

Is reform and/or transformation of the Namibian society possible?

Transformation emphasises the results or consequences of change.

A systemically corrupt society is different in its appearance and character once transformation has taken place (Van Tonder). This type of change is a fundamental "remaking" of an institution. It is likely to affect an institution in all those dimensions and factors that are meaningful for its functioning and survival (Van Tonder).

Transformation is when a systemically corrupt institution is officially "declared dead" and a "new" institution is "conceived" that co-produces processes associated with the interaction of integration (horizontal development) and differentiation (specialisation). Compared to the concept "change", a system can be transformed, while people can only be "changed", in other words, "developed".

When a comparison is drawn between the two concepts "reform" and "transformation", reform focuses on evolutionary, incremental improvement over the long-term, such as the reform of the societies of the United States of America and the United Kingdom during the 18th and beginning 19th century, and Hong Kong and Singapore



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since the 1950's and in effect also their public sectors over a period of about forty years. "Transformation" is used in a more comprehensive context with a focus on radical revolutionary change.

We can change the Namibian society incrementally over time. However, a complete transformation, a radical change in a short period of time of two to five years, is not possible.

Examples of the most sustainable changes are the United Kingdom and the United States of America as well as changes in Hong Kong and Singapore. These changes indicated that people need time to change over a longer period of one generation (e.g. 40 years) to make such change sustainable.

References

Van Tonder, C.L. 2004. *Organisational Change: Theory and Practice*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

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