.\textsuperscript{161}

\textsuperscript{158} Interview with the Desk for Social Development, 31\textsuperscript{st} of March, 2010
\textsuperscript{159} Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2008), p. 14
\textsuperscript{160} Fairclough, (1992), p. 191
\textsuperscript{161} Pateman, (2004), p. 92ff
Deviation from control and classification

I have seen in the empirical material that current means testing of grants and benefits in Namibia are problematized and questioned by the BIG coalition. It is in that contexts the proposal for an unconditional grant is presented.

Fairclough means that questioning of conventions is one of the important ways through which discursive change is realised. Often new suggestions for innovation are presented as alternatives to these conventions. The innovations are built up on existing discourses, but adopted in new and creative ways.\footnote{Fairclough, (1992), p. 96f} The proposal for a universal grant without any means testing is often referred to as a practical solution, but also to the employment and poverty situation of Namibia today. In the empirical material I have found that poverty is regarded as difficult to classify and that the coalition sees many problems with grouping people in categories. They instead argue for the grant to be paid out to every Namibian without any means testing or conditions attached.

This quotation is from one of the interviews where the informant discusses the universal grant. Organization of work and of the labour market is here referred to.

And it’s easy to register them on that terms (universal, my remark) rather than group them and someone should control and you know how the employment situation is. You will get the job for two days the other day you don’t have a job. So now how are you going to control these things? You are in and out, in and out. So how many people are now doing that and who is going to control this things and it’s costly. Rather then, you give each and everyone.\footnote{Interview with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, 18th of March, 2010}

The sign “group” is here connected to the signs “control” and “costly”, while the universal grant is defined as “easy”. The control of people is described as a costly way to hand out grants, but above all, the work situation is seen as a problem when defining the groups eligible for the grant. The informant refers to the work situation when many people have to take a job for the day. This type of casual work, which implies insecurity from day to day, is common in Namibia, and as Jauch et al. note there are also significantly more women than men in casual employment.\footnote{Jauch et al., (2009), p. 31}

A problem in the social structures is here identified and at the same time a possible solution is presented. The current system of cash disbursements is also pointed out by the coalition for being discriminative and exclusionary. The coalition argues that it is hard to define a border that could sufficiently include all those who would need the grant.

If you look at the system, it doesn’t reach all. There are a lot of bureaucratic things in the system itself and it doesn’t reach all. But why we say universal, then we don’t draw lines and then we assure everybody rich and poor, educated and non-educated. All will benefit from the wealth distribution of this country. Nobody is really excluded. So other grants has showed that there are discrimination, there are… People have died, disabled people have died because you have to go through certain procedures and what, what, what, and sometimes somebody will decide ‘you are not disabled. You don’t need to’.\footnote{Interview with the Desk for Social Development, 31st of March, 2010}
Current systems are here criticized for not “reaching all”, which is connected to “bureaucratic” forms of classifying people in groups. The system is criticized for being too focused on classifying so that people have died during that process. Implicit in the last two lines is also that the classifying can’t capture the reality or the real conditions of being disabled. A “label” on someone’s condition is not the same as what it is to have it. The problem with classifying people is also connected to how the poverty situation is in Namibia. Having a work doesn’t imply a salary good enough to actually live from. This is often referred to in the empirical material. Poverty is not the same as being unemployed.

So it doesn’t mean that only because he has a job that they are not poor. So I think the net effect is that even in households where people are working and they wouldn’t otherwise qualify if the grant wasn’t universal, so they wouldn’t qualify because some of them, some people say, ‘why do you give it to people who work?’, right. Many people who work in our economy are unable to sustain their families (…).166

What it is to be poor is here in struggle and becomes rearticulated. There is an interdiscursive relation in the quotation where the critics questioning of giving to those who work are inserted. Working and getting the grant is questioned while the coalition articulate the chain of equivalence differently. Having a work does not imply having a salary high enough to live from, which results in many poor people being classified as non-poor. An important fact in the context is that 23 percent of the households classified as poor in Namibia have wages and salaries as their main source of income, according to the National Planning Commission.167

The coalition here presents what they see as the shortcomings of classifying and grouping people. It is often expressed that through a universal grant, there is a better chance for the money to reach the poor. This should also be seen in, among other things, the context of rural poverty in Namibia where the rural poverty measures three times higher than urban poverty, 38 percent compared to 12 percent.168 Another interpretation of the problem with the money “reaching” the poor is corruption.

The non-existence of a means-test for a Basic Income Grant prevents corruption and favouritism often associated with conditional cash transfers where officials have the power to grant (or not to grant) the benefit.169

The meaning of “means test” is here established through the chain of equivalence with the problems “corruption” and “favouritism”. The power of the officials to decide who will and who will not get the grant implies a notion of an unreliable system. The coalition identifies what they see as the problem with means testing and classifying people in to eligible groups. What is implicit in the universal aspect of the grant is a potential loosening of the states control and administration in the context of social grants. Bureaucracy is according to Fairclough, who refers to Max Weber, a hierarchical organization that rationally organizes and coordinates the work of

166 Interview with the National Youth Council Namibia, 16th of March, 2010
168 Ibid., p. 9f
169 Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2007), p. 25
people for different organisational goals. This implies control over the matching of means as well as control over people. People, he argues, often become objects in the process through the ordering of them and through registration and checks. This is however something the coalition tries to avoid with the objective of economic efficiency, to reach all in need of the grant and to avoid the stiffness which means testing implies. In line with the governmentality perception, control is regarded as inefficient and costly. Rather than the state controlling its citizens, it's regarded better and more efficient when individuals control themselves. I also believe that the problematization of means testing first of all should be seen in the context of the actual problems with the classifications, which is connected to, among other things, rural poverty and the administrative problems with reaching those who need the money.

The techniques available for income redistribution are here criticized as well as the liability of the public authorities. As we have seen in earlier sections, the trust in the people to use the grant wisely without any control is instead regarded as a good way for redistribute income and alleviative poverty. The problems with direct control of people can partly be related to the perspective of governmentality and the neo-liberal scepticism towards centralized government. As Rose argues, the neo-liberalism came with a detachment of central regulatory technologies and instead, a focus on shaping the power of autonomous entities such as organizations, communities and individuals. The principle of governing “at a distance” is instead practiced in the neo-liberal societies, where the individual is governing herself and care for her own fulfilment.

However, I would like to add that the idea of a basic income grant as such does not have to be regarded as a “neo-liberal idea” because of that. The idea of an unconditional grant somehow goes beyond the neo-liberal rationality that implies that the individual welfare is a matter best solved and organized within the labour market. The idea of a BIG is rather an idea that goes beyond the rules of the market and implies a certain level of security independently of participation on the labour market and the rules of the free market. This will be further developed in the final discussion below.

**A Final Discussion**

I would like to begin this conclusive part of my thesis by summarizing what I have seen in the sections above. My purpose with this thesis was to study how the Basic Income Grant Coalition speaks about their proposal and project for a basic income in Namibia with a focus on how they conceptualize, relate to, reject or try to transform structures, discourses and ideas about poor, poverty and poverty alleviation in Namibia, and further, how this can be related to structures in the Namibian society.

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172 Rose, (1996), p. 56f
To give a picture of how the language stands in dialectical relation to societal structures and practices I have intended to through the analysis integrate Fairclough’s three dimensions of discourse within every section. In the first section “A Rich Country With Deep Inequalities” I showed how the problem in Namibia is repositioned from the country as such to the distribution and inequality in Namibia. The country as such is seen as a rich country that could provide for all its citizens. I here saw a hegemonic struggle about what knowledge about Namibia that should be the one judging the possibility and sustainability of a BIG. Through the focus on distribution, the coalition opens for possible change in the material. The coalition also disaffiliates with how the inequalities of today are explained. They recognize the inheritance from the past, but emphasize on the role of contemporary politics. This focus on the effects of contemporary politics opens up for the possibility of change, as the past is not seen as fully determining the present structures in Namibia.

In the second section, “The Active (Poor) Citizen”, I discussed how the poor are conceptualized. The metaphor “trap” is described as a dimension of poverty. The poor are seen as captured in the poverty, which passivates them and makes them unable to act or engage. I here argue that the descriptions about what the poor are seen as held back from, also carry with it the image of the desirable citizen. The grant however, is seen as a way of building up dignity and confidence of the poor people, which is seen as stimulating the poor to take social responsibility and engage in their civic rights. The BIG is seen as an important intervention for breaking the vicious circle that the poor are described to be caught in. That is not regarded as welfare, but as empowerment for economic activities, which I related to the hegemony of the neo-liberal order. With the results from the pilot project, it is emphasized that the people use the grant for starting business and income generating activities. The poor are seen as what I analyze as potential entrepreneurs, which I connected to the desire for economically active citizens in contemporary societies.

In the third and last section of my analysis, “The Relation Between the State and the Citizens”, I discussed how the coalition pictures the relation between the society and the citizens in the context of poverty alleviation. The coalition disassociates with the notion of the grant as being “a giving for free”. The BIG is instead seen as a right, and even a human right. They also problematize the convention of means testing for grants and categorization of poor, as ineffective, discriminative and corrupt, whereas they argue for a universal and unconditional grant for the guarantee that the money actually will reach those who need it the most. I relate this to the situation of poverty and the loosening of the state control in contemporary societies.

The BIG Proposal as an Alternative Idea for Poverty Alleviation

In this last section I will to draw the results together and discuss them in relation to the contemporary Namibian society and what conceptual change the BIG coalition argues for.

As Frayne notes Namibia is characterized by a duality in national ideology, between the free open market neo-liberal ideology, and the quest for equality and justice. The combination, Frayne
The hegemony of the neo-liberal ideas of the market as the solution for equality and poverty reduction has not brought with it any major changes for the poor, Melber argues. As White argues, the poverty has rather grown in the developing countries since the entering of the neo-liberal doctrine.

The proposal for a basic income grant in Namibia is a proposal for redistributing money and for ensuring that the poor has some income. The proposal for a universal grant, without any counterclaims or means testing, goes, I suggest, somehow beyond the rules of the market. The grant would offer all Namibians a small income even outside participation on the labour market, and it would imply a salary even for those who don’t follow the rules that define a “good citizen”. This should primarily be seen in the contexts of the high unemployment rates and the big gap between rich and poor in Namibia, but should also be seen in relation to the hegemony of the principles of the free open market.

With the proposal and through the ideas that build up the proposal comes a way of looking at Namibia as a society today. Namibia is by the coalition not seen as a poor country as such. It’s the majority of the people that are poor, while a few have the most of the wealth in the country. This opens for a picture of Namibia as a country that has the potential to on its own do something about the poverty. As Melber notes, there is a mentality within the elite which tends to focus on the history of colonialism and apartheid as the reason for contemporary inequality. He however argues that this type of reasoning isn’t sufficient today. Contemporary politics are in large parts responsible for the situation. This is also something that the coalition emphasizes and by doing that they reject the image of the past determining Namibia’s future. They thereby offer alternative ways of explaining the situation of poverty and possibilities for the future.

As McKay argues, there is a focus on the labour market as a solution for the individual’s welfare, in contemporary societies. This belief excludes, within the discourse, the possibility of getting an income without first working for it. This is something that the coalition responds to and rejects. In the context of the large inequalities in Namibia, the grant is not getting for free, but a human civil right, everyone should have something, they argue. They thereby reject the contemporary dominating principle of the labour market as the only way to people’s welfare and then offer alternative ways of poverty alleviation.

The hegemony of the neo-liberal conceptualization is, I argue, present in the empirical material. The images of the poor, the good citizen and of the good life in many ways resemble with the image of the good citizen conceptualized within governmentality. By that, I don’t mean that the coalition has absorbed the governmentality ways of govern or that they aim to govern. I rather argue that the images of what a “good” citizen is, is present in the material and how they

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175 Melber (2007a), p. 115f
176 White, (2004), p. 18
177 Melber, (2007a), p. 124ff
argue for a basic income. As Bebbington et al. argue the neo-liberal agenda is hard to avoid for the civil society as the neo-liberal language has adopted conceptions, such as empowerment, from the civil society.\textsuperscript{179} Their main question in their anthology is if the NGOs can make a difference today as few question or give alternatives to the (d)evelopment, which is the immanent structures and processes.\textsuperscript{180}

I relation to the focus on the labour market within the neo-liberal societies, the BIG proposal implies an alternative, where the individual can have an income outside the market. However, the coalition also emphasizes on the active, responsible and engaged citizen as a result of the BIG. This is also the image of the desirable citizen within the governmentality.\textsuperscript{181} While the BIG challenge the hegemonic ideas of the free market, they at the same time build on the image of the desirable citizen. As Bebbington et al. argue, it is very hard for the civil society to destabilize the hegemony of the neo-liberal order.\textsuperscript{182} I believe that it is difficult \textit{not} to emphasize on the results from the BIG pilot project, when they resemble with the hegemonic notion of the good citizen as results can legitimize their proposal. They can show that the controversial idea of a basic income grant can lead to the desirable citizen and does not automatically lead to dependency and laziness, as the critics argue according to the coalition. The idea of a BIG lies “outside” the neo-liberal order and the governmentality, but can offer results attractive within this hegemonic order.

Using the language of Fariclough, this could be seen as a matter of hegemonic struggle. The coalition builds on the image of the desirable citizen, but rejects other hegemonic orders such as the order of the free market as the only solution to poverty. In the middle of the struggle for getting the idea of a basic income accepted and adopted, the coalition at the same time offers change in conceptions concerning the relation between the state and the citizens, how the potentials of the country can be regarded and how it can be changed.

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This is a thesis where I have mainly studied the langue on different levels. This does not mean that what I have studied is \textit{only} language. Language has real consequences in the world we live in. I hope that this thesis somehow has given that notion. How the coalition argues for their proposal matters for how it will be received. Similarly, the world and the society in which the coalitions works does influence and shape how they can speak about it. The structures are however not fully determining. Change is possible.

Twenty years has past since independence and the fact that not much has changed for the poor during these years is a concern. No matter what could have been done during these years or not, the proposal of a basic income might be an idea that actually could change the situation for the poor of Namibian.

\textsuperscript{179} Bebbington et al., (2008), p. 15
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., p. 5ff
\textsuperscript{181} Johansson, (2007), p. 32
\textsuperscript{182} Bebbington et al., (2008), p. 33
Summary

Namibia is one of the most unequal countries in the world and the poverty levels are high. This thesis discusses the Basic Income Grant Coalition’s proposal for a basic income grant in Namibia as a poverty reduction strategy. The proposal is a universal and unconditional grant of N$100 ($SEK100) a month for every Namibian until the age of pension.

The purpose of the thesis is to study how the Basic Income Grant Coalition speaks about their proposal and project for a basic income in Namibia with a focus on how they conceptualize, relate to, reject or try to transform structures, discourses and ideas about poor, poverty and poverty alleviation in Namibia, and further, how this can be related to structures in the Namibian society.

The methodological and theoretical framework is Norman Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis and social theory of discourse. The study is based on six interviews with representatives within the coalition and their four publications. The three-dimensional conception of discourse is the benchmark for the analysis where a relation between the levels of the text, the discursive practice and the social practices and structures are analyzed.

The study discusses how the coalition regards Namibia as a country that can afford the grant, but that the problem is the skewed distribution of the wealth. The coalition disaffiliates with explanations of how inequalities of today are explained. They recognize the inheritance from the past but emphasize on contemporary politics, which is suggested to be analyzed as an opening for conceptual change.

The BIG is seen as a way out of poverty, which through the metaphor “trap” is described as a condition hard to leave. The image of the good citizen in contemporary societies is referred to in relation to how poor are described, as well as the results from the BIG pilot project. The grant is seen as a way of building up dignity and confidence in the people, which is regarded as a condition for social responsibility and engagement in civic rights and responsibilities. The BIG is described as empowering for economic activities, which is related to conceptions about citizenship within governmentality.

The coalition disassociates with the notion of the grant as being giving for free. The BIG is instead seen as a right. They also regard means testing and categorisation of poor as ineffective, discriminative and corrupt, whereas they argue for a universal and unconditional grant to ensure that the money actually will reach those who need it the most.

Suggested in the thesis is that the proposal also offers possible change in conceptions about Namibia as a country and its possibilities for reducing the poverty.
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*Transcribed data from the interviews, in possession of the author:*

Interview with the Council of Churches Namibia, 24th March, 2010.

Interview with the Desk for Social Development, 31st of March, 2010.

Interview with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, 18th of March, 2010.

Interview with the Namibian Non-Governmental Forum Trust, 19th March, 2010.

Interview with the National Union of Namibian Workers, 29th of March, 2010.

Interview with the National Youth Council Namibia, 16th of March, 2010.

**Texts**

Basic Income Grant Coalition, (2005), Haarman, Claudia & Haarman, Dirk (ed.), *The Basic Income Grant in Namibia* (ELCRN/DfSD: Windhoek).

