



## **BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS BETWEEN SHONA AND NDEBELE ETHNIC GROUPS IN ZIMBABWE**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy in the Faculty of Management Sciences Public Management  
(Peacebuilding)

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## DECLARATION

### BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS BETWEEN SHONA AND NDEBELE ETHNIC GROUPS IN ZIMBABWE

I declare that the thesis herewith submitted for the PhD: Public Management (Peacebuilding) at the Durban University of Technology has not been previously been submitted for a degree at any other university.

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I hereby approve the final submission of the following thesis.

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This \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2015 at Durban University of Technology

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my late sisters Caroline and Ethel, may their souls rest in eternal peace.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Despite all the public pretences of projecting a united country, Zimbabwe is a divided country and this has made genuine peace and unity very difficult to attain. The bruised and polarised relationship between the Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups is deeply rooted in the annals of history, which makes it a protracted social conflict. The Gukurahundi campaign between 1982 and 1987 was part of a chain of catastrophic events, which have emanated from a well-established culture of violence and intolerance between Shona and Ndebele. Efforts to address this culture using a top-down approach under the auspices of the 22 December 1987 Unity Accord did little to curb hostilities. Even though these efforts were commendable, they were not sufficient to make any significant inroads into the polarised relationship of mistrust between the two groups.

This thesis applied an Action Research design and specifically used the Transcend dialogue method to explore the possibilities of building mutual respect and understanding among a small sample of young Shona and Ndebele participants. The research found that creating intentional platforms for interaction could have a positive transformative effect on relationships. It is not too late to create more spaces and transformational platforms for people to dialogue, to listen to each other, to share stories, and carry out projects together. Engagement using dialogue can create new synergies, which can make a worthwhile difference to the long journey towards (re) building broken bridges and building new bridges.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| AAED:     | ARAB AMERICAN EUROPEAN DIALOGUE                |
| ASP:      | AFRO SHIRAZI PARTY                             |
| AVP:      | ALTERNATIVE TO VIOLENCE PROGRAMME              |
| BMATT:    | BRITISH MILITARY ADVISORY AND TRAINING TEAM    |
| CCJP:     | CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE      |
| CCM:      | CHAMA CHA MAPINDUZI                            |
| CIO:      | CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION              |
| DDR:      | DISARMAMENT DEMOBILISATION AND RE-INTEGRATION  |
| FRELIMO:  | FRENTE DE LIBERTECAO DE MOCAMBICANA            |
| FRLOLIZI: | FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF ZIMBABWE           |
| GPA:      | GLOBAL POLITICAL AGREEMENT                     |
| ICU:      | INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL WORKERS UNION            |
| IISD:     | INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINED DIALOGUE |
| ITD:      | INTER-TAJIK DIALOGUE                           |
| KCS:      | KALANGA CULTURAL SOCIETY                       |
| MBS:      | MALUBALE BURIAL SOCIETY                        |
| MBS:      | MANYIKA BURIAL SOCIETY                         |
| MCS:      | MASHONALAND CULTURAL SOCIETY                   |
| MDC:      | MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE                 |
| MHS       | MATABELELAND HOME SOCIETY                      |
| MLF:      | MTHWAKAZI LIBERATION FRONT                     |
| MLO:      | MATABELELAND LIBERATION ORGANISATION           |
| MRP:      | MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC PARTY                       |
| MUBS:     | MASHONALAND UNITED BURIAL SOCIETY              |
| NDP:      | NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY                      |
| NGOs:     | NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS                 |
| OECD:     | ORGANISATION OF EUROPEAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  |
| PF:       | PATRIOTIC FRONT                                |
| RENAMO:   | RESESTENCIA NATIONAL MOCAMBICANA               |
| RF:       | RHODESIA FRONT                                 |
| SADC:     | SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY         |
| SRANC:    | SOUTHERN RHODESIA AFRICAN NATIONAL COUNCIL     |
| SRTUC:    | SOUTHERN RHODESIA TRADE UNION CONGRESS         |

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| TAAA:   | THERE ARE ALWAYS ALTERNATIVES          |
| TANU:   | TANGANYIKA AFRICAN UNION               |
| TINA:   | THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE                |
| TRC:    | TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION    |
| UMR:    | UNITED MTHWAKAZI REPUBLIC              |
| UN:     | UNITED NATIONS                         |
| UNDP:   | UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME   |
| UNICEF: | UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN EDUCATION FUND |
| USIP:   | UNITED STATES INSTITUTE FOR PEACE      |
| ZANLA:  | ZIMBABWE NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY      |
| ZANU:   | ZIMBABWE AFRICAN NATIONAL UNION        |
| ZAPU:   | ZIMBABWE AFRICAN PEOPLES UNION         |
| ZBC:    | ZIMBABWE BROADCASTING CORPORATION      |
| ZIMSEC: | ZIMBABWE SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL   |
| ZIPRA:  | ZIMBABWE PEOPLES REVOLUTIONARY ARMY    |
| ZNA:    | ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ARMY                 |
| ZNP:    | ZIMBABWE NATIONAL PARTY                |

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*Zimbabwe is afflicted with a disease akin to alcoholism, namely endemic violence. For over 150 years, leaders of this beautiful country, bounded by the Zambezi and Limpopo, have used violence to achieve their political objectives. Violence was used by Lobengula to suppress the Shona. Violence was used to colonise and the threat of violence was used to maintain white minority rule. Violence was used to overthrow the white minority. And since independence, violence has been used to crush legitimate political opposition. The use of violence has been compounded by another phenomenon—namely a culture of impunity. Those responsible for the use of violence have never been brought to book. Not only is there a long history of violence used successfully to achieve political objectives but also those who have committed horrendous crimes have prospered through their actions. As a result, the use of violence is now deeply imbedded in our national psyche. Political violence is accepted as the norm. (Coltart 2007:81-82).*

## 1.1 Introduction

Unresolved violent conflicts, some of which are more than a century old, litter Zimbabwe's political landscape. The country's history has been blemished by its inability to break away from its violent past. The country attained independence on 18 April 1980 after 15 years of a bitter liberation war. Subsequently, peace building and nation building processes began in earnest after the war as signified by the Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Re-integration (DDR) of belligerent forces and the policy of reconciliation, enunciated immediately after independence.

However, history has proven that hurriedly implanted peace arrangements lull societies by temporary cessation of hostilities, which ultimately fail in the end to provide fertile ground for sustainable peace. Zimbabwe's independence proved to be a short honeymoon as the young republic faced its first crisis because of the ethnic motivated civil strife in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. The violence left 20 000 people of mostly Ndebele origin dead by 1987 when the two rival nationalist parties Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) signed the Unity Accord (CCJP 1997). The short "age of innocence" was over for the young republic (Edgar 2002:139).

The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saw Zimbabwe featuring in the academia and media for both the wrong and right reasons depending on one's demeanour. Terms such as a "pariah state", a "collapsed state", "constitutional collapse", "cronyism", "exhausted nationalism", "state under siege", "unfinished business" "heroic state", "leadership crisis", "land crisis" and "mutating millennium crisis" have been used to define and describe the country. While much focus on Zimbabwe depict issues to do with decolonisation politics, democracy and land politics, this has left another important aspect of Zimbabwe's conflict conundrum unattended and still unaddressed. This is the issue ethnicity and its attendant problems on Zimbabwe's polity. Zimbabwe like many post-independence countries in Africa like Nigeria, Rwanda, and Kenya has been struggling to deal with a multi-layered protracted social conflict, which manifests through ethnic polarisation and ethnic motivated violence.

## **1.2 Research problem**

In October 2009 the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops noted in their pastoral letter (quoted by Dachs 2009:2),

*For the cycle of violence, humiliation, oppression and exploitation in Zimbabwe to stop, the truth about the country's violence needs to be told and the rival between Shona and Ndebele needs to be addressed...Zimbabwe is deeply divided politically and besides having conflict between different racial groups, its history includes hurtful memories from ethnic rivalry between the Shona and the Ndebele people.*

It has been more than twenty-five years since the signing of the historic 22 December 1987 Unity Accord Agreement between ZANU and ZAPU. The Unity Accord was a negotiated settlement based on top down approach, which ended the violence, which was taking place in Matabeleland and Midlands's provinces. This was of good, but unfortunately not sufficient for interpersonal reconciliation. Because, despite the signing of this negotiated settlement, ethnic polarity, rivalry and tension between Shona and Ndebele remain as an unfinished business and a contentious issue. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the government of Zimbabwe has maintained silence in terms of coming up with holistic and practical processes of addressing the tension and simmering discontentment between the Shona and Ndebele.

The emergence of radical political groups from Matabeleland like the Mthwakazi Liberation Front (MLF), Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP), Matabeleland Liberation Organisation (MLO) and Ibetshu Likazulu which are all advocating for a complete secession of Matabeleland from the rest of Zimbabwe clearly manifest that ethnic polarisation cannot be swept under the carpet forever or be expected to disappear on its own. According to the former MLF Secretary General, Paul Siwela (2012:4),

*There was initial hope that Zimbabwe was going to integrate us into their state as full citizens with equal rights to all opportunities, and thus over the years Mthwakazians have learnt that Zimbabwe is not their home and Zimbabwe will not accommodate Mthwakazians into their community. The time is now opportune for Mthwakazians to reclaim their country irrespective of the expected howling that would be generated by this demand...our people have endured suffering, pain and shame since November 4, 1893, up to date and need to extricate themselves from the injustices they are experiencing today from Limpopo up to Zambezi and from Plumtree up to Battlefields.*

This clearly demonstrates the extent and the deep-rooted nature of the problem. According to Maphosa (2011:4), 'The Shona will blame it on the Ndebele and "their cynicism" coupled with their undesired appetite to learn and adapt which is backdated to the early days of their founding fathers the likes of Mzilikazi and Lobengula'. On the other hand, the Ndebele will passionately blame it on the Shona with "their excessive greed for power and wealth...'

The media act as a public meeting place where people meet and discuss issues that affect society (Habermas 1989). Media can act as a barometer that can enable one to understand the mind-set of society (Chiwada 2013:12). A random survey of the comments made by readers toward each other on the various topical issues on the online Zimbabwean newspapers and social media reveal that ethnically inflammatory statements are a common occurrence. The following are comments by readers based on a random survey of Zimbabwe's popular online newspapers.

Anti-Ndebele sentiments speaking readers:

*...Was it not because of malcontents who came looting our food, wives, sisters and cattle (livestock)? It took time for the Shona to retaliate, not because they could not but because they failed to understand what kind of mammals these Ndebeles were coming to snatch other people's belongings without provocation. [sic] (02/08/11 Newsday)*



*If Ndebeles are so pedantic about their history then why don't they go to South Africa and bow down before the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu and apologise for Tshaka's dissent and claim their heritage there. Zimbabwe will never be split because Bulawayo belongs to Shonas as much as Harare belongs to Ndebeles. (sic) (02/08/11 Newsday)*

*To what extent can you justify your Ndebele identity? Do you know that the Ndebeles came into Zimbabwe running away from Tshaka? So Tshaka is no longer living, so why are you still here? Okay, stay but the truth is no Ndebele thing will ever rule Zimbabwe. (12/05/13 Newsday).*

The following are some of anti-Shona remarks presumably posted by Ndebele speaking readers:

*Likewise, do you know the similarities between Shona language dialects with Swahili language and many other Central African languages including Burundi is no coincidence? In short you do not belong to Southern Africa, the land belong to Abathwa and the San. (sic) (13/05/13 Newsday)*

*Remember when black Nguni Queens like Mnkabayi and Mnyamazan were ruling dynasties and armies of men in Zululand and beyond, you were over in caves digging rats and beating each other over the head with clubs (Rozwi). [Sic] (Umthwakazi Review 15/12/13)*

*"Our great father Lobengula should have dealt with you people before the colonial devils arrived; he was so kind and generous to actually give you a chance to co-exist...but you Shonas too greedy". (Sic) (18/11/14 Umthwakazi Review)*

The hurling of inflammatory insults, based on half-truths, factual errors, and myths between Shona and Ndebele substantiates two key issues: Firstly, it is an indication of the deep mistrust and acrimony that exist between the two groups. Thanks to new media platforms, the debates are exposing what was taboo. Secondly, these comments illuminate some of the general perceptions that demonstrate how these two ethnic groups perceive each other. This is largely because most of these people are presumably ordinary people who do not know each other, (in fact people do not write their actual names preferring to use pseudonyms) but rather who are attacking one another based on what they think each ethnic group represents. Such deliberations are also coming out without any coercion. According to Mpofu, "there may not be direct communication between the elite and the ordinary people but the intertextuality of debates alludes to some form of speaking to each other" (2013b:1). Unfortunately, this kind of communication further alienates the communicators because it has basis on attempts of proving who is right and who is wrong.

According to Thompson (2000:58), an ethnic group is “a community of people who have the conviction that they have a common identity and common fate based on issues of origin, kinship ties, traditions, cultural uniqueness, a shared history, and possibly a shared language”. In simple terms, ethnicity is about identity or categorisation of identity and there is nothing wrong with innocent or honest ethnic differentiation and compartmentalisation (Msindo 2004). However, complexities emerge when there is politicisation of ethnicity, in that case it will act as symptom of problems in a given social order. Even in such a scenario, ethnicity may not be a big problem, but rather it will still be indicative to unaddressed underlying core problems, which could be economic, political, or socio-cultural. Failure to address these underlying problems in the long term will transform ethnicity from its symptomatic role to a stand-alone problem in addition to the unaddressed underlying core problems that are driving ethnicity. This newly created problem is largely a relational one a “people problem” and it usually leads to disengagement, dehumanisation, disrespect, and mistrust, which may lead to the perpetuation of dangerous myths and negative imageries.

Ethnicity problem creates relational disenchantment, which affects relationships and genuine engagement. In addition, once such a situation is set into motion, it creates a violent vicious cycle, which affects society’s ability to address core issues that could be feeding ethnicity because of disengagement and mistrust.

### **1.3 Research motivation**

The world is still livid with horrors and pogroms linked to the problem of perceptions and misperceptions in the politics of identity and citizenship. The holocaust in Germany, genocide in Rwanda and former Yugoslavia serve as classical cases of what can happen if peace-building methods are not applied. This is clearly an old problem, but the 21<sup>st</sup> century is still facing threats from this old problem. In his classic article, Clements (1997:1) claims that:

*The world needs some new ways of thinking about old problems and new ways of acting if we are to survive the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is vital that students of peace and conflict work out ways of harnessing the creative imagination of everyone so that all peoples can envisage a political future and ways of realising that future...what is missing in most social sciences and in much of our work in conflict analysis and resolution are opportunities to hear what the*

*voiceless, the marginalised, the excluded and the victims have to say. Scholars spend too much time listening to each other...what is also missing are dialogues across the huge social fissures- -those of class, those that exist between persons locked into cultures of violence and those working to build cultures of peace, as well those that flow from gender and ethnicity. We need dialogue between the so-called learned and unlearned and between ancient and modern wisdom.*

Dialogue should also be promoted among the so-called unlearned and the learned, and it can also play an important role in encouraging and facilitating environments that lead to more of such dialogues.

## **1.4 Research aim and objectives**

The main aim of this thesis is an attempt to build mutual understanding and peace between Shona and Ndebele people in Zimbabwe.

A relationship that is characterised by mutual respect, compassion and understanding can melt away suspicions and this can lead to the building of peace. Why building friendships? Friendships are important and they can act as fuel in the journey towards the establishment of a culture of peace and co-existence. One crucial aspect which characterises friendship is its relational communication virtue. Harris found that:

*Building friendships with neighbours be they nearby households, communities or countries, is necessary in order to move towards the tolerance, solidarity and understanding...it reduces the likelihood of violence because when friends have a conflict, they ordinarily dialogue rather than fight. (2011:126).*

At macro level, the United Nations (UN) was found on the principle of developing friendliness. This illustrated in the Article 1 subsection 2 of the UN Charter which states that the purpose of the UN is to “promote friendly relations among nation states based on respect” (UN 1945:3).

The unfriendly verbal exchanges between the Shona and Ndebele in public media clearly demonstrate lack of tolerance and understanding. Having said that, questions emerged about the relationship between the Shona and Ndebele, for example how the situation came to what it is now? Why is it not changing? What to do to address some of these issues? This research is part of an effort to address some of these issues and it has the following objectives:

- To gain an understanding of Shona attitudes towards Ndebele and vice versa
- Critically interrogate initiatives undertaken in an effort to promote reconciliation between Shona and Ndebele after the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987.
- To design and implement a dialogue process involving Shona and Ndebele people with the aim of building mutual understanding, friendship and respect
- To carry out a preliminary evaluation of the short-term outcome of this intervention

The research is contributing towards a better understanding of the dynamics behind the Shona and Ndebele relationship through Action Research. It will add value to the existing studies which have been largely descriptive, exploratory, and prescriptive in approaches with the exception of the study undertaken by Dumisani Ngwenya, which used Participatory Action Research (PAR) (2014). This thesis is also part of growing literature that interrogates the link between conflict, violence, and ethnicity in Africa. More importantly, it endeavours to explore and promote exchange, contact, and interaction through dialogue between conflict stakeholders with an intention to build friendship as a way of (re) building relationships. To date there has not been any study that has made such an attempt about Shona and Ndebele conflict.

## **1.5 Limitation**

The basis of this thesis is Action Research Design. The motivation behind choosing this approach was to effect social change through an action-based intervention. However, it is of note that such an intervention produces an effect called a “feel-good effect among participants through the process of consciousness raising mobilisation and instilling a self belief in ordinary people regarding their capacity to change” (Bloor and Wood 2006:12). Note that it is only after the end of a once off intervention that there is this 'feel good' effect. It can give some misleading conclusions to Action Researchers. Therefore, in an attempt to minimise the impact of the feel good effect we did two things. Firstly, we will not conduct the intervention evaluation immediately after the end of the intervention but rather it will be conducted two after the

intervention. The second thing is the intervention was not a once off intervention; it was based on six sustained dialogue sessions, which were conducted and spread over a sustained period of seven months.

## **1.6 Delimitation**

This thesis is not going to evaluate the long-term impact of the intervention. This is not to say the long-term impact of an intervention is unimportant, rather this is because of the fact that this is an academic research project for a doctoral study, bound by some periods. Thus, this will not permit a long-term impact of the evaluation conducted and therefore the study will stick to the short-term outcome of the intervention.

## **1.7 Terminology**

Peace-building discourse like any other discourses has some specific terms and concepts. Thus, it is necessary to clarify some of the key terms or concepts to use throughout the study.

### **1.7.1 Negative peace**

Negative peace is a situation which is characterised by the mere absence of direct forms of violence or war. According to Galtung, negative peace describes peace as the absence of war or direct violence (1969:168). Direct forms of violence refer to physical, verbal, or psychological attacks and abuse by parties to the conflict. Negative peace usually emerges following a successful attempt to end violent conflict through engagement or efforts meant to prevent escalation into violence. The obvious limitation of defining peace using the negative perspective is that it ignores the other subtle forms of violence, which are not linked to direct violence but nonetheless lethal to humanity.

### **1.7.2 Positive peace**

Positive peace is a comprehensive understanding of peace beyond the mere absence of direct violence. Positive peace emerges after dismantling all forms of violence including structural violence, which is subtle, but lethal. Structural violence describes structures, cultures, and policies that promote preventable and unnecessary pain, death, and suffering of people. Unjust structures and unequal relationships that maintain the dominance of one group over others demonstrate

structural violence. Positive peace is the alternative to structural violence since it entails addressing social justice through creating a culture of peace within and across societies (Lederach 2005).

### **1.7.3 Protracted social conflict**

A protracted social conflict is “a phenomenon of human creation evolving from, and producing changes in the personal, relational, structural and cultural dimensions of human experience” Lederach (1997:17). Protracted social conflict is a concept developed by Edward Azar to refer to conflict situations, which are characterised by prolonged and often violent struggle by groups in multi-communal societies (1990). Multi-communal societies particularly in Africa usually emanate from pre-colonial historical rivalries and from divide and rule policies instituted by former colonial powers. In most of these multi-communal societies, it is not uncommon to realise that a single communal group or a coalition of a few communal groups that dominate other groups also dominates the state.

In a protracted social conflict, “collective actors use social power to defeat or remove opponents and gain status, power, resources and scarce values” (Himes 1980:14). Protracted social conflicts continuously slip in and out of violence depending on the prevailing circumstances at any given time. This usually happens over a long period of time which is usually characterised by an acrimonious relationship resembling a “no war no peace scenario”. In simple terms a culture of violence or chronic violence would have ensued, which leads to the further straining, polarisation and fragmentation of society.

### **1.7.4 Conflict-transformation**

Conflict-transformation develops on the assumption that conflicts in human relationships happen for a reason and they serve as a symptom for an existing problem. The usual and normal response when violence in conflict occurs is to stop it and then try to find the causes. However, even though it is good to respond, most of such responses and reactions do not address relationships and structures, which drive the conflict. Relationships (re) building and societal structure transformation are at the core of conflict-transformation. According to Berghof, “conflict-transformation is best described as a complex process of constructively changing relationships,

attitudes, behaviours, interests and discourses in violence prone settings”(2012:23). Conflict-transformation also addresses underlying structures, cultures, and institutions that encourage and condition violent political and social conflicts (Paffenholz 2013a:3).

### **1.7.5 Peacebuilding**

Peacebuilding essentially entails any activities and processes that censure violence in all its forms, endorse the rule of law, forgiveness, truth recovery, justice, reconciliation, and avoid a relapse into violence. It involves the (re) building of structures and systems, which emphasise economic, social and political justice for all. The origins of peacebuilding are traceable back to the former UN Secretary General Boutros, Boutros. (Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* of 1992) The process of establishing positive peace is peacebuilding. It aims at channelling the energy generated by conflict in creative, constructive and nonviolent rather than destructive and violent directions. Its aim is not to eliminate conflict but to utilise conflict processes for generative and positive change. Peacebuilding sub-divides into two compartments, which are technical peacebuilding and transformational peace building. Technical peace-building focus on (re)building destroyed physical infrastructure and superstructure. While transformational peace building emphasises the nourishing of social relationships and the healing of spiritual souls of the society (Machakanja 2010:1). It covers issues like reconciliation, healing, truth recovery, justice, and forgiveness.

### **1.7.6 Ethnicity**

Ethnicity is the ability of a group to define, classify, and differentiate itself from the other ethnic groups. This compartmentalisation uses common identity, geography, kinship, ties, cultural traditions, and language to distinguish itself from others. Ethnic identities are universal as illustrated by Rawlinson, “differentiation through ethnicity has always existed in Africa and humans have a universal propensity to form collective identities to distinguish outsiders from insiders along ethnic lines” (2003:4). Thus, holding all other factors constant, there is wrong with ethnicity in principle. Because it is, a mere mechanism of differentiating groups based on clear differences that exist between them.

However, according to Lonsdale ethnicity is a convenient instrument that can be used to mobilise groups for political purposes leading mutual antagonism through “*othering others*” through ethnic chauvinism (1994). Such negative expression of ethnicity produces a phenomenon commonly known as tribalism (Msindo 2007:268). Ethnicity expresses itself positively through unity and co-operation in diversity (Msindo 2007). Cordel and Wolff believe that ethnic conflicts are not about ethnicity *per se*, but rather demonstrate some ethno-political conflicts between the groups (2010:81). While this is an important observation, this thesis believes that there is something more to it; by addressing whatever ethno-political differences between ethnic groups, it will not automatically address issues such as mutual mistrust, suspicions, and interpersonal relationships. Thus, beyond the ethno-political differences that may have sowed the seeds of hatred between groups, what exists now is a toxic environment, which poisons relationships. This toxic environment will not neutralise itself, instead it mutates by feeding into existing ethno-political tensions and vice versa.

## **1.8 Thesis chapter outline**

This thesis subdivides into five main sections. Section one is the general introduction, section two will be literature review, section three will cover the research methodology, section four will deal with data presentation and analysis and section five will be the summary and conclusion. The breakdown of the chapters is as follows:

Chapter One: This chapter presents the research problem, research motivation, research aim and objectives; limitations and delimitations of the study and definition of terminology used in the thesis.

Chapter Two: This chapter examines the main peace theory which is guiding this thesis. Conflict-transformation forms the basis of the main theoretical framework and will be discussed alongside other conflict handling mechanisms like conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution.

Chapter Three: This discusses the role of dialogue in relationship building using cases studies and it also covers the sub theoretical framework.



Chapter Four: This chapter examines the relevant literature by tracing the history of the relationship between the Shona and Ndebele up to the eve of independence.

Chapter Five: The chapter reviews the nature of post-independence Shona and Ndebele relations. The chapter also analyse the developments that have taken place since the signing on the Unity Accord to the most recent features of the relationship between the two ethnic groups.

Chapter Six: This chapter discusses the research approach used in the thesis, which in this case is the Action Research Design. The chapter will emphasise the origins of Action Research, how it works and will justify its adoption in this thesis.

Chapter Seven: This chapter discusses the methodological issues of the thesis. The chapter will highlight the adoption of a qualitative research paradigm used in this thesis. The chapter also describes and justifies the data collection methods, instruments, data analysis methods, study population, sample size used in the study. Ethical issues, validity and reliability of the findings were also covered in this chapter.

Chapter Eight: This chapter presents findings on the theme of Shona and Ndebele attitudes of each other.

Chapter Nine: This chapter will present findings on the theme of peacebuilding initiatives pursued in line with the Unity Accord.

Chapter Ten: The chapter describes and discusses the process, activities and the action developed towards promoting friendship among the participants in the experimental group.

Chapter Eleven: This chapter will evaluate the outcome of the intervention.

Chapter Twelve: This chapter will wrap up the thesis by stating recommendations and giving general summary of the thesis, it will also reflect on the entire thesis and the conclusion.

## **1.9 Summary**

This chapter has discussed the research problem, research motivation, research aim and objectives; limitations and delimitations of the study and definition of terminology

used in the thesis. The next chapter will discuss and review the main peace theory used in this thesis and other relevant conflict handling mechanisms.

## CHAPTER 2: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, CONFLICT-RESOLUTION AND CONFLICT-TRANSFORMATION

*When a conflict arises, people tend to feel uncomfortable and seek for a reason and a quick solution. However, in social conflicts the underlying causes are often multi-layered and often refer to different aspects in time and context. In order to reach the goal, the actors have to enter a process of conflict-transformation, which will turn out to be both linear and circular. (Lederach 2009:7).*

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the main peace theory, which is guiding this thesis. The main theory that inspires this thesis is the Conflict-transformation model, pioneered and popularised, in the transformative peace-building discourse, by John Paul Lederach. The Conflict-transformation peacebuilding discourse marked the beginning of a departure from international peacebuilding towards local peacebuilding where local actors play a pivotal role in the transformation process. There will be examination and discussion of Conflict-transformation as a theory and strategy for handling conflict and building peace along with other conflict handling mechanisms such as conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict-resolution.

### 2.2 Conflict handling mechanisms

Conflict is at the heart of all human activities, interactions, and relationships. The history of humankind has been that of conflicts. Conflict emerges from the incompatibility between the interests or needs of two or more parties, be they individuals, groups, or nation states. According to Cooper (2003:85),

*Conflict is an ineradicable part of human condition and it occurs when the interests of one party come by accident or design into engagement with those of another or others...conflict develops when something is propelled in the space already occupied by something else that cannot readily accommodate this new presence.*

Incompatible goals or incompatibilities, which eventually become conflict drivers, may involve tangible or intangible aspects of human life. Different ideas, sentiments,

attitudes, and feelings naturally emerge because of human interactions. Harris (2011:124) observed that,

*...each of us sees, hears and experiences the world uniquely and we spend our lives bridging the differences between our perceptions and (and all the needs and wishes they generate) and the perceptions of others. It is how we deal with those differences or conflicts which shape the societies in which we live in.*

Lederach (1995:9) identifies the constructionist view of conflict, which is particularly very useful to this study. Conflicts “do not just happen”; rather they are socially constructed and restructured through societal structures and norms. Individuals and groups exacerbate adversity in conflict situations by acting as participants in fostering tension through behaviour, attitudes, and perceptions. While conflict is inevitable, its destructive potential can emerge in the form of either direct violence or structural violence; these are inevitable, but result from deliberate choices (Harris 2011:123). In fact, the dialectical nature of conflict presents opportunities and challenges, advantages and disadvantages to human relational interaction. Reinmann (2004:7) who identified the three different ways of perceiving conflict captures this:

- *Problem-* There is a tendency to view conflict as problem of political order/status quo.
- *Catalyst-* There is a tendency to perceive conflict as a catalyst for social change.
- *Nonviolent struggle-* There is a tendency to see conflict as a nonviolent struggle for social change.

Through interpreting or understanding conflict differently, societies have developed different mechanisms of dealing with conflicts. To Lund, when addressing conflict it is essential to first look at endogenous methods within the conflict setting before resorting to exogenous methods (2001:23). However, at the heart of several of these mechanisms is the need to handle or address violence, which has become synonymous with conflicts yet these two are different even though they are interconnected.

### **2.2.1 Conflict Prevention**

The concept of conflict prevention derives from the well-known belief that prevention is always better than cure. In fact, it is both reasonable and cost effective (financially and in terms of human resource) to prevent conflicts before they degenerate into violence (Chalmers 2006:2). However, one can emphasize that the concept of conflict prevention is not about avoiding conflict or preventing it *per se*. This is because conflict prevention is neither feasible nor desirable since conflict is an inevitable part of human life. Therefore, when we discuss conflict prevention, for example we are in fact discussing violence prevention.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), conflict prevention is focused on supporting national institutions and leadership in their efforts to prevent violence, engage in conflicts constructively and peacefully (UNDP 2008:12). Proponents of conflict prevention are convinced that while conflict is normal and acceptable, we should prevent at all cost the violence and destruction, which may result from conflict.

Conflict prevention aims to provide incentives for a peaceful accommodation while at the same time reducing the possible benefits of confrontational engagement. While conflict prevention is more important and meaningful when used before the escalation of violence, it also has an important role even after violence has taken place as it seeks to put in place mechanisms to prevent a future relapse into violence.

According to Berghof (2012:17), conflict prevention bases itself on four key pillars, which are as follows:

- Identifying situations that could result in violence.
- Reducing manifest tension
- Preventing existing tension from escalating
- Removing sources of danger before violence occurs.

These four pillars translate into two main distinctive but nonetheless interlinked approaches, which are short-term crisis management and long-term structural prevention (Cordel and Wolff 2010:79). We designate short-term crisis management

to arrest any unfolding worsening of the security situation (Cordel and Wolff 2010:79). While long-term structural prevention aims to address root causes of situations of conflict, sometimes linked to the societal systems or structures (Cordel and Wolff 2010:79).

We have identified a number of methods and tools utilised by conflict prevention practitioners and institutions. These may include early warning, security, and confidence building measures, preventive diplomacy, preventive peacekeeping, and peace education.

**Early warning:** Early warning entails forecasting and monitoring situations that have the potential to turn into violent conflict (Berghof 2012:18). Early warning mechanisms utilise qualitative and quantitative data to monitor countries and regional situations in order to implement preventive strategies like promoting preventive and diplomatic initiatives especially during stages when the conflict is still tractable.

**Confidence and security building mechanisms:** Confidence and security building strategies reduce suspicions while at the same time enhancing co-operation and understanding (Berghof 2012:18). These strategies may include assuring the victims of guaranteed security. These should not empty assurances; rather they should be real life changing assurances supported by genuine willingness and practical deeds to that effect. In Rwanda after the genocide, the government has been making efforts to create a “non-ethnic” society, one of the important slogans used being “never again”, and this has acted as way of re-assuring the society that there is a determination to instil confidence and security within society. This creates a stable and effective secure environment, which is a foundation for building and strengthening relationships.

**Preventive diplomacy:** This is the work carried out by diplomatic envoys and multilateral institutions in encouraging engagement as an alternative to violence (Berghof 2012:18). At the institutional level, the United Nations (UN), initially by its late former Secretary General, first promoted this concept Dag Hammarskjöld. Preventive diplomacy institutes a spirit of co-operative problem solving among conflicting parties and may use mediation.

**Preventive peace-keeping:** Preventive peacekeeping aims to stop and separate the fighting groups. In so doing, peacekeepers should monitor and protect civilians who tend to be very vulnerable during armed conflicts.

**Peace education:** Peace education is based on the belief that people “learn” to be violent through societal socialisation and people have the capacity and ability to choose how they respond to conflict (Miall 2004:4), so “people can unlearn old beliefs and practices and relearn alternatives” (Harris 2011:126). Peace education can help to promote a culture of peace as an alternative to a culture of violence by encouraging the widespread acceptance of attitudes and behaviours which emphasise nonviolent ways of dealing with conflicts.

Despite the potential that lies with conflict prevention, especially its peace education component there is controversy concerning the concept (Mbalamya 2012:43). Conflict prevention sometimes condones the use of violence in the form of preventive action to protect the vulnerable members. Sanctioning the use of violence at any level is a huge problem as far as peace research is concerned, where compatibility between ends and the means used to achieve those ends is always emphasised. According to Ghandi “there is no way to peace, peace is the way” (cited in Chopra 2005:13), the means of attaining peace must always be consistent with the goal of peace itself. Preventive action has actually been used as a convenient instrument to target particular nation states using military force in the name of the “responsibility to protect” paradigm. Iraq, Somalia, Libya, and Afghanistan for example used force in an attempt to bring about peace, with significant consequences.

### **2.2.2 Conflict Management**

Conflict management as a concept is not so concerned with ending the conflict as with containing violence by separating the fighting parties. Bloomfield and Reilly (1998:18) notes that,

*Conflict management is the positive and constructive handling of difference and divergence. Rather than advocating methods for removing [it] addresses the more realistic question of managing conflict: how to deal with it in a constructive way, how to bring opposing sides together in a co-operative*

*process, how to design practical, achievable co-operative system for the constructive management of difference.*

Conflict management emanates from the realisation that conflicts could be protracted and these move into and out of violence repeatedly. Violence is caused by “existing institutions and historical relationships as well as from the established distribution of power” (Bloomfield and Reilly 1998:18). Such protracted social conflicts have forced conflict theorists to review and reconceptualise various conflict intervention strategies and accept that it is unrealistic or even impossible to solve protracted social conflicts. Thus, all that is possible to do in such complex conflict situations is to separate the conflicting parties and so mitigate violence and the likelihood of its escalation. At macro-level conflict, management seeks to bring those who have the power to end large-scale violence using a negotiated settlement and mediators usually play an important role in facilitating the negotiation process. In Zimbabwe, the Unity Accord of 1987 between Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) had basis on the conflict management approach.

Cooper has observed that “conflict management is akin to a boxing match, where the conflict manager who happens to be the referee plays an important role in separating contestants and also ensuring that the rules of engagement are followed without undue injury to the contestants” (2003:86). Peacekeeping operation whose intervention aims is to deploy both military and civilian personnel in order to prevent further hostilities and fighting illustrates conflict management. By keeping, the fighting parties apart “there is hope that time or other interventions will result in a diminishing of the conflict”. (Harris 2011:123). This completed successfully, conflict management will have led negative peace, to use as a launch pad for possible positive peace.

Conflict management, however, it has its limitations, the biggest one being its inability to tackle structural violence which results in many more deaths than direct violence (Harris 2010:79). Conflict management is at times based on a simplistic perception of viewing peace as equal to the absence of war and direct violence. Such an interpretation has basis on the traditional understanding of viewing security as equal to protecting the borders of the state against invasion. Thus, conflict



management tends to only address direct violence, which is often a symptom and not the key, or root problem to the conflict itself. More importantly, this may leave the conflict environment or setting unchanged and leads to a façade that is at times characterised by a cessation of hostilities and violence only, while leaving the underlying causes of the conflict very much intact.

Conflict management has also been criticised for concentrating on those in top leadership positions while ignoring the grassroots people before and after negotiations, yet grassroots people withstand the worst of violent conflicts. The other key problematic aspect of conflict management is its promise to “manage”, this is viewed as tantamount to pretending that human action can easily be directed or controlled like machines or other physical objects. As Lederach pointed out ...experience tells us, however, that we do not really manage human action and interaction in ways we might manage things in the physical world (1995:17). Conflict management has a limited focus on the technical and practical aspects of the conflict.

### **2.2.3 Conflict-resolution**

Ideally, the concern of resolving conflict is to bring a solution to an on-going conflict through addressing its root causes. The main assumption in conflict-resolution discourse is that conflict is bad and we must seek a solution to because it emanates from clearly traceable root causes. Therefore, one can believe that one solves conflict by finding a mutually satisfying solution that provides a win-win outcome for the parties concerned. This may be carried out by the parties to the conflict themselves through negotiation or it may be aided by a mediator. The progenitors of conflict-resolution like John Burton, Christopher Mitchell, Michael Banks, Edward Azar and Denis Sandole among others were convinced that “every conflict has a finite life and a clear end, and therefore, can be solved or be declared intractable” (Botes 2003:4).

John Burton got credit for developing the problem-solving approach, which complements conflict-resolution with the human needs theory (Burton 1991). Burton strongly believed that conflict was a result of the society’s inability to satisfy human needs, including justice, security, and esteem (Burton 1991:23). At a macro-level

conflict-resolution sought to promote diplomacy and mediation among nation states and this is captured in the signing of formal peace agreements. At micro-level, conflict-resolution may involve mediation at community and family levels by assisting conflict parties to reframe their positions so that common ground can be found or created in order to solve a problem.

According to Mbalamya (2012:64),

*...conflict resolution does not set specific solutions or end goals for society, rather it offers a commitment to the key assumption that destructive win-lose styles of management in violent conflict generally incur unacceptable costs for the conflict parties and the whole society in general and the search for ways of transforming actually or potentially violent conflict into peaceful process of political and social change.*

We identified the following eight steps as crucial in resolving a conflict (Mbalamya 2012:67):

***Creation of an effective atmosphere:*** This typically entails creating a secure environment in which interaction between conflicting parties will take place without interruption. A mediator can assist.

***Clarification of parties' perceptions:*** Parties must be able to express their feelings and perceptions to each other. Conflicting parties have different perspectives of issues at stake and through clarifying each other's position, feelings and perceptions the parties may understand and appreciate each other better.

***Focus on individual and shared needs:*** By focussing on each party needs and those that are shared, this step marks the beginning of finding areas of common ground.

***Building of shared positive power:*** Where it is difficult to find common ground among conflicting parties, the parties focussing on the solution to the problem may build this.

***Looking to the future and then learning from the past:*** Bridging the gap between the past and present will make it easier for parties to face a common future together.

**Generation of options:** Conflict and violence sometimes occur because concerned parties may believe they have run out of options or alternatives. Dynamic and creative thinking can change pessimism into optimism.

**Taking action:** When exploring alternatives, parties must develop particular acts to meet individual and shared needs.

**Making mutual benefit agreements:** Parties must commit to steps mentioned above which would be formulated into a mutually satisfying agreement:

*Conflict resolution also identifies the importance of relationship-building among actors as way of addressing the root causes of a conflict. However, the conflict resolution discourse believes in the role of external actors especially in the form of partnerships between international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and local NGOs (Paffenholz 2009:4). The partnerships have witnessed activities such as dialogue projects between groups and communities, peace education and conflict resolution training programmes. (Paffenholz 2009:4).*

*Conflict-resolution has close inclinations to the liberal peace theory which believes in what Paffenholz described as “an overarching rationale for international support to local actors by considering vibrant civil society as an essential component of liberal democracies. (Paffenholz 2013:2).*

*The main strength of conflict-resolution lies with its endeavour on tackling the underlying root causes of conflict and its attempt to promote relationship-building among actors. Conflict-resolution addresses the content of the conflict and while this is strength, it sometimes fails to adequately address the social system within which the conflict is occurring. The efforts to promote relationship building are commendable and very important; however, empirical evidence demonstrates that the international NGOs and donors tend to dominate in the process by virtue of being the benefactors. Hence their association with local NGOs and community based organisations has not yielded much in terms of improving relationships due to the fact that local NGOs tend to be dominated by elites who understand international donor and NGOs modus operandi and they are also influenced by that (Paffenholz 2013:11).*

Henkeman illustrated this using the example of South Africa where, despite reconciliation attempts by elite individuals like Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, economic inequalities between blacks and whites and among blacks themselves remain as a challenge to post-apartheid South Africa. Economic inequalities are a major source of hostilities and these hostilities are what Henkeman regarded as “bad

relationships that are rooted in a continuation apartheid perceptions and attitudes on all sides” (2010:12).

While conflict-resolution correctly identifies the need to address the root causes of a conflict, its idea that every conflict has a clear finite end is problematic because conflicts are an unending aspect of human interface. More importantly, the notion that a conflict has a finite end emanates from the thinking that conflicts are a short-term phenomenon, which can be “resolved”. Hence, there is need for a conflict intervention mechanism, which appreciates the nature of conflict, especially its dialectic nature. Thus, any conflict handling mechanism, which fails to transform the conflict energy, systems, structures, and relationships, will not succeed much in promoting the movement from a culture of violence toward a culture of peace.

### **2.3 Conflict-transformation**

Peace-making efforts often result in conflict management, especially in situations where conflict-resolution is impossible or difficult. In some instances, peace-making efforts may lead to conflict-resolution because the parties to the conflict are happy with the outcome. However, the parties may still hate or mistrust each other and this is not sustainable peace. Conflict-transformation goes beyond conflict management and conflict-resolution and involves building or rebuilding relationships, with damage from conflict (Boege 2006:7). Conflict-transformation also aims to rebuild trust through fostering forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation. To Harris and Morrison “Peace through transformation is based on the assumption that human beings are capable of love that can overcome feelings of hatred”. (2003:17).Crucial to this transformation process, are relationships.

Relationships constitute an important part in the process of conflict-transformation where there is conception of peace as “centred and rooted in the quality of relationships. This includes both face to face interactions and the ways in which we structure our social, political, economic, and cultural relationships”. (Lederach 2003:30). The Ndebele and Shona polarisation in Zimbabwe has all the hallmarks of a relationship problem particularly what Bradshaw identified as “...past relationships, where some individuals or groups have historically coerced or cheated others, this leads to distrust among parties in the present” (2007:29). Tension-based past

relationships can influence present and future relationships through intergenerational transmission of distrust and disrespect of each other. Lederach has observed that the concept of “transformation does not suggest that we simply eliminate or control conflict, but rather points descriptively towards its inherent dialectic nature”. (2003:28) By this he means that social conflict is naturally created by humans who are involved in relationships, yet once it occurs, it changes (i.e., transforms) those events, people, and relationships that created the initial conflict. Thus, the cause-and-effect relationship goes both ways from the people and the relationships to the conflict and back to the people and relationships. In this sense, "conflict-transformation" is a term that describes a natural occurrence. Conflicts change relationships in predictable ways, altering communication patterns and patterns of social organization, altering images of the self and of the other. (Burgess 1997:14)

Miall claims, “Relationships affect the whole fabric of interaction within the society in which conflict takes place” (2004:4). Ethnic polarisation is a relational problem and its relational characteristic disturbs social normalcy. Lederach argues that polarised relationships between groups are often a trigger for conflict and hinder peace-building efforts long after the violence is over (1996:18). “Memories are part of each party’s socially constructed understanding of the situation, shaped by culture and learning ...The way groups remember and construct their past is often central to the mobilisation of conflict”. (Miall 2004:8).

Lederach noted that if conflict is unaddressed it could have destructive consequences. Conflict-transformation addresses a culture of violence by striving to replace it with a culture of peace through promoting tolerance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Conflict-transformation demonstrates a unique way of understanding conflict where its consequences turn into dynamic ways so that images of self and that of others reach transformation from conflict rather than harm. Changing perceptions, context, and behaviour does this. A social conflict by its nature changes perceptions and attitudes of conflicting parties in a negative way, which worsens polarisation; however, if done successfully conflict-transformation is expected to inculcate and inoculate trust and mutual understanding.

Contemporary conflicts, be they at micro or macro level” demand more than win-win outcomes because “the very structure of parties and relationships may be embedded in a pattern of relationships of conflict that extend beyond the particular site of conflict” (Botes 2003:5) Transformation should take place at personal and systemic levels. The manner in which one expresses conflict is transformed as well as changed from “mutually destructive modes towards dialogue and interdependence” (Lederach 1989:14).

The underlying agenda of conflict-transformation goes beyond the visible aspects of a conflict; it has a spiritual agenda as well which emphasise love, forgiveness, and reconciliation between individuals and groups (Lederach 2004:4). Lederach’s ideas of conflict-transformation were informed and influenced by Anabaptist-Mennonite religious approaches, which promote peace as embedded in reconciliation, and reconciliation being a product of truth, mercy, justice and the building of right relationships and social structures through a radical respect for human rights and nonviolence as a way of life. (Lederach 2003:3) Yevsyukova identifies seven interconnected aspects to the conflict-transformation process (1993:1). The first issue is coming together, this involves love and overcoming fear, and it usually takes one party to the conflict to appreciate the significance of relationships. The next aspect relates to two interrelated issues, which are commitment and trust. These facilitate the beginning of reconciliation through restoration of trust and it reduces vulnerability. Trust may lead to opening up as parties begin to share pain and grief and it may become reciprocal among conflict parties. Active listening on both parts are components of transformation process. Listening and being listened to is not just confined to words; it includes the feelings and needs behind the words. This also cultivates a sense of validity of one’s own needs, which may initiate mutual recognition through empathy. Empathy to the other person especially an opponent is difficult; however, it can facilitate the beginning of honest dialogue based on honest exchange of opinions where personal thinking paves way to group thinking. Finally, the normalisation of relations ushers in a new healthy relationship based on trust and inter-dependence.

Lederach believes that conflict-transformation demonstrates a better appreciation of the nature of conflict itself unlike conflict-resolution and conflict management (2004).

Lederach compares conflict-resolution and conflict-transformation (2004:18).

**Table 2.1: Comparison of conflict-resolution and conflict-transformation**

|                                       | <b>Conflict-resolution</b>  | <b>Conflict-transformation</b>  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>The key question</i>               | How do we end something not so desired?   | How do we end something destructive and build something desired?  |
| <i>The focus</i>                      | It is content centred   | It is relationship cantered.  |
| <i>The purpose</i>                    | To achieve an agreement and solution to the presenting problem creating the crisis                      | To promote constructive change processes inclusive of – but not limited to—immediate solutions.   |
| <i>The development of the process</i> | It is embedded and built around the immediacy of the relationship where the presenting problems appear. | It is concerned with responding symptoms and engaging the systems within which relationships are embedded.  |
| <i>Time frame</i>                     | The horizon is short  | The horizon is mid-range to long-range.   |
| <i>View of conflict</i>               | It envisions the need to de-escalate conflict processes.  | It envisions conflict as a dynamic of ebb(conflict de-escalation to pursue constructive change) and flow(conflict escalation to pursue constructive change) |

Source: Lederach (2004:19)

### **2.3.1 Historical background**

Conflict-transformation is a new concept and it began to gain popularity in the early 1990s. We can trace its growing acceptance and recognition from the end of the Cold War and John Paul Lederach is credited for pioneering and popularising it as a theory. In his book published in 1995, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict-transformation across cultures*, Lederach outlined the conceptual underpinnings of conflict-transformation. Conceptually, its foundations can be traced to Glutting's model of peace, violence and peace research, which was published in the first issue of *Journal of Peace* in 1969. The idea of transforming relationships, which is the bedrock of conflict-transformation, is closely associated to the work done by Curle in 1971. Finally, the relationship-(re)building had a lot of influence from Kelman and Fisher's works. However, Lederach's most influential work in conflict-transformation came in his 1997 book *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in divided societies*. Although the book was published in 1997, Lederach has indicated that he

started exploring the ideas of conflict-transformation in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Lederach 2012:8). Lederach emphasised three main dimensions of conflict-transformation, which are perceptions and attitudes of people, the context in which people live, and the behaviour of people (2012).

Van Dijk explains that the behaviour of people has a bearing to perceptions and attitudes (2009:11). An example of perceptions and attitudes includes distrust, trust, feelings of confidence or superiority (Van Dijk 2009:11). The context is about how people live in communities. This may entail either equal or unequal access to basic amenities, economic opportunities, and participation in socio-political structures. The context influence people's attitudes as well as their behaviour (Van Dijk 2009:11). How people behave is largely a product of attitudes and perceptions and the context of their situation. Examples of behaviour may include violence or peaceful coexistence, corruption, hatred, dialogue and engagement.

At macro level especially during the Cold War, the possibility of a nuclear war had always pre-occupied many peace practitioners so much that upon the end of the Cold War most scholars expected a more peaceful world. The optimism emanated from the fact that Cold War proxy wars in Angola, Mozambique, and Namibia were addressed by a combination of conflict management and conflict-resolution. However, even though the end of the Cold War saw a remarkable decline in terms of interstate wars, it unfortunately marked an increase in new violent intrastate conflicts and recurrence of some conflicts, many of which could not be adequately addressed by interventions such as conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict-resolution. To Lederach:

*...the nature and characteristics of contemporary conflict suggest the need for a set of concepts and approaches that go beyond traditional statist diplomacy. Building peace in today's conflicts calls for long-term commitment to establishing an infrastructure across the levels of society, an infrastructure that empowers the resources of reconciliation from within that society. (1997: xvi)*

At micro level Conflict-transformation could be useful for instance in a situation of divorcing couples who have children. Transformation is needed so that their relationship after divorce will not be characterised by hatred of each other, which may affect children.



Berghof (2012:22) explains the complementary role of conflict-transformation,

*...in the face of violence, there are three main impulses. The first is an immediate one – to stop it. The second is a medium term one - to deal with the wounds resulting from it. The third finally is a long-term one - to change the underlying conditions that have led and may lead again to violence. Conflict-transformation is the comprehensive approach that attempts to achieve the last of these three goals without neglecting the others.*

Conflict-transformation became a more apposite and alluring to conflicts, which emerged after the end of the Cold War. These conflicts were mostly due to knotty systems, structures, and relationships, which promoted both direct and structural violence. These conflicts became deep rooted and a protracted part of society's social system. Preventing violence (in its different facets) in such systems became virtually impossible, managing such conflict-habituated systems became a nightmare, and more importantly, such systems cannot be resolved. Sub-Saharan Africa is awash with examples, which demonstrate this, for example, violent conflicts in Central African Republic, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Kenya among many others. Many of the problems emanate from the inability of governments to furnish their citizens with the basic infrastructure and services that sustain a decent and respectable life. As Harris put it "... the exploitation, neglect and exclusion which are features of structural violence kill, slowly in comparison to direct violence, but vastly more people". (2010:79)

### **2.3.2 Aspects of conflict-transformation**

Relationships constitute a key component in any conflict-transformation process. Conflict-transformation process addresses conflict and relationships on the premise that "conflict and change are a normal part of human life and conflict is continuously present in human relationships and the fabric of these relationships is constantly adapting and changing" (Lederach 2000:36).

According to Mitchell (2005:5), "Conflict-transformation must begin by transforming the conflict itself that is the content and the root causes of the conflict. Secondly, transformation must address the socio-political system of the conflict setting. The socio-political system is a fundamental ingredient because it influences the conflict itself and vice versa. The net effect of this is the further straining of relationships.

Lederach (2000:38) identifies four 'vital modes' that are not just linked to socio-political systems, but to relationships as well. These are:

- Personal - changes that aim at reducing the violent ramifications of social conflicts by focussing on interpersonal and intrapersonal changes. These personal changes will influence emotional, perceptual and spiritual issues of the conflict,
- Relational - efforts meant to reduce poor communication and amplify understanding through enhancing interaction and interdependence. Social conflicts have a propensity to destroy normal pattern of communication and interaction in relationships. The relational dimension of transformation seeks to reduce dysfunctional or poorly functional communication while seeking maximisation of mutual understanding through deliberate interventions,
- Structural - aims to understand and redress the perceived root causes of the conflict. It also emphasises the critical ways in which social structures, organisations, and institutions are built, sustained, and changed by conflict. "Structural transformation promotes nonviolent ways of addressing underlying causes and social conditions that create and foster violent expressions of conflict" (2000:38). Structural transformation seeks to maximise institutional relationship in order to enhance meeting basic human needs and public participation in public institutions.
- Cultural - seeks to address societal perceptions of engaging in conflict. The common perception in human societies is that violence works and it produces quick results. This has largely promoted a culture of intolerance and violence. Cultural transformation does not only acknowledge the cultural patterns that promote the rise and use of violence but it seeks to initiate ways that cultivate tolerance and peaceful handling of conflict.

Vayrynen (1999:152) presents a similar list of what to transform conflict at macro and micro level. These are:

- Actor transformation - refers to the internal changes in major parties to the conflict and relate closely to Lederach's personal transformation.

- Issue transformation –involves altering the political agenda of the conflict that is changing what the subject of the conflict. This is linked to Lederach's aspects of addressing the content and the conflict and structural transformation.
- Rule transformation - defines the norms that actors follow in their interaction with each other and compares to both personal and cultural transformation of the conflict.
- Structural transformation - highlights changes in the systems or structures, which feed the conflict and is similar to Lederach's structural dimension.

Lederach and Vayrynen both demonstrate that Conflict-transformation involves conflict content, structures, and relationships. For this study in particular, the relationships facet of the conflict-transformation is central to the study because it addresses perceptions and systems that reproduce and influence perceptions.

Lederach went another step further illustrating the multi-level nature of conflict-transformation in the peace-building process, which gives agency to local actors (1997:39). Lederach designed a three-levelled pyramid, which divides society into three levels requiring different strategies of peace building.

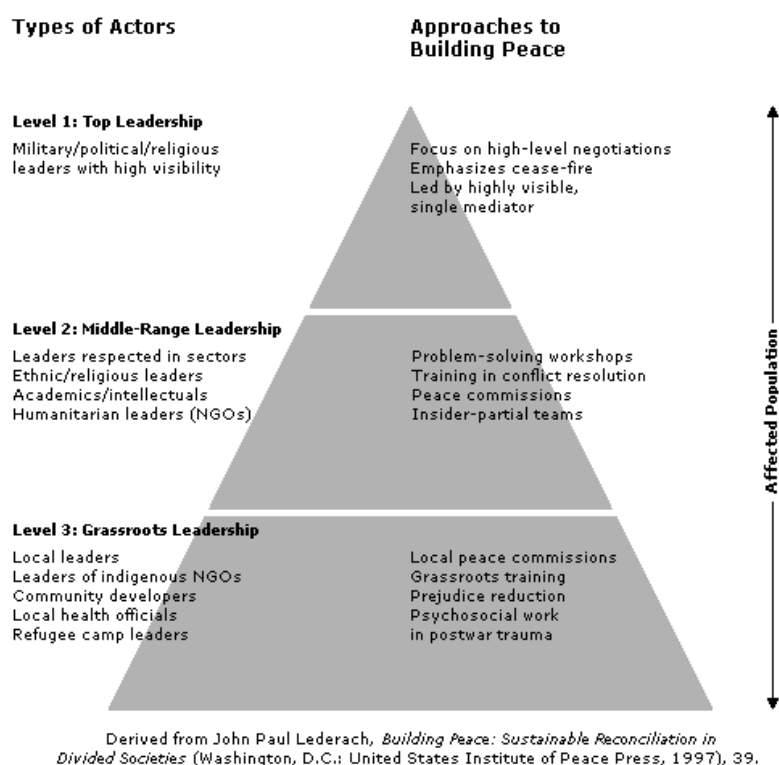
The first level also known as track I is composed of top leadership and made up of political leaders who have the power, especially the means and capacity to make things happen in either direction. We can access top leadership by mediation, which focuses on high-level negotiations whose emphasis is on ceasefire.

The second level, or track II, is mid-level leadership, is from ethnic leaders, academics, civil society leaders, and NGOs. This group can be accessed via resolution-based approaches like problem-solving workshops, conflict-resolution training, and peace commissions. Lederach strongly believed that the second level is the nucleus of conflict-transformation since members from this group could easily blend with members from first and third levels.

The third level, or track III, targets grassroots level of the community, which represents the majority of the populace who are usually direct victims of violent conflicts. We can address this group through grassroots interventions training to

reduce prejudice, community dialogue projects that built to form friendships and create trust and psychosocial support to deal with trauma healing.

**Figure 2.1:** *Lederach's three levels pyramid.*



Source:Lederach(1997:39)

The third level, or track III, is of special interest to this study, particularly community dialogue projects that can build relationships through building friendships, based on trust and respect. In fact, this study views greater potential from third level, assuming it is the group that suffers most from the conflict and therefore it is this group, which benefits more from peace than other groups.

Conflict-transformation as a concept has, however, been criticised by some who view it as value laden, too idealistic and ambitious. Botes (2003:11) argues, “The link between Conflict-transformation theory and its practical application still appears weak”. This is probably because conceptually Conflict-transformation is still young and growing and still undergoing structural metamorphosis. However, to make clear is that, the emergence of Conflict-transformation does not make it a sacrosanct concept nor does it denigrate other existing conflict handling mechanisms. Conflict-

transformation is also presenting a synthesis of the earlier interventions like conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict-resolution, but as an enhanced modification, which goes beyond addressing negative peace. In Lederach's own words, "my purpose is to add a voice to the on-going discussion and search for greater understanding and clarity in human relationships and not to minimise or degrade other interventions" (2004:16). From this angle, of mention is that Conflict-transformation is not in competition with other conflict handling mechanisms as such, because each intervention strategy including Conflict-transformation has their strengths and weaknesses. Thus, these mechanisms may as well complement each other depending on the nature, time, and context of the conflict.

## **2.4. Summary**

This chapter has examined the theoretical aspect, which informs this thesis. Conflict-transformation has been adopted as the main peace theory in this thesis because of its ability to address the relational aspects of social conflicts and more importantly. It puts the local actors in the driving seat. Dialogue will be an important platform in facilitating the expected transformation process. Commitment to genuine and fruitful engagement is fundamental to the process of transformative peace building. Interventions like conflict management, conflict-resolution, and conflict prevention have contributed immensely in dealing with ethnic conflict. However, the continued prevalence of violent ethnic conflicts in Africa and elsewhere has proved that perhaps other types of conflict intervention mechanisms like conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict-resolution have not been adequate to address the relationships side of conflicts. This does not mean that earlier interventions; it merely means that we forget earlier interventions. They can address certain aspects within conflicts complemented by conflict-transformation because its thrust is to replace a culture of violence and intolerance with a culture of peace and tolerance. The task of creating a culture-based peace is not a simple one; however, it can be made possible by creatively addressing relationships and structures of societal systems through dialogue, forgiveness, and reconciliation. This study will make use of the relational aspects of conflict-transformation particularly its potential to promote grassroots community integration using dialogue as a form of engagement. In

addition, the next chapter will discuss the conceptual issues and applicability of dialogue.

## CHAPTER 3: DIALOGUE AND RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING

*The things that make man truly man are localised neither within the individual nor in the world around him but in the inter-human sphere where two human beings communicate with one another, a part from their respective spheres. (Buber 1965 quoted in Rodriguez 2012:2)*

### 3.1 Introduction

Conflict intervention strategies such as conflict-resolution and conflict management mostly emphasise elite based engagement in the form of negotiation or mediation in order to reach a peace settlement or agreement. However, a negotiated peace settlement as a peace-making approach naturally excludes other key stakeholders like the grassroots people and it results in negative peace, which in most cases is characterised by polarised relationships. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the role and significance of dialogue in building relationships. Conflict-transformation promotes the use of horizontal dialogue within the grassroots level and vertical dialogue with other groups of society. Dialogue at grassroots level can initiate a trajectory, which can lead to forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation. Also covered in this chapter is Gordon Allport's inter-group contact hypothesis, adopted as the sub-theory, which informs this thesis. The chapter will also discuss brief case studies of dialogues and negotiated settlements.

### 3.2 Dialogue and Conflict-transformation

The limited use of dialogue when dealing with conflict may be the result of overemphasising power in relationships, such that those with most power focus on orders, obedience and see little need in engaging in dialogue. The reluctance to engage in dialogue is by physical and economic power. Conflict-resolution and conflict management often involve convincing those with most power that it is in their own interests to engage with other parties to a conflict in order to find a sustainable solution which satisfies all parties. A key ingredient in this interaction is communication. However, most conflict handling communication methods like negotiation, mediation, debate and discussion engender competitiveness and promotes adversarial discourses which foster competition for gains and are therefore detrimental to the development of interdependent relationships or fruitful working

relationships (Amalodoss 2007). By contrast “dialogue is a genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn” (Saunders 2009:18). It aims to promote engagement in a non-confrontational, non-competitive, and non-judgemental manner to listen and hear in a humanised way. By contrast, with negotiation, discussion, or debate, which tends to be product focussed, dialogue is process oriented.

**Table 3.1: A comparison between debate and dialogue**

| Debate   | Dialogue  |
|--|---|
| Assuming that there is a right answer and you have it          | Assuming that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can craft a solution |
| Combative: participants attempt to prove the other side wrong. | Collaborative: participants work together toward common understanding.                          |
| About winning.   | About exploring common ground.  |
| Listening to flaws and making counter-arguments.               | Listening to understand, find meaning and agreement.  |
| Defending assumptions as truth                                 | Revealing assumptions for re-evaluation   |
| Analysing the other side’s position                            | Re-examining all positions  |
| Defending one’s own views against those of others              | Admitting that other is thinking can improve on one’s own.                                      |
| Searching for flaws and weaknesses in other’s positions        | Searching for strengths and value in others’ positions  |
| Seeking a conclusion or vote that ratifies your position       | Discovering new options, not seeking closure  |

Source: Reychler (2001:453)

Fisher and Ury discovered that:

*Negotiation is a basic means of getting what you want from others. It is back and forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests that are shared and others that opposed...the persons involved in the negotiation process must have a mandate and the power to enter into agreement (Fisher and Ury 1981:42).*

Mediation is just like negotiation in terms of aiming towards reaching an agreement among parties using a negotiation process. The difference between the two lies with the involvement of a “neutral” third party who facilitates the communication process between parties. However, Henkeman questions the “neutral” role that is played by



the mediator by demonstrating that in mediation of a conflict that is characterised by unequal power relations, a mediator becomes nothing but a bystander and promoter of the status quo (Henkeman 2010:11).

Dialogue is about “exploring the frontiers of what it means to be human, in relationship to each other”. (Isichei and Bolaji 2009:60). Bland argues that the aim of dialogue is not necessarily to come to an agreement but to learn to disagree in a more insightful and constructive way (2006:3). Dialogue is an important tool to address situations where adversarial situations have created dysfunctional or potentially destructive relationships.

*Protracted social conflicts cannot be resolved through a bargaining procedure because non-negotiable needs such as identity, security, participation and development are at their core. Containment of warring functions may result in short term cessation of violence, but will not ensure lasting peace unless the institutions and attitudes that caused and aggravated the conflict are addressed and transformed. (Kriesberg 2000:51).*

Conflict-transformation as a strategy towards building positive peace emphasises promoting healthy relationships because if left unaddressed they can pose a threat to human security. The use of dialogue in the process of mending relationships has proven to be a promising panacea and a viable alternative to polarisation, which characterise social conflicts. Saunders noted that relationships are characterised by the following five essential components, identity, interests, power, perceptions, and patterns of interaction (2009:18). We can closely identify these components of relationships with non-negotiable human needs such as identity, security, participation, and development. Failure to address the non-negotiable human needs especially in multi-communal societies has led to the rise of protracted social conflicts. However, dialogue-based peace-building projects provide optimism expected to deliver trust understanding, empathy, and possibly peace because of the ability to promote contact.

### **3.3 Inter-Group Contact hypothesis**

The theoretical basis of adopting dialogue as a key towards inter-group transformation is motivated by the inter-group contact hypothesis. In 1954 an American social psychologist Gordon Allport postulated that through direct face to face encounters, based on inter-personal and inter-group communication, it is

possible to reduce inter-group prejudices and animosity (Hewstone and Swart 2011:374)

The notion of dialogue facilitates contact and interaction, which is capable of demystifying myths in order to transcend the negative inter-dependence parties in a polarised relationship (Steinberg 2013:40). Ultimately, this can replace negative inter-dependence with positive inter-dependence, which seeks to complement each other rather than to annihilate the particularistic identity of the other (Steinberg 2013:40). In order to maximise chances of achieving success through inter-group contact, the following key variables were identified, time, repeated interaction and age of participants:

**Time:** Dialogue participants need to spend time together in order to listen to one another to learn and understand one another. Time spend together could be in form of few hours or days of uninterrupted intensive interactions.

**Repeated interactions:** The interactions of participants should not be based on a once off event because that will not be sufficient to expand or transform participant perceptions. Thus, repeated and sustained intensive interaction for months or years if need be can open up possibilities of dismantling real and imagined cultural, political and social barriers. Participants can even identify common goals through joint inter-group activities and thereby reduce inter-group fears and suspicions.

**The age of participants:** The age of participants is crucial, teenagers and young adults are essential agents and drivers of change than adults (Mitchell 2011:96). More importantly, young people especially students are more receptive and more open-minded than adults who tend to have hardened attitudes that are very difficult to transform. Transforming young people is a sustainable investment towards a culture of peace. Transforming young people is just as good as “sowing the seeds” of future peace through equipping future generations with ingredients of positive peace (Steinberg 2013:40). By adopting dialogue as a tool to facilitate Conflict-transformation, the study anticipates to benefit from the contact, which is capable of changing attitudes.

### **3.4 Dialogue and relationships building**

Successful dialogue may lead to transformation of group culture in the following three ways; first, it can change participant conduct. Secondly, dialogue changes the group emotion by inculcating a sense of friendliness and trust. Finally, dialogue is capable of changing attitudes of participants through instilling mutual co-operation, which replaces monologue with dialogue (Gerard and Teurfs 1995:146). The dialogue process requires a tactful facilitator who has the acceptance, trust and respect of the participants involved in the process. There are some interesting examples where we use dialogue in building relationship with encouraging outcomes.

#### **3.4.1 Arab-American-European Dialogue (AAED)**

At a macro conflict, level the example Arab-American-European Dialogue (AAED) serves as an example of how dialogue can work towards improving relationships and perceptions in adversarial situations. The enterprise came about in March 2004 from concerned individuals who perceived themselves 'agents of change' (Saunders 2012:172). These individuals came together, in their individual capacities and they included former policy makers, academics, religious officials and journalists from the United States of America (USA), Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq (Saunders 2009:16).

The dialogue had technical support from the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue (IISD) and the purpose of the engagement was to come up with a series of dialogue meetings to discuss sources of altercation in the prevailing acrimonious relationship between the West and the Arab world. This followed an increase of violence linking to terrorism, which exacerbated the relationship. The September 11 2001 attacks on World Trade Centre and the 7 July 2005 train bombing in London created an impression that the US and Western European nations were under an onslaught of terrorist attacks from the Arab world and in particular Islam, while the Western involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan contributed to the perception that there was an aggressive agenda aimed at the Arab world (Lederach 2011:8). Therefore, the concerned citizens decided to create a platform for a face-to-face dialogue to explore the possibility of creating a framework for a new relationship based on mutual understanding. To Lederach, 'engagement must happen with a wider set of

people and stakeholders at multiple levels of society than is typically undertaken in official processes' (Lederach 2011:8). Engagement entails sustained purposeful dialogue and consultations; so purposeful dialogue is the encompassing of views that can enable participants to focus on accurate understanding of sources of polarisation (Lederach 2011:9). The AAED engagement initiative is a direct contrast to disengagement that has been seen among Western countries where some have vowed that 'we will never negotiate with terrorist' or the infamous former US President George Bush's bully kind of statement that 'you are with us or against us' (Lederach 2011:6).

According to AAED:

*Our working assumption is that better understanding of today's Islamic world requires a wider lens of analysis beyond the radical fundamentalist of Islam to include the reformist and moderate Muslim voices. It is important that the West and especially USA government moves away from its stereotypic approach to call Islamic groups as terrorist organisations (AAED 2009:2).*

Since its formation AAED has, held more than ten dialogue meetings where issues such as electoral processes, religion, terrorism, and violence were discussed (Saunders 2009:18). The dialogue centres on the sustained dialogue method, which centres on five important stages. Participants move from the primary pledge to engage in dialogue to the mapping stage where they will identify and name the problems underlying the dysfunctional relationship and shift to deeper and more focussed scrutiny of specific issues to the problem. The next stage will be situational building in which the group begins designing a set of interactive steps to be undertaken jointly for the purpose of transforming perceptions (Saunders 2012:172). The final stage is joint acting out together in implementation of the agreed steps.

At this stage of AAED, it is still difficult ascertain comprehensively the level of success recorded given the long term and sustained nature of the project. However, some of the inspiring short term results have been that Arab participants have gained a lot of insight in terms of what has been motivating policy making from the West and in the same vein Western world participants gained a better view of Islamic political opposition groups and the motivations behind such formations (IISD 2011:3). However, the most important revelation was the realisation that the Islamic groups are not monolithic or homogeneous as widely perceived that is in terms of agenda

and orientation (Saunders 2012:174). The other partial achievement is merely the setting up of AAED; it is an achievement, given the monologue nature of official circles of the adversaries. Despite the fact that the incremental benefits of such engagements take time to take root, there is a ray of hope that such meetings will continue in a spirit of genuine engagement and so built mutual respect.

### **3.4.2 Tajikistan**

The case study Tajikistan demonstrates a unique situation where they used dialogue to address the civil war from 1993 up to the peace-building phase, which started in 2000. It also represents a partial success story of a negotiated agreement, which was transformed from an elite agreement to a people's agreement - at least so far. The Inter-Tajik Dialogue (ITD) was made up of Tajiks from all the ethnic regions who came out of the need to address a complex conflict which was influenced by the power vacuum created by the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 (Slim 2012:192). The situation worsened by religion, regional, ethnic, and historical complexion of Tajikistan.

Acrimonious relationships saw Garm and Gorno Badakhashan regions, which had been ostracised from power taking up arms against a government that was largely dominated by elites from Leninabad (Slim 2005:5). After peace-making negotiations and dialogue, dysfunctional relationships were noted as one of cardinal issues that had to be addressed. Hatred, mistrust, and hostility across ethnic groups and political factions remained as a major challenge. According to Slim, "dysfunctional relationships in a society evolve over time due to historical, political, social, and economic factors. In some cases, these relationships remain latent and manifest themselves in discord and ineffectiveness and general state of tension that prevails in society" (2005:7).

In the case of Tajikistan, they embarked on an endeavour to bring peace based on five stages of a sustained dialogue intervention (Saunders 2009:16).

- Stage 1 - Deciding to hold dialogue
- Stage 2 - Naming problems and mapping relationships
- Stage 3 - Analysing problems and relationships

- Stage 4 - Designing action scenarios
- Stage 5 - Acting together

The purpose of engaging in these five stages was to encourage interaction and working together for a sustained period and so build trust between dialogue participants. It should be noted the external actors, especially Russia and USA also played a pivotal role in facilitating the peace-making and early peace-building phases and in February 2000 ITD dialogue members took the initiative and formed an NGO named the Public Committee for Democratic Processes. The purpose of this NGO was in facilitating local control and ownership of the peace process in order to make the peace-building process work in a sustainable manner. Among many issues that were discussed the following two issues became key to the success of the peace-building process; the deliberation to move from theory into practical action aimed at addressing root causes of conflict and transforming the dialogue process from being elitist and exclusivists to inclusivity where ordinary citizens and communities were to take part (Slim 2012:192). The belief was that “the only way to make the peace process sustainable is to make it more public” (Slim 2012:192).

By end of 2005 most of the provisions set by the Public Committee for Democratic Purposes had largely been implemented at three different levels using sustained dialogue approach which also encouraged communication within groups and between groups (Slim 2012:198). This increased strong citizenship participation within different strata of the society from citizens to policy makers. There is still a long way to go just as seen in most peace process, but Tajikistan seems to be moving on a promising trajectory.

According to Gerard and Teufs, a dialogue require the following four skills, firstly parties must put aside their own positions and judgements of other parties (1995:148). This requires the creation of a climate that promotes trust so that other parties will feel confident enough to express their views. Leavitt (1986:1) identifies a spiritual dimension to this aspect, which may be very helpful to a process in which she articulated that:

*We need to let go of our own will - not so as to surrender to another's, but so as to look together for God's solution. It's a question of finding ways to let go*

*of our commitment to opposition and separation, of letting ourselves be opened to our connectedness as human beings.*

Secondly, parties realise the implications of their subconscious perceptions and assumptions. Failure to identify these perceptions will result in unfruitful dialogue. Thirdly, parties should listen to each other in a way which Leavitt described as listening with the intention of “being open to the possibility the we might be ourselves be changed by what we hear” (1986:1). Finally, the parties must carry out a reflection and introspection that may enable them to clarify matters and perception.

### **3.5 Dialogue and Conflict-transformation in Sub Saharan Africa**

In Sub-Saharan Africa region, despite the high prevalence of so much violence and a general failure by many to implement peace processes as shall be highlighted later, there are some inspiring examples at macro level and at micro level which give hope to the future of dialogue based peace-building processes in the region.

#### **3.5.1 Nigeria**

At micro level, the relationship building through dialogue, completed by Youth and Interfaith Communication, brings out an inspiring story from Nigeria, which again gives optimism to other grassroots peace-building projects. Nigeria despite its wealth in crude oil production in Africa is a seriously divided country. It has more than three hundred ethnic groups with different languages and cultures (Amundesen 2010:1). The country’s population is almost divides equally between Muslims in the north and Christians in the south and a few who belong to African traditional religions. The ethno-religious divisions are also part of a colonial legacy and were utilised for the divide and rule purposes and later after independence these were perpetuated and exacerbated by competition for power and resources (Igwara 1995). The result has been disunity, hatred, violence, and political instability. It was against this backdrop that Youth and Interfaith Communication decided to initiate a project, which brings together Muslims and Christian young adults together for a face-to-face dialogue and it, was first time experience for some of the participants (Ivorgba 2010).

Emmanuel Andre Ivorgba spearheaded the project with support from New Era Educational and Charitable support in Jos Plateau State of Nigeria and Jewish-Palestinian Living Room members who are based in San Mateo USA. The project

started in the Jos Plateau State, which lies in the middle belt dividing Muslim north and Christian South, and it happens to be one of most areas affected by ethno-religious violence in the recent years. (Bauchi State had considerable success at a similar project). Two hundred Muslims and Christians young adults met for a four-day annual dialogue conference under the theme “Refusing to become enemies”, and among the facilitators were Libby and Len Traubman from the Jewish-Palestinian Living Room who have vast experience in using sustained dialogue.

The dialogue was characterised by a series of events, which included talking together, listening to each other, sharing personal narratives in small groups, eating together, and discussing shared experiences among other activities. These activities enabled participants to have a frank communication and they began to develop trust and realised the common humanity in others. A sense of trust can mark the melting away “othering” or “them-ification” of adversaries. As the face to face dialogue ended with participants affirming one another there was a general feeling that “an enemy is one whose story we have not heard” and there was more which unites than which divides. While this may seem a drop in the ocean in Nigeria, it is such small efforts, which can produce determined individuals who can promote trust and building relationships with respect of human dignity. It is quite clear that we can do a lot in Nigeria and interfaith sustained dialogue such as this gives hope to future grassroots engagement. Sustained and repeated efforts have a slow but positive cumulative effect, which can improve relationships by transforming perceptions at micro level in the end. It should never be a once off event, because if it is not sustained it will fizzle out and fail to bear fruits. The optimism generated among participants requires further nourishment through sustained engagement.

### **3.5.2 Somaliland**

The case of Somaliland is a direct contrast of what happened in Somalia, which we discuss later in the chapter. It is yet another encouraging story of resilience despite all the odds against it as the country struggled to implement a unique bottom-up grassroots based peacebuilding (Omaar 2010:15). This has seen the country attaining relative success and stability. Somaliland declared itself independent in 1991 following the defeat of Mohamed Siad Barre's regime by a coalition of several armed groups. The “republic” of Somaliland carved itself from Somalia, a union it



willingly entered in 1960 when it got independence (Moe and Simojoki 2013). Hitherto, these two Somalis co-existed separately as Somaliland was under the colonial tutelage of the British while Somalia was under the Italians. When the two merged to form Somalia in 1960 the Somalilanders felt cheated by the power sharing which apparently favoured clans from Somalia (Omaar 2010:12).

The political upheavals that saw Siad Barre taking power through a military coup in 1969 did not improve the situation for Somalilanders, it actually worsened their plight and it was not surprising they became part of several armed groups that ousted Siad Barre in 1991 (Omaar 2010:8). However, for the Somalilanders it was a struggle to extricate themselves from the union arrangement, which they deemed unfair. As of now Somaliland is not yet a recognised sovereign state, but it has all key fundamental aspects of a functioning state and this happened as a result of a different trajectory it took the moment it declared itself independence.

According to Graf, the key ingredient to the relative success could be the bottom-up and dialogue based implementation of the peace-building program. The bottom-up arrangement was on the following pillars the role of clan elders, the unique hybrid system of governance and the international isolation (2011:5).

### ***The role of clan elders as peace-builders***

Clan elders have always played an important role in the socio-political life of the Somalilanders. A supreme council of elders called *guurti*, which comprised of titled and non-titled clan leaders representing all the clans was formed (Moe 2013:17). In November 1992, some 400 *guurti* members met at Jiideli for face-to-face dialogue. Bradbury et al indicated, “The *guurti* of Somalilanders different clans were constituted as a national *guurti* and given responsibility for controlling clan militia, preventing acts of aggression against other communities and defending Somaliland “(2003:460). At the end of the dialogue, a joint local committee of thirty members responsible for settling conflicts according to terms laid down at the dialogue conference was set. This arrangement was able to cascade down to local communities where religious leaders such as *sheikhs* and *wadaads* were incorporated as local peacemakers and the task was done with ease because these were respected members of local communities (Graf 2011:6). The process also

facilitated stakeholder buy-in, as ordinary citizens became owners of the peace-building process because of their inclusion.

### ***The unique hybrid system of governance***

Somaliland developed a unique hybrid system of governance which comprised of the executive made up of a president and the vice, and cabinet of ministers, a bicameral parliament made up of elected members in the lower house and an upper house made up of *guurti* members (Farah 2001:138). The institutionalisation of *guurti* members in the corridors of power had some strong stabilising effect in terms of facilitating state security by addressing local conflicts, more importantly *guurti* members were given the power to select the president. This hybrid system has legitimacy and mandate of the people and its decisions are binding and therefore respected by citizens.

### ***International isolation***

The fact that Somaliland does not have recognition as sovereign state has deprived of aid from multilateral institutions and other possible benefits associated with such recognition. However, this seems to have worked as a blessing in disguise as the Somalilanders are self-reliant owners of their own processes. It seems the isolation shielded it from possible exposure to interferences, which sometimes spoil the peace-building process if not handled properly. One of the lessons drawn from Somaliland was illustrated by Kaplan who highlighted that;

*The success of society-led, bottom-up process of democratisation stands up in sharp contrast to the repeated failure of international attempts to construct a Western-style state in the rest of Somalia- and calls into question the influential fundamental assumptions underlying the top-down, unitary state-building exercises so commonly attempted in fragile states. (2008:144).*

### **3.5.3 Somalia**

The case study of Somalia is an example, which demonstrates challenges that are associated with top-down negotiated settlements and international peace-building practices, which fail to trickle down to the grassroots. Despite being a homogeneous country in terms of ethnicity, common language, culture, and religion Somalia divides into clan politics (Netabay 2007:2). After the defeat of Siad Barre, Somalia has not

been a stable country despite numerous attempts and efforts towards peace making, peacekeeping and peace building. According to Mahomoud:

*...through a top-down approach, twelve national reconciliation conferences were convened with the goal of restoring a central authority, yet no success was achieved. The immediate reason was that the faction leaders and warlords who signed the peace deal and agreed to form a national government frequently failed to honour their promises. (2002:158).*

The other reason why the peace deal could not come into fruition could be mistrust among faction leaders and warlords. This mistrust emanated from unhealed memories of past violence and may have been exacerbated by international actors and the role they played. It must be made clear that this study is not anti-international actors in peace-building, the point is, international actors must appreciate that each conflict situation is uniquely different from another and therefore the one size fits all blanket approach can have problems in some situations. In the case of Somalia, we can appreciate that the antecedent to armed conflict had a Cold War dimension in it, which saw international actors fomenting the conflict behind the scenes, and ironically, some of them re-appeared as peacemakers and peacekeepers. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Somalis are sensitive to any opaque external involvement in their processes. Thus, any international peace-building involvement must take note of the fragile nature of this state of affairs and know where to draw the line and allow local players to occupy the driving seat just like in the case of Tajikistan. In the case of Somalia, peace-making and peacekeeping efforts have failed to take root largely because their imposition from above through influence of outsiders. Graf discovered that

*... Of squeezing societies into inappropriate Western one size fits all models of what a modern state is supposed to look like, the international community should focus on adapting and supporting particularity of societies. So in place of propping up the state from outside international efforts are likely to succeed if they bolster local peacebuilding processes. (2008:8).*

This is clearly illustrated by the fact that despite the presence of UN and African Union (AU) peacekeepers and various peace accords signed by Somalia, Somalia remains a volatile state and is regarded as the worst place on earth. Daily violence, extremist terrorist attacks, and piracy are all symptoms of collapsed state where

numerous reconciliation attempts have failed to produce the desired results making “it a failure among failed states” (Menkhaus 2004:16).

### **3.5.4 South Africa**

The political transition from the apartheid system to democracy in South Africa in 1994, witnessed the application of both conflict management and conflict-resolution in the negotiation process. Key to these negotiations was the fact that the negotiation discourse by its nature emphasise the use of power in order to reach a settlement and naturally it promotes the engagement of those in high positions of authority who have the means and capacity to effect change

In the case of South Africa, negotiation saw mainly the top leadership of National Party (NP) and African National Congress (ANC) playing a pivotal role in shaping future South Africa. This effectively transformed the peace settlement into an elitist venture and eventual peace settlement, which emerged, used a top to bottom approach (Bond and Manyanya 2003). Attempts to institute racial harmony and reconciliation were affected by this approach. Therefore conflict management and conflict-resolution were successful in as far as bringing negative peace was concerned and they did not succeed addressing the other fundamental aspect of the conflict which should have seen actual integration of races (Verway and Quayle 2012:565). Bradshaw has indicated that democracy in South Africa is under threat largely due to failure to meet basic human needs and it is not surprising that bad relationships characterise the unequal and divided society (2007:x). According to Henkeman, “blacks and whites continue to act according to intergenerational scripts that were written and internalised long before they were born” (2010:12).

While, it may be understandable that ending the psychological, economic and social effects of three centuries colonisation and four decades of apartheid cannot be addressed in two decades, indications on the ground demonstrates that post democracy South Africa has not taken the right trajectory. The deep hostilities which manifest themselves in the form of intolerance, high crime rates, sexual violence, xenophobia and other forms of conflict behaviour are all symptomatic to an angry, grossly unequal and divided society (Neocomos 2010:4).

Part of the problem can be explained by the use of conflict-resolution and conflict management strategies, which are sometimes shrouded by secret compromises and emphasise negotiation to reach a settlement. Conflict-resolution and conflict management have been criticised for “merely applying a band aid to cover deep wounds” (Bhegof 2012:20). Negotiated settlements that are reached using conflict-resolution and conflict management sometimes create two inter-connected problems, which are elitism and exclusivity. Grassroots people are the most vulnerable in most conflict situations and by being left out as stakeholders, they will continue harbour hostilities against each other and against those in positions of authority. This means a negotiated peace settlement must not be an end but a means to an end.

### **3.5.5 Zimbabwe**

The use of negotiation as way of reaching a peace agreement was also witnessed three times in Zimbabwe. The first was the Lancaster House Conference of 1979, the Unity Accord of 1987, and the Global Political Agreement (GPA) of 2009 (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010:1). The detailed discussions of these issues will be done at length in chapter five, but in short, what must be pointed out is that in all these negotiations witnessed top leadership engaging each other in what Ndlovu-Gatsheni described as elites accommodating each other (2008:2). The Lancaster House Conference was part of a decolonisation negotiation process between a colonial power alongside white settlers and the representatives of African nationalist movements. The 1987 the Unity Accord was a negotiated settlement to end the ethnic motivated violence and civil strife in Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces and finally the GPA was a product of mediation which saw ZANU PF and Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations sharing power in order to end politically motivated violence and economic meltdown. In each of these cases elites made compromises to each other and shared power that made that process an end itself instead of it being the means to an end (Mashingaidze 2005:86). The result of this has been negative peace and it explains why the grassroots people in Zimbabwe remain polarised along ethnic and political lines (Muchemwa e *Ta* 2013:14). To Ndlovu-Gatsheni “in both Zimbabwe and South Africa, elite transitions were sealed by the high-sounding national reconciliation policies” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008:2).

These policies did not achieve the intended objectives because they only benefited the elites while ordinary citizens are sacrificed as policies failed to cascade to the grassroots (Mandaza 1999:79).

### **3.5.6 Mozambique**

For so many years, Mozambique has been regarded as a success story of a successful mediation story in Africa. However, if recent events are anything to go by, that unblemished record risks soiling. The recent violent clashes in Mozambique between Frelimo de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) government forces in Mozambique and former Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO) forces is part of vestiges of a three decade war which only ended in 1992 following the signing of the Rome Accords (Paffenholz 2001:121).

Mozambique's three-decade war started soon after independence from the Portuguese in 1975. The war had both regional and international Cold War politics and dynamics following evidence that RENAMO was getting financial and logistical support from Rhodesia and later on from South Africa after 1980, which then was embarking on its Total Strategy whose intentions, were to destabilise the entire Southern African region (Flower 1987:46). Internally, the formation RENAMO was also motivated by the politics of marginalisation, regionalism and ethnic clashes within FRELIMO (Hanlon *et al* 2008:18). The civil war caused serious loss of life, destruction of infrastructure and the tainting of relations across the political divide. However, on 4 October 1992, following a series of negotiations between FRELIMO and RENAMO, which were facilitated through mediation by the Catholic Church in Rome and Mozambique a peace arrangement, was reached and it was to be followed by elections. The mediation process also witnessed the involvement of African leaders like Presidents Robert Mugabe and Daniel Arap Moi (Paffenholz 2001:122).

The Rome Accords effectively ended the war but not the hostilities between adversaries as signified by the fact that more than two decades after the accords, armed clashes between FRELIMO government's forces and former RENAMO forces started in 2013 (Jentzsch 2013:3). The clashes have been of a low intensity, but loss of life has been acknowledged on both sides. However, it is not the intensity of the

clashes, which is of concern here; it is the significance of these clashes. This demonstrates the failure to move beyond a signed agreement, a challenge, which faces several post settlement scenarios. Negative peace sometimes lull post conflict settlement countries into believing that the hostilities are over, yet it is in the post settlement period when a lot of work must be done to promote horizontal and vertical relationship-building dialogues across the societal strata.

To Lederach, “If we are to move beyond settlement and toward reconciliation... we must not limit our lenses to only the highest level of political actors and the peace negotiations they forge” (Lederach 2001:843). The value and importance of mediation and negotiation should never be underestimated because they facilitate the establishment of negative peace which is an important foundation upon which positive can be built. The challenge lies with failing to move beyond settlement and post conflict arrangements of peace. In Zimbabwe, as in South Africa, the failure to move beyond settlement necessitates the need to engage the grassroots in effort to establish what Kriesberg identifies as “fashioning an enduring peaceful relationship”, using the transformative potential of dialogue as a vehicle towards building tolerance and respectful relationships (2010:50).

Conflict destroys communities to the extent that strong distrust can replace the civic way of life. Distrust signifies a broken social contract and is largely a result of intractably sustained conflict. (Re) building trust entails changing perceptions and misperceptions and it demands resources in the form of time, patience, finance and above all commitment of the concerned stakeholders within the affected communities (Muchemwa *et al* 2013:8).

Heider (2009:13) suggest a two-stage process whose intention is (re) establishment of the broken social contract in order to restore trust, which gets broken automatically with the collapse of that social order. The first stage involves groups working separately; this first stage aims to be an icebreaker as bringing the two groups too soon may worsen the existing tension. As each group works separate from each other, it can mark the beginning of social renewal and social cohesion. The groups will get an opportunity to reflect and reposition their needs, fears, and interests. This process can use a trusted facilitator and the facilitator must help

ensure that the groups are mentally prepared to move to the next stage, which is a bit more delicate, and complex since it will involve the meeting with the other group. If the groups agree to meet, the intention is to facilitate a harmonious exchange of opinions in order to (re) establish the broken social contract and possibly trust. The intention is not to agree on anything, but rather on re-establishing a culture of harmonious co-existence.

Further interactions may be possible especially if groups complete the first stage well, they may uncover shared needs, interests, and fears. Groups may be able to go beyond identifying shared needs, interests, and fears by identifying some shared tasks which they may decide to do together. If the shared tasks are performed well, it may serve as an indicator that the group has managed to transcend the current conflict and can mark the beginning of trust as groups may begin to feel secure with each other's company. The re-establishing of trust is a key element towards providing a firm foundation for dealing with the real conflict itself. Conflicting parties often find it difficult to create platforms for open and honest discussion of issues at stake largely because mistrust can become a vicious cycle that is very difficult to break. This creates non-functional communities that have a tendency to be fragile and characterised by chronic violence (Adams 2011:14).

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the stages approach was applied and it produced encouraging results. The community inter group discussions enabled not only to the designing of shared projects, it led to the open "discussions of the war and role playing (of) the other in order to foster understanding empathy and changes in perceptions and attitudes" (Heider 2011:17). Heider also believes that community based interventions can be utilised to jump-start the process of social cohesion and renewal which leads to the development of trust (2011:11). However, there are no guarantees, especially for quick solutions, the only necessary guarantee is probably the need for guaranteed sustained commitment towards engagement process. If commitment to sustained engagement becomes a culture, community groups will realise the mutual benefits of working together. More importantly, the community may even accept the claim that conflict is the vehicle towards social change and groups must jointly find creative methods of working with conflict in a nonviolent manner. The only unfortunate thing is that communities have largely been cultured to



believe in “quick wins and fixes” which usually justify and embrace violence as part of its modus operandi. Harris found that the “quick wins” and “quick fixes” mind-set leads to desperation which limits societies to believe that There Is No Alternative (TINA) and therefore violence becomes an instrument of choice (2004:vii). However, through engagement communities will realise that There Are Always Alternatives (TAAA) and violence is the only unacceptable alternative (Harris 2004: vii).

### **3.6 Summary**

This chapter has discussed the importance of dialogue in the relationship-building process and the sub theoretical framework of the thesis. It has highlighted that conflict-handling mechanisms such as conflict-resolution and conflict management are largely elitist and exclusionist by design. If there are no extra efforts to move beyond peace-making efforts, empirical evidence indicates that a piece of paper by a few individuals is sometimes inadequate and cannot replace the human interface experience by a wider circle of citizens. At the same time, vertical and horizontal dialogue across the society can make a difference hence there is hope in engagement as opposed to disengagement and there is also hope in dialogue as opposed to monologue. International peace-building efforts by external players are very important as they help to jump-start peace processes in fragile and desperate situations; however, these efforts must work hand in glove with the local actors and local initiatives must lead the way so that they will eventually take control and own the process and built peace systematically. The next chapter traces the history of animosity between the Shona and Ndebele dating back from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the eve of independence in 1980.

## **CHAPTER 4: SHONA AND NDEBELE RELATIONS BEFORE 1980**

*There is no virtue in being Ndebele supremacist in the same way there is no virtue in being a Shona supremacist. (Nkomo 2011:5)*

### **4.1 Introduction**

The nature of the relationship between the Shona and Ndebele groups has been a subject of much debate and controversy. This chapter examines the relevant literature on the nature of relations between the Shona and Ndebele groups during the pre-colonial and colonial epochs. More importantly, the chapter will also attempt to highlight this thesis's effort of transcending the existing debates and controversy, especially the over-emphasis on who did what, when, why and how which has not helped much in understanding the real meaning behind the polarisation of relations. This chapter also reveals the problem between violence and social relationships. The use of violence or threats of using it affected social relations leading to the rise of a "sick" society, which is devoid of trust and tolerance. The most unfortunate development has been that violence became a culture which was transmitted inter-generationally both directly and indirectly and this was done in a "toxic way" which "poisoned" future relationships and engagement. Because of the historical nature of issues under review, this chapter adopts a historical survey approach of the period before the arrival of the Ndebele in Zimbabwe and the phase after their arrival from 1839 up to 1980.

### **4.2 Historical background**

Modern day Zimbabwe as a geopolitical entity lies on the plateau between Zambezi and Limpopo rivers. Its current geo-political borders like those of many African countries are largely a product of colonial creation. Historically, the Zimbabwean plateau was inhabited by early Stone Age human communities whose existence preceded that of Bantu people who are the ancestors of modern Shona, Ndebele and many other groups by many centuries (Beach 1980:4). Evidence from ethno-archaeologist pinpoints the fact that the Khoikhoi and San communities were the

indigenous inhabitants of not only modern Zimbabwe but of the entire Southern African sub-region prior to the immigration of Bantu people into the area (Hitchcock and Vinding 2004).

As Stone Age communities the San and Khoikhoi's way of life revolved around small nomadic communities, whose economy relied on hunting game, gathering fruits and rearing of animals. Although details are not clear about the San and Khoikhoi beyond the archaeological findings, politically the San and Khoikhoi lived as simple communitarian and decentralised communities with no strong centralised authority. The simple hunter-gatherer economy must have promoted a communitarian way of life and this must have meant that inequalities were not highly pronounced and therefore more peace must have been enjoyed. The San and the Khoikhoi communities were displaced into the periphery of Southern Africa by the Bantu migrants who began to arriving in "waves and phases" from around 300 AD onwards (Beach 1980:3).

The Bantu migrants are the ancestors of many groups that are found in many parts of Southern Africa including the Shona, Kalanga, Ndebele, Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, and Tswana among many others. In fact, Africa's languages are classified into four linguistic groups, Khoisan, Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, and Niger-Congo. The language of most Southern African Bantu groups belongs to Niger-Congo language family, which spreads from Senegal valley to Kenyan coast and south Namibia to Eastern Cape in South Africa. Because of the existing linguistic inter-connections, all the Bantu groups are believed to trace their origins to Benue Cross region in the Cameroonian highlands in West Africa (Vansina 1995:176). Their migration is associated to population explosion, which may be linked to many possible factors, which include the agricultural revolution, discovery of iron, climatic, and possible environmental factors connected to desertification of the Sahara among many others.

The Bantu were Iron Age people who had developed knowledge of producing iron tools and weapons and they managed to assimilate and displace the Khoikhoi and San possibly through consent and coercion where the use of violence cannot be ruled out. The ancestors of both Shona and Ndebele are traced to these Bantu

people and the only major difference being their arrival times on the Zimbabwean plateau.

A number of writers and scholars who wrote on the subject of Shona and Ndebele relations have placed emphasis on “unbearable and bloody violence” which they claim was perpetrated by the Ndebele against the Shona. Works by writers like Hole (1926), Willis, and Collingridge (1894) are characterised by the demonization of the Ndebele. Such notions have, however, been countered by revisionist scholars who have advanced strong arguments debunking the nature, extent of violence and its dynamics (Cobbing 1976) (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2004). However, what is emerging from these works in general is the undeniable evidence that demonstrates the existence of both direct and structural violence in Shona and Ndebele societies. These forms of violence were adopted by both groups as part of strategies of attaining and maintaining their political and economic objectives. However, it is essential to understand the background of each group separately prior to the interaction, which only started in 1839 after the arrival of Ndebele on the Zimbabwean plateau. The background of each group prior to the eventual interaction seems important because it had a bearing to relationships, which later developed.

#### **4.2.1 Shona**

The people who regard themselves as Shona today in Zimbabwe are part of large Bantu groups that migrated to Southern Africa in different phases in the first millennium. It is essential to note that these groups did not use the term Shona in the past, but rather these groups spoke several inter-connected dialects that are now being generally lumped together as Shona. The term Shona only started to be used officially by colonial officials in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a blanket term to refer to all indigenous groups that were non-Ndebele (this includes Karanga, Kalanga, Zezuru, Manyika, Korekore, Ndaou and many others) that the colonial officials found on the Zimbabwean plateau. Therefore, the term is in essence used in retrospect in reference to the various sub-ethnic groups that were found in Zimbabwe by the Ndebele and were later lumped together as Shona (Ranger 1985:4). The sub-ethnic groups that were spread across the Zimbabwean plateau speak virtually the languages that are more or less the same with different dialects only. The first known organised settlement of the people who are the ancestors of the modern Shona

groups can be traced today in the Limpopo province in modern South Africa at Mapungubwe heritage site located at the confluence at Shashe and Limpopo rivers.

The details that have been availed by archaeological evidence indicate the existence of a semi-centralised state that controlled wide area and the state was involved in trade, mining, and agriculture. The king was the head of state and his powers were exercised on his behalf by vassal chiefs who paid tribute as a sign of allegiance and acknowledgement to the authority of the king at Mapungubwe. The semi auto-autonomous vassal chiefdoms were organised and linked through clan lineages connected through blood and alliances cemented by marriage and trade (Beach 1994:20). The Mapungubwe state flourished up to the period towards the end of the first millennium and the beginning of the second millennium witnessed a northward movement of the Shona groups across the Limpopo River into modern Zimbabwe where they founded another semi-centralised state at Great Zimbabwe in around 1100 AD (Pikirayi 2001:35).

The reasons for the demise of Mapungubwe are a subject of speculation and possible factors may include power struggles, civil wars, and other economic factors, which must have provided incentives for migration to greener pastures (Garlake 1973:46). The new state was founded at Great Zimbabwe site (this is where the name of the country is derived from and it means houses of stone) and it was more or less modelled along the same the same lines as the Mapungubwe state in terms political and economic organisation. The Great Zimbabwe capital was also an important trade co-ordinating centre and it appeared to have been a bit more advanced than its predecessor and it flourished up to 1450 AD before its influence began to decline (Garlake: 1983:46). The collapse of Great Zimbabwe state witnessed the rise of two new main political formations Torwa and Mutapa, which existed almost concurrently with each other, and these new political formations consisted of the migrants whose ancestry is traced to Great Zimbabwe. They also incorporated other indigenous people whom they found on their way as they migrated to new lands through both consent and coercion.

The Torwa state was located in the south western and Mutapa in north-eastern Zimbabwe. The formation of these new states was not done smoothly since violence

was also part of strategies that were used to subdue other weaker sub-ethnic groups and clans (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009:27). The name Mutapa (in Shona means he who conquers or simply a *pillager*) and the Torwa (means *we will fight* or *foreigner*). In many African cultures, names of places and individuals are used to carry messages, and the names of these political formations that emerged from Great Zimbabwe demonstrate possible turbulence, which was associated with state formation processes or decline of preceding political formations. They also indicate that violence was used as an instrument of attaining political and economic objectives. However, we should misinterpret as a sign that these pre-colonial communities were always fighting all the times. These pre-colonial people also engaged in normal way of life like being involved in trade, agriculture, and mining, which of course indicate some level of peace and stability, which must have prevailed at times (Mudenge 1988:43). However, peace and stability were not permanent state of affairs because periodically they were interrupted by conflict and violence and at times, circumstances forced some people to move out (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009:27).

One of the major sources of conflict and violence was the issue of succession; the rulers were hereditary and upon the death of the incumbent, tradition dictated that the first son from the most senior wife was the heir apparent. This was, however, was not that simple and as obvious since other sons and uncles could circumvent the process and position themselves to usurp power. Therefore, succession issues were usually a bloody affair associated with civil wars at times, which saw some ruling family members being murdered, banished or running away to escape from the expected persecution and sometimes taking some followers with them in the process. The reason why this point is being made clear is that there is a tendency of exaggerating the peace, which existed on the Zimbabwean plateau prior to the arrival of Ndebele and Europeans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. More importantly, there is also the problem of over emphasising the *indigenusness* of Shona people at the expense of denying or belittling the *indigeneity* of other people like Ndebele who migrated to the Zimbabwean plateau after the Shona. From this analysis, it is clear that the Shona groups were equally migrants to the Zimbabwean plateau just like many other Bantu people to include the Ndebele who settled later after them on the Zimbabwean plateau in 1839.

The successor states to Great Zimbabwe provided finer details in terms of the way of life the Shona people (Bourdillon 1976:14). This is largely because these Shona states interacted with European travellers who documented a lot about the Shona people whom they interacted with (Mudenge 1988:35). However, these documents had many prejudices in them, as some European did not fully understand these indigenous peoples. Nonetheless, they still provide many interesting details in terms showing and confirming the political and economic way of life that (Mudenge 1988:48). The Torwa and Mutapa states faced the same opportunities as other early Shona states, but more challenges arose as wealthy classes among the Shona people began to emerge largely due to trade in ivory and gold with Arabs and Portuguese. More conflicts emerged as wealthy groups fought among themselves and with foreigners, especially the Portuguese who attempted to control trade routes, mining, and hunting areas. This eventually led to the weakening and the eventual downfall of Torwa and Mutapa states, only to be replaced by another Shona state in 1684 led Dombo Changamire who emerged from Mutapa state and managed subdue Torwa state. Dombo Changamire and his followers Rozvi (it means *destroyers*) created a Shona state named Rozvi or Changamire state, which can effectively be considered as successor to Torwa and Mutapa, and its demise came in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The rise and survival of the Rozvi state has been attributed to not only trade or leadership skills but to its military ability as well which saw it waging wars with other smaller sub-ethnic groups and clans and the Portuguese.

*In 1684 Dombo Changamire conquered Maungwe and after that it became a Rozvi tributary kingdom. In 1695 Dombo Changamire invaded the Portuguese feira of Manyika and also conquered Manyika in the process. The effect of these Rozvi campaigns of 1680s and 1690s was that the Portuguese were expelled from the Zimbabwean plateau and never again attempted to re-establish their political control there until after the fall of the Rozvi Changamire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Ncube 2000:4)*

This indicates that violence existed and it was used as an instrument, which was considered effective because it probably produced the desired results to these groups. This apparently demystifies the myth that the Shona were “very peaceful people” whose peace was only disturbed by the arrival of the Ndebele. It is quite clear that the Shona fought against each other and they also raided each other, even

though they co-existed, the “unity” was just a façade of deep hostilities that existed at times, because in essence the state was a divided state along sub-ethnic and clan lines. This became clear during the later stages when the Shona groups faced threats from Nguni and Sotho groups that passed through the Zimbabwean plateau (Beach 1994:20). These groups were emigrating from Nguniland in South Africa as a result of Mfecane (a political and economic revolution that took place among the Nguni and Sotho-Tswana groups involving increased warfare, state formation and forced migrations), which will be discussed more in the next section (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2011:3). These groups included Sotho of Mpanga, Ngoni of Ngwana Maseko, Ngoni of Zwangendaba, Ngoni of Nxaba, and Swati of Nyamazana who killed the last Rozvi Changamire Chirisamhuru (Cobbing 1976:116).

The Rozvi never came together to face the invaders as a formidable force but rather some Rozvi groups actually joined the Nguni groups to terrorise and plunder on fellow Shona sub-ethnic groups and some even continued to do that long after some of the Nguni groups had left the Zimbabwean plateau (Beach 1994:139). One such infamous group was known as the Dumbuseya, these were Shona youths who joined Nxaba and Ngwana Maseko’s Ngoni in the 1820s and 1830s, which remained behind as the Mfecane groups proceeded north.

The Dumbuseya embarked on a career of marauding and harassing other Shona communities pretending to be *Madzviti* (Beach 1994:141). The Nguni and Sotho groups stayed briefly on the Zimbabwean plateau and used violence using their better military strength and forced a number of Shona communities to establish settlements as defence mechanism against attacks by the Nguni and Sotho groups who were raiding and taking away women, young boys, cattle and grain (Mazarire 2005:5). The Shona named these Nguni groups *Madzviti* (which means violent strangers) and by the time Ndebele settled in Zimbabwe the Shona had already developed a sense of fear, negative attitude and hated the Nguni groups given the violent encounters that they had earlier with groups that passed through the plateau. More importantly, the last Changamire Chirisamhuru had met his death at the hands of the Swati of Nyamazana so such that by the time the Ndebele arrived in Zimbabwe in 1839 they found the Shona at their weakest position and very much



divided due to a succession dispute which sought to replace Changamire Chirisamhuru.

#### **4.2.2 Ndebele**

The Ndebele just like the Shona are Bantu people belonging to the Nguni sub-ethnic groups who trace their origins to KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape areas of South Africa. Other Nguni sub-ethnic groups who share the same ancestry with Ndebele include the Xhosa, Swati, Zulu, and Gaza. Originally, they were not known as the Ndebele but were known as the Khumalos because the Khumalo clans constituted majority (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:58). Their ancestral land where they originated, is found today in the area between Black Umfolozi and Mkuzi rivers near Ngome forest in the northern part of modern KwaZulu-Natal.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni indicates that the Khumalos just like other Nguni groups were not organised as centralised states but lived as decentralised clans who nonetheless were connected to each other through “kinship ideology, kinship loyalties, clan intimacies and blood solidarities” which apparently kept clans connected together (2003:55). A communitarian way of life where people shared the basic human needs such as land, food, shelter, and water sources promoted relative peace. This does not mean that there were no rich classes; the rulers were comparatively richer in terms of possessing cattle, receiving tribute from subjects, and having control over land. However, leaders also played an important distributive function which in a way insured that their subjects were furnished with the necessities of sustaining a decent and respectable life (Guy 1981:51).

Mangethe Khumalo was the clan head of the Khumalos in the 1780s. However, credit is given to his grandchild Mzilikazi Khumalo for founding what later became the Ndebele state (Cobbing 1976:26). Despite the initial co-existence which facilitated relative peace among the Nguni sub-ethnic groups and clans, the situation began to change at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many factors have been suggested for this turn of events, including droughts which increased competition for the available resources, decline in soil fertility and pastures and expansionist ventures by Europeans who wanted to control trade and commerce (Eldredge 1995:123). The net effect of all this was the creation of a highly competitive

environment where only the “fittest could survive” and this saw some clans actually accumulating more wealth at the expense of the weak. However, this process witnessed a marked increase in the use of violence across the political spectrum as a new way of attaining and protecting political and economic gains (Eldredge 1995:124). This was the beginning of Mfecane, which meant “time of troubles”. Mfecane was a political, economic and social revolution which changed the geopolitical outlook of Southern Africa as its attendant violent wars witnessed the demise and disintegration of old political formations such as the Ndwandwe of Zwide and Mthetwa of Dingiswayo and Khumalos under Mashobane (father to Mzilikazi).

During the Mfecane wars, many people lost their lives and there was unprecedented internal and external displacement of people creating many refugees who were forced to emigrate or absorbed by new political formations and some especially those that had been defeated and lost their lands migrated. These include the Sotho of Mpanga, Ngoni of Ngwana Maseko, Ngoni of Zwangendaba, Ngoni of Nxaba and Swati of Nyamazana, Kololo of Sebetwane, Sotho of Moshoeshoe, Swati of Sobhuza, Shangani of Soshangane and Khumalo (Ndebele) of Mzilikazi (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:141). These groups established settled in areas as far as modern Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. Mfecane is still a subject of debate especially on the causes and this study will not concern itself with those debates, but rather this study is more interested in the results of the process particularly how violence became a feature in the various Mfecane connected states.

Mfecane created a situation where group survival was predicated on the ability to defend itself and this could be done by many ways, which included either submitting to a strong ally or forming strategic alliances with stronger groups. The most preferred scenario was developing the means and capacity to fight and defend the group, gain followers in the process and then possibly dominate your opponents. This was what Mzilikazi Khumalo did after his father Mashobane was killed by Ndwandwe of Zwide Nxumalo, he first joined the Zulu of Shaka in 1819 and their alliance managed to defeat the Ndwandwe (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:60). Mzilikazi and his Khumalo followers became vassals to the Zulu state. However, that alliance ended with a dispute over alleged war booty in 1821, this forced Mzilikazi, and his

Khumalo followers to migrate north. This was a long and tortuous journey ending when he settled in Zimbabwe with his followers in 1839.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni highlighted that:

*...as Mzilikazi and his people were emigrating away from Zulu land and entering Transvaal they adopted the policies of raiding, conquest and incorporation of and assimilation of weaker groups they met on the way to the north. (2003:60).*

The raiding and incorporation of weaker groups had been part and parcel of violence which constituted Mfecane and stronger groups like Zulu of Shaka had used a combination of coercion and consent to establish Zulu hegemony in Nguni land. Mzilikazi seems to have initiated a process of establishing Khumalo hegemony in an effort to build a state (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:62). Groups that became victims of these raids and incorporation included the Pedi, Tswana, Kweni, Hurutshe, Khudu, Ngwaketse, Rolong, Ngwato, and Sotho among others (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:62). The raiding included taking away cattle, women, grain, and young men. This added more numbers to his followers, and numbers were not only added by raiding since it is improbable to have followers who are following only on the basis of threats or fear, other groups joined voluntarily having been lured by the protection associated with joining a stronger group.

Raiding enabled Mzilikazi to accumulate wealth as well and he used some booty to buttress his position by re-distributing the cattle and women to his followers (Eldredge 1995:126). It was along the way to the north when Mzilikazi's growing followers attained to name Matabele, which later became Ndebele. This name was given by the Sotho of Moshoeshoe as a term, which they used to refer to strangers from the coastal areas. It must be pointed out that initially it was just a generic term referring to all the strangers from coastal areas that were passing through Basutoland; however, it later became associated specifically with the followers of Mzilikazi. The Ndebele spoke Zulu, but the group ceased to be homogeneous, but nonetheless the Khumalo clan remained the core of the group and the language began to borrow words from the groups that were joining them on the way. During this phase the Ndebele used violence against weaker ethnic groups in order to advance their interests, however, the extent and magnitude of that violence has in

many instances exaggerated by some sections in effort to cover up for violence which was perpetrated by other groups like the Boers and their Griqua and Korana allies. While it cannot be denied of the Mzilikazi was not just a perpetrator of violence, it must also be noted that Mzilikazi was also victim of violence, particularly from the Mfecane period. Given this background it may reasonable to infer that maybe it was a question of a victim turned perpetrator. Research has demonstrated that victims can easily turn into perpetrators and the story genocide in Rwanda is one good example. The unfortunate irony was that the cycle of violence that Mzilikazi was entangled in continued even long after his death.

The now multi-ethnic Ndebele did not proceed straight into Zimbabwe from Zulu land; they established a capital at *eGabhini* in the Caledon valleys in Transvaal by 1826 where raiding, voluntary incorporation, and assimilation continued to add numbers to the now mobile state (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003). Although what Mzilikazi was doing in building a state was considered “normal” and probably consistent with the dictates of the time, there was a serious problem in creating a nation, which was based on “cosmetic unity” because this is neither durable nor sustainable. Underneath that heterogeneous moving state were divisions based on class and ethnic cleavages, this can be attributed to the manner in which the members had been incorporated. Even though Ndlovu-Gatsheni has pointed that the divisions were not that much pronounced (2003:100), it seems that those who had originated from Zulu land regarded themselves as the aristocracy and first class citizens while those who joined along the way be it voluntarily or through coercion were never equal to those from the Khumalo clan.

Although there were exceptional situations where non-Khumalos were rewarded by Mzilikazi for their loyalty, it seems some citizens were favoured and the unfavoured were certainly not happy. The fact that they remained part of Mzilikazi's group must have been not out choice but rather out lack of choices. One European observer who visited the Ndebele during their stay in Transvaal pointed out that Mzilikazi referred to his captives as his dogs. Captives were reminded repeatedly of their second-class citizens by some Ndebele laws discriminating against them (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:103). Ndlovu-Gatsheni further demonstrated that;

*The conquered and assimilated people were used as agricultural producers especially women, whereas men were drafted into the Ndebele amabutho (soldiers) that herded cattle and participated in raids. The client chiefdoms were forced to pay tribute to Ndebele in the form skins, tobacco, karosses, iron tools and grain. (2003:64).*

Perhaps this may explain the reasons why some of Mzilikazi's followers especially Sotho and Tswana chose to remain behind when the Ndebele left Transvaal (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:67). From 1826 to 1834 Mzilikazi's stayed in Transvaal only to be forced to leave as result of constant harassment and attacks by the Boers and their Griqua and Korana allies (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:67). The Boers were migrating from the Cape Colony because of Great Trek and they were equipped with better and more modern weapons and after several bloody clashes in 1837 Mzilikazi and his followers feeling the growing pressure and insecurity left Transvaal and crossed into Zimbabwean plateau in order to maintain independence and autonomy. When the Ndebele left Transvaal they split into two groups with one group led by Mzilikazi himself and his maternal uncle Gundwane Ndiweni and that became the first group to settle in area of western Mbembesi River in south-western Zimbabwe in 1839 and only to be joined by the Mzilikazi group a little later.

#### **4.3 Pre-colonial Shona and Ndebele relations 1839-1897**

Pre-colonial period Ndebele and Shona relations are characterised by what Stauffer summed as "offender" and "offended" narrative, the Ndebele being regarded as the offender and the Shona being the offended (2009:107). The offender and offended narrative has generated debate since it insinuate that violence was one sided. When the Ndebele settled in Zimbabwe in 1839, they avoided to central part of the plateau, which was inhabited by several decentralised Shona sub-ethnic groups. This consideration may have been necessitated by the fact that the Ndebele were not yet ready for any possible serious military engagement given the long journey from the south. The Ndebele did not get any serious resistance when they settled among the Kalanga of Ndumba area. In fact several Shona groups had actually been weakened by the several Nguni and Sotho groups that they had encountered earlier and more importantly at that juncture the only notable groups that could offer resistance among the Shona was Mutinhima and his followers. Most Shona people especially those connected to the Rozvi groups were in turmoil and divided over succession dispute

after the killing of Changamire Chirisamhuru by the Swati of Nyamazana (Beach 1994:85).

Mutinhima and his group managed to offer resistance, which gave problems to the first Ndebele group, which was led by Gundwane Ndiweni. Mutinhima was defeated only after the second group of the Ndebele, which was led by Mzilikazi, had joined the Ndiweni group (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:68). The period between 1839 and 1842 was generally regarded as the settling stage for the Ndebele as there was nothing much to write home about in terms of the interaction between the Shona groups and the Ndebele group. During the same period, the Ndebele were involved in a civil war, because when Mzilikazi re-joined his first group he discovered that Gundwane Ndiweni and some senior Khumalo clan members had installed his son Nkulumane as the King, perhaps in belief that Mzilikazi had probably died. This was due to a two-year break of communication between the two groups after they had left Transvaal.

To Mzilikazi this was unacceptable, unforgivable, he ordered the execution of Gundwane Ndiweni, and other senior chiefs like Mafu, Dolo, Mkwananzi, and Kanye among others, who had supported Nkulumane's installation as king were executed (Cobbing 1976:43). Some of his senior wives including the mothers to Nkulumane and Lobengula (the future king) were also executed. Several of his sons including Nkulumane were either executed or banished to South Africa. Mzilikazi was in essence stamping his authority and consolidating his position and probably this time using violence in its extreme. This crisis, which known as Ntabayezinduna and it, also demonstrated that violence, as an instrument was not only unleashed on "external enemies" only; even "internal enemies" could face the same wrath of ruthlessness if they do not comply with the king.

At this stage, it must be pointed out that most Shona communities perceived these new arrivals in the same manner in which they had the other Nguni and Sotho groups. They had named these groups *Madzviti* that means violent strangers and so they just viewed the Ndebele as one of many other *Madzviti* groups that had terrorised them earlier on. The term *Madzviti* became the name, which was given specifically to the Ndebele since they ended up staying permanently unlike other

groups, which proceeded north. This term was in some instances used to refer to one other Nguni group, the Shangani of Soshangane, who also established themselves in the southeast section of the Zimbabwean plateau. It is not yet clear whether the Shona were able to distinguish the differences between the *Madzviti* from Ndebele and those from Soshangane. However, it was plausible that in the memories of most Shona communities that *Madzviti* were not good news at all to them because they meant times of trouble, given the fact these groups embarked on the same routine like the other earlier *Madzviti* of raiding and taking away women, young boys, cattle, and grain.

Therefore, the Shona must have believed that all *Madzviti* were the same people, after all they were all coming from the same direction. When the Ndebele began to increase and widen their scale of raiding (as shall be discussed later) in an effort to consolidate their position, this must have confirmed the perception and prejudice that all *Madzviti* were violent; what might have worsened the situation was the realization that the Ndebele had come to stay for good on the Zimbabwean plateau.

The end of the Ntabayezinduna crisis saw Mzilikazi consolidating his position among the Ndebele people and thereafter he began focussing on consolidating Ndebele hegemony on the Zimbabwean plateau. This process was done using aggression, violent incorporation, and voluntary incorporation. Aggression was an expansionist method of increasing the Ndebele territory by taking away lands of the surrounding communities. Land was vital for farming and cattle pastures. Therefore the wars of aggression were embarked upon on to a greater extent in the period soon after the Ntabayezinduna crisis where weaker groups such as Kalanga, Rozvi, Nyubi, Birwa, Shangwe and other Shona groups lost their land creating what became known as Matabeleland.

The expansionist wars gave the local Shona groups two options, to either resist or fight back and if defeated then you be violently incorporated in the Ndebele state. In another scenario a group could resist when defeated the group would migrate as far as possible from Matabeleland like what happened to the Rozvi of Mutinhima. A considerable number of groups especially those found within the proximity of the expanding Matabeleland that included the Kalanga, Rozvi, Nyubi, Birwa, and

Shangwe were subdued. This was perhaps out of fear, which may be related to memories of Madzviti, and therefore they did not offer much resistance but submitted and acknowledged the authority of Mzilikazi and became part of the Ndebele state (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:70). The move by such groups could have been strategic, the motive being that “if you cannot beat a stronger enemy it is safer to join the enemy”. They adopted the Ndebele language and culture and they enjoyed a semi-autonomous kind of independence in their chiefdoms but now as part of the Ndebele state, which they demonstrated by paying tribute to the Ndebele king and also partaking in various political economic and social activities of the Ndebele state.

This development further changed the ethnic composition of the Ndebele who, when they arrived in Zimbabwe, divided into two distinct classes - the Khumalo clans from Zululand and several other Nguni and Sotho who were absorbed along the way. Moreover, the local indigenous Shona groups added a third class to the growing Ndebele state, and this eventually constituted approximately 60 per cent of the Ndebele state (Beach 1994:36). Thus, when discussing the Ndebele, the term now also includes this class as well as those who were forcefully incorporated and ended up adopting language and culture. However, it must be pointed out that Mzilikazi and the Khumalo aristocracy remained the nucleus of the Ndebele state and as a class were referred to as *Zansi* from the *Abezansi* meaning those who came from the south. The groups that were incorporated by the Ndebele along the way before crossing Limpopo like the Sotho and Tswana groups were regarded as *Enhla* meaning those from North. Those groups that were absorbed and incorporated when the Ndebele settled in Zimbabwe like the Shona sub-ethnic groups were known as *Hole* (At times the word is used in a derogatory sense) (Lindgren 2004:178). However, it must be noted that in a way the classification had a geographic purpose of compartmentalising people on the basis of their origins (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008:34). Although it has been argued that these classes were not cast in stone, it seems the reality was that these classes were not equal to each. “Inequality rather equality was the order of life in the Ndebele state” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:94). This can be signified by control of intermarriages between classes.

*Enhla men were not allowed to marry Zansi women. Zansi and Enhla men generally looked down upon Hole women. However, the social stratification that divided the Ndebele society did not succeed in stopping the proud Zansi*



*men to have illicit relationships with Shona women and subsequently produced belittled offspring termed 'incukubili' (half breeds) (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:108).*

The insinuation from the above statement demonstrates not just the clear existence of social classes, which existed in the Ndebele society, but it also reveals how the Ndebele society looked down upon the Shona. If the offspring, which were produced by the illicit relationships, were looked down as half people, it simply means their mothers were simply not regarded as people at all.

Cobbing (1976:115) identified the following categories that were used by the Ndebele to relate with their Shona neighbours,

- Those incorporated as individuals by seizure or voluntary assimilation.
- Those swallowed as a whole.
- Those adjacent who adopted Ndebele language
- Tributaries further afar who paid tribute.
- Those who resisted or paid tribute periodically and with ill grace

Not all Shona groups became part of Ndebele state; a sizeable did not become part of the Ndebele state. However, those who maintained their status were practically given two choices of either to acknowledge the suzerainty of Mzilikazi and the Ndebele state through paying tribute or to resist and face constant raids and harassment. “Recalcitrant subject groups that failed to acknowledge Ndebele hegemony through payment of tribute were commonly raided” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:142).

A sizable number of Shona communities within proximity of Ndebele state chose the tributary states option where they were spared from raids and became vassals to Ndebele state and enjoyed semi-autonomous status. Such groups included Neman, Hwadalala, Mahuku, Mnigau, Lemba, Kalanga, Shangwe, and Masunda among others (Cobbing 1976:148). However, representatives of the Ndebele were stationed in their polities to ensure compliance that was expected of their status. Nhema's Mhari paid hoes, Lemba paid in the form of copper, Kalanga paid in the form of labour and mopani poles, Shangwe in tobacco and Masunda in the form of labour

(Cobbing 1976:147). This arrangement in a way challenges the claim that the Ndebele always raided the all the Shona indiscriminately. Some Shona communities never experienced any raids at all especially those that complied with the Ndebele state (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009:98).

The Shona groups, which submitted to Ndebele authority and paid tribute, enjoyed a considerable degree of peace through cordial relationships with Ndebele and some even became pro-Ndebele (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:242). Some of the Shona communities like those from Nhema were even involved in trade with Ndebele while others from Mberengwa also benefited from cattle alliances. Under the cattle alliances system pro-Ndebele Shona they were given cattle by the Ndebele under an arrangement where they could look after the cattle on behalf of the Mzilikazi and in return were allowed to enjoy benefits like milk, cattle manure, a percentage of new born calves and special limited slaughter rights (Beach 1994:60). This worked well for these Shona communities because they desperately wanted cattle following their losses to the Nguni and Sotho *Madzviti* and the Ndebele had plenty of cattle.

However, even though the relationship with these groups could be considered cordial it is clear that such a relationship was considered cordial only in as far as these Shona groups were paying tribute and acknowledging the Ndebele suzerainty. Thus, such a relationship was largely influenced and defined by one side, meaning that it was not based on mutual respect of each other but rather on patron-client model bordering fear due to threats of possible violence. It is very probable that these Shona groups may have adopted this as another survival strategy, which was just different from those from those groups that were assimilated into the Ndebele state in order to evade raids. This can be substantiated by the fact that at times some of these groups would refuse to comply with the tribute arrangement and upon doing so the Ndebele raiders were unleashed upon them (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2004:23). During the raids, cattle, grain, women, and young men were taken to Matebeland as captives. Ndlovu-Gatsheni captures this point well when he identified that:

*It was a general practice among the Ndebeles for the raiders to come in after a raid with children and women and these were commonly tied their hands behind to ensure that they did not escape...The captives were first of all*

*brought and paraded before the Ndebele King in the capital. The Ndebele King had the duty to distribute the captives. The females who were old enough to be married were immediately distributed among their captors especially Chiefs. The King took a percentage of well selected captives to reside in the capital and to work for him. (2003:100).*

Most captives were obtained from punitive raids against Shona groups that were considered recalcitrant. These groups had refused to acknowledge Ndebele authority or paid tribute erratically choosing to be independent but faced the full wrath of perennial raids. These were mostly Shona communities residing a distance from the Ndebele capital, that distance which meant little to Ndebele king as he still imposed his authority on them. This did not change much even after the death of Mzilikazi in 1868, his son Lobengula who succeeded him maintained the policies voluntary incorporation and coercive assimilation where raids or threats of violence were part of instruments of maintaining power.

Raids were not just for punishing non-compliant communities; they also “acted as a political ploy to weaken neighbours of the Ndebele” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008:74). This claim resonates well with claim that the Shona were the offended. Thus, raids were in a way systematic and indiscriminate as indicated by some early writers like Willis, Collingridge, and Hole, but this should nonetheless be used to justify raids because raids by nature were violent and bloody since they included killing, humiliation, and capture of victims. This is important because Stauffer in his research identified narratives, which seem to downplay the long-term ramifications of violent aspects of raids under the veil of “assimilation and incorporation” (2009:118). Such attempts are tantamount to sanitising war and violence into what looked like simple free choices, which were given to those who were, raided (Stauffer 2009:119). Such raids affected a number of Shona communities and these included the Chihota, Svosve, Njanja, Mangwende, Hwata, Chishawasha, Chinamhora, Zimuto, Mangwende, Situngwiza, Rwizi, and Chivi among others who resisted Ndebele control (Cobbing 1976:310).

There is no doubt that the Shona communities that were victims of these targeted and punitive political raids regarded themselves as the offended and were not happy, and therefore it is possible that they must have detested and hated the Ndebele. However, it must be pointed out that the origins of such feelings were probably generated by the early Nguni groups that passed through the Zimbabwean plateau

before the Ndebele arrived. The further humiliation by the activities of the Ndebele only invoked the memories of past Nguni attacks and hardened the existing possible feelings of hate. The humiliation of being hounded and captured was real and Beach claims that “Ndebele raiders also tended to follow up their targets if they fled as and when they pursued people from Chaminuka's medium base near Umfuli to the Northern Shawasha country beyond the Umwindsi in 1883” (1974:639). Cobbing also indicated that one Shona Chief “Chivi Mazorodze was captured and skinned alive for resisting; cattle, sheep, goats, children and guns were taken away” (1976:318).

Deducing from such action, it is unreasonable to infer the intention of political raids was not to defeat only and punish the recalcitrant but also to humiliate and send a message to others who may contemplate resisting in future. Some of the raids were unofficial and therefore not “legal” as they were not sanctioned by the Ndebele king (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:149). Sometimes senior Ndebele chiefs took advantage of the situation to raid Shona communities for their own personal gain, and this probably made it difficult for the victims to distinguish the “legality” of a raid and raises questions to the claims that raids were unsystematic. Beach also identified evidence that “even Ndebele on a peaceful mission such as delivery of a message would sometimes cover expenses by raiding” (1994:23).

Those who survived the raids were traumatised but the situation must have been worse for those who were, forcibly taken to Matabeleland, and integrated as subjects, wives, and captives. Some writers as Chennels and Thompson believed that captives were treated as good as slaves, a claim which has been questioned by revisionists scholars like Ndlovu-Gatsheni who nonetheless also admits that captives were “scorned by the *Zansi* and *Enhla* groups” (2003:96). Ndlovu-Gatsheni indicated that captives were “subordinated to the *Zansi* and *Enhla* groups socially and politically, thus while they were belittled and looked down upon, they were not slaves” (2003:96). These were possible signs of both direct and structural violence, which existed. This was also a clear disrespect, which must have further humiliated the captives especially as they were adjusting to the new life as subjects. Ndlovu Gatsheni further highlights that “Mzilikazi called some of his subjects dogs, A dog in Ndebele is *inja* and it is not respected at all beyond its ability to hunt” (2003:99). “The

captives were occasionally reminded of their second class citizenship status by some Ndebele laws which were discriminating toward them” (Ndlovu Gatsheni 2003:103).

Thomas who is quoted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni made this point by noting that

*Ndebele law discriminated against the captives if a captive or slave murdered a real Ndebele would certainly be punished by death because the former was a vassal and the latter was a member of the aristocracy, on the other hand if a real Ndebele murdered a captive he would be charged with homicide and punished with fine of number of cattle. (2003:103).*

This clearly demonstrated that the Ndebele laws were applied selectively and this contradicts the claim by Ndlovu-Gatsheni that the “social conditions of the captives were tolerably humane” (2003:102). The question of the treatment being humane or inhumane depends on from whose eyes the humane is seen or defined, because what could be humane from the captor could be inhumane from the captive.

Revisionists historians like Bhebe indicate that after adjustment some former captives actually identified with their conquerors as they translated their totems from Shona to Ndebele like Shumba to Sibanda, Nyanga to Nkomo, Gumbo to Msipa, Shiri to Nyoni, Moyo to Nhliziyo (1973:9). The fact that some former captives *branded* their totems and names Ndebele was probably a futile attempt to gain acceptance while keeping their identity hidden in order to gain acceptance and minimise the stigma of using a Shona names in an environment surrounded by Ndebele language and culture. “Beyond these pragmatic motivations it seems unlikely that any distinct ethnic people or group would voluntarily submit itself...” (Stauffer 2009:119)

It was clear that the Ndebele viewed the Shona as the inferior people and some Shona groups may have accepted that reality and had probably come to peace with that reality since their choices were in a way limited. This could have been the effect of what is known as the Stockholm syndrome. Stockholm syndrome is a psychological condition, mechanism, or strategy of survival where a captive or the oppressed person will “bond” with the captor(s) in some cases to the extent of defending the captor(s) or oppressors. This strange response develops due to possible three main reasons, firstly, the captive or the oppressed develops a belief

that the captor is too powerful and can kill him or her if he or she does not co-operate, and this belief could be based on reality or perceptions of insecurity. The second factor is the realisation and acceptance that escaping is difficult if not impossible. Therefore, one accepts the situation and develops coping mechanisms within the system and finally the presence of small gestures of kindness by the captor may be interpreted by the captive as genuine, leading to the acceptance of the captor and positive responses by the captive (Carver 2004:2). The Stockholm syndrome was discovered in 1973 following a bank robbery in Stockholm Sweden where hostages were held against their will for several days and they began to 'bond' with their captors to the extent defending the captors and making it difficult for them to be rescued by government officials (Carver 2004:3).

The Shona communities that experienced raids also made efforts to increase their defence by building settlements on mountains and hilltops in order to minimise impact when attacked (Mazarire 2005:5). These hilltop settlements formed what later became the "Ndebele myth": early missionaries and colonial officials who labelled the Ndebele as "blood thirsty savages" who were always terrorising the hapless, peaceful, and helpless Shona promoted this. These were of course somehow exaggerated sentiments, which were designed to justify colonial occupation on the basis that the European settlers "saved" the Shona from an "imminent genocide" which was being perpetrated by the Ndebele.

The hilltop settlements were used as defence mechanism against Ndebele raids and attacks, however, some of them were developed long before the Ndebele settled in Zimbabwe. These settlements were a general defence mechanism, which was used even against attacks from fellow Shona attacks. The Shona were not a homogenous group, even though they lived as small-decentralised sub-ethnic groups and clans they also quarrelled a lot and fought and raided each other as well. Some of these intra Shona attacks and raids were perpetrated by the rogue Dumbuseya group, which apparently was a Shona group, which had been *Nguninised* and embarked on a career in raiding which was independent from Ndebele (Beach 1994:141). Other attacks came from Gaza Shangani, which was another Mfecane state made of another Nguni group that had settled in south-eastern Zimbabwe. The Shona were not attacked all the times in fact they also attacked and raided the Ndebele as well in

retaliation. The Ndebele did not believe in total war because such a strategy was neither feasible nor sustainable. “The Ndebele no longer believed in total war nor did the Shona believe in total peace” (Beach 1977:638). What is clear from this complex relationship is that there was disengagement and limited co-operation, which was manifested through mistrust, fear and hate and this increased violence or threats of using violence. Some Shona groups like those under Chiefs Mashayamombe, Chivero, Nyamweda, Mapondera, Chinamhora, Nyandoro, Mangwende, Svosve, Seke, Mudzimuremu, Gambiza, Mutekedza, and Mabukwa entered into agreements with the Portuguese to acquire guns and ammunition (Cobbing 1976:334). Thereafter some refused to pay tribute to the Ndebele or paid it erratically and raids were unleashed upon them, leading to further straining of relations. This saw the Ndebele king targeting the mentioned Chiefs especially in the late 1880s, as Lobengula felt that he was now losing grip in terms of his dominance over his Shona subjects. Thus, when the British colonial settlers arrived they found relations between Shona and Ndebele already strained with clear ethnic cleavages between “offenders” and “offended” (Stauffer 2009:115).

#### **4.4 Shona and Ndebele relations under the colonial dispensation**

The colonial dispensation was marked by divide and rule tactics, which not reduced both the Shona and Ndebele as colonial subjects, but further accentuated the “offender” and “offended” narrative. The British settlers further perpetuated the prejudices, which gave a higher status the Ndebele. The Ndebele were considered as more organised, fierce and militant as compared to Shona, who were regarded as weak and meek by the British settlers (Stauffer 2009:125). When the British colonial settlers and the British South Africa Company (BSACo) officials settled in Mashonaland in 1890, some Shona Chiefs welcomed them in belief that they were “visitors” who, like the Portuguese, would assist them in acquiring more guns to use against the Ndebele. The British settlers quickly noted the frosty relations between the Shona and Ndebele and between 1890 and 1893 they instigated further divisions by encouraging Shona groups in Mashonaland areas not only stop paying tribute but to defect and raid the Ndebele on the promise that if attacked the whites will “defend” them (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:215). Apparently, this was a ploy used to provoke the Ndebele knowing well that the Ndebele will retaliate and then British will then use

that as a pretext to destroy the Ndebele state and complete the total annexation of the Zimbabwean plateau. The Ndebele played into the hands of the British and they increased their raids against the defecting Shona communities leading to a situation where so many Shona were ready to join the British settlers in attacking the Ndebele in 1893.

Apparently, the British colonial settlers had failed to get the much-anticipated gold in Mashonaland after having been granted exclusive mining rights in Mashonaland by the Ndebele king Lobengula under the Rudd Concession of 1888. The British settlers then realised that any expansionist moves beyond Mashonaland into Matabeleland were not going to be easy as long as the Ndebele state was still intact. Therefore when Lobengula dispatched a punitive raid against the Shona of Mhari Bere who had raided Ndebele people, the British launched an attack on the Ndebele and Chiefs Zimuto, Madzivire, Gutu, Chirumanzu, Chivi Madlangove joined them among others (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003:218). The Anglo-Shona alliance as described by Ndlovu-Gatsheni manifested the mistrust and detestation that existed between the Ndebele and some Shona groups especially those who participated in the plundering (2003:219). During the attack which led to the beginning of the demise of Ndebele state, the Shona allies who worked alongside the British settlers and took this as an opportunity to raid and plunder the Ndebele who began to retreat from their capital Bulawayo. Pro Ndebele Shona were also attacked and plundered by this Anglo-Shona alliance.

This demonstrated a discord aspect, which was part of the relationship between the Ndebele and the Shona. In fact, beyond the discord it demonstrated lack of coordination between the Ndebele and the Shona. The Shona happily participated in the looting perhaps in retaliation to the earlier raids. This may also have happened partly because the Shona were not aware of the Rudd Concession, which Lobengula had signed without any dialogue with them; the British were neither visitors nor their liberators. (The British settlers were made by Lobengula to believe that the entire Mashonaland was his vassal state) However, this should not be viewed as a supposition that any co-operation between the Ndebele and Shona was going to stop annexation of Zimbabwe by the British. The annexation was going to come in any case, given the developments in other pre-colonial states, but the fact that Lobengula



effectively signed a treaty that paved way for the British occupation of Mashonaland and eventually the whole of the Zimbabwe without the involvement of Shona in the process has led to a very common belief among many Shona people that the “Lobengula and the Ndebele sold the country to the British”. Even though this belief is clearly a fallacy and not based on truth because Lobengula was indeed tricked by the British imperial officials into signing, the Rudd Concession the belief that “the Ndebele sold is the country” is shared by many in Shona circles up to today.

The Ndebele were defeated by 1893 ending their hegemony over the Shona communities and they lost much of their wealth as their cattle were looted and the king “disappeared” into exile where he died. Soon after the defeat of the Ndebele the British began to consolidate their control of the Zimbabwean plateau by introducing unfair taxes, taking away land from the indigenous people through promulgation of vindictive laws which legalised government forced labour in a situation which reduced both Shona and Ndebele and other indigenous groups into colonial subjects (Muchemwa and Ngwerume 2011:6). In March 1896, the Ndebele launched a campaign to regain their independence and the Shona joined in the struggle against British settlers.

Although both groups had a common aim of driving away the colonial settlers, their war efforts were mostly spontaneous and not well co-ordinated. Perhaps that could be part of the acrimony which had had seen some Shona joining hands with the British in the 1893 war which had marked the demise of Ndebele state. The 1896-1897 ended with the defeat of both Shona and Ndebele. The British settlers were able to outwit these groups separately and ended the war separately. The Ndebele and the British had diplomatic *Indaba* talks in which they made a lot false promises, which convinced the Ndebele to give up the struggle and among. This gave a somehow dignified end to the war in Matabeleland, unlike in Mashonaland where the struggle ended with the humiliating defeat, capture and hanging of those who were leading the struggle. The way the war ended for the Ndebele and Shona demonstrate how different the two groups were perceived by the British settlers.

The pre-colonial political set up, which had largely seen the Ndebele hegemony over several Shona groups, was ended violently with the advent of colonial rule, which

was consolidated, with the military defeat of both groups in the 1896-7 uprisings. The new political dispensation under British colonial rule reduced both Shona and Ndebele groups into mere colonial subjects without right to any notable political, social, and economic rights. Like what happened to most African countries that became colonies, a combination of direct and structural violence was used to control colonial subjects in Rhodesia as the country was now called in commemoration Cecil John Rhodes whose imperial efforts were pivotal in securing the colony on behalf of the British Empire.

Direct violence was experienced in the form forced labour policy commonly known as *chibharo*. This forced labour was not very different from slavery as victims were forced to work in mines, farms, roads, and railways construction without any remuneration and were subjected to physical beatings in the case of non-cooperation. Colonial authorities also criminalised any political sentiments of the colonial subjects.

Direct violence was supported by structural violence in the form of colonial laws, which were crafted to discriminate Africans. Some of these colonial laws included the Masters and Servants Act of 1901, which clearly entrenched the servant status blacks and masters status class of whites. Other laws included Land Apportionment Act of 1930, African Accommodation and Registration Act of 1946, the Unlawful Organisations Act (1959), the Law and Order Maintenance Act (1960) and the Emergency Powers Act (1960). In short, all these acts buttressed the inferiority status of blacks while advancing the interests of the white. The actions of colonial state placed Shona, Ndebele and other groups in “the same boat”; however, these actions added another layer of violence on top of the other existing layer of violence and disengagement. The layer of violence, which was added by colonial rule, had direct implications to the nature of relations between Shona and Ndebele. Ndlovu-Gatsheni correctly identified that

*Colonialism never wanted to create nations in Africa based on common national identity because this was going to fuel African nationalism. Colonialism wanted to create colonial states as ‘neo-Europe’ that served metropolitan material needs while maintaining Africans fragmented into numerous tribes and unable to unite against colonial oppression and domination. (2009:101).*

Mamdani highlighted that the colonial state had two main categories of compartmentalising its inhabitants that is citizens and subjects (1996:17). The whites were citizens and the blacks were subjects. However, the Rhodesian colonial officials further sub-divided colonial subjects based on ethnic tags known as “Mashona natives and Ndebele natives”. The ethnic tag;

*... Was enforced through the national identity card system that coded and classified Africans according to an assigned village and district of origins. Under this system, every native district in Rhodesia was represented by a specific numerical code and every adult native was issued a national identity known as a national identity card known as isithupa in Ndebele and chitupa in Shona. (Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007:277).*

Colonial officials did not invent ethnic identities because these were already in existence in pre-colonial Africa; however, they played a pivotal role in increasing the politicisation of ethnic cleavages (Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007:278). This brings into play an important distinction between ethnicity and tribalism. Msindo managed to capture this in a unique way when he highlighted that on one hand ethnicity is merely “that capacity in people to classify themselves as social others” (2007:268). On the other hand, “tribalism is normally the mobilisation of ethnically conscious people to ferment political enmity and disunity between “others”. An ethnic community is inward looking than a political tribe. Ethnic groups do not exist primarily as political institutions to fight off their opponents, but to preserve their cultural artefacts and that which they imagine as the stuff from which their group is made” (Msindo 2007:268-69).

#### **4.4.1 “Common enemy and common problems based alliances”**

The early period of colonial rule saw, the Ndebele and Shona engaging primarily as ethnic others suffering under the effects colonial rule. Direct and structural violence affected them equally and this saw Shona and Ndebele even collaborating in the form non-ethnic associations that were platforms to raise their concerns to the colonial officials. Non ethnic-based associations such as trade unions like the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) which was led by Charles Mzingeli, the Federation of Bulawayo African Trade Unions led by Jasper Savanhu, the British African Workers Association led by Benjamin Burombo, the Railway African Workers Union led by Joshua Nkomo, the Artisans Union led by Jason Moyo and the

Municipal Workers Union under the leadership of Francis Nehwati. These labour-based organisations were of people from different ethnic backgrounds and what united them most was the common enemy, which they were all facing. This level of co-operation platforms which facilitated the development of cordial relationships between Shona and Ndebele which culminated into the 1948 general strikes by Africans which paralysed the Rhodesian economy. The unions later merged to form the Southern Rhodesia Trade Union Congress (SRTUC), which was led by Joshua Nkomo. These labour unions culminated into the formation of proto nationalistic political formations like Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (SRANC) led by Aaron Jacha in 1934 (Ranger 1999:16). However, it must be pointed that African elites and workers in the urban areas especially in Bulawayo mainly facilitated such co-operation, which was the industrial hub of Rhodesia. Besides these labour based organisations there were other non-ethnic organisations that were largely recreational like Bulawayo Football Association, African Ballroom Dancing group and Rhodesian Dancing club (Msindo 2006:436). Some of these clubs manifested coping strategies of black to the new environment and at times this transcended ethnic inclinations as members were drawn across the society without any ethnic exclusion.

The existence of co-operation in the form on non-ethnic associations did not stop the formation of ethno-cultural based associations, which were used by different ethnic groups to adjust under the hostile environment in urban areas. Some of these were social safety nets by ethnic groups to support each other and they included ethnic based burial societies and other cultural and recreational societies. They included Manyika Burial Society (MBS), Mashonaland United Burial Society (MUBS), and Malubale Burial Society (MBS among others. These existed together with Matabeleland Home Society, Sons of Mzilikazi Home Society (MHS), Mashonaland Cultural Society (MCS) and Kalanga Cultural Society (KCS) among others (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007:136). The ethnic associations facilitated the advancement of member's group and at times, there was competition by these associations.

Despite the common problems which had necessitated co-operation as noted by non-ethnic associations the colonial environment and the new urban dwellings presented little political, economic and social spaces which were heavily contested by the Shona and Ndebele so much that the ethnic associations would at times

demonstrate some visible signs of tribalism and not mere ethnicity. Colonial officials who wanted to prevent the rise nationalistic sentiments fermented part of it. The colonial state had primordial interpretation of blacks, which made white colonial officials to believe that certain ethnic groups were good for particular jobs than others. The Ndebele were viewed as militant and more assertive groups and therefore were believed to be good foremen and Shona were considered a bit weak and more cultured such that those from Manyika (a Shona dialect from eastern Zimbabwe) were considered to best house servants (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009:100). In fact blacks also began to accept these tags yet in essence there was nothing special about them because people preferred joining professions where they could work with their friends and relatives from their home area as this enabled smooth transition into urban setup and hence there nothing primordial about ethnic groups in terms profession specialisation (Msindo 2007:279). This had an influence in terms of how blacks perceived each other.

The other factor was probably due to competition for the limited opportunities presented to blacks by the colonial state and it culminated in the outbreak of the Bulawayo 1929 faction fights.

#### **4.4.2 Bulawayo 1929 faction fights and their significance**

The late December 1929 to early January 1930 Bulawayo faction fights and violence which pitted the Shona against Ndebele who were in alliance with Kalanga (in the colonial period the Kalanga were synonymously identified as Ndebele) and other non-Rhodesian nationals (Msindo 2006:430). Bulawayo had been developed as the industrial capital of Rhodesia and during its early development in 1898 the city required more labour than what the local community could provide and this led to an influx of Shona and other non-Rhodesian men to settle in Bulawayo because of the employment opportunities it offered. Many factors have been given to explain why the faction fights occurred which include the impact of the 1929 Great Depression, which affected the Rhodesian economy leading to increased unemployment and competition, by blacks (Phimster and Van Onslen 1979:4). While the impact of the Great Depression was indeed an undeniable part of the problem, ethnic inclinations were used as instrument to mobilise groups to fight in order to gain control of the available few opportunities.

To Msindo there was something more than the impact of the depression as ethnicity played an important role in fomenting the violence that saw the destruction of property and loss of life (Msindo 2006:431). The Ndebele and their allies were not only determined to regain control of Bulawayo and the available employment but were determined to drive the Shona out of Bulawayo. Msindo identified that one of the main complaints raised in social beer drinking platforms by the Ndebele was “why are these people here? We do not go to their country, molest them, and take their jobs and wives. Let us drive them out” (Msindo 2006:438). There seems to have been unhappiness over what Ndebele considered as “Shona insolent” and also the increase in sexual relations between Shona men and Ndebele women and there was belief among the Ndebele women that Shona men were very generous with their money when compared to Ndebele men (Ranger 2010:98). Ndebele cultural groups like MHS considered these sexual relations unacceptable. Msindo highlighted that:

*It seems that the local urban Ndebele men were annoyed by these “new” and seemingly casual cross-ethnic sexual relations between their Ndebele ‘cousins’ and Shona and other foreigners in Matabeleland who had more money to attract such women. This sounds similar to the 1929 grievances where Ndebele people bitterly complained of the ‘association of Mashona males with Matabele females’. The association of Shona men with Ndebele women cited in some of the sources raises a number of questions. First, one wonders whether the Shona, by trying to monopolise the company and sexual services of unmarried urban Ndebele women (to the annoyance of Ndebele men), were being retributive to Ndebele men by attacking them where it pained them most, their masculinity. By that token, one also wonders whether Ndebele reaction was a response to that felt assault on their masculinity – that Shona came all the way from Mashonaland and took Ndebele women to themselves in the presence of Ndebele men. Alternatively, were Shona men trying to portray an imagined public moral authority over the ‘children of their nieces, aunts’, or what they imagined as their female relatives violently trafficked into Matabeleland during the pre-colonial era? It seems both views are plausible. (Msindo 2006:435).*

The faction fights were eventually quelled by the colonial state but the main lessons drawn were that in the event of competition, especially where something special can be gained or lost, ethnicity becomes salient and can be used as an important instrument to target other ethnic groups. More importantly, this also manifest that despite the new environment where some level of co-operation was existing due to solidarity in being colonial subjects, the pre-colonial animosities were still undeniably there and arising competition could trigger them.

This was also witnessed in the election of Native Advisory Boards in urban areas. The boards were elected by blacks so that they would represent the interests of the few black people in urban areas and they worked hand in hand with the white controlled municipal councils. Competition and serious lobbying was seen in the election of members and ethnic groups tended to vote for “their own people”. Even though there were no violent cases recorded in the campaigning and lobbying, the point had been made that issues of ethnic inclinations were a fact and Msindo quoted one Ndebele observer whose remarks were made after an election of Native Advisory Board members, who clearly pointed out that “It had become a matter of voting for our own sons who understood our culture and traditions. There were so many capable Shona that we could not vote for because they did not represent Kalanga and Ndebele interests” (2007:283). The competition in urban areas gave a glimpse of what can happen competition between ethnic groups arises.

#### **4.4.3 The instrumentalism role of ethnicity during the liberation struggle**

The struggle against colonial rule began by creating a platform, which generated nationalistic sentiments and managed to unite both the Ndebele and Shona under the banner of “Sons of the Soil” (Stauffer 2009:133). This demonstrated that ethnicity could be an instrument in a positive way, which can be used to mobilise masses. Unfortunately, the instrumental role of ethnicity can also work in a negative way if ethnicity transforms into tribalism and this is what happened between Shona and Ndebele nationalists. “Sons of the soil” became “Sons of Segregation” as they began to position themselves for the takeover of the colonial state (Stauffer 2009:134).

By the end of the 1950’s, nationalistic sentiments began to be expressed by Africans as signified by the revival of the old SRANC in 1957 led by Joshua Nkomo, ethnic rivalry existed but it was not as salient as it became in the 1960s, especially during the armed struggle period. This could be explained by the fact that competition and possible gains were not also well pronounced or clear. Joshua Nkomo who was Ndebele speaking was accepted as a national figure and leader despite the fact that he was coming from an Ndebele background. Joshua Nkomo was accepted by the Shona and was bestowed the title “Father Zimbabwe” and the Shona even gave him the name *Chibwechitedza* (which means a slippery stone and

refers to Nkomo's ability to evade the Rhodesian secret police). This demonstrated that nationalism was characterised by true "Son of the soil".

However, it must be pointed out that despite this seemingly true unity based on true nationalism there were efforts to strike a balance in terms of the ethnic composition of the SRANC executive. Such attempts were a clear manifestation that ethnicity was a serious matter which could not be left to fate (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007:36). The banning of SRANC in 1959 by the colonial state led to the formation of National Democratic Party in 1960 and still Nkomo became its leader and again efforts to strike ethnic balance were made. However, it was during this period when ethnic sentiments, which can be connected pre-colonial animosities, began to show signs leading to what eventually became tribalism.

The debates and discussions within NDP began to ignite tensions that demonstrated clear elements of ethnic rivalry. Like any political formation NDP was bound to have conflicts and disagreements over many issues, however, which some of the discussions took which then clearly exposed that the ghost of past Ndebele and Shona rivalry was real and not forgotten upon the ethnic dimension. This became clear on debates of possible names of the future nation, which the NDP was striving to create in the event of victory against Rhodesian colonial settlers. To Ndlovu-Gatsheni,

*...pulsations and reverberations of ethnicity emerged strongly within NDP, indicated by the debates that emerged around the name for the imagined post colonial nation. Because of strong regional Ndebele identity, some people in "Matabeleland imagined independence on the basis of memories of the pre-colonial Ndebele state. Therefore they were opposed to the naming of the imagined nation as Zimbabwe. To the people of Matabeleland the name Zimbabwe conjured up the promotion of Shona history and memory. (2009:65).*

The Ndebele speaking community alongside the Kalanga speakers with whom they had developed closer ties with as witnessed in their alliance in the 1929 faction fights preferred the name Matopos. Matopos is an important cultural heritage site found in Matabeleland near Bulawayo where the grave of Mzilikazi, the founder King of Matabeleland, is located, an important place for the Ndebele people. Meanwhile Shona speakers preferred the name Zimbabwe that is derived from an ancient Shona city, which flourished in the 12th century. The dispute was a clear



prolegomena of what was to face the country in the future, secondly it also demonstrated that these two groups envisioned two different nations and it would take a great deal of effort to create a single unified nation. Thirdly, it gives credence to the claim that people appeal to ethnic inclinations and emotions when there is something to be gained or lost, hence ethnicity plays an important functional role as an instrument (Stauffer 2009:104). In this case, the debates were a manifestation of issues to do with power and dominance in the future nation hence each ethnic group preferred its own name and possibly ways of doing things. Clearly, Sons of the soil were slowly turning into Sons of segregation.

Thus, ethnicity is a symptom, which demonstrates an existing problem between groups and is also used as an instrument to gain control and support. Cordell and Wolff illustrated that "ethnicity is an important resource around which groups can crystallise. "Ethnic conflicts are not in fact conflicts about ethnicity per se, but rather manifest conflicts between ethnic groups" (2010:81). This study believes that if the real conflicts between the ethnic groups are not addressed by some kind of intervention, then ethnicity itself will become a relational problem of polarisation, or the stereotyping of identity, and it will add another layer to the existing problems between the groups. When this happens, every action and inaction by a group will be seen and interpreted through the prism of ethnicity and this will become tribalism where mistrust and suspicions will characterise the relationship. When the Shona members of NDP came up with the name Zimbabwe, an ancient Shona heritage site, it was interpreted as an effort to promote Shona hegemony. Suggesting Matopos may have also been interpreted as an attempt to revoke the nostalgia of Ndebele state whose hegemony had a lot of influence in Mashona speaking areas.

These differences probably explain why the NDP experienced a minor split which saw Michael Mawema who was a Shona speaker of Karanga origin leaving with other Shona members to form Zimbabwe National Party (ZNP) (Ndlovu-Gastheni 2009:114). This became the first political party to officially use the name Zimbabwe and Mawema is credited for coining the name Zimbabwe (Ndlovu-Gastheni 2009:114). Even though the split did not affect NDP that much, because Nkomo the party president quickly replaced the Shona members by promoting more Shonas into higher positions within NDP, the point had already been made. Maybe to pacify the

Shona who happened to be the majority in the country (they are still the majority as they consist of 80 per cent of population) the NDP later adopted the name Zimbabwe. When NDP was banned in 1961, it rejuvenated itself and remerged the same year under a new name Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) and still under the leadership of Nkomo. However, it soon became clear that whatever the kind “unity” that could be forged, it only served as a band-aid, which only covered deep wounds and was *prima facie* in terms of real inter-ethnic relations; ethnicity was now a problem of tribalism.

Given this background, it is not surprising that the “unity” in ZAPU was short lived as the party faced what Ndlovu-Gatsheni described as “the grand split of 1963” (2009:114). The 1963 split saw Shona speakers forming a rival party Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) thereby leaving ZAPU mainly under the control of an Ndebele-Kalanga alliance. After the split members from both parties made frantic efforts to deny that ethnicity was part of the problem. The publicly mentioned reasons for the split were mostly attributed to the problem of Nkomo’s style of leadership and the division and confusions associated with establishing a government in exile. These seem to be real issues to the conflict but when the split eventually occurred, it followed the existing Shona-Ndebele ethnic fault lines and that cannot be explained by mere coincidence.

Msindo has argued that ethnicity is not always a divisive force because it can actually be a unifying force at times and further claims that prior to 1960s ethnicity was positive force as it was used to mobilise mass support for nationalism (Msindo 2007:269). This argument is true to an extent, but it must be viewed with some degree of caution. Although ethnicity played a positive role, this does not rule out the possibility of the secret or hidden ambitions by the ethnic leaders to use the ethnic cleavages as a mobilisation tool and a launch pad for support in order to gain political power. It was very easy for ethnic organisations to become tribal organisations because within an ethnic group there are a subtle element of *othering others*, which sometimes happen subconsciously. The public transcript for ethnic organisations hardly exhibit sinister intentions at all and this was done in order to gain acceptance or to hoodwink the public, but the backstage or the hidden transcript exhibit some tribal agendas.

The changes in the 1960s, which saw ethnicity becoming divisive a force, were not sudden or unexpectedly; they were rather a culmination of several activities and processes, which merely saw the backstage transcript becoming public. What made this inevitable was that ethnicity had long reached the untenable phase of tribalism despite all the efforts to sweep it under the carpet. The situation was further exacerbated by the salient issue of power and Muzondidya, Ndlovu-Gatsheni captured this well, when they indicated that ethnic cleavages were accentuated by leadership positioning for the takeover of the state and that made ethnicity a functional instrument (2007:280).,

The formation of ZAPU had marked a shift in nationalist politics where nationalists began to feel that nonviolence against the colonial state was not working. The nationalist had come to a position that only violence in the form of a war could extricate them from colonial bondage and this marked the radicalisation and the hardening of nationalism and increased use of violence. This added another layer of violence to the already violent situation, however, the danger of using violence as an instrument of attaining an objective is that that violence will not be limited to the outside enemy alone because even internal enemies could be subjected violence. The split of ZAPU that led to the formation of ZANU saw serious violence pitting the former allies and supporters from both sides were killed and maimed in the internecine violence (Chung 2003:60). Chung further claims that the violence was instigated by ZAPU, who were using a slogan which demanded that it is essential to destroy the “snake inside the house”, meaning ZANU before destroying “the snake outside” meaning the colonial settler regime of Ian Smith (Chung 2003:60). Sons of the soil were now confirmed Sons of Segregation.

Because of the rivalry and violence between ZAPU and ZANU, the colonial state seized this as opportunity to worsen and deepen ethnic divisions using its agents to stir more trouble, confusion, and attacks. “White agents, with their faces painted black, entered the townships to burn the houses political activists. Very cleverly, the Smith regime escaped the blame, while the two nationalists blamed each other” (Chung 2003:60). This violence was used by the colonial state as a convenient smoke screen to ban the two parties and arrest the nationalist’s leaders. It must be mentioned that both parties continued to make “cosmetic” and futile efforts to strike

ethnic balance by including “all” ethnic groups to create a national appeal but still this was too little too late as divisions were very clear. This can be substantiated by the fact that tribalism continued to haunt the parties and ZAPU had to experience a second split in 1970, which saw some of its Shona leaders and supporters crossing the floor to join the rival ZANU, while others formed another splinter party Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe (FROLIZI). Nkomo in his biography admitted the split in ZAPU was largely due to tribalism motivations (Nkomo 2001:117).

The two sides ZAPU and ZANU eventually fought the war against colonial settler control as different entities. ZANU and guerrillas Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA) was based in Mozambique while ZAPU and its guerrillas (Zimbabwe People’s Liberation Army (ZIPRA) was based in Zambia. Zane’s guerrillas operated in Shona speaking areas and its recruits were mostly Shona speaking, likewise ZAPU’s guerrillas operated in Ndebele speaking areas and their recruits were mostly drawn from Ndebele speakers. This worsened the divisions as now each group was representing each particular ethnic group even though each party continued to make frantic efforts to co-opt up few faces from the *other* ethnic group to gain national appeal. At one moment in 1975, efforts were made by Presidents Samora Machel and Julius Nyerere to join the two forces under an umbrella military wing – the Zimbabwe People’s Army. However, these efforts ended tragically after the two sides exchanged fire at Mgagao and Morogoro military camps in 1976 in Tanzania, leading to the death of several recruits; these clashes were motivated by tribalism (Muchemwa *et al* 2013:6). Bhebe has indicated that, “the reason was very simple. These young men and women were trained to hate each other by their leaders, who wanted the separate existence for their parties” (Bhebe 2004:256).

This effectively dented the efforts to rejoin the ZAPU and ZANU. The leaders of the parties only forged a loose “unity” arrangement under the banner of Patriotic Front later in 1976 where they collaborated at diplomatic level and in the negotiation process with the settler regime. ZANU became Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and ZAPU became Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African People’s Union (PF ZAPU). This was apparently due to pressure from African leaders who were providing logistical support, were concerned by these divisions, and therefore demanded unity. Otherwise, in reality there was nothing patriotic about

the arrangement in as far as unity and mutual understanding were concerned. Perhaps the only patriotic aspect was only in as far as fighting the colonial settler regime was concerned. This could be explained by the divisions on the idea of joint participation in the elections, which brought independence in 1980.

The Lancaster House negotiations were a culmination the war that had gravitated to unprecedented levels and the pressure from the international community. This saw the newly elected government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in Britain presiding over the negotiations between the nationalists and the colonial settler regime. PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF jointly negotiated as the Patriotic Front and when everything had been concluded with a ceasefire agreement signed and a transitional road map in place, the next question was on how to contest in the upcoming elections (Nkomo 1984:219). This generated a lot of debate and there was lobbying by moderates from both parties who advocated for a unity that would see the parties re-uniting and contesting elections as one entity under the banner of Patriotic Front. Joshua Nkomo and PF-ZAPU supported the idea of joint participation, but unfortunately, this enthusiasm was not shared by many ZANU-PF. Radicals elements within ZANU-PF were convinced that they did not need PF-ZAPU to win the elections. The basis of the argument emanated from the fact that ZANU-PF's guerrillas (ZANLA) were mostly Shona speaking and had operated in Shona speaking areas. Since the Shona made up 80 per cent of the total population of blacks, simple mathematical projections gave ZANU-PF the majority, given that people were likely going to vote on ethnic lines (Chung 2003:249)

To Chung, “despite efforts by ZANU-PF to convince everyone that it represented the Ndebele as well as the Shona, and by PF-ZAPU that it represented the Shona as well as the Ndebele, in fact the population was poised to vote ethnically” (2003:253). Above all, ZANU-PF viewed itself as the major contributor to the success of the liberation struggle and it therefore belittled the liberation efforts by PF-ZAPU because its support was largely coming from the Ndebele speaking who constituted 20 per cent of the black population. Hence, by participating jointly, the feeling in ZANU-PF was that PF-ZAPU would “unduly” benefit from ZANU-PF's efforts (In fact ZANU-PF believed it played a more pivotal role than PF ZAPU). The failure of the joint election endeavour clearly demonstrated three things, firstly that animosity and

mistrust were still high if not worse between the Shona and the Ndebele, and the formation of a Patriotic Front had done nothing to address the rift. Secondly, it manifested that the liberation was not only against the colonial settler regime, there was a silent war between the two ethnic groups in terms of who would emerge triumphant in new Zimbabwe. Finally, it also exposed that new nation was going to be born out of polarised groups who had no mutual respect for each other.

As predicted by the radicals within ZANU-PF it won the majority in the elections, which were held in February 1980. Out of 80 seats contested by blacks ZANU-PF got 57 seats and PF-ZAPU 20 seats. The first government of new Zimbabwe would come from ZANU-PF. The victory by ZANU was not only celebrated as victory for independence against the colonial regime, it was also regarded as Shona victory against the Ndebele. "Rather than nationalism and the armed struggle giving birth to common national identity, it became a terrain of politics of tribalism and fragmentation of the supporters of ZAPU and ZANU as though they were not of the same country "(Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009:87).

Masunungure captured well the dilemma, which faced new Zimbabwe when he said:

*What was in dispute, and for which the nationalist and the settler colonial regime were fighting each other was the question of who would control the state. The 1979 Lancaster House Constitution answered that question only partially by allocating control of the state to the black majority. However, it did not answer the question of who among the blacks would control the state and its destiny. This question Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF sought to settle by deciding to contest the February 1980 elections separately from PF-ZAPU and thus settling the question, once and for all, of who had the majority support in the country and therefore who is entitled to rule it. ZANU-PF emerged winner by capturing 63% of the black vote while ZAPU was second with 24%. (2007:4).*

## **4.5 Summary**

There is no simple way of describing Shona and Ndebele relations from the period the Ndebele arrived on the Zimbabwean plateau in 1839 up to the attainment of independence in 1980. However, what seems to be emerging is the fact that the relationship was multifaceted and complex, characterised by love-hate relationship traits at times. During the pre-colonial period 1839-1889 the Shona are mostly portrayed as victims and in the colonial period 1890-1980 both groups became

victims of the colonial system. The relationship had its tumultuous moments and sometimes cordial. Mistrust, suspicions and misunderstanding have been dominating themes that have also been noted in the relationship and at times exhibiting traits of hatred. The arrival of the Ndebele witnessed not just the consolidation of Khumalo aristocrats over the Ndebele state, but also the Ndebele hegemony over many Shona groups but not all of them. This was witnessed using coercion and consent where balancing the two was not easy as in many instances coercion outweighed consent. This resulted in some kind of co-existence, which was predicated on mistrust and fear, patron and client relationship. Colonialism introduced a new dispensation, which reduced both groups into colonial subjects. This created some “unity” of some sort as both sides confronted the common enemy but still the colonial environment created cutthroat competition as both groups struggled to survive. This saw ethnicity acting as a rallying point to unify people through mass mobilisation; however, beneath these efforts were hidden ambitions plotting and counter plotting by both groups in the struggle to outwit each other. The split of ZAPU in 1963 and the ethnic internecine rivalry, which emerged thereafter, evidenced this struggle. These divisions further deepened as the two sides fought against colonial rule separately and contested elections separately as well. The victory by ZANU-PF was not just victory against colonial rule; it was also a Shona victory against Ndebele. Thus, new Zimbabwe was born out of fragmented nationalists whose ethnic relationship was devoid of true mutual respect and understanding of each other. This situation made peace building and nation building a delicate and daunting task as shall be seen in the next chapter, which analyses the post-independence Shona and Ndebele relations.

## **CHAPTER 5: SHONA AND NDEBELE RELATIONS AFTER 1980**

*The animosity between the two major ethnic groups in Zimbabwe, the Ndebele and the Shona, is so real and so strong it can almost choke you to death. Be it at church, at the workplace, in educational institutions, in social and entertainment circles, in the media, in the political arena, at sports and arts or in the streets you can feel, touch, and smell it. (Maphosa 2011:6).*

### **5.1 Introduction**

The post-colonial Shona and Ndebele relations are largely a by-product of past developments that occurred in the pre-colonial and colonial epochs, particularly the events in the struggle for independence. This has proven that the struggle for independence was perhaps not only a struggle against colonial rule, but it was also an ethnic struggle as groups fought to outwit each other. The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss the nature of post-colonial Shona and Ndebele relations. The chapter will argue that the independence euphoria and honeymoon quickly came to an end due to challenges linked to mistrust, disengagement, and suspicions, which had its origins in history. These challenges from the past permeated into the post-colonial dispensation, but this time with devastating consequences. Instead of embarking on genuine peace building and nation building, the new government concentrated its efforts on state building using violence as an instrument of choice against “the enemies of state”. Violence worsened the already existing culture of violence and it had devastating consequences in terms ethnic polarisation. Despite, signing a “Unity” Accord, which stopped the pogroms, suspicions, and mistrust remained unabated.

### **5.2 A short honeymoon: Ethnic polarisation after independence**

Independence became a short honeymoon as the ramifications of ethnic mistrust reach its climax. This resulted into what Stauffer described as the “fatal fusion of ethnic hatred” (2009:143). The fusion can be attributed to the failure by nationalists to deal head-on with the problem of ethnic hatred which had been masked by the



pretensions of unity under the banner of the Patriotic Front. Independence brought so much pomp and fanfare among many Zimbabweans who had endured the fierce and gruesome war in which more than 30 000 lives had been lost (Ellert 1989:42). The colonial government of Ian Smith had resorted to brutal and violent acts to defend minority rule from the imminent black majority rule. In response, the nationalists had in turn used violence in an effort to extricate themselves from the colonial yoke. As ZANU-PF celebrated its victory, PF-ZAPU was in a predicament, it felt cheated by independence, which seemed to be signifying Ndebele defeat by triumphant Shona. Under this independence exhilaration the newly elected ZANU-PF government under the leadership of the then Prime Minister Robert Mugabe announced its much-publicised policy of reconciliation. Mugabe announced that:

*If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and an ally with the same national interests, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you. Is it not folly, therefore, in these circumstances that anybody should revive the wounds and grievances of the past? The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten.* (Huyse 2003:37).

This announcement and policy of reconciliation and the general amnesty, which followed it, were hailed as epitome humanity and an unexpected gesture in which an olive branch was extended to former adversaries. However, underneath this high-sounding statesmanlike statement, a closer view to it reveals two key issues, firstly that this statement seems to be a declaration, and is based on a top-down style of doing things. Secondly, this was blanket reconciliation, which promotes the concept of letting bygones be bygones, and therefore it seems tantamount to promoting national amnesia. It is under this spirit of “reconciliation” and “unity” that the first cabinet of the new government was made up of ministers from not only ZANU-PF, which had won elections, but it also incorporated members from PF-ZAPU, and the Rhodesia Front (RF) party, which represented the interests of the former colonial regime. In essence, this was a coalition government or a Government of National Unity (GNU).

This arrangement seemed perfect on paper, as it appeared to entail virtues of peace building and nation building, which were predicated on inclusiveness. Unfortunately, in reality this new arrangement was a façade full of pretensions, which concealed

lack of ethnic cohesion and sincerity in it. More importantly, the newly born country suffered from ethnic fissures that had developed during pre-colonial and colonial historical interludes and reached its climax in the final phases of the liberation struggle (Lindgren 2005:144). It seems as if the blanket amnesty and reconciliation approach, which was based on top-down strategy, had only addressed the black and white binary leaving out the ethnic polarisation issues unaddressed (Mlambo 2010:38). Although PF-ZAPU eventually joined the new government it had reservations on the results of the elections especially with regards to what it cited as irregularities that gave ZANU-PF an unfair advantage (Chung 2006:192). Under the new cabinet, Joshua Nkomo was offered the post of the President (apparently the post was just titular and ceremonial only without any executive powers as these were vested in the office of the Prime Minister) and he refused preferring something that would allow him to participate actively in the actual business of running the country (Nkomo 1984:158). He then accepted the Home Affairs portfolio, was not forgiven by the hawks and radicals in ZANU-PF, who viewed this as an attempt to belittle ZANU-PF victory and Shona triumph.

The national coalition government arrangement suffered from what Ndlovu-Gatsheni referred as Shona triumphalism, in which the Shona and ZANU-PF in particular regarded itself as a senior partner in the government (2009:30). This meant that the GNU had a tokenism largely, as PF-ZAPU was regarded as junior partner destined to play a secondary role to ZANU-PF. It was not surprising that this undermined and humiliated PF-ZAPU in many ways and this was exacerbated by brazen and deliberate efforts to downplay and downgrade the role played PF-ZAPU in the liberation struggle (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2011:3). Naturally, this generated resentment, frustration, and anger on the part PF-ZAPU and Ndebele speakers who now were clearly being reduced into second-class citizens in every sphere. The independence euphoria was fast turning into a long nightmare. However, this was just a tip of the iceberg, because real trouble had already started during in the Assembly Points and it worsened during the re-integration exercise of former combatants to create a unified Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA).

### **5.3 Assembly Points violence and clashes between ZANLA and ZIPRA combatants**

In accordance to the terms of the roadmap agreed at the Lancaster House negotiations combatants from both ZANLA and ZIPRA were expected to turn up to the designated Assembly Points. These assembly points were essentially the first stage in the DDR process, which was supposed to continue soon after independence. Unfortunately, the disarmament aspect under the terms of Lancaster agreement bizarrely allowed each combatant to keep his or her personal weapon while inside the Assembly Points. Therefore in the Assembly Points combatants were armed and to make matters worse both sides had sizable arms caches where they could access more weapons if need arises. All this was attributed by the fragile peace, which came because of mistrust of each other and the peace process

Given such a scenario, it was very clear that placing ZIPRA and ZANLA combatants within proximity of each other would be a recipe for disaster. Unfortunately, this is what happened, particularly in two volatile Assembly Points at Entumbane in Bulawayo and in Chitungwiza near Harare, where ZIPRA and ZANLA camps were adjacent to each other and combatants were free to go in and out of the camps. Thus, contact and clashes between the two groups became inevitable with a potential for devastating consequences as Bhebe noted that, “the young men and women were trained to hate each other” (2004:256). It is not clear what really sparked the violence because up to now both sides point fingers at each as expected, but given the history of antagonism between the two parties and the tension which was existing even at cabinet level “the smallest, most trivial matters were quickly translated into party affiliations “ (White 2007:623). Alexander et al concur with White when they pointed out that “fighting had often been set off by fairly minor incidents - an argument, a fist fight - but these escalated rapidly, revealing a certain amount of preparedness on both sides, as well as pervasiveness of fear and tension” (2000:187). There were also inflammatory statements, mostly by the ZANU-PF leadership attacking PF-ZAPU, which also worsened the situation. Enos Nkala who was the then Minister of Home Affairs was quoted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni at one point saying:

*We want to wipe out ZAPU leadership. You have only seen the warning lights. We haven't yet reached full blast...the murderous organisation and its murderous leadership must be hit so hard that it doesn't feel obliged to do the things it has been doing. (2011:27).*

It is not surprising that ZANLA and ZIPRA exchanged fire on nine and 10 November 1980 leading to the death more than 300 people (CCJP 1997:3). Alexander *et al* argue that these violent encounters “had roots in the clashes between party cadres (many of whom later became guerrillas) at the time of ZANU’s split from ZAPU in 1963, the massacres—largely of ZIPRA guerrillas in Tanzanian camps in 1976” (2000:185). Therefore, the exchange of fire scenes in Assembly Points were reminiscent of what had happened earlier in Tanzania as well in Zambia and Mozambique during the struggle when attempts had been made to unify the ZIPRA and ZANLA forces

The sporadic outbreak of violence in Assembly Points like Ntabazinduna, Connemara, Gwaai, Chitungwiza, and Entumbane began to spread throughout the country. This triggered a chain of events, which set into motion what eventually led to the Gukurahundi. Gukurahundi was an anti-dissident military operation carried out between 1982 and 1987 mainly by the fifth Brigade. During the operation thousands of Ndebele, speaking civilians in Matabeleland and Midlands’s areas were killed in the process (CCJP 1997). Gukurahundi in Shona language means the early rain that washes away the chaff and dirt before the spring rains (Eppel 2008). As mentioned earlier the mistrust and suspicions had become unbearable and these have been in existence for years but this time it had reached unprecedented levels where even at government level PF-ZAPU ministers faced virulent verbal attacks from their ZANU-PF counterparts who accused them of instigating the violence in the Assembly points and also of “failing to control their men” (White 2007:624). The concept of Security Dilemma could explain the accusations and counter accusations. The concept of Security Dilemma was popularised by a British historian Hebert Butterfield and the American political scientist John Herz.

In simple terms a Security Dilemma concept explains a conflict scenario where one party in its effort to increase its security provokes a reaction from the other party to the conflict that in essence decreases the security of the first party (Roe 2005:1). The end result is a process of action and reaction by the two parties in which each

side's behaviour, utterances, action and inaction will be seen as a threatening the other party and vice versa (Roe 2005:2). Thus, whether real or imagined the perceptions and misperceptions generated from this will exacerbate the feelings of insecurity, which further heightens more perceptions and misperceptions. The net effect of all this is total disengagement and eventually leading to fusion and violent confrontation. In the case of Zimbabwe, mistrust and suspicions had generated a Security Dilemma for both ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU. ZANU-PF viewed PF-ZAPU as threat to its endeavour towards supremacy and vice versa and this was manifested by accusations and counter accusations of each other. On one hand, ZANU-PF believed that ZIPRA forces wanted to take over political control of the country using violence. On the other hand PF-ZAPU believed that ZANU-PF had manipulated the elections and had intentions to establish a Shona hegemony through a one party state and therefore its 1980 election victory was a farce and questionable (Chung 2003:147). To PF-ZAPU,

*...there was outright and unapologetic building of the state as a Zanunised and Shonanised political formation where other political formations like PF ZAPU that drew most of its support from Matabeleland and Midlands regions had no dignified space and Ndebele speaking people were an inconvenience that had to be dealt with.*(Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2011:2).

Thus, when the violence increased, particularly in the form of a military "mutiny" where former ZIPRA guerrillas attempted to take over Bulawayo in January 1981, it was clear that the security dilemma had reached a point of no return (White 2007:625). This led to the eventual dismissal of PF-ZAPU cabinet ministers, which had started earlier on. The already bad situation was now worse. Essentially, everything was being politicised and conditioned with ethnicity at the same time as the struggle for supremacy had reached its climax. The DDR process and efforts by the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT), which sought to integrate former combatants into a single, faced the same challenges. There were genuine suspicions of favouritism and fears by ZIPRA that its members were being targeted and with some "disappearing" without trace. There was indeed evidence that Shona people from former ZANLA were receiving preferential treatment and they used every opportunity possible to humiliate the Ndebele and ZIPRA. This led to desertions by ZIPRA cadres from the army where some members were labelled 'dissidents for engaging in violence to show their frustration The dissidents issue is

also a debatable issue and in some quarters, some believed these were fictitious people created to justify condemnation of PF-ZAPU, which was already in motion. There is also evidence, which suggest that dissident groups called Super ZAPU were connected to the Apartheid government of South Africa. The following is the classification of dissidents who operated in Matabeleland according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008:28).

- The South African sponsored Super ZAPU who intended to destabilise Zimbabwe and cause security panic.
- The genuine ex-ZIPRA combatants who did not agree with the Lancaster House Agreement and who saw it as a sell-out on the part of the Patriotic Front leadership
- Ex-ZIPRA who joined the ZNA and defected because of ill-treatment and threats to their lives
- Demobilised ex-ZIPRA combatants who became dissidents because harassment by the Fifth Brigade.
- Ex-ZIPRA combatants who became dissidents because of the treatment of their war time commanders and ZAPU leadership and
- Ndebele youth took advantage of the situation to lead a life of banditry.

Whichever way these dissidents came into existence, their diverse backgrounds, and motivations simply demonstrates a fragile and complex security situation, which needed a cautious approach and not hasty decisions. More importantly, dissidents were mostly small groups of disgruntled individuals who engaged in violence and killing of innocent citizens in attacks which were not so well co-ordinated. The point here is not to generate a scorecard on who did the most damage to whom because that can be a subject of other future research by historians. The important point to understand here is why things had taken such an ugly turn to a young nation which had so much promise was that “violence was in a way symptomatic of the failure of a smooth blending of major ethnicities into a new national identity called Zimbabwe” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008:47)

The most probable reason for the failure “of smooth blending major ethnicities” had been the dearth of genuine engagement and dialogue within the government partners and its citizens. This is typical of most ethnic motivated conflicts, they

characterised by lack of political will to engage each other as each ethnic side will be convinced that it is justified for its actions or inactions. While it is clear that the new state was facing a very complex and delicate situation, it needed patience, restraint, objectivity, and careful handling. Unfortunately, such virtues were non-existent among the conflicting parties as much effort was being exerted towards the struggle for mastery. Ndlovu-Gatsheni captured this well when he said, “our crisis is compounded by the fact that at no time have the people who today carry the identity of Zimbabweans been given an opportunity to participate in any open debate on what type of nation they aspire to live in” (2012:2). The disturbing developments, which heightened insecurity on both sides, were indicative of groups reaping the effects of their long-standing mistrust and suspicions of each other, which prevented dialogue and engagement leading to a security dilemma.

Roe believes that a Security Dilemma is often a false justification, in many situations adversaries tend to amplify an adversary’s hostility yet ignoring the possible threatening character of their own actions and inactions to the other party (2005:vi). This point is also again reiterated by Mbembe who identified what he called “the power of the false” (2002:628), where faulty information and falsehoods create an exaggerated reality which is seen as truth by the parties, largely because there is no open platform for engagement. Lake and Rothschild identifies what they described as information failure where groups misinterpret and misrepresent information for advancing their respective groups agenda (1996:45). When such a situation is set into motion, groups do not take time to listen to each; in fact, they may only listen to each other in order to find ways of twisting words so that they construct an attack or a counter attack.

#### **5.4 Exaggerations unabated and one side blame game**

The combination between the power of the false and a security dilemma sometimes avail incentives to justify the unjustifiable pre-emptive attacks in the name security. While such measures would be justified in the name of security, in reality it increases insecurity among the concerned groups. The violence and intimidation along ethnic lines within ZNA led to the formation of renegades labelled “dissidents”. In response, government justified the existence of a Brigade whose purpose was to deal with the “dissidents”. The formation of the North Korean trained fifth Brigade (the idea of

forming such a Brigade preceded the existence of dissidents) had generated a lot of controversy and debate within new government. Of major concern to PF-ZAPU was the fact that composition comprised of mostly Shona and former ZANLA combatants and it existed outside the normal hierarchy of the army as it reported directly to the Prime Minister. This clearly demonstrated not only the failure of DDR but also utmost ethnicisation of the army. PF ZAPU's concerns were probably justified because the real intentions for such a Brigade were clear but very suspicious given the existing ethnic tensions. The Brigade had serious ethnic undertones and so were dissidents and the stage was already set for a clash. However, exaggerations in the name of the power of the false played a major role in fomenting the conflict and one major question that has been asked is that if dissidents indeed existed was the government's response proportional to the threat posed by dissidents? Alternatively, was the threat posed by dissidents real or imagined?

Perhaps these questions were never fully interrogated by those in government as suspicions and distrust and disengagement reigned supreme. Of major concern was how all the dissidents were being linked directly linked to PF-ZAPU and secondly they were all defined as Ndebele believed to be connected to Nkomo in particular and his opponents in ZANU-PF derogatorily changed his title from "Father of Zimbabwe" to "Father of dissidents". In fact by implication all PF ZAPU followers and Ndebele speaking people in particular were being connected to the dissidents one way or the other and it also happened that the dissidents were operating in Ndebele speaking regions (Lindgren 2001:160). To government and the Shona elites who served in it, Matabeleland and every person who spoke Ndebele language became potential dissidents or supporters of dissidents. "ZANU-PF politicians argued that dissidents were dominated by ZIPRA and motivated by disaffection over ZAPU's electoral defeat" (Alexander *et al* 2000:185).

Thus, clearly the government was acting out of suspicions and myths by criminalising Ndebele speakers and all former ex-ZIPRA combatants as dissidents. (Stauffer 2009:114). The failure by government to be objective and transparent in handling the unfolding crisis only served to make matters worse as people were prevented from understanding what was actually happening; rumours, myths and half-truths were now influencing policy. Government churned out propaganda



demonising its adversaries. Every form of violence and insecurity linked to dissidents. This was the situation in February 1982 when the country was informed that arms caches had been “discovered” PF-ZAPU farms and properties in Dande, Mushumbi pools, Gwaai River, Ascot and Woody Glenn (Mnangagwa 1989:237). To government this “confirmed” that PF-ZAPU was planning subversive acts with the intention of taking over the country using illegal means. “Mugabe treated the caches as definitive proof that ZAPU had always been planning a coup, that it had held back forces and cached weapons in a final struggle to overthrow a ZANU-PF government” ( Alexander *et al* 2000:188). This made South Africa’s involvement in this Shona and Ndebele conflict through an operation code named “Operation Drama” (which is discussed below) very successful (Alexander *et al* 2000:189).

#### **5.4.1 South Africa’s role and influence**

The end of colonial and minority rule in Rhodesia and creation of Zimbabwe made South Africa’s Apartheid government to feel apprehensive and awkward about its own situation. South African policy makers believed that “communist enemies” whose onslaught could affect its stability and survival of its minority government now surrounded them. Therefore, South African policy makers believed that their political survival could only be guaranteed if the entire Southern African region was made unstable. There were possible two reasons for this line of thinking, firstly if African governments in Southern Africa were unstable, it could paint a negative picture of the concept majority rule and independence and divert international attention from South African affairs. Secondly, being surrounded by unstable African governments made them less likely to render material and logistical support to ANC and its Umkonto weSizwe military wing, which was a thorn in the flesh to South African government. Thus, a conflict between the Shona and Ndebele could equally serve that agenda well and that could maybe punish PF-ZAPU because earlier during the 1960s and 1970s the alliance between ZIPRA and African National Congress (ANC) armed wing Umkonto weSizwe had presented problems to South Africa.

There is irrefutable evidence that South Africa recruited disgruntled Ndebele speakers and created armed dissidents who called themselves Super ZAPU insurgents who went around terrorising people in the name of PF-ZAPU (Alexander 2000:189). The actual size of this group will never be known but it served well its

purpose of creating confusion and worsening “the dissident problem” because this happened at time when ex-ZIPRA members were defecting from the ZNA in large numbers. South Africa was also working with the few whites who had remained serving in Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) in new Zimbabwe, some of these whites were now double agents and new evidence reveal that they played a role in “unearthing arms caches” in PF-ZAPU properties. Therefore, there is a possibility that the double agents had a role in influencing and exacerbating a situation, which was already bad in terms of Ndebele and Shona relations to promote further divisions.

Arms caches were a final straw, which ended the fragile power sharing arrangement as witnessed by the dismissal of PF-ZAPU from cabinet. The issue of arms cache reveals the danger, which emanates from a security dilemma. While it was a well known that both ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU had arms caches, it became hot issue when PF-ZAPU’s arms were discovered. In fact, the manner in which government responded has made some observers to believe that the event may have been stage managed to justify an attack on PF-ZAPU and its supporters. In fact in later years similar events happened government opponents, arms of war were alleged to have been found leading to their arrest and prosecution and the courts failed to prove the case.

The arms cache saga was followed by the arrest of many PF-ZAPU senior officials including Dumiso Dabengwa and Lookout Masuku who were the most senior ZIPRA leaders. Many more Ndebele speakers defected from the newly formed ZNA citing harassment and a spate of disappearances of their colleagues from the army and Joshua Nkomo the leader ZAPU had to flee the country. Government deployed fifth Brigade in January 1983 purportedly to deal with the problem of dissidents in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. Ndlovu-Gatsheni believes that the response by government to this unfolding crisis was not only disastrous to the nation building agenda; it was also disastrous to ethnic relations as well (2008:16). It also demonstrated government’s obsession with state security which it probably regarded as more important than nation building (Masunungure 2007:4). The government conveniently manipulated the situation to “settle old scores” from the past.

The deployment of a Shona speaking Brigade in Ndebele speaking areas clearly made the conflict to be between the Shona and the Ndebele (Lindgren 2004:202). This was because when the Ndebele speakers witnessed their relatives being maimed killed, harassed and tormented, to them it was not just a matter soldiers doing that, it was the Shona who were doing that to them (Yap 2001:16). The ruthlessness and cruelty which was unleashed especially on the Ndebele civilians led to the death of an estimated 20 000 people. The 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade justified its violence in explicitly tribal and political terms (Alexander *et al* 2000:192) this made Ndebele speakers to hate the Shona because they associated them with death and harassment, which they witnessed being unleashed on them (Lindgren 2005:158).

To Ndlovu-Gatsheni, what started as a mission to stamp out dissidents became from start to finish an conditioned with ethnicity crusade to make Ndebele account for the nineteenth century raids on the Shona (2011:5).The connection between the animosity generated by the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ndebele raids against the Shona and the Fifth Brigade violence cannot be ruled out. Without trying to justify the Fifth Brigade violence in any way, it is possible that the 19<sup>th</sup> century raids acted as a humiliation to the Shona and probably that this had been passed on through intergenerational transmission. In research carried out by Alexander *et al*, some of the interviews recorded confirmed that Fifth Brigade members mentioned the 19<sup>th</sup> century attacks. For example, 'The child of snake is a snake...your forefathers ate our cattle-where are they? You have been killing our forefathers, you Mandebele.' (2000:222)

Humiliation "involves feelings of shame and disgrace as well helplessness in the face of abuse strong at the hands of a stronger party" (Jones 2006:268). Humiliation has been noted in influencing human behaviour towards aggression, murder, and genocide. In fact recent cases of genocide have demonstrated that humiliation and the need to recover, regain self-respect and revenge has been a vital motivating behaviour of perpetrators (Jones 2006:269). Examples include the Nazis who rose to power and prominence by manipulating what they termed national humiliation and generated revengefulness against former tormentors. The Tutsis can trace Rwanda genocide of 1994 to the past humiliation of Hutus. Thus, Hutu *genocidaires* were descendants of humiliated Hutus. In Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic as a nationalistic rallying point used the humiliation of the Serbians in the battle of Kosovo

in 1389 six hundred years later in 1989 to justify violence and genocide in the name of restoring Serbian pride and power. Stauffer noted what he termed inter-generational transmission of antagonism, which may help to explain the incarnation of animosities, which became the Gukurahundi violence (Stauffer 2009:151).

There was also a clear political agenda in the operation of targeting Matabeleland and Midland provinces, this is because these were the PF-ZAPU strongholds, in fact, it was the only strongest contender to ZANU-PF's hegemony project. Thus, one cannot rule out that ZANU-PF wanted to neutralise the political threat posed by PF-ZAPU as demonstrated by its agenda for a one party state (even within the Unity Accord the one party state agenda is very clear). This demonstrated lack tolerance and refusal to embrace plurality on the part of ZANU- PF, especially if that plurality entails a strong contender to its power. In fact, Vambe believes that the reaction by ZANU-PF in handling the dissident problem is very typical of ZANU-PF each time when it feels that its power is under serious threat and he therefore does not rule the possibility that a similar kind of response could have been witnessed had the dissident threat emanated from Mashonaland provinces (2012:282). In essence, there were other contributing factors to the violence in Matabeleland besides ethnicity.

Vambe gives credence to his analysis by tracing the trends of state violence especially in the June 2008 election whose prevalence was witnessed in Mashonaland provinces where ZANU-PF faced stiff competition from the opposition party in its formerly traditional strongholds (2008:26). Indeed, there were other factors to the conflict besides ethnicity. This view is important in terms of widening the horizon of analysis, but tends to downplay the tribalism aspect in the equation, yet when ethnicity becomes tribalism like in Zimbabwe; it means that every factor to an issue will be seen through the prism of tribalism. It also means that addressing those factors outside tribalism matrix will be difficult because tribalism would already have diluted relations and influenced perceptions. This ultimately means that relationships and tribalism issues must be discussed in conjunction with other factors. Because when a group from a particular region, speaking a specific language grotesquely target and ruthlessly attack a group from another specific

region speaking a particular language, any political agenda or factors in that conflict will be superseded by the ethnic dimension, especially in the eyes of the victims.

In any case, it was not so obvious that being Ndebele meant that one automatically supported PF-ZAPU, however, during the period of this violence from 1983 to 1987, being Ndebele, in Matabeleland or Midlands could mean life or death of some individuals it means the ethnic dimension cannot underestimated. Given this dimension, it was not surprising that “dissidents” also attacked and killed Shona civilians and white farmers in retaliation (CCJP 1997:5). The attacks by dissidents were at times directed also to Ndebele civilians, especially in situations where the civilians they were alleged to have refused to co-operate with the dissidents (CCJP 1997:12). In other words, the dissidents expected some level of co-operation from civilians and this placed innocent civilians in the crossfire from the dissidents and the 5th Brigade.

In the period towards the elections of 1985 and its aftermath, more violence continued along ethno-political lines even in areas outside Matabeleland. This include areas such Harare, where suspected ZAPU supporters and Ndebele speakers were openly harassed and evicted from their properties with such properties being temporarily taken over ZANU PF connected individuals.

*The actions of the Fifth Brigade hardened ethnic prejudice and created a strong link between ethnicity and political affiliation. The highly politicised military force alienated the Matabeleland region from the state...it created a perception that the military as a Shona dominated designed to intimidate and kill the Ndebele. Their operations were thus crucial in amplifying both a political and ethnic interpretation of violence. (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003: 26).*

## **5.5 The role played by Shona civilians**

When large-scale violence and killings takes place especially that of an ethnic or genocide nature, the role played by the masses always comes under spotlight. This was the situation in Germany after the Holocaust and in Rwanda after the genocide. Likewise, questions have been asked in terms of the actual role that the Shona masses played in the violence that took place against the Ndebele. Such questions are important because they have a bearing to the future peace building and reconciliation efforts. The fact that the group, which was responsible for the violence, was largely Shona has unfortunately made the Shona people appear like

accomplices, especially from the perspective of victims (Lindgren 2005:158). Did the Shona partake in the violence? The majority of the Shona masses were not directly involved in the violence and killings. Unlike in Rwanda where thousands of the Hutu majority worked hand in hand with government militias in the killing of Tutsi minority and moderate Hutus (Mamdani 2001). In Zimbabwe, such a direct connection between the state actors and violence against the Ndebele people is not clear and it may be an interesting subject of future research. This, however, does not rule out the possibility of some Shona people who might have secretly supported or even celebrated the violence against the Ndebele given the past acrimony, which characterise the violence. Hence, the Shona in general have moral guilt over Matabeleland that they were indirect beneficiaries of the violence. In the same vein, some Shona people were directly affected by the violence as some had relatives among the Ndebele people.

Unfortunately, some of the recent comments in the media demonstrate hate, bitterness and anger as some Ndebele speakers seem to believe that all the Shona people were in complicity and therefore responsible for the violence. Such comments are quite understandable given the manner in which the completely dissident affair was handled. Such comments and perceptions were revealed by the findings by Lindgren who noted that the Ndebele speaking people in Matabeleland believe that the Shona and their government were responsible for the killing of the Ndebele people in Matabeleland (2005:158). However, according to one Ndebele social historian, Pathisa Nyathi, the mentality of painting every Shona person with the same brush is not only wrong but unfair as well. "What is happening now is the same as during Gukurahundi where all Ndebele were being accused of being dissidents" (2011:3). That line of thinking created a complex insecurity situation which resulted in a vicious cycle of violence where anger and bitterness can inculcate feelings of revenge and retaliation through inter-generational transfusion of ethnic antagonism (Stauffer 2009:151). When victims take revenge on their former tormentors they will become new perpetrators leading to a cycle of violence whose main characteristic is an ever-escalating cycle of attack and counter attack where victims and perpetrators will be constantly changing roles. This cycle of attack and counter attack is unstoppable if no intervention takes place.

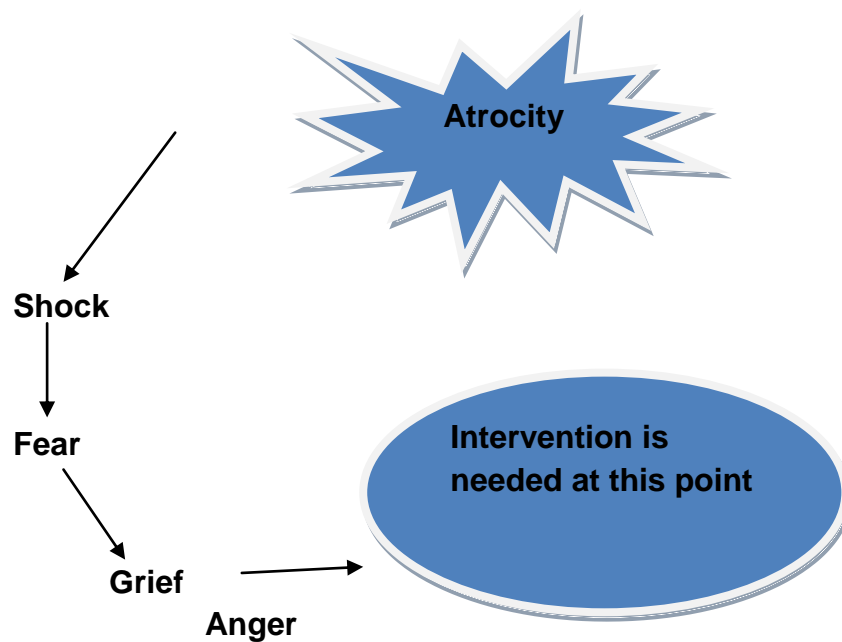
Elworthy and Rifkind illustrate how the cycle of violence works and how important it is to break that cycle of violence before implementing any peace building and reconciliation strategies (2005:44). Without a timely intervention that breaks the cycle, not all efforts in addressing the conflict will yield much result in terms of addressing the animosities, bitterness, revenge, and retaliation in the long term.

**Figure 5.1: The cycle of violence**



Adapted from Elworthy and Rifkind (2005:44)

**Figure 5.2: The need for a timely intervention**



Adapted from Elworthy and Rifkind (2005:45)



The atrocities in Matabeleland continued and so was the general insecurity, which had gripped the country. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), in conjunction with Legal Resources Foundation, became the first organisation to document and expose the atrocities. Feeling the pressure from the civil society and the international attention, which was likely to be drawn to the report, government initiated a commission led by Simplicious Chihambakwe to investigate the atrocities, but unfortunately, when the commission completed its task its findings were never made public. Meanwhile, CCJP and other organisations like the churches encouraged political leaders to stop the violence, find a political solution, and initiate peace talks, which could lead to reconciliation. The unity talks started in 1985 and they were based on series negotiations where ten marathon meetings between PF ZAPU and ZANU PF delegates were held (Chiwewe 1989). PF ZAPU was under the pressure to negotiate as it felt it had no choice because the atrocities against the Ndebele and its supporters had become unbearable. To government, the instability was now affecting its image adversely, thus the chance of getting a political solution was considered good for ZANU PF, and more importantly, it was going to have advantage in the negotiations.

## **5.6 The Unity Accord between PF ZAPU and ZANU PF**

The Unity Accord was signed on December 22 1987 between the leaders of PF ZAPU and ZANU PF. Under the terms of the Accord ZANU PF and PF ZAPU “irrevocably committed themselves to unite under one political party” ZANU PF. The parties also committed to take vigorous steps to eliminate and end insecurity and violence in Matabeleland. Indeed, the atrocities ended in Matabeleland and new government, which attempted to reflect the “new” ZANU PF, was formed and Joshua Nkomo became one of the countries second Vice President following the amendment of the constitution. Todd (2007:235) identified the key ten points, which constituted the Unity Accord, which are as follows:

- ZANU PF and PF ZAPU were irrevocably united under one political party;
- Unity was to be achieved under the name Zimbabwe African Union (Patriotic Front), in short ZAPU PF;
- Comrade Gabriel Mugabe would be the first secretary and President of ZANU PF;

- ZANU PF would have two second secretaries and vice-presidents, who would be appointed by the first secretary and the president;
- ZANU PF would seek to establish a socialist society in Zimbabwe on the guidance of Marxist Leninist principles;
- ZANU PF would seek to establish a one party state;
- ZANU PF would abide by the leadership code;
- The present leadership of PF ZAPU would take immediate steps to end insecurity and violence prevalent in Matabeleland;
- ZANU PF and PF ZAPU would convene respective congresses to give effect to the agreement;
- Comrade Robert Mugabe would be vested with full powers to prepare for the implementation of the agreement and to act in the name and authority of ZANU PF.

Although the Unity Accord has been credited for ending violence and atrocities, it suffered from elitism (Mashingaidze 2005:86). It was an elitist agreement, which left out the majority of the people who had suffered and were still haunted by the violence and atrocities. It was based on a top down on the justification that leaders at times can make decisions on behalf of their people. While this may be so when things are being equal and normal, but not when it comes to matters that involves emotions, pain, grief and sorrow. In such situations, leaders cannot purport or simply think they can act on behalf of their people. This probably explains the Accord being stuck after bringing negative peace, failing to progress towards positive peace: typical of most negotiated settlements. Once the direct violence is over, society tends to assume that it is at peace, this may be peace, but it is negative peace and negative is enough because it requires carefully crafted processes that enable the long haul journey towards peace building and reconciliation to be accomplished.

The Unity Accord seems to have addressed the political aspects the conflict well, where elites accommodated each other in the corridors of power only (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2005:2). This is one fundamental problem of assuming that coming up with a power sharing formulae automatically leads to co-existence (Nadler 2012:128). While it must be admitted creating such a formula is an important step, it is certainly not an end but should act as means to an end. Leaving it like that will be tantamount

to ignoring both the technical and transformational aspects of the peace-building process.

Technical aspects of peace building entail re-building replacing destroyed homes, infrastructure of the victims and addressing economic marginalisation. Transformational peace building focuses on emotional and psychosocial dimension of the conflict, aiming to address damaged relationships. This is a crucial aspect of any peace-building venture and it entails healing, justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation issues. In the case of the Unity Accord, it seems both the technical and transformational aspects of peace building were not well addressed. The blanket amnesty, which followed the signing of the Accord, came in 1988 and it seems to have benefited the perpetrators of violence while leaving victims without any form of redress. Of serious concern was the failure by the Unity Accord to acknowledge or even to mention the Gukurahundi atrocities within the terms of the agreement. Such action or inaction on the part of the negotiating parties to the Unity Accord was tantamount to killing the victims of Gukurahundi twice.

## **5.7 Post Unity Accord Shona and Ndebele relations**

It has been more than twenty-five years since the signing of the Unity Accord and there has not been any direct violence between the Shona and Ndebele. While this was a good development, the same cannot be said when it comes relations and perceptions. At political level the government has been “successful” in portraying a picture of a united nation (Muzondidya and Ndlovu Gatsheni 2007:277), however despite such attempts there certain symptoms that have difficult to ignore over the recent years. Some of these signs have been in the form of a direct repudiation of the Unity Accord, which saw some former PF-ZAPU like Dumiso Dabengwa and the late Thenjiwe Lesabe going back to resuscitate PF-ZAPU. It may interesting to understand why such developments are taking place at this point in time and one of the reason that has been proffered has been the death of Joshua Nkomo in July 1999. Nkomo was a unifying symbol of unity and was very much respected in Matebeleland since he played a very big role in convincing the Ndebele speaking people to accept the Unity Accord. His departure from the political scene reveals that the Ndebele had perhaps only conditionally accepted the Unity Accord out of respect for him hoping for future opportunity to redress. Thus, his departure also gave people

from Matabeleland an opportunity to reflect on their status from the time of the signing of the Unity Accord. This has led to what Ndlovu-Gatsheni described as 'Ndebele particularism' (2008:27).

To Ndlovu-Gatsheni Ndebele particularism “is a product coalescence of grievance and resentment to Shona triumphalism” (2008:28). People can see a lot about Ndebele particularism in the form of expressions in media from Matabeleland. The media is public meeting place where people and discuss issues that reflect society (Habermas 1989). Thus, the media can be used to get fairly good inferences about the mind-set of the society. There is no doubt that this reflects a lot about the Ndebele opinion and perception about their feelings about the situation. This is very important because it is an exposition of real perceptions of Ndebele speaking people. Much of the views about particularism can be witnessed by young Ndebele speakers especially those in Diaspora who have used the internet as a platform to launch “a virtual community known as the United Mthwakazi Republic (UMR) that symbolises the desire for a restored pre-colonial Ndebele nation” (2008:28). The concept of UMR repudiates not only the concept of Unity Accord but it also repudiates the whole concept of Zimbabwe nationhood which some Ndebele speakers generally believed to be defined in accordance to the interest of the Shona people. This also reveals that some Ndebele do not feel that they are obliged to be part and parcel of the concept of Zimbabwe which appears to them as a “Shona imagined nation” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008:47).

The revelation is probably a reflection of the unfinished politics and debates, which started in the 1960s, when nationalists were debating the naming of the future country. Ndlovu-Gatsheni believes Ndebele perceptions should be understood within “the broader terrain of the development of Zimbabwe and the configuration of the Zimbabwe nation-state”. There is no doubt that the invocation such feelings was compounded by the Gukurahundi atrocities which “hardened ethnic prejudice and created a strong link between ethnicity and political affiliation” (2011:25). This redefined the concept of being Ndebele where Ndebeles view themselves as victims of Shona triumph which is well reflected in the following list of grievances by pro Ndebele pressure group uMhlahlo weSizwe sika Mthwakazi quoted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008:277):

- Marginalisation of the elected MPs of Matabeleland
- Instituting a reign of terror in Matabeleland
- Perpetuating ethnic cleansing against the people of Matabeleland
- Translocation of the economic resources of Matabeleland to Mashonaland
- Reserving key jobs for Shona people in Matabeleland
- Depriving the people of Matabeleland of education opportunities
- Retarding the cultural identity of the inter-cultural society of Matabeleland

The bitterness that is reflected in that list has also been witnessed by a number of pressure groups that have since emerged in Matabeleland and outside the country especially in South Africa. Such groups include Imbovane Yamahlabezulu, PF-ZAPU 2000, Mthwakazi Liberation Front, Mthwakazi Action Group on Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in Matabeleland and Midlands and Mthwakazi People's Congress. Some of these organisations have taken a radical approach and are now demanding secession from the rest of Zimbabwe especially the Mthwakazi Liberation Front (MLF). The groups believe that the Unity Accord is surrender document, which saw PF-ZAPU being swallowed by ZANU-PF. The few Ndebele speaking people in government and ZANU-PF have been labelled apologists and sell-outs who have benefited as individuals at the expense of people from Matabeleland. To the pressure groups, (quoting Mabhena cited Ndlovu-Gatsheni,

*ZANU-PF is a party that is founded on splitting Zimbabwe into tribal groupings, i.e. Shona and Ndebele, whereby Shonas must provide national leadership. ZANU PF, usually referred as 'The Party has always had in their leadership deck Shonas taking up key leadership positions with a lacing of Ndebele apologists making up the leadership elite numbers. The party had to enlist the services of Ndebele apologists to paint a picture of a government of national unity following the inconsequential Unity Accord signed in December 1987. The Ndebele apologists were to behave like gagged guests at this party-make no key decisions. (2009:186).*

The government responded by arresting the leaders of MLF and charging them with treason, which can attract death sentence in Zimbabwe if convicted. Some Shona people have sympathised with people from Matabeleland but do not support the secessionists' agenda, some have responded with vitriolic attacks by labelling the secessionist as prescribing to tribalism, whose intention is to destroy Zimbabwe in an effort to re-establish the nostalgic the Ndebele state of the past which had hegemony

over Shona people. President Mugabe clearly does not support or entertain the secessionist and in a speech quoted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008:28) he said,

*Zimbabwe is one entity and shall never be separated into different entities. It's impossible. I am saying this because there are some people who are saying let's do what Lesotho did. There is no Lesotho here. There is one Zimbabwe and one Zimbabwe only.*

The Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa recently expressed similar sentiments in the state media when he indicated that:

*Zimbabwe is a unitary state and anyone who harbours plans to secede or partition the country along tribal lines is possessed by evil spirits and day dreaming (Herald 27 June 2015).*

This probably explains why government has reacted by arresting active secessionist advocates in Zimbabwe as an effort to control the threat posed by secessionist. The response by government is reactive rather than proactive. Of late government has been making efforts to invoke the importance of Unity Accord through highlighting and amplifying the legacy and the role played Joshua Nkomo who it now acknowledges as Father Zimbabwe and it is interesting to trace how he was re-transformed from being Father of Dissidents back to Father Zimbabwe (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007:73). In 2013 his statue was erected and unveiled at ceremony presided over by President Mugabe in Bulawayo which also witnessed the re-naming the city's newly refurbished airport after him. Such efforts are seen as too little and meaningless to some Ndebele people as real issues are not being discussed openly like the issues of marginalisation which has also witnessed Shona speaking teachers being deployed to teach in primary schools in Matabeleland (Murambadoro 2015:46).

However, not all pressure groups have been as radical as MLF and not all groups agree to the radical idea of secession. Other groups have been moderate in their demands and have been pushing for a political solution through devolution of power in order to enable Matabeleland provinces to enjoy some degree of autonomy which facilitates greater development unlike a unitary system of governance which tends to centralise everything to the capital. They include political parties like MDC and the revived ZAPU. Perhaps to demonstrate the displeasure with the status quo, the Ndebele speaking provinces have used every election as an opportunity to vote for

any strong party, which opposes ZANU-PF. Over the past year, MDC has been enjoying a big support base from Ndebele speaking provinces largely due to anti Gukurahundi sentiments and the protest vote associated with it.

Ironically, the MDC party itself became a victim of a split, which interestingly followed the same Ndebele and Shona ethnic fault lines. The split of MDC in 2005 was motivated debate on whether to participate in the upcoming senatorial election. However, it turned into an ethnic affair as the split clearly showed the ethnic tensions that exist in Zimbabwe. Vambe carried out a research to ascertain the voices and perceptions of ordinary people after thirty years of the Gukurahundi violence (2012:295). His findings concurred with Ndlovu-Gatsheni in demonstrating that the voices from the people in Matabeleland merely manifest “realities and perceptions of exclusion, marginalisation and confinement to second-class citizenship of Ndebele-speaking people that began in 1980” (2012:13). Thus, the launch of various pressure groups from Matabeleland including the radical ones should not be seen as a problem but rather a symptom of a relational problem.

Ethnicity invokes perceptions, some of them are real and some they not so real, and this is largely generated and compounded by the mistrusts and lack of openness between the ethnic groups. Vambe revealed that lack of economic opportunities among young people has acted as a constant reminder of the ugly past, which saw Ndebele speaking regions lagging behind during the violence, which took away more than five years of development (2012:297). What seem to be sticking points has been the silence and pretensions that everything is now okay and lack of acknowledgement on the part of government (Vambe 2012:295). There is a strong perception that government must take responsibility and apologise publicly. Such a move is important in initiating true reconciliation, which can possibly bring closure. This can also re-assure the victims that such violence will not be allowed to happen ever again. Similar sentiments were also expressed by Murambadoro who found that most victims point that “we cannot reconcile until the past has been acknowledged” (2015:33).

However, government seems to have confused the Unity Accord and the amnesty of 1988 as closure, which is not only wrong but also rather insensitive and very

unfortunate. A sad chapter, which was characterised large-scale violence cannot be wished away or be swept under the carpet. At no point have the government officials promoted open dialogue to discuss what it takes to bring true closure and for victims to heal, reconcile and forgive. Instead, the response has been hostile, intolerant, and insensitive to say the least, including utterances by some government officials that what happened is now a “closed chapter”. Arresting and detaining radical activists will only prompt more radicals to emerge and this will re-create the very scenario, which led to the very violence in 1982. Disengagement and distrust create a security dilemma, which prompts parties to act based on myths and suspicion. Whereas growing evidence indicates that dialogue and engagement may address undying embers of the past, reduce prejudices, misperceptions, and promote co-existence and security. A Participatory Action Research (PAR) completed by Dumisani Ngwenya in Matabeleland in 2014 is very instructive. Ngwenya found that even against the odds, engagement even among the victims without acknowledgement or apology from the perpetrators could enable communities to heal themselves and find peace (2014: iii).

## **5.8 Summary**

The relationship between the Shona and Ndebele after independence started on a wrong footing altogether, the two groups struggled for co-existence under the new dispensation. Mistrust, intolerance, and suspicions were key features of the relationship, and this aptly demonstrated that the “unity” which had been forged during the war against colonial rule was a mere pretention and beneath it was the toxicity of tribalism. Tribalism and failure embark on a genuine peace building and nation building created a security dilemma, which resulted in the Gukurahundi violence and massacres. The Ndebele perceptions are those of victims of violence in need of redress. The Ndebele attribute to the Shona and “their government” in particular. Unfortunately, some Shona and government in particular believe the Unity Accord of 1987 “sorted out things”. This discord has resulted in uneasy peace and pretentions, which are covering unhealed festering wounds and deep-seated hostilities. This serves a clear demonstration that true nation building and co-existence are products of the long haul journey of genuine peacebuilding and true reconciliation process rather than a single stroke of a pen on an agreement.



However, even without government involvement communities can do something worthwhile and meaningful. The next chapter discusses the technical aspects about doing something to make a difference using Action Research instead of just describing, analysing and prescribing the traditional way.

## CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH DESIGN

*Only governments can do some things, such as negotiating binding agreements. However, only citizens outside government can do some things, such as changing relationships. (Saunders 2005:1)*

### 6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the Research Design in use in this thesis. A Research Design is an overarching plan that gives direction to a research process. This thesis adopted an Action Research Design primarily because of its ability to facilitate action and social change through enabling different participants to play a special role in identifying, designing, and implementing an intervention to an existing social problem. The inclusivity characteristic of Action Research Design dovetails well with the overall aim of building friendships, which is based on mutual action to build mutual respect. The building of friendships is expected, friendship is nurtured as friends learn to experience one another in mutuality (Waghid 2010:61).

### 6.2 Research Design

Research Methods scholars have different understandings and different interpretations of research terminology; so much that confusion of terms in this field is common. It is precisely because of this reason that in many instances, Research Design and Research Methodology components are sometimes used interchangeably or at times, they are treated as different terms. To Creswell, multiple interpretations by research methods scholars are actually positive because this increases choices to researchers (2003). “In the past two decades, researches approaches have multiplied to a point at which investigators or inquirers have many choices” (Creswell 2003:3). This thesis notes that Research Design and Research Methodology are clearly interconnected but conceptually different. So, how is the term Research Design going to be applied in this thesis? It is out of both choice and the need to avoid being entangled in the terminological minefield, and mix up that in this thesis the Research Design concept adopted is as defined by Johann Mouton (2001). A Research Design is just a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting

the research (Mouton 2001:55). The nature of a Research Design is influenced by the research problem and aim and not vice versa. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett concurs with Mouton when she noted that a Research Design constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (2006:10). A Research Design guides the researcher in adopting procedures that enable the research problem and aim to be addressed (Kumar 2005:84). Effectively, this means that a Research Design serves two key functions, which are:

- To conceptualise an operational plan to undertake the various procedures and tasks to complete the research,
- To ensure that these procedures can adequately obtain valid, objective and accurate answers to the research problem and aim (Kumar 2005:84).

### **6.2.1 Action Research**

Prior to this study, I should be honest to admit that I had no knowledge of Action Research whatsoever. However, it was through support and encouragement from my supervisor who also facilitated my participation in the Alternative to Violence Project (AVP) in Durban, which gave me a good orientation and appreciation of Action Research. Action Research Design emerged as an attempt to deal with real life situations that demanded intervention in the form of transformative action and change. Action Research bridges the gap between theory and practical problem solving through humanising the research activity. Action Research Design can simply be described as a set of actions, which incorporates collaboration or partnership between the researcher and local stakeholders to address a particular problem.

To Greenwood and Levin, Action Research is a set of self-consciously collaborative and democratic strategies for generating knowledge and designing action in which experts in social and other forms of research work together with local stakeholders in order to work out a practical solution to a problem (2007:3). Kemmis alludes to what he termed the capacity of action research towards changing 'people's practices and the situations in which people practise – the conditions for their practice – as they change their understandings of their practices (2010:421). Thus, the thrust of Action Research Design focuses on doing with instead of doing for stakeholders (Greenwood and Levin 2007:3). The participation of stakeholders or the community

in all the stages of the research process differentiates Action Research Design from other Research Designs. The concept of participation is also confirmed by Berg who indicated that The central purpose of Action Research is to come to some resolve and use it to take action toward improving the lives of participants (stakeholders) (2009:251).

Action Research is grounded on the claim that real world problems require real world solutions (Moriarty 2007:2). Such real solutions cannot be imposed from outside or assumed, but rather they should emerge from the people themselves. This cultivates a sense of ownership to the solutions that emerge and it focuses on what is actually feasible, actionable, and practical. In peace research, this is very important because in the past peace research has concentrated more on theoretical aspects of research, which in many instances fails to change real life problems.

The ontological assumptions of Action Research are based on the notion that action researchers view themselves as agents of change endeavouring to promote values based on the inter-relationship between the researcher and the environment. McNiff and Whitehead summed this well by indicating that the central methodological assumptions are that Action Research is done by practitioners who perceive themselves as agents, regardless of their social and institutional contexts (2006:35). Their methodologies are open-ended and developmental as they ask how they can learn to improve social practices (McNiff and Whitehead 2006:35).

The epistemological basis for Action Research is that knowledge production is always a continuous process. Thus, it is not possible to come up with final answers on anything. McNiff and Whitehead illustrates that in social sciences knowledge creation is a social process, so while knowing maybe a property of the individual knower, all answers should be regarded as provisional and subjective to social critique (2006:36). Therefore, this study does not claim to bring final or all answers facing the Shona and Ndebele relationship. In its small way the study is one of very few and unique studies which have attempted to build friendships between the Shona and Ndebele using Action Research.

Action Research dovetails well with the thrust of this research, which is to bring together a small sample Shona, and Ndebele people and then facilitates

engagement in the form of Transcend conflict-transformation dialogue sessions, which anticipates producing not just practical action, but which can also leads to possible development of friendships among participants. Kemmis captures the relational dimension of Action Research very well when he highlighted that one may therefore say that the goal of action research is to create models of democratic dialogue and practical deliberation, and thus offer people other ways of relating to one another (2010:424).

### **6.2.2 Origins of Action Research**

John Collier (1890-1947) can trace the concept of Action Research to works in the 1930s. However, the most systematic and methodological work on Action Research is linked to a Jewish Psychologist named Kurt Lewin who first used the phrase in 1944 and later published a paper titled Action research and Minority problems in 1946 (Bloor and Wood 2006:10). Lewin was motivated by what he termed social change, especially on how to cultivate and promote social change with the people as opposed to for the people (Bloor and Wood 2006:11). Lewin believed that it was possible to carry an experiment in a real life situation, with the aim of achieving a specific goal that has a bearing to problem-solving and social change. In 1943 at the height of the Second World War, Lewin conducted a form of Action Research in the USA in which he aimed to encourage the use of beef tripe as part of diet for the American people. The motivation behind this was that beef was in serious short supply as it was being prioritised to troops at the war front. Therefore, there was a desperate need to find a substitute for beef without compromising the protein content of those Americans at the home front and beef tripe became the possible solution.

However, the problem was that this proposed “tripe solution” by Lewin was not popular among American homemakers because they simply lacked the expertise of preparing it. Lewin then decided to conduct a study in which he trained a small sample of homemakers in the skill of cooking tripe. After the training, he then carried an evaluation on how the training had transformed the cooking habits of the small sample of homemakers understudy. Two things emerged from Levin’s experiment and the first one was that his experiment proved that it was possible to conduct a problem-solving venture in a natural setting. Secondly, it exposed the basic three-stage process of what can lead to social change. The three-stage process is

characterised by “dismantling former structures (unfreezing), changing the structures (changing), and finally locking them back to a permanent structure (freezing)” (Greenwood and Levin 2007:6). The three-stage process became the fundamental backbone for what eventually became Action Research. However, over the past years a lot modifications have been introduced which have since improved the effectiveness of Action Research. This is with specific reference to the strong involvement of participants and making participants owners of the process and reducing the researcher to the role of being the facilitator and catalyst to the Action Research process. Greenwood and Levin believe that Lewin laid a foundation, which promotes “knowledge production based on solving real-life problems” (2007:8). The following are some of key characteristics of Action Research according to Craig (2009:7):

- The study takes place in a natural setting.
- The researcher must examine his own biases, remove them, and use professional judgement and background in developing a research as an instrument.
- Through the study multiple forms of quantitative, qualitative or both are collected including primary data, secondary data etc.
- Findings are typically rich in description.
- Process, not product is stressed.
- Inductive analysis is on-going.
- Meaning is derived from data analysis.
- Findings inform practice.

### **6.2.3 The goals of Action Research and how it works**

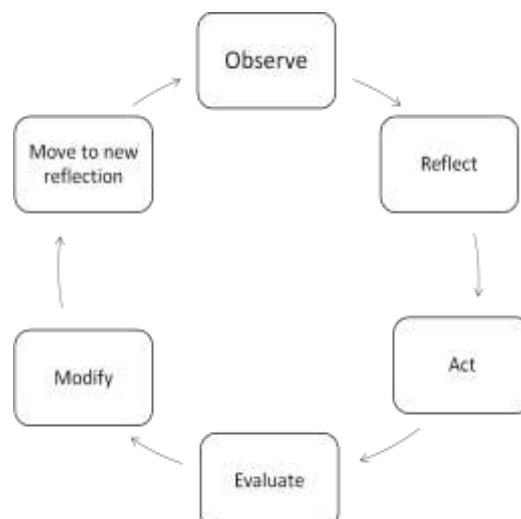
Action Research is different from most conventional designs in the sense that it is not satisfied by just identifying a problem and then stating plausible causes and then finally recommending a possible panacea. The primary goal of Action Research is to identify the problem working hand in glove with participants with the sole purpose of identifying and producing actionable and practical knowledge, which produces solution to the problem. According to Johnson (2008:28), Action Research typically involves the following five steps:

- Ask a question, identify a problem, or define an area of exploration. Determine what is it you want to study.
- Decide what data should be collected and how often.
- Collect and analyse data.
- Describe how your findings can be used and applied, you create your own plan for action based on your findings.
- Finally, report or share your findings and plan for action with others.

The process does not end at just identifying or sharing findings to plan for action and producing actionable knowledge. It goes further to the designing, implementing an intervention and then finally evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention. It also entails trying something new or retrying in event of failure, which is very possible in some instances.

In essence, the Action Research process follows is a continuous cyclical journey as opposed to well-demarcated linear characteristic of other designs. The cyclical characteristic of Action Research entails an exploratory stage where problem identification and understanding is embarked upon. The planning for an intervention tactic then follows this. During the intervention, specific observations are identified in order to synchronise them with the overall findings of the entire cycle or process. The cyclical nature of Action Research enables a comparative analysis in measuring the effectiveness of an intervention through a before-and-after intervention comparison. The cyclical nature of Action Research is captured in the following reflective cycle:

**Figure 6.1: the cyclical nature of Action Research**

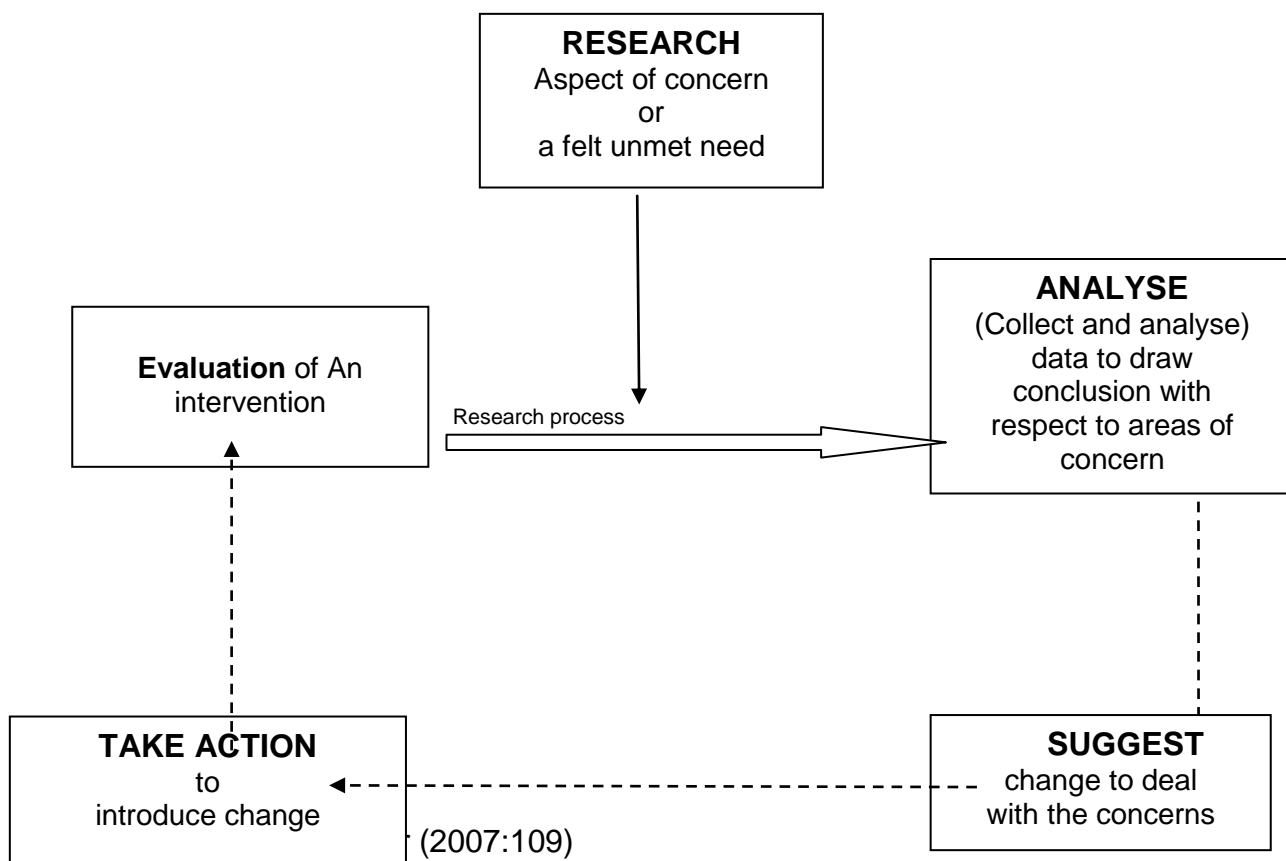


Change, be it positive or negative is witnessed and measured by noting differences in the key variable(s) prior and after intervention (Kumar 2005:85). If change is not achieved or is negative then an investigation must be carried out so that remedial measures are undertaken and then the cycle can restart again. This is because Action Research is also a process of learning by doing where mistakes provide valuable lessons of knowing what to do and what not in the next cycle.

Kumar (2007:109) suggest that there are two foci of Action Research:

- An existing problem or intervention is studied in order to identify possible areas of improvement in terms of enhanced efficacy and/or efficiency: The basis of bringing about changes.
- This is where a professional thinks that there is an unattended problem or unexplained issue in the community or among client group. Through research, evidence is gathered to justify the introduction of a new service or intervention.

**Figure 6.2 Action Research Design structure and process**





However, in the area of peace building the researcher or the professional does not know everything or cannot claim to know everything because the community or the stakeholders have a very crucial role to play in finding alternatives. Therefore, action, particularly that which transforms relationships of ordinary people usually comes from the citizens and not just from governments. There are some things that only governments can do, such as negotiating binding agreements. But, there are some things that only citizens outside government can do, such as changing relationships (Saunders 2005:1). Action Research with small groups can make huge strides in communities because of the following characteristics and advantages (Gall-Meredith 2007:23):

- Action Research is a collaborative and adoptive research design that lends itself to use and work with community situations.
- Action Research Design focuses on pragmatic and solution driven research rather than testing theories.
- Action Research studies often have direct and obvious relevance to practice.

#### **6.2.4 The role of the researcher in Action Research**

Action Research is more complex and perhaps more harder than other conventional research. In Action Research, the researcher has many responsibilities and takes a key role in encouraging social change. This role is mainly promoted through facilitating effective communication among the participants. Communication can facilitate the creation of an environment where participants are encouraged to engage each in a way, which permits honest dialogue. According to Simpson and Chow (nd: 3) an “action researcher wears many different hats” in providing the following services:

- Planner - Leader
- Catalyst- Facilitator
- Teacher- Designer
- Listener- Observer
- Reporter- Synthesise

These different roles of the Action Researcher must be done working hand in hand with the participants. This clearly demonstrates that the researcher will be actively involved, but one must state that the researcher's role is mainly that of a facilitator and not a main decision maker or dominant figure in the process. The facilitator role of the Action Researcher should enable the participants to take full responsibility of the process to such an extent that the participants should be able to continue on their own even when the researcher has completed his research. The following are case studies of recent Action Research.

| <b>The problem</b>   | <b>The AR process</b>  | <b>Outcomes</b>  | <b>Reference</b>          |
|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Palestine and Israel</b><br><br>The protracted social conflict between Palestine and Israel has seen many agreements failing to promote peaceful co-existence between the protagonists.   | The “seeds” of peace was used as an intervention to promote a people-to-people (p2p) peace project based on dialogue. The project targets young students from Palestine and Israel and takes them to Colorado springs in USA for a face-to-face dialogue over a sustained period composed of 3-week sessions. During the dialogue sessions, students have the opportunity to get close to each other, share personal experiences, and listen to each under the facilitation of experienced facilitators. | The “seeds” of peace program has managed to do what the politicians have been grappling with for many years without success, which is to bring the people together. The program has produced some surprising friendships between the Palestine and Israeli students. Through an alumni platform where participants maintain contact through communication using social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Tweeter, and Whatsapp. Some alumni pay each other visits, which is something, which gives optimism of a possibility of creating a generation of more tolerant people who value the virtues of co-existence through a culture of peace. | Steinberg 2013            |
| <b>Ethiopia</b><br><br>Ethiopia like other several African countries faces the problem of inters- ethnic based group animosities. The ethnic tensions have had an effect on the country's main academic institution, Addis Ababa University. The period between 2000 and 2010 was marked by violent student demonstrations, which had ethnic based violent clashes especially between 2004 and 2007. | The intervention came in the form of sustained dialogue using 716 randomly selected participants and non-participants drawn among university students. The sustained dialogue was conducted over two semesters, which was about 8 month's period. The idea of a sustained dialogue was to promote trust, positive attitudes, and positive perceptions of each other.   | The results of the intervention indicated that the intervention had quite reasonable positive effect on the attitudes of the participants. It also demonstrated a marked decline in mistrust and an increase in the level of trust. However, the results indicated no notable effect on the behaviour of participants.   | Svensson and Broneus 2013 |
| <b>Rwanda</b><br><br>After the 1994 genocide which witnessed the death of an estimated 800 000 to 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus, post genocide Rwanda has struggled to deal with healing and reconciliation issues between perpetrators and survivors.   | A people-to-people (p2p) healing and reconciliation program was initiated using a series of dialogue workshops. Small groups of participants were drawn from Tutsis and Hutus who were survivors and perpetrators respectively. Emphasis was placed on small groups in order to enhance better and intimate interaction between the participants.  | A gradual improvement in terms of healing was noted. The intervention also managed to improve the perceptions and to demystify misperceptions among the participants. This has improved co-existence as survivors and perpetrators are now on talking terms, which is something, which gives optimism for future engagement and possible societal transformation.  | Staub 2013                |

|  |  |   |                          |
|--|--|---|--------------------------|
| <p><b>USA</b></p> <p>The perennial problems of race relations between the African-Americans and Whites have been a source of tension for centuries. One of the long-term effects has been the internalised sense of inferiority, self-hatred, victimhood, and low self-esteem within the African-American community. This has not helped the race relations, as the two communities remain polarised based on racialism and systemic violence.</p> | <p>An intervention came in the form of an approach named Self help Affirming Soul Healing Africans (SASHA). The SASHA intervention promoted self-healing using small groups of African-American using dialogue workshops. Participants had to undergo a seven-phase process which covered the following themes: Building Community, Experiencing a disorienting experience, Feeling the vulnerability, Experiencing body, Mind and spirit split, A Culturally corrective experience, Body, mind and spirit wholeness and Entering a new vulnerability. The first four stages were designed for self-affirming and understanding different forms of racial experiences. The final three phases were for self-healing.</p> | <p>The results of the SASHA intervention were quite encouraging as participants demonstrated signs of improved self-esteem, confidence and reduced self-hatred.</p>   | <p>Johns 2008</p>        |
| <p><b>Northern Ireland</b></p> <p>Despite enjoying peace in the recent years, Northern Ireland remains divided along ethno-religious lines. The divisions are connected to past decades of violence, which left the country deeply divided. This can be manifested by the education system, which was aptly marked by separation based on ethno-religious lines.</p>   | <p>An intervention came in the form of a strategy for social cohesion sharing and integration. The strategy came against the backdrop of realising the significance of school in building peace. A wide range of activities was initiated to advance the notion of inter-community contact between Protestant and Catholic children. These included mixing them in school and in class and developing an all-encompassing curriculum. Sustained contact between children of these two communities was the main goal.</p>   | <p>Results indicated that contact between Catholic and Protestant children led to the growth of friendships across ethno-religious lines. This also saw prejudices reducing significantly. Contact and friendships, which ensued at a young age, were seen as crucial factors in creating a platform for future engagement.</p> | <p>Ramiah et al 2013</p> |
| <p><b>South Sudan</b></p> <p>South Sudan became the youngest</p>   | <p>Reconciliation and healing dialogue workshops are on-going under a 3-year project</p>   | <p>The outcome of the intervention is still difficult to ascertain since the intervention is still at an infant stage. However,</p>   | <p>Suwa 2014</p>         |

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| independent African country following a referendum, which saw it sever ties with Sudan. However, due to power wrangles violence erupted in 2013 pitting supporters of the incumbent president Salva Kiir's Dinka ethnic group against supporters of former vice president Riek Machar's Nuer ethnic group. Since then the violence has become ethnic. Several agreements have been signed to date and very limited success has been noted in terms of addressing the ethnic polarisation. | that seeks promote engagement at grassroots level. 80 participants drawn from the protagonists ethnic groups and will go for a 4-week face-to-face dialogue and then go back to their communities for some reflection. | preliminary evaluation based on follow up of the first group of participants has indicated a shift in terms of perceptions. Participants have confessed that they were loaded with negative perceptions of each other before the dialogue and after the dialogue. They changed. Although this is still preliminary, it remains to be seen how far this intervention will go in terms of promoting co-existence. |  |
|---|--|---|--|

**Table 6.1: Case studies which applied Action Research**

A number of valuable lessons can be drawn from these case studies. The first one being that Action Research is a promising design in peace building and has been applied with some reasonable and encouraging levels of success. This makes it very relevant to use in the African set up which faces several Protracted Social Conflicts. Action Research when applied in peace building makes a bold attempt of introducing practicality in terms of exploring various alternatives of building peace. This is diametrically opposed to the traditional designs, which tend to be prescriptive in nature while lacking realistic practice (Gustavsen *et al* 2008:64). This, however, should not be seen as an attempt to dismiss other designs or to look down upon traditional designs because they are still important, but rather this should be seen in light of complementary role that Action Research can play by taking peace-building research to another level.

Another crucial factor drawn from some of these studies is the fact that the sample size and sampling technique are very important. While using a bigger sample like in the case study of Ethiopia has its own advantages, it also has its own drawbacks. A big sample that is based on a random sampling technique faces the risk of huge dropouts. This thesis uses a small sample of 24 participants who were selected

using purposive sampling technique. Finer details and justification on this and other issues will be discussed in the next chapter.

Ideally, the purpose of engaging in Action Research in the first place is to bring about change. The age of participants was also an important aspect in Action Research and the case studies from Middle East, Northern Ireland and Ethiopia clearly demonstrated this. Children and young adults are much receptive and more dynamic when it comes to transformation. Gustavsen et al clearly emphasised the need for “specific people and specific contexts” (2008:64). In the case of Northern Ireland, participants were primary and secondary school children In the case of Middle East participants were teenagers and the case of Ethiopia participants were young adult university students. As shall be highlighted in detail in the next chapter, in this study participants were drawn from young adult university students from Solusi University in Bulawayo.

Interventions in Action Research require sustained efforts in order enhance chances of success, because a once off activity may not effectively transform situations. Action Research deals with people and real societal problems. As pointed out by McNiff and Whitehead “human beings are unpredictable because of different choices which they make” (2006:33). Thus, given this and the emotional nature associated with humanity, transformation in general takes place neither automatically nor as quickly as the researcher may want. This is why it is important to factor in time in the application of sustained efforts towards transformation. A good example is the “seeds” of peace intervention, which has been on-going since 1993 to date. The overall goal of the “seeds” of peace program is to promote long-term impact of the intervention. In the case of case of Ethiopia, the intervention was over two university semesters and ideally, in this case it was prudent to assess the short-term outcome of the intervention.

McNiff and Whitehead have indicated that in research “every answer is tentative and open to modification... and Action Researchers do not look for a fixed outcome that can be applied everywhere” (2006:32). However, success in one Action Research can give reasonable grounds to draw valuable lessons that can enable one to apply the model elsewhere. Even if the change may be small, in principle it is still important

and worthy acknowledging. Besides that, success in small things, which are done consistently, may cumulatively bring bigger results in the end. Not only do we learn from our successes, even where an intervention was used and failed to make an impact, that failure provide grounds to modify and allow one to retry again or try something new altogether.

The outcome from most of the summarised case studies indicates that change was noted. The level of change or success differ from one case to the depending on the circumstances, however, what was beyond doubt was that contact between adversaries could change attitudes and perceptions in positive way. In some instances, it actually fosters the development of friendships, which saw a marked decline in prejudices.

### **6.3 Justification for using Action Research**

Action Research is about real human life challenges and exploring alternatives that can be generated by engaging the concerned parties. While any other design could have been used in this research, Action Research was precisely chosen because of its ability to promote the collaborative process. This approach is not limited to knowledge consumption but also extends to unique knowledge production and discovery as well. This is a departure from traditional research whose epistemological grounds believe that “knowledge is only discovered using specific methodologies such as scientific method, which aims to predict and control outcomes” (McNiff and Whitehead 2006:28). More importantly, Action Research using dialogue method also has the relational capacity to engage and bring people together through contact. Given that the relationship between the Shona and the Ndebele has been characterised by the dearth of honest engagement especially at the top echelons of power due to polarisation, engaging young adults is worthy trying than to continue doing the same things and expect different results. However, the inability or failure among leaders to engage must not spell doom, but rather provides an opportunity to explore other avenues or alternatives. Therefore, it seems that engaging citizens may be a viable option; citizens can withstand the worst of toxic relationships. This point has been articulated by Saunders when he pointed out that, “there are some things that only governments can do, such as negotiating binding agreements. However, there are some things that only citizens outside government

can accomplish, such as changing relationships (2005:1). The aspect of changing relationships cannot be done in theory or a stroke of a pen, but rather it can only be done effectively in the form of practical action.

## **6.4 Ethical issues when using Action Research Design**

The fact that Action Research is implemented in real life settings makes it a very delicate process. We did not force or pressurize participants in this research and those wishing to withdraw from the research at any stage we released. Solusi University granted written permission, the institution whose community participated in the research. We gave special priority to participant confidentiality. I was also guided by the code of conduct for peace practitioners employing aspects of the Transcend Method adopted from Governance, Social Development, Humanitarian, and Conflict (GSDRC) Applied Knowledge Services (available online at <http://www.gsdr.org>) that says:

- Identify positive elements in the parties and the conflict itself to create the potential for further development. Emphasise shared roots and responsibilities, rather than distributing blame and guilt.
- Be creative and suggest alternative courses of action. Collectively find a short, memorable outcome formula, for example “sustainable development”, that may not do justice to all complexities, but may facilitate communication.
- Do not demand consensus, commitment, or co-operation from parties who are not ready. Equally do not “deform” the conflict by pushing agendas too far away from the parties’ immediate concerns.
- Do not manipulate. Be open and honest with yourself and others about aims and feelings, remembering that the conflict worker’s task is to empower.
- Do not judge. Retain confidentiality and do not seek publicity or gratitude.
- Remember that conflict work is the art of the impossible, requiring optimism, idealism of the heart and realism of the brain.



## **6.5 Summary**

The overarching plan that is giving direction to this research process is Action Research Design. This approach entails identifying a problem and appreciating why the problem is manifesting itself in the manner in which it is. This is followed by careful planning and designing of an intervention strategy, which is implemented jointly by the participants. Meticulous monitoring of the intervention then follows the implementation. This is done by comparing the before and after intervention scenarios. This process can be repeated through several reflective cycles until best alternatives or possibilities are found. Thus, Action Research is not about certainties but rather it is all about exploring alternatives or possibilities jointly and creatively. Emphasis is not just about the product but it is also about the process as well because the process can influence transformation. Action Research is also “not about learning why we do certain things, but rather how we can do things better” (Ferrance 2000:3). This is very crucial in peacebuilding, especially in Africa where it is important not just to do a good diagnosis and prognosis, but there is also need to find a possible cure and give it on the “sick patient” and then find if it makes a difference all. The next chapter discusses the methodology that was used in this thesis.

## CHAPTER 7: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. (Margaret Mead).*

*Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted. (Albert Einstein).*

### 7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the methodological aspects of this thesis. In the research process, a Research Methodology illustrates how the research is conducted with a specific focus on methods, tools, techniques and procedures used to fulfil the research aim and objectives (Mouton 2001:56). This thesis explores the idea of building relationships through building friendships between two ethnically polarised groups. This naturally entails dealing with people's perceptions, attitudes, experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Given this, the research uses a qualitative research paradigm because of its capacity to explore and illustrate dynamics that influence human behaviour in their social settings (Davies 2007:136). The chapter will also explain and justify the study population, sample size and sample selection, data analysis techniques, validity and reliability aspects of the thesis.

### 7.2 The research process

According to Grinnell, a research is a "structured inquiry that utilises acceptable scientific methodology to solve problems and creates new knowledge that is generally applicable" (1993:4). This effectively means that a research has a purpose and it is a process, which must be systematic and should be guided by a specific methodological route and steps. Thus, in order for the new knowledge to be acceptable it must have been produced by objective, valid, and reliable methodological procedures. A Research Methodology differs from a Research Design on the basis that a Research Design is an overarching plan of the research process, whereas a Research Methodology focuses on how specific we will accomplish certain tasks and the relevant tools to use. Mouton summarises the differences as follows:

**Table 7.1: the differences between Research Design and Research Methodology**

| <b>Research Design</b>   | <b>Research Methodology</b>   |
|--|---|
| Focuses on the product: What kind of study is being planned?   | Focuses on the research process and the tools and procedures to be used.      |
| Point of departure=Research problem or question.   | Point of departure = Specific tasks (data collection or sampling) at hand.    |
| Focuses on the logic of research: What kind of evidence is required to address the research question adequately? | Focuses on the individual and use the most “objective” (unbiased) procedures. |

Adapted from Mouton (2001:56)

### **7.3 Research Methodology**

Research Methodology is usually accomplished using mainly two principal approaches, which are qualitative and quantitative paradigms. There is of course a third paradigm, which is called the mixed approach, which blends qualitative and quantitative paradigms together. Qualitative research paradigm emphasises non-numerical understanding of the dynamics of a social phenomenon in the natural setting (Arsenhault 1998:118). Merriam believes that the interest of qualitative research lies in understanding the meaning that people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam 2009:13). To Braun and Clarke, qualitative refer to (techniques of data collection or data analysis) and to a wider framework of conducting research (2013:4). Braun and Clark further argue that qualitative research is not just about the data or techniques used to obtain data and analyse it, it is about the application of a paradigm, which is quite different from quantitative paradigm (2013:4). This essentially means that a qualitative paradigm ought to embrace everything qualitatively that is from the data itself to its analysis, presentation and evaluation.

Whereas a quantitative research paradigm emphasis on an inquiry which uses numerical data and techniques to measure and understand a phenomenon (Berg 2009:3). Quantitative research places more meaning in mathematical measurement

of variables rather than a social meaning and understanding of such variables. Aliaga and Gunderson further highlight that qualitative research is about “explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods” (2002:43). Kumar highlighted the differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches in the following Table:

**Table 7.2: Differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches**

| <b>Differences with respect to:</b> | <b>Quantitative Research</b>  | <b>Qualitative Research</b>  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Understanding philosophy            | Rationalism: Human beings acquire knowledge through reasoning capacity.   | Empiricism: Human beings acquire knowledge through sensory experiences.                            |
| Approach to inquiry                 | Structured/rigid/predetermined methodology  | Unstructured/flexible/open methodology   |
| Main purpose of investigation       | To quantify extent of variation in a phenomenon, situation, issue etc.  | To describe variation in a phenomenon, situation, issue etc.                                       |
| Measurement of variables            | Emphasis on some form of either measurement or classification of variables  | Emphasis on description of variables   |
| Sample size                         | Emphasis on greater sample size   | Fewer cases  |
| Focus on inquiry                    | Narrows focus in terms of extent of inquiry, but assembles required information from a greater number of respondents.             | Covers multiple issues but assembles required information from fewer respondents                   |
| Dominant research value             | Reliability and objectivity (value free)  | Authenticity but does not claim to be value free   |
| Dominant research topic             | Explains prevalence, incidence extent, nature of issues, opinions and attitudes; discovers irregularities and formulates theories | Explores experiences, meanings, perceptions and feelings   |
| Analysis of data                    | Subjects variables to frequency distributions, cross tabulations or other statistical procedures                                  | Subjects responses, narratives or observation data to identification of themes and describes these |
| Communication                       | Organisation more analytical in nature, drawing inferences and  | Organisation more descriptive and narrative in   |

|             |   |        |
|-------------|---|--------|
| of findings | conclusions and testing magnitude and strengths of a relationship | nature |
|-------------|---|--------|

Adapted from Kumar (2005:17)

## 7.4 Qualitative Research Paradigm

This thesis adopts a qualitative research paradigm because the research is exploring real life people's experiences, feelings, perceptions and experiences of ethnic polarisation. The inquiry delves into in depth relational issues of polarised groups with the intention of building friendships. This necessitates the need to qualitatively explore the experiences and narratives of a small sample of Shona and Ndebele people and facilitate dialogue, which leads to mutual respect, understanding, and possibly friendships. Qualitative methods facilitates "collection and analysis of information based on its quality and not quantity" (Anderson and Arsenhault 1998:119). After all "not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted" (Albert Einstein). Berg who pointed that "clearly, certain experiences cannot be meaningfully expressed in numbers (2009:3) also confirmed this. More importantly, qualitative research is about meaning and not numbers (Braun and Clarke 2013:20). Qualitative research paradigm is most appropriate because it also works very well with Action Research Design, which is in use in this thesis.

## 7.5 Study population and sample

A study population refers to a collection of individuals or units that are subject of inquiry or research. In this thesis the study will be carried out in the province of Bulawayo, which has a population of 650 000 (CSO 2012:12). The choice of Bulawayo is largely because the city is predominantly Ndebele speaking area but has a fairly large and growing number Shona speaking people as permanent residents. My entry to the research area was through Solusi University, and permission was granted in writing by the authorities. Given the qualitative nature of the research, the sample size is small. According to Davies, in qualitative research "the core sample maybe anything from 1 to 20: the smaller the sample, the more detailed, intense and sophisticated will be process of exploring psychosocial reality" (2007:146). More importantly, this thesis is based on Action Research Design and it

seeks to facilitate a practical dialogue, which may lead to friendships. After all, there is a saying; “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has” (Mead). This research targeted 24 participants, divided into two groups each composed of 12 participants drawn equally from the Ndebele and Shona ethnic groups. Each group consisted of six people from the Ndebele speaking groups and the other six were from the Shona speaking community. One group had to undergo the practical experimental dialogue process where participants will come up with creative proposals that are meant to build mutual understanding and respect and friendships. I advised and facilitated in the designing and implementation of the intervention. I facilitated this process using the Transcend dialogue method of conflict-transformation, developed by Galtung (2002). The second group did not through the Transcend dialogue process because it is the control group.

However, just like the experimental group the control group went through pre-intervention assessment to evaluate the perceptions and feelings in the group and was again later evaluated after the implementation of intervention process with the experimental group. This was in order to facilitate a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of the preliminary intervention and its short-term outcome. Sampling is a process of choosing an appropriate sample, which is representative to the study population. This is an important step because the sample has a bearing to the outcome of the research process. However, in qualitative research numbers are of little significance because the essence is not to quantify the extent of diversity of research subjects but rather to explore and describe the diversity of a phenomenon (Kumar 2005:165). This explains why it is even possible to come up with a sample as small as one individual. Therefore, qualitative sampling techniques are not confined to hard and fast principles when compared to quantitative sampling techniques.

The fundamental guiding principle in qualitative research is reaching what Kumar described as the *saturation point* which is a point where the researcher would have obtained what he or she may consider to be enough data to explain and describe a phenomenon (Kumar 2005:165). This justifies the selection of a sample using non-probability sampling techniques in qualitative research. Non-probability sampling

techniques refers to sampling where the number of elements in a population do not have an equal chance of selection as opposed to probability sampling techniques where elements have an equal chance of being selected. A non-probability sampling technique gives the researcher liberty and flexibility to select a sample or samples that depends on the specificity of the research topic and its aim (Davies 2007:146). This thesis adopts a purposive sampling technique, which is one of non-probability sampling techniques.

Purposive sampling is based on obtaining data from specific target groups that are consciously selected by the researcher. The underlying principle of purposive sampling is its capacity to empower the researcher to use his or her judgement to select relevant target groups commensurate with the nature of research. Purposive sampling is also referred to as judgemental sampling since it relies largely on the judgement of the researcher to select subjects that can provide the best information to achieve the aim and objectives of the research (Kumar 2007:179). In essence, the purposive sampling is influenced by the purpose of the research. We used purposive sampling to select Bulawayo as the place where research was undertaken. The purpose of choosing Bulawayo was influenced by the fact it is a predominantly Ndebele speaking town with a sizable population of Shona speaking people. Traditionally, it was an industrial city and therefore it attracted many immigrants who came in search of employment. This gave Bulawayo its cosmopolitan outlook, which is good for this kind of research. Although purposive sampling may be exposed to the researchers' possible bias, it remains as an important method of obtaining information of qualitative nature and specifically where Action Research Design is used. Perhaps the most important merit of purposive is the flexibility it gives the researcher in terms choosing participants who can provide the best available information (Kurebwa 2013:177).

Oliver believes that in purposive sampling, participants are also recruited on the basis of criteria set to maximise information output from the respondents (2006). Purposive sampling was used to select the two groups that are key to this research. The need to obtain Shona and Ndebele participants whose background, experiences and willingness to participate in the Action Research project necessitated adopting

this choice. The nature of the Research Design and Methodology adopted in this thesis also influenced the choice of using purposive sampling.

The targeted sample size of this research was 24 and this was influenced by the qualitative nature the research. In qualitative research, emphasis is on the quality of data that the informants can provide and it is quality rather than quantity that matters in qualitative research. The decision to settle on a small sample also influenced employed the sampling technique. More importantly, this being an Action Research, it enables me as a researcher to be involved in the research process and that includes making decisions on who can make an effective contribution as participant. This is unlike in positivist's research where the researcher is technically barred from the research "so as not to contaminate it" (McNiff and Whitehead 2006:30).

Potential critiques, especially those arguing from a positivist vernacular may question the use of purposive sampling *Vis a Vis* a small sample, citing subjectivity and bias problems. While these concerns are real, these features are an inherent nature of qualitative research. Qualitative research deals with people in their naturalistic environment, therefore the sampling technique and sample size will have to be context specific (Henning *et al* 2004:152). What it effectively means is that the results of this qualitative Action Research inquiry will not claim credit beyond the reality reflected by settings and context upon which the study was undertaken. The sample selection technique in this thesis should be understood and interpreted within the realm of qualitative research paradigm because the specific realities and the settings in particular context will not necessarily be a reality elsewhere. Further detailed explanation on validity, reliability and the general limitations of the research will be discussed later in this chapter.

## **7.6 Data collection**

Data collection sources are usually influenced by the research aim, objectives and design in use. There are two forms of data collection sources, which are categorised as secondary sources and primary sources. Secondary sources constitute second-hand data and this data are generated because of analysis and publication of the first time user. Secondary sources of data include data obtained from academic books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and internet sources. While primary



sources of data entail first-hand data generated for the first time and has not gone through the interpretation mill of the researcher. This thesis utilises both secondary and primary sources of data in order to facilitate the methodological triangulation of data sources. Secondary sources were also utilised in the data presentation and analysis chapters to verify findings.

### **7.6.1 Secondary sources**

Secondary sources were used particularly in the form of document analysis in order to get an understanding of what other experts have found about nature of relationships between the Shona and the Ndebele. Secondary sources, which were used, appear in the literature review section and these include academic journal articles, books, and dissertations.

### **7.6.2 Primary data collection**

Primary sources are central in this research given the Action Research Design, which intends to come up with practical ways of building friendships through relationships. The following data collection methods were used to collect primary data:

#### ***Observation***

Given the practical nature of the research observation was chosen as one of the ways of collecting primary data. According to Kumar, “observation is a purposeful, systematic, and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place”. (2005:119). Observation can enable the researcher to access crucial data about participants’ behaviour in an interaction process, which is sometimes impossible to obtain from interviews of questionnaires. Aspects like such as aggressiveness or friendliness of participants can best be noted using the participant observation method. The observation method was used particularly as the two groups interact together in the dialogue process, which I facilitated.

#### ***In depth interviews***

In depth interviews were conducted to all the 24 participants using a structured interview schedule. This was done in order to facilitate uniformity, which made before and after evaluation easier. Data generated from in depth interviews will corroborate data from focus group discussions and focus group discussions.

### **Focus group discussions**

Focus group discussions are a good way of exploring perceptions and group feelings. Focus group discussions will be used based on a schedule made up of both structured and unstructured questions; this is in order to combine elements of uniformity and flexibility. Focus group discussions were used with each ethnic group separately to facilitate group members to express their opinions freely during the discussions. The focus group discussion will be used to prepare for the Transcend dialogue sessions.

### **7.7 Transcend dialogue method**

The Transcend dialogue method is a strategy of conflict-transformation, which “views peace as the ability to handle conflict with empathy, nonviolence, and creativity” (Galtung 2002: xix). It seeks to bring together conflict parties together with the help of a facilitator. Galtung claims that transcend method seek to identify positive elements in the parties and the conflict itself to create the potential for further development (2009:109). The essential element is to bring protagonists together so that through contact they can transcend the prevailing animosities and together identify creative ways to (re) build relationships through mutual respect for opponents.

To put it Galtung’s own words:

*Transcendence is about making what was is acceptable compatible which is making it attainable. Actors and goals are maintained exactly as they are, but there has been breakthrough, the incompatibility barrier has been lifted, the system has been transcended. (that is where dialogue comes into context) What was impossible has become possible, not only the region of acceptability, but sometimes even the point of bliss has become attainable. Transcendence is unlike compromise where the compatible is made acceptable and actors remain the same as they were, but the goals change, they modified in the sense of being moderated in this case the original compatibility barrier is entirely respected, it is only the acceptability region that has been expanded. (2009:110).*

Galtung further reiterates that the Transcend method using dialogue loosens conflicts and allows parties to unlock the conflict through joint creativity (2004: 186). Emphasis is placed in identifying shared roots and responsibilities, rather than apportioning blame and guilt (2000:5). The Transcend dialogue’s fundamental underpinnings hinge on dialogue as opposed to competitive negotiation. Dialogue is

unlike negotiation which is competitive whereby one party seeks to prevail over the other, dialogue seeks to engage the opposite sides in a non-confrontational manner in order to develop mutual respect, understanding and collaboration (Isichei and Bolaji 2009:6). Transcend method is motivated by the following premises:

- Conflict is a source of violence and development.
- Mutual causation and shared responsibility
- There is in value in empathetic and respectful dialogue.

#### **7.7.1 Stages in Transcend dialogue**

As earlier eluded, the Transcend method relies on peaceful engagement in the form dialogue with all parties by firstly engaging in one at a time. By engaging with one party at a time, the facilitator was aiming towards preparing the parties for the eventual face-to-face dialogue. The notion of engaging one party at a time prior to the face-to-face dialogue between parties is very important because in the case of violent conflict it may not be possible for parties to have a face-to-face dialogue without adequate preparation. Sometimes, the facilitator may realise that the animosity is still too strong and may extend time engaging parties separately until such a time it becomes necessary to proceed with the process. Transcend dialogue has the following three stages.

In this thesis the first stage and second stages of the transcend process were in the form of in-depth personal interviews and focus group discussions with each group separately between late June 2014 to early July 2014. The in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were tape recorded with consent from the participants. We used these in depth and focused group discussions as a way of obtain data on attitudes before the intervention. The third stage was in the form of six sustained dialogue sessions, which started from end of July 2014 up to early December 2014 with a session on each month, and detailed information these will discussed in the data presentation and analysis chapters. However, we respected the participants discomfort in having the dialogue sessions recorded and refrained from recording. The post intervention evaluation was conducted from the end March 2015 to early April 2015 and this was done using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

### **First stage**

Engage parties separately in order to probe what Galtung described as the negative goals (fears) and positive goals (hopes). This is in order to identify cognitive space

### **Second stage**

This stage entails re-engaging parties separately once again, but this time around, the aim is to convey to each party the perspectives emerging from the first stage basing on the cognitive space created on each side.

### **Third stage**

Progressing to this stage depends on the success registered in the first and second stages. At this, stage parties meet to begin the transcending dialogue process with the help of a facilitator or facilitators.

#### 7.7.2 Recent case studies using Transcend dialogue method

**Table 7.3: Case Studies where Transcend method was applied**

| <b>Location</b> | <b>The problem</b>   | <b>Transcend initiatives undertaken</b>  | <b>Outcomes</b>   | <b>References</b> |
|-----------------|--|--|---|-------------------|
| <b>Nigeria</b>  | - Gender discrimination in land rights in Enugu, Nigeria This was largely due to structural and cultural violence, which saw rural women in Enugu being discriminated with respect to land property rights.                  | Problem solving transcends dialogue workshops involving all stakeholders were conducted in two rural communities with the help of a trained facilitator.   | There was a notable shift in terms of how the communities view women and this was positive start, which could lead to the improvement to the status of women.   | Madu 2013         |
| <b>Rwanda</b>   | After the Genocide in Rwanda, which destroyed trust and social cohesion between the Hutu and the Tutsi, the biggest challenge was on how to heal the emotional wounds from the past and reconcile the polarized communities. | The basic principles of transcend approach were notably applied using community based socio-therapy with the help of facilitators. The purpose of the socio-therapy was to facilitate dialogue and interaction between survivors and perpetrators. The group acted as a therapeutic model to instill some trust and confidence in each other using dialogue. | The approach was successful as noted by testimonies from participants who indicated they found much relief after sharing and listening to each other and heard. | Basabose 2014     |

|                 |  |   |   |              |
|-----------------|--|---|---|--------------|
| <b>Zimbabwe</b> | Following the Gukurahundi violence between 1981 and 1987, which saw an estimated death of more than 20 000 people, the government did not apologise and the country has remained polarized on ethnic lines. Survivors are still haunted without any healing or recourse. | Though not calling it by the name transcend dialogue, the basic principles of transcend were noted in the in the survivors self-healing dialogue workshops which were conducted with the help of a facilitator. The idea was to share the experiences and in order to relieve emotional pain. | The results indicated that with the right environment and support survivors can help each to find some considerable degree of relief from emotional pain, which may go a long way in the long journey to healing. | Ngwenya 2014 |
|-----------------|--|---|---|--------------|

## 7.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is the methodological process of running through the data in order to get an understanding of what is emerging from the data (Babbie 2011:396). In this research, two methods of data analysis were employed, interpretive analysis and discourse analysis. Clearly, these are manual methods of analysing data and not computer based methods. The choice to use manual methods of data analysis largely influenced the qualitative nature of research. Secondly and perhaps, more importantly was that my direct involvement was equally important so that I could have a better interaction with the data itself given that I had facilitated the Transcend dialogue sessions. Besides that, facilitating the dialogue sessions also enabled me to become intimately acquainted with the data. Interpretive thematic analysis is a form of inquiry that entails a thorough analysis of interview transcripts, focus group discussion notes and dialogue session notes in order to identify behaviours, perceptions and attitudes participants (Brawn and Clarke 2013:13). Themes, meaning emerge, and these are coded and categorised accordingly. However, critiques to the interpretive thematic analysis lament the involvement of the researcher in the process citing both subconscious and conscious biases, which may affect validity and reliability of the results. To address this I then employed discourse analysis as a second method of analysing data within the same study to facilitate methodological triangulation in the analysis. Discourse analysis entails finding deeper meaning of words and expressions, sometimes hidden, from verbal speech (Shaw and Bailey 2009:414). While interpretive thematic analysis is largely concerned in identifying themes picked from data content, discourse analysis looks

at the context and manner in which the content was expressed. The two-pronged approach of using interpretive thematic analysis and discourse analysis facilitate qualitative reliability and validity of findings, which predicate on credibility, and conformability of findings.

### **7.8.1 Evaluating the outcome of intervention**

Evaluation constitutes an important aspect in any research and especially in Action Research where it is crucial to analyse the before and after intervention patterns and compare the two. Since this research is largely qualitative for the purposes of evaluating the outcome of intervention, the research analysed the data obtained from individual interviews with the participants and focus group discussions before the intervention. This exercise of extrapolating perceptions and attitudes of each other uses interpretative thematic analysis and discourse analysis. The interviews and focus group discussions were ran from seven to fourteen of July 2014 on both experimental and control groups. Key in understanding the perceptions were issues like the language used, the tone, and the actions observed from the participants. These can give pointers that can indicate someone's attitude. This subject will be discussed chapter 8 and 11. The intervention started on the 30 July 2014 up to 6 December 2014.

The post intervention evaluation of the intervention interviews and focus group discussions ran from 31 March to 9 April 2015. The obtained data was analysed using the same method based on interpretive thematic analysis and discourse analysis. The idea was now to compare any changes in terms of perceptions with those that emerged before intervention. In this case, the comparison will be taking into cognisance the group that went through the experimental dialogue and the control group that did not go through the dialogue<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> To improve my role as a facilitator I had received some training through participating in the AVP training at three levels which are Basic Level, Advanced Level and Training of the Trainers Level. The Training of the Trainers level equips with skills to facilitate group engagement for peacebuilding and nonviolent handling of conflict.

## **7.9 Validity and reliability**

Validity and reliability features are key aspects in research; they seek to ensure that the steps taken in the research, the generated data, and information are acceptable and dependable. Validity is about the accuracy of the process and its outcomes (Davies 2007:243). To add on to this, Creswell argues that steps undertaken in the research process will validate the findings. Reliability is intertwined to validity and is about the dependability and consistence that emerges from the research process because of using reliable tools and methods of to generate data.

### **7.9.1 Validity**

Babbie has argued, “Validity refers to the extent to which an empirical inquiry adequately reflects the real meaning of the concepts under consideration” (2011:133). Validity questions the role of the Research Design, Research Methodology, and research instruments used in collecting data in relationship to the aim and objectives of the research. Creswell (2014:201) identified and recommended the following eight validity strategies:

#### ***Triangulation***

Triangulate different sources of data by examining evidence from the sources in order to build a coherent justification for themes.

#### ***Member checking***

Participants validate the accuracy of the findings, specific descriptions themes and the final reports to ensure accuracy.

#### ***Use of description***

Using strong and effective description is good qualitative way of conveying the findings. Rich and thick descriptions used hand in hand with strong discussion and shared experiences will provide the necessary detailed explanations.

#### ***Clarifying biases***

Clarifying the biases that the researcher brings into the research is a good way of self-reflection. It demonstrates open and honest engagement with the readers. After all, in qualitative research a researcher and the research constantly influence each other.

### ***Present negative and discrepant information***

Information that may be indicating or opposing the main themes and narratives needs specifying. These reflect the real life and the different perspectives that come with it.

Having a sustained stay in field is good because that extra mile enables the researcher to develop in depth and a better understanding of the phenomenon under study.

### ***Peer debriefing***

This entails locating a person (a peer debriefed) who can review the qualitative data so that other people other than the researcher will corroborate accounts and narratives by the debriefed.

### ***Use of an external auditor***

An external auditor is different from a peer debriefed in the sense that the auditor is not familiar with the research or the project. The external auditor should be able to provide an objective assessment of the entire project without fear or favour.

Validity does not have the same interpretation that it has in quantitative research, given its positivist standpoint, or in the traditional natural science approach. Qualitative validity entails the accuracy of the findings in line with characteristic procedures, which facilitates credible validation. The equivalent to validity in qualitative research translates into trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility of findings. Thus, as hinted earlier on the validity of the findings is applicable to the settings of the research and cannot be generalised elsewhere. However, in an effort to ensure trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility I applied the eight validity strategies as recommended by Creswell in the following ways:

**Table 7.4: Strategies of ensuring validity**

| <b>Validation strategy</b> | <b>Action taken</b>   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>1. Triangulation</b>    | Using three methods of data collection to ensure data triangulation did triangulation. Methodological triangulation was done by using two different data methods of analysing data. |
| <b>2. Member checking</b>  | Communication with participants after the fieldwork was done by interview and discussions using social media in the form of Whatsapp text messages platform.                        |



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>3. Use of description</b>                                  | Data presentation and discussion of finding was done using qualitative data analytic and presentation procedures in the form of rich descriptions and explanations.  |
| <b>4. Clarification of bias</b>                               | This was done by mentioning the characteristic challenge of studying a social phenomenon by action research through a qualitative paradigm. Findings of such a study should be understood and appreciated within the realm of its context and not outside. |
| <b>5. Presentation of negative and discrepant information</b> | Contradictions from the findings were clarified and presented in data presentation chapters.   |
| <b>6. Prolonged time in the field</b>                         | The fieldwork of this study was conducted over period of 9 months and I think this was long enough to get a better appreciation of the key issues under study.   |
| <b>7. Peer debriefing</b>                                     | A fellow colleague who has worked on a similar subject of ethnicity in the same region was helpful as a peer debriefed.  |
| <b>8. Use of the external auditors</b>                        | Some of the ideas and themes emerging in this project went through external auditors in the form of an article which was published in a peer reviewed journal during the course of this study.   |

Reliability is about the dependability, consistency, and conformability of the approaches and steps used in the research process. These have a strong bearing to the research outcome. Gibbs (2007) quoted in Creswell (2014:203) identified the following key procedures to ensure qualitative reliability:

### ***Checking transcripts***

Double-check the transcripts in order to double check for possible errors that may have occurred during transcription.

### ***Coding must be consistent***

Coding must be consistent and effort must be made to ensure there are shifts in the meaning represented by the codes.

### ***Co-ordination and communication***

This applies especially in the case of team research where there is more than one researcher where it necessitates communication and sharing of analysis to avoid confusion.

### ***Cross checking codes***

Again this is crucial in team research where if there is more than one coder. After coding there is need to cross check the coding so that data interpretation will be as smooth as possible.

In essence, reliability in qualitative research is a product of what Henning et al described as “craftsmanship of the researcher” and that “craftsmanship” comes with aspects such as precision, care, and accountability in the research process (2004:152). To ensure reliability especially about tools and instruments, the interview schedule will undergo a pilot study to test and rectify any challenges prior to the actual usage. The following table also illustrates a summary of how reliability strategies were employed in this thesis.

**Table 7.5: Strategies of enhancing reliability**

| <b>Reliability strategy</b>               | <b>Action taken</b>   |
|---|---|
| <b>1. Checking of transcripts</b>         | This was done by proper data management procedures, which included transcribing the audiotape data and filing transcripts accordingly using index cards. The original tapes were also well-secured and backed up in two different data storage in the event of any challenge. |
| <b>2. Coding consistence</b>              | This was done by familiarising myself with data through double-checking and reading of transcripts several times in order to understand the content of the data prior to coding.  |
| <b>3. Co-ordination and communication</b> | Even this was not team research per se, I repeatedly read the data to discover key patterns and analysed the data using thematic and discourse analysis in order to ensure effective and reliable communication from the data.  |
| <b>4. Cross checking codes</b>            | This elaborative task was done by double-checking the coding system in order to capture any patterns/themes that may have been missed. In essence, this was an auditing of the coding process.  |

In qualitative research, validity and reliability issues are not comparable of expectations of positivists or quantitative research. This is due to the nature of qualitative research because it deals with the reality of human nature. Validity and reliability are seen through trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and conformability. Key to the realisation of these is artisanship, open communication, and pragmatic ethical validity (Henning et al 2004:152). I also further reiterate that this thesis does not claim generalisation and replication of findings, rather the

findings are consistent in as far as the sample and the reality of its settings were concerned.

### **7.10 Ethical considerations**

Ethical aspects of the research provide important code of conduct that ensures integrity of the research while at the same time being sensitive to the community where the research is being undertaken. In this research ethnical issues will be given due consideration especially given the practical nature of the research. As indicated earlier permission was granted in writing by Solusi University administrators who also generously allocated me a small office to use as well. Participants were informed of the voluntary nature of their involvement in the research and if those chose to discontinue for any reason their choice was respected. No monetary incentives were provided, only light meals and refreshments were provided during the dialogue sessions and focus group discussions. The confidentiality and privacy of respondents was be duly noted and respected as well and therefore names of participants will not appear in this thesis.

### **7.11 Summary**

This chapter has highlighted the methodological details of the thesis. Given that the intention of thesis is to build friendships as a way of cultivating mutual respect and understanding between two polarised ethnic groups, a qualitative research paradigm was adopted. I believe one can never sensibly express numerically capturing human experiences and endeavouring to build respect and trust. A qualitative research paradigm works well in facilitating the understanding of people's experiences, feelings, and perceptions. Purposive sampling was adopted to facilitate the selection of willing and committed participants. This was done taking into cognisance the practical nature of the Research Design, which dovetails very well with the aim, and objectives of the research. Data analysis will consist of a dual systemic methodological approach using interpretive thematic analysis and discourse analysis.

## CHAPTER 8

### **COSMETIC PEACE: A NO WAR-NO PEACE SITUATION BETWEEN THE SHONA AND NDEBELE IN ZIMBABWE**

*The Ndebele and the Shona will never get along. Have you ever noticed the tension between Highlanders and Dynamos when they play at Babourfields stadium? There is a silent war between the Shona and the Ndebele.*

#### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter is the first chapter of the four chapters whose focus is on the presentation, analysis, and discussion of findings. This chapter in particular, specifically presents findings and analysis on the controversial aspect of Shona and Ndebele relations. Emphasis will be on conveying the views and narratives obtained from the in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and observations and data obtained from documentary research. What is discernible from the findings is that although on surface it may appear as if the conflict is latent, the views, and narratives captured from the voices of the informants and supported from documentary evidence tell a different story. Underneath the Shona and Ndebele relations, the embers are still burning and the wounds are still raw. The serious simmering discontentment is akin to latent hostility and a clear dearth of social cohesion. It seems the impact of past toxic relationships may have had deeper ramifications than anticipated.

#### **8.2 Presentation and analysis of findings**

As eluded to in chapter seven, data analysis in this thesis was a combination of two methods that is the interpretative thematic analysis and discourse analysis. This methodological triangulation was found to be very important especially in an inquiry where attitudes and social perceptions are involved. Social perceptions refer to the process in which impressions either negative or positive of other people's traits and personalities are developed (Michner 2004). The impressions are derived through socialisation, experiences, and data that humans accumulate through their senses. Attitudes are sometimes subtle and very difficult to measure. Probably the best way to understand an attitude is through peoples' perceptions of themselves and each

other. Perceptions influence an attitude and vice versa. According to Breckler an attitude is defined as a response to an antecedent stimulus (1984:1191). There are three core components, which are crucial in understanding an attitude, and these are affect, behaviour, and cognition. Affect refers to emotive feeling or emotional response to a situation (Breckler 1984:1192). This can be observed by analysing verbal statements, which exhibit feeling and observing moods, and they range from positive to negative varying from pleasurable feeling of good and happy to displeasure and unhappiness (Ramsbotham *et al* 2011:10). Behaviour can be manifested through behavioural intentions and some verbal statements that can denote behaviour and these can be positive or negative: favourable and supportive (e.g. keeping and protecting) and unfavourable and hostile (e.g. discarding and destroying) (Breckler 1984). Cognition is linked to thoughts and beliefs of existing systems and structures. These thoughts may vary from positive to negative for example supporting versus derogating statements. These key points on attitudes are also confirmed by Ramsbotham *et al* who argues that attitudes can be either positive or negative depending on the situation (2011:10). In violent conflict situations, conflict parties tend to develop negative attitudes, which are also characterised by demeaning stereotyping of each other. In such situations, relationships tend to be dominated by emotions of insecurity, anger bitterness, and hatred.

### **8.2.1 Understanding attitudes and perceptions through narratives**

Peoples' attitudes and perceptions are expressed sometimes through narratives and actions. In this particular instance, narratives expressed by participants were vital in understanding the nature of relations between the Shona and Ndebele. According to Ndakaripa, narratives refer to bodies of either verbal or written accounts of connected events (2014:2). Narratives can be classified into two, that is first order and second order narratives. First order narratives are a product of people who are telling their own stories and experiences, while second order narratives are stories and experiences based on social interaction, formal education and media (Ndakaripa 2014:3). Thus, by analysing narratives expressed by people as they interact and share experiences one can draw inferences and come up with a possible reasonable depiction of their perceptions. Narratives are sometimes handed over from one generation to the other and they influence attitudes and perceptions of the recipients.

Some narratives end up becoming community narratives and these are shared narratives, which sometimes influence individuals of that community. In this research, the following questions were asked in order to elicit individual views and community narratives:

- Can you tell me any stories about the Shona/Ndebele people that you have heard?
- Describe your experiences of living with the Shona/Ndebele people.
- Do Zimbabweans hold some stereotyping of each other? Give examples.
- Have you personally been a victim of ethnic discrimination? Do you mind sharing your story?

### **8.3 Haunted by the past and paying the price for mistrust**

The relations between the Shona and Ndebele depict a bleak and sad story of deep hostilities. Perhaps this is a clear manifestation of paying the price of long standing past violence and mistrust. All the participants in the individual interviews and focus group discussions pointed that the relationship between the two ethnic groups is characterised by deep-seated animosities that are at times border hatred if not actual hatred itself. One participant indicated, “There is a silent war between the Shona and the Ndebele”. This depiction clearly indicated that even though the conflict between two ethnic groups is silent, deep down the hostilities are very real. In essence, these are latent hostilities, which are at times come out clearly in the open at certain platforms, and one participant illustrated this by saying:

#### **8.3.1 Football**

*The Ndebele and the Shona will never get along. Have you noticed the tension between Highlanders and Dynamos when they play soccer? And is that tension all about soccer?*

Apparently, each time when these two teams meet the heavy tensions that characterise each encounter clearly demonstrate that this is beyond normal sporting rivalry. Rather, each team is viewed as representing the epitome of its respective supporters. Highlanders Football Club is a Bulawayo-based team, which was formed in 1926 by Albert, and the Ndebele community sees Rhodes Khumalo, the grandsons to King Lobengula as an embodiment of Ndebele spirit. Therefore most of its supporters who happen to be Ndebele speakers, view it as representing the

Ndebele soul. By contrast, Dynamos Football Club, which is a Harare-based team, formed in 1963 during the period, which also saw the rise of radical nationalistic sentiments against the colonial regime. Whether this is by coincidence or by design it was formed around the same period when the Shona dominated ZANU PF “rebelled” from ZAPU in 1963 and mostly Shona people support Dynamos and it is seen as representing the Shona (Ncube 2014:195). Each time when one team is defeated, it is common to witness violent clashes between their rival supporters and in the recent past, it has led to death and serious injuries. Including songs that are sung by rival supporters depict the tension and sometimes-tangible hatred. Ngwenya (2014:32) aptly demonstrated this when he pointed out that:

*When the two teams are playing in Bulawayo and Highlanders are losing or loses the Highlanders supporters usually chant anti Shona songs. One of them is poignant: Maye Maye Nanka amaShona engibulala! (Oh Oh here are the Shona’s killing me).*

What it means in this case is that to Highlanders supporters a defeat by Dynamos is equated to being killed by the Shona and it goes on to show the emotions that accompany the support and it is clearly beyond just normal football match hooliganism. Ncube (2014) also noted this rivalry by indicating that what exist between Dynamos and Highlanders is beyond football hooliganism. He noted that supporters of these teams do not even share seating stands. Ncube (2014:204) also observed some two songs by Highlanders supporters, which also highlight the separation, which goes as follows:

*“Hakula Shona lihlalee eSoweto”. (Shona people are not welcome in the Soweto stand)<sup>2</sup>*

*“Sowekewalibonai Shona lihlalee Soweto”. (Have you seen a Shona sit at Soweto stand)?*

Likewise, Dynamos do not share their Vietnam grand stand with Highlanders supporters. Any supporter who disrespects this rule by crossing the boundary is violently evicted and beaten thoroughly. This exposes the narrative of deep hostilities, which use football support as an outlet valve to vent frustrations of each

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<sup>2</sup> The Soweto grand stand sitting arena is home and a preserve to Highlanders supporters and Vietnam grand stand is for Dynamos supporters.

other. Dynamos supporters also have their anti-Ndebele song, which denotes stereotypical representations, which goes as follows:

*MaNdevere munovapireiko doro, anonetsa adhakwa, MaNdevere musavape doro havazogeze (Why do you give Ndebeles beer they become troublesome when drunk. Don't give Ndebeles beer they will refuse to bath when drunk. (Ncube 2014:205).*

It is also during the same football matches that one commonly hears Dynamos supporters shouting openly that:

*Mandeverere makauraya vana baba vedu, mombe dzedu nevasikana vedu zvakapambiwa naMzilikazi (Ndebeles you killed our fathers, we want our cattle and ladies who were taken away by Mzilikazi). (Ncube 2014:205).*

This means that beyond football these hostilities are historical. Upon probing participants on where the hostilities between the Shona and Ndebele could be emanating from, all the participants pointed to the Gukurahundi violence as the main source of the hostilities. One participant pointed out clearly that, “the Shona killed our brothers, fathers, and mothers and the Shona did not apologise for Gukurahundi.

### **8.3.2 Gukurahundi**

What seems to be emerging from the above statement is that Gukurahundi atrocities were a watershed in the history of the two groups. Not only was Gukurahundi an important turning point, it also created the common belief, which apports collective responsibility to all Shona for causing Gukurahundi. The Gukurahundi collective responsibility narrative also indirectly implies the collective victimhood, which was also endured by the Ndebele community. The situation has been worsened by the failure on the part of government or the Shona to acknowledge and apologise for the atrocities. Colonel Tshinga Dube, a former senior ZIPRA combatant and a ZANU PF politburo member was quoted in the Sunday Mail 22/05/2012 saying:

*You know people won't go shouting in the streets talking about Gukurahundi, but some of them have it in their hearts...we need to address those fundamental issues. We take them lightly sometimes, but deep down in their hearts the people still have them. We should never sweep these issues under the carpet. We should come out in the open and say we made very serious mistakes.*



Another senior ZIPRA commander, Dumiso Dabengwa, shares similar beliefs but went further ahead to point out that both sides should have offered an apology to each other. He further alludes to the fact that:

*Dissidents who were responsible for what happened should have offered an apology to government for all that happened and government was also supposed to do the same. We should have a public apology from those dissidents that were operating at the time and then the element of healing should have immediately taken effect. The government has not apologised and victims have not apologised. The victims remain bitter because nothing was there on the ground to re assure them that what happened will never happen again. (22/05/2012 Sunday Mail).*

Thus, Gukurahundi is community narrative among the Ndebele people, which shows anger and bitterness towards the Shona in general. Shona speaking participants were also in agreement with Ndebele participants on the significance of Gukurahundi in shaping the current nurture of Shona and Ndebele relations. One Shona participant pointed out that, “these problems came from Gukurahundi because the Ndebele always say to us we killed their relatives”.

The narratives of Gukurahundi manifest the pain, the bitterness, and anger toward Ndebele people because of what happened to them and why. The bitterness can be noted in the statement made by the national representative of Mthwakazi Liberation Organisation David Magagula who was quoted in online newspaper saying:

*We know vividly well that when Mugabe killed our sisters, mothers and babies, he did it in the name and behalf of every Shona...Never forget that when time to them comes no Shona will be spared. (2014).*

Mpondo who argued that also shares this argument:

*To a Ndebele speaking person, Shona people are to be blamed for all the misfortunes, marginalisation, pain and suffering that they experienced since the dawn of independence. (2013:3).*

Gatsheni-Ndlovu argues that Gukurahundi atrocities were the final straw that broke the camel’s back, “ the actions of the Fifth Brigade hardened ethnic prejudice and created a strong link between ethnicity and political affiliation” (2008:169). This took away any little hope that may have existed to resolve the issues without loss of innocent lives. To Mandaza, Gukurahundi was a break to a national contract (2014). The use disproportionate force by the Fifth Brigade, which saw civilians getting into

crossfire without any reasonable justification, left an indelible mark. This was then worsened by lack of economic and social development in the affected areas (Mhlanga 2010).

### **8.3.3 Discrimination**

The failure by government to institute meaningful development in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces has heightened notions that the provinces are being deliberately marginalised due to a deliberate Shona conspiracy against the Ndebele. Both Ndebele and Shona participants equally raised the narrative of marginalisation of Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. One Ndebele participant had this to say:

*Most industries have closed their Bulawayo operations and relocated to Harare. This has caused serious unemployment to the local people and it's very unfair because it makes us feel unwanted and less important than people in Harare.*

Similar sentiments of being marginalised were also echoed and acknowledged by a Shona participant though applied in different context:

*The current situation favour us the Shona people at the expense of the Ndebele people. Look at national news in vernacular from Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), Shona news always come first and then followed by news in Ndebele. Why is it like that and is that fair?*

The politics of marginalisation have a bearing to the current relationships, which even heighten the suspicions that Matabeleland was being deliberately starved off from the much-needed vital development. Musemwa pointed out that the reluctance by government to make meaningful investments during Gukurahundi and after worsened mistrust. This is more so with the government's inability to address the resolve the perennial water problems, which have dogged the city of Bulawayo. To Musemwa the failure to address the water problems through the construction of the Matabeleland Zambezi water project has been interpreted as being motivated by a deliberate plan to punish and Matabeleland and its people due to its past documented history of rejecting ZANU PF and its government.

Retired Colonel Tshinga Dube was quoted in the Sunday Mail of 09/09/12 saying, "Everybody in the country knows that Bulawayo is a dying city, most industries have closed down, and unemployment is at its highest".

The marginalisation of Matabeleland, which is both real and imagined, has worked very well alongside the belief that there is well-crafted conspiracy by the Shona to institute their hegemony over Matabeleland areas. Participants from Matabeleland who strongly believe that while they appreciate that unemployment is a national problem in Zimbabwe in general, their concern is that the very few jobs and other little opportunities that are found in Matabeleland are taken over by the Shona people from Harare expressed these sentiments. One frustrated Ndebele participant pointed that:

*Lots of Shona people are getting employment in Matabeleland. These include general hand jobs such as slashing of grass and yet they can't even utter a single Ndebele word.*

This clearly frustrates local Ndebele people given the high unemployment levels facing the Bulawayo. The presence and the seemingly dominance of Shona people in high profile jobs at national level and also even in Matabeleland is also seen as sign of greediness by the Shona who “want everything for themselves”. This was clearly witnessed in the Luveve Stadium incident, which was highlighted by many Ndebele participants. What happened on the Luveve Stadium issue was that Zimbabwe was preparing to host SADC regional youth in 2013 in which Bulawayo City had been chosen by government as the hosting city. As part improving the facilities for the games, various venues had to be renovated including Luveve Stadium, which is located within the high-density residential area of Luveve Township. The tender to do all the repairs in this stadium was won by a company from Harare and the company brought along its staff members including general hands to do the work. This did not go well with the local community members who naturally expected to benefit from the project as well through getting any form employment that came along with the project. Local residents mobilised and blocked the stadium and denying the Harare company access to the stadium forcing the company to hire some locals for some general handwork. The resistance campaign seems to have paid off although some community members felt that the local residents only got the low paying jobs while those from Harare remained in influential and highly paying positions.

A vocal female Member of Parliament Priscilla Misihairambwi-Mushonga whose mother Ndebele and father is Shona presented a motion in parliament commenting on the appointment of Shona speaking at Lupane State University, which is located in Matabeleland North saying:

*We pick somebody from who is coming Mashonaland to become a Vice Chancellor of Matabeleland...The issue of politics of ethnicity is a reality in this country and if we do not deal with it, we will continue to have problems. (NewZimbabwe.com 19/07/15).*

#### **8.3.4 Language**

The situation has not been made better because even in government departments operating in Matabeleland, Shona speakers who can hardly speak Ndebele are deployed serve local people Ndebele speaker and speak to them in Shona. The Shona has interpreted this as an insult and disrespect to the Ndebele in effort to perpetuate dominance through “well-orchestrated nepotistic appointments and deployment” (Mhlanga 2010:106). This unfortunately gives some level of credence and traction to allegations that the Shona have been implementing “their” “Shona Grand Plan” of reducing Ndebele people into second-class citizens. In retaliation, a participant from Bulawayo pointed out that some Bulawayo companies and organisation have allegedly adopted a policy of hiring Ndebele people only. Ingwebu Breweries and Bulawayo City Council were cited some of the examples. Mhlanga (2006:107) also highlighted the side- lining of the Ndebele in the institutions of higher learning:

*It has been noted that most students in teacher training colleges like United College of Education, Hillside Teachers College and Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo College come from Mashonaland. This means that most of the teachers and other professionals produced from these colleges are Shona speakers. This is a blow to the Ndebele language and education, because children in the primary schools in Matabeleland are being taught by teachers who cannot speak the local language.*

This brings into context the issue of language, which has been a major cause of disagreement to the tensions. While it is very common to find that the majority of Ndebele can speak Shona or at least have some basic understanding of Shona, the reverse does not always apply. One Ndebele speaking participant pointed in frustration that:

*The Shona use their language when speaking to us, but when you reply in isiNdebele they will say they don't understand isiNdebele language, so they expect us to speak in their language and yet they don't put any serious effort to learn isiNdebele?*

Another Ndebele participant highlighted that:

*When I came here as a first year student I was allocated a room to share with a Shona speaking person from Harare and all the times we talked she used Shona and I one day I asked if she could make an effort to learn isiNdebele and she expressed a negative attitude to that suggestion. I ended up changing room and moved to my Ndebele friends.*

The issue of language manifest the silent war and politics of dominance and in many instances even senior government officials including ministers have been caught up in this storm after speaking in Shona addressing while Ndebele speakers deep in Matabeleland. This has been seen as a sign of rudeness, disrespect and a deliberate effort of looking down upon the Ndebele people and their language. To some Gukurahundi survivors it may actually serve as crude reminder of the violence of the Fifth Brigade and the violent manner in which they were forced to speak and sing in Shona.

The issue of language has even exposed the tensions even in parliament where at one point during the question and answer session the Minister Transport Obert Mpofu who is a Ndebele speaker was asked a question in Shona language by Shona speaking Member of Parliament (MP). Minister Mpofu chose to respond back to the question in isiNdebele. The Deputy Speaker of Parliament Mabel Chinomona who is Shona happened to be the Acting Speaker on this particular session quickly interjected to force the Minister to respond in Shona (New Zimbabwe.Com 24/07/14). Minister Mpofu flatly refused to respond in Shona and only later agreed to respond using the English language before reverting back to Ndebele even after receiving some rowdy jeering from other MPs who seemed unhappy with his actions (New Zimbabwe.Com 24/07/14). The high-level public spat of government officials demonstrate the animosity between the two ethnic groups. It also demonstrates the levels of intolerance that exists, in fact, the Acting Speaker just assumed that everyone can understand Shona or should understand Shona.

As highlighted earlier by Mhlanga (2006) that dominance by Shona trainees in teacher training colleges will end up having a situation in which Shona teachers will be deployed to teach in Matabeleland and that has actually been happening over the recent years. This development also witnessed some Primary Schools in Matabeleland abandoning Ndebele language taking Shona as an option. Shona speaking teachers teaching in Matabeleland primary schools caused so much tension, some Ndebele people interpreted it as a final move to destroy the Ndebele language, and it has actually exacerbated the mistrust and anger. At one school named Makuzeze Primary School in Matobo district of Matabeleland, local community members took it upon themselves to force the school Headmistress to leave the school and during the interview with the Chronicle 31/05/14 she pointed that:

*When these rowdy people came to the school they insulted me and they told me to leave the school as they were tired of being led by Shona speaking people. They said it was enough that the nation was being led by a Shona speaking person and would not accept this at community level.*

Ironically, the Headmistress was Ndebele but was married to a Shona and was using her husband's surname. The fact that she was Ndebele herself did not save her from eviction and it seemed as if the community probably did not disapprove her marriage to a Shona man, which technically made her to be considered a Shona person.

### **8.3.5 Marriages**

Even though intermarriages exist between these two ethnic groups, they are not as popular; it seems that there are some quarters where there is still some serious resistance. The subject of intermarriages and intimate relationships between the Shona and Ndebele also came out unsolicited from the participants, which then forced me to probe the subject further from the participants. Only a few participants indicated during the interview that they had no problems with intermarriages or romantic relationships across ethnic lines. Some even suggested that there was need to promote such marriages because they viewed them as an opportunity to bring these two ethnic groups closer. However, more than half of the participants both male and females expressed some reservations to such intermarriages or other romantic relationships. One female Shona participant pointed out that I will not get

married or get involved with a Ndebele guy because my auntie advised me not to date Ndebele guys because we are just different people.

A male Ndebele participant who highlighted that also expressed similar sentiments:

*If you are Ndebele you should stick to your Ndebeles, if you are Shona stick to your Shonas because we are like oil and water. Where I come from if I bring a Shona girl as a wife I risk becoming a family outcast because of that marriage and this actually happened to one of my relatives.*

These sentiments even reflect and resonate well with what used to happen during the pre-colonial period Shona and Ndebele relations where such marriages were not particularly approved at all as highlighted in chapter four. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, intermarriages were strictly controlled.

*Enhla men were not allowed to marry Zansi women. Zansi and Enhla men generally looked upon Hole women. However, the stratification that divided the Ndebele society did not succeed in stopping the proud Zansi men to have illicit relationships with Hole women and subsequently produced belittled offspring termed incukubili (half breeds). (2003:108).*

Even during the early colonial period a number of Ndebele families remained conservative on this issue as witnessed during the 1929 violent faction fights between the Shona and Ndebele which saw some Ndebele men clearly expressing their disgust and opposing sexual relations or marriages between their daughters to Shona suitors (Msindo 2006:435).

### **8.3.6 Stereotyping**

The prejudices and stereotyping of each other have also been noted through name calling using derogatory names of each other. One participant revealed that derogatory name-calling used by Ndebele in reference to the Shona is *Amaswina* loosely translated it means the dirt. The Shona refer to the Ndebele as *Madzviti*, which loosely translate to violent stranger or foreigner. Strangely, these names can be traced back to the 19th century and they have been handed over as community narratives from one generation to the other. This indicates the intergenerational transmission of hostilities, which has taken place over time. Gatsheni Ndlovu pointed that during the pre-colonial Ndebele and Shona relations, it was common for the Ndebele king Mzilikazi to call his Shona subjects *inja* (dogs) (2003:98). This reference denotes a demeaning tag, which was placed on those who were regarded

as dogs. In addition, there is no doubt that words like *amaswina* and *madzviti* still carry strong negative connotations of each other. These terms also demonstrate the perpetuation of the pre-colonial perceptions, which sneaked into the 21<sup>st</sup> century via the back door where the Ndebele were regarded as violent foreigners who were good for nothing but good in stealing while threatening the presumed stability of Shona communities. The mentality of regarding the Ndebele as foreigners is still very common among many Shona despite the irony that almost 60% of the people who regard themselves as Ndebele adopted the Ndebele identity through assimilation and association having been integrated from local Shona and Kalanga groups who were found in Zimbabwe when the Ndebele arrived. The internet platform debates between the Shona and the Ndebele have also witnessed the Shona being referred as *Gukurahundists*. One Ndebele regular contributor who calls himself *Phunyukabemphethe*, in one of his regular postings he pointed out that “all Shonas are greedy *Gukurahundists*”.

*To a Ndebele speaking person, Shona speaking people are to be blamed for all the misfortunes, marginalisation, pain and suffering that have been experienced since the dawn of independence. (Bulawayo24 2013:6).*

Another article Ncube (2015) in Bulawayo24 further supported this view by saying:

*Shona Nationalism has been operating in Zimbabwe as this genocidal Gukurahundi State since 18 April 1980. In presentation, it has operated as Shona Politics 'disguised' as Zimbabwe politics... Shona Politics is pretty simple to define. It is just an anti-Mthwakazi political creed that says Zimbabwe is a Shona State, which belongs to the Shona. Its sole and core purpose is therefore to exclude uMthwakazi from the core of that State. It places the Shona at the centre of this political universe of concentric circles that pale in significance and colour the further you move away from the centre...At its most extreme, Shona Politics is represented by Gukurahundi. Otherwise Shona politics is represented by a Shona 'majority' who happily and silently benefit and continue to benefit from the political architecture of Shona empowerment and entitlement created by Gukurahundi years ago. It pays lip service to equality between the Shona and uMthwakazi and others, and equal access to opportunities.*

These statements demonstrate blanket blame to all Shona for everything including Gukurahundi despite the fact that not all Shona supported the violence and some actually lost their Ndebele relatives during the violence. These statements also indicate the anger and anguish that characterise some of the Ndebele feeling. While



these feelings coming from some Ndebele people are quite understandable given the pain and trauma they endured. This has unfortunately led to the blame game where the two ethnic groups point fingers at each other. Unfortunately, that blame game and the pointing of fingers have not helped the case in way besides worsening the situation. One participant pointed out that, the Ndebele say the Shona killed their relatives and the Shona also say the Ndebele also killed their relatives and it all confusing.

Naturally, when two groups are in a Protracted Social Conflict situation where victims and perpetrators have exchanged roles over time, each side is bound to be defensive while finding ways of verbally assaulting each other. This is because in a Protracted Social Conflict nearly all protagonists are convinced that they act in a reasonable, rational way and that they do their best to master the conflict, yet together they create a system that they cannot control anymore (Ropers 2011:102). As calls for government to apologise continue to be ignored as seen by government's "head in the sand" attitude of downplaying the issues, the hostilities seem to be getting worse. The government's attitude seems to be getting some boost from some radical Shona people who believe that the Ndebele must apologise first. These radicals claim that the Shona will not apologise for Gukurahundi until Ndebeles themselves apologise on behalf of Ndebele King Mzilikazi and his son Lobengula for the raids in pre-colonial Mashonaland. The politics of citizenship also highlight the fact that the Shona have probably not accepted the Ndebele as full bona-fide citizens of Zimbabwe. This ultimately creates a stalemate, which contributes to the deepening of mutual hostility and mistrust. This also takes away opportunities for genuine engagement.

All the participants were of the opinion that government should apologise regardless of the pre-colonial raids by the Ndebele to the Shona. The failure to apologise is what has made victims and survivors angry. The government has not only failed to apologise, it has actually made some efforts to maintain a tight lid on the issue so much that the Gukurahundi topic is a taboo subject in the public sphere in Zimbabwe. However, this has not stopped people from revisiting or discussing the subject matter on other platforms that are beyond the easy reach and control of government like the internet and other various forms social of media. To

government, Gukurahundi atrocities are now a closed chapter, which belongs to the past. However, this approach seems to downplay the fact that people are not yet healed. The survivors are still tormented and counting their losses. Therefore, any efforts to silence them will boomerang and only help in making things worse. This probably explains why there has been intergenerational transmission of trauma. Young people who did not experience either the 19<sup>th</sup> century raids or the 20<sup>th</sup> century Gukurahundi are being haunted and affected by that terrible past in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **8.4 We are not like that**

During the focus group discussions, there was a question on if there was anything that each group would wish to convey to the other group. Interestingly, each group expressed that it wanted the other group to know that they were not as bad as they have been portrayed. One Ndebele participant pointed:

*I want the Shona to know that we Ndebele people can also do anything that the Shona can do, we are not as lazy as we have been portrayed; all we want are the opportunities.*

These sentiments were probably expressed in attempt to demystify one of the popular myths among the Shona that Ndebele are lazy and they do not want to go to school, all they think is about going to South Africa. The myths about the Ndebele being lazy can also be traced back into history where the Shona assumed that because the Ndebele raided for grain, cattle and women the supposition was that they must have been lazy people who did not have a work ethic. Another participant also added that:

*We Ndebele people we are sometimes wrongly labelled as violent people, but not everyone who is Ndebele is violent. The fact that they could some amongst us who are bad does not make everyone who is Ndebele bad.*

It must be noted that among many Shona people in Mashonaland, there is a popular belief that Ndebele people are violent by nature and if you mess around with a Ndebele man he will not hesitate to stab you. This belief was also expressed by some female Shona participants as the reason why they follow the advice from their elders not to get involved with Ndebele men. Clearly, this primordial thinking of the other has made the already bad situation worse. A Shona speaking participant also

expressed that the Ndebele people had some wrong impressions about the Shona by pointing that:

*We do not hate the Ndebele or look down upon them. We are not all responsible for Gukurahundi. Some of us feel bad about what happened during the Gukurahundi violence, but unfortunately we are all blamed as Shona people and that's wrong and very unfair.*

The reality that the Fifth Brigade was made up Shona people and a Shona deployed it dominated government and this created an impression that the Shona people supported it and all its actions were on behalf of the Shona people. This has made some Shona people to feel that not all of them are *Gukurahundists* as accused because in any case defending the actions of the Fifth Brigade is defending the indefensible. However, this has not stopped the blanket Shona accusation as the accusation has gone to claim that even though not all of them supported Gukurahundi atrocities they still benefited from the Shona hegemony, which ensued after Gukurahundi. This has been exacerbated by the anonymous Shona Grand Plan document whose contents confirm the intention dominate the Ndebele in all spheres of life (Ngwenya 2014:223). This heightens suspicions especially in the absence of open platforms where honest engagement is promoted. In fact, the sentiments expressed by participants demonstrated the dearth of open engagement, which seems to be fuelling the perpetuation of the unsubstantiated myths, which generalise and wrongly paint the entire group with the same brush. One Shona participant indicated that:

*Some of us cannot speak Ndebele because we grew up in areas where we never had any Ndebele people to interact with. So when I say I can't speak Ndebele language it's not like I am looking down upon the Ndebele people as such.*

What also seems to be emerging is the fact that each group feels that it has been misconstrued. Therefore, the message is that we are not like what you think we are. This means in essence the groups do not truly know much about each other, but rather each group has been largely been socialised through narratives that contain some toxic prejudices that promote mutual disrespect. Some of the general perceptions, which are rife about each of the two ethnic groups:

Ndebele people:

- Lazy
- Violent and bloodthirsty
- Uneducated
- Prefer a too easy life
- Ndebele men are stingy
- Ndebele women are promiscuous.

Shona people:

- Selfish and inconsiderate
- Cruel
- Disrespectful
- Pompous and full of a superiority complex
- Corrupt and very nepotistic
- Too loud
- Dirty
- Weak

Of interest, during the interviews some participants expressed the narrative of misinterpretation even though it came without solicitation. An Ndebele speaking participant pointed that, I have no problem with the Shona and that is why I can speak their language, but it appear as if it's the Shona who have the problem with us Ndebeles. A Shona participant also had this to say, I think as Shona people we are more accommodating but the Ndebele are not as accommodating if come to Bulawayo.

These sentiments made me realise that the past politics of dis-engagement seem to be continuing just like what happened during Gukurahundi when PF ZAPU and ZANU PF were busy involved in mudslinging, yet the two parties did not engage each other to explore possible solutions to the impasse. During the early period of Gukurahundi Joshua Nkomo bemoaned at the deteriorating security situation, which to him demanded careful handling, patience and objectivity, but he failed to meet

Mugabe and all his efforts to meet to do so were blocked by some ZANU PF radicals (Nkomo n.d) However, technically it seems that the young participants do not see each other as enemies *per se*, but rather they have been socialised through narratives that exude both real and imagined enmity. This appear to have led to the rise of ethnic chauvinism on both sides which probably explain why each side regard itself in a positive way while believing that the problem lies with the other group (Ungeleider 2012). This realisation buttressed and justified the need to create a platform that could enable young people to explore the perspectives that interrogates the difference between perceptions and reality.

## **8.5 Putting up appearances while the elephant is in the room**

“I was told to pretend like a foreigner so that I could justify the use of English when communicating”. These are words of a Shona participant explaining her coping strategy she developed in order to avoid being discovered to be Shona. Since isiNdebele is the commonly spoken language in Bulawayo and most parts of Matabeleland, one of the ways in which a person can betray himself, as a non-Ndebele speaker is to use English. While the use of English may facilitate basic communication and understanding for those with little or no knowledge of Ndebele, it has also attracted the wrath of some Ndebele speakers who interpret this as a sign of showing off. However, if one pretends to be foreigner the stigma of showing off will be taken off (maybe until such a time when the cover is blown off).

One Ndebele participant argued that:

*Using English is not really good at all; imagine what will amadala (elders) say if you use English in rural areas like Tsholotsho or in Lupane there, it's not acceptable because it's a sign of disrespect.*

This may actually justify some of the reasons why the earlier participant adopted a short measure of pretending to be a foreigner in order to gain acceptance. These are signs that some Ndebele people feel that it will be good if Shona speakers could use IsiNdebele language when in Matabeleland. However, this has not been the case, most Shona speakers cannot communicate in Ndebele language, and this forces most Ndebele speakers to switch to Shona language once they realise that they are speaking to someone from Mashonaland areas. Essentially, this provide relief to

Shona speakers, but it has also deprived them a chance to learn isiNdebele language as they have wrongly developed a belief that that all Ndebele people can speak or understand Shona. This does not augur well with some Ndebele speakers who view this as a sign as of perpetuating Shona hegemony by *Shona-lising* Ndebele people. One Ndebele speaker had this to say upon asking him how he managed to learn Shona language:

*The Shona people are everywhere and its not like one has a choice, you just find yourself surrounded by people speaking Shona and also things that have Shona names and then you find yourself learning it.*

This illustrates the feeling of dominance, which sometimes justifies the belief that the Shona people are insensitive. Ndlovu (2007) who has researched on the politics of language and ethnicity dynamics in Zimbabwe has also confirmed this by citing an example where the former Vice President Joyce Mujuru held a series of political rallies in Matabeleland speaking in Shona without any Ndebele interpreter. To Ndlovu (2007:143) and perhaps a feeling that is shared by other Ndebele speaking people:

*Vice President Mujurus language use demonstrates that the ruling political elites take it for granted (either by design or by accident or both) that everybody in Zimbabwe understands Shona; suggesting that Zimbabwe is a Shona empire, with Shona as the emperors language which should be spread into every corner of the country regardless of variations in linguistic realities. The consequence of this is the popularisation of Shona linguistic and cultural norms with all other polities being increasingly marginalised and invisibilised. The underlying implication here is: you either have to identify with Shona cultural norms by speaking the Shona language or else you remain on the peripheries of the national agenda.*

This also suggests that the efforts that are leading towards the alleged *Shona-lisation* are treated with disgust and abhorrence among Ndebele people and probably when one speaks in Shona to Ndebele people they do so grudgingly. The First Lady of Zimbabwe Grace Mugabe also committed the same perennial mistake during her nationwide meet the people tour in 2014. She used a mixture of Shona and English in her speeches in Bulawayo and Matabeleland provinces. In Bulawayo people walked out on her before she finished her speech and it drew a lot of angry comments from many people on various online websites, one commentator had this to say online afterwards concerning First Lady's action of using Shona

*How can she pride herself for acquiring a degree in Mandarin and yet she has mastered one the languages spoken by her people.*

Other online commentators dwelt much on language and cultural dominance in the following ways:

*This issue (of using Shona language) needs to be addressed with immediate effect; we are sick and tired to see our language being trampled upon by “these people” our fathers were killed during the Gukurahundi genocide and nothing was done and now it our culture! What? I would like to therefore call upon every sound Ndebele to stand up and advocate for their culture that is currently under threat. Remember the 1979 (Grand Plan)... so everything is well calculated. (Sic).*

*Wake up maNdebele and I say truly wake up from your slumber. If you don’t very soon it will be too late. When I landed on at Joshua Mnqabuko (JM) airport Bulawayo the first language I was talked to was Shona and these people are not ashamed because they expect you to know Shona as if it is the only language in Zimbabwe. Most shops I visited, be it shops, hair saloons you name it they are there...let every person from this region shun these people.*

In an apparent response one, presumably Shona commentator had these to say in response:

*Anogwara mupfana uyu, idununu chairo, kana asina nyaya ngaanovata anofunga Bulawayo ndeye maNdebele oga”. (This young man is crazy, he is such a fool, and if he doesn’t have anything to say he must go to sleep. He thinks Bulawayo belongs to the Ndebele people only).*

Therefore, besides some possible political issues one can detect among some of the reasons why people walked away and commented so strongly was the feeling of disrespect based on language. This was probably one of the few cases where people have publicly registered their disgust. Because in many instances people rarely express their anger on public but reserve their anger to the online websites while they maintain pretences on public. Therefore the public script may be that of depicting a picture that all is okay just like government would want everyone to believe, but the back stage script depicts a different story altogether. This is probably part of Zimbabwe’s national psyche where silence which margins fear or denial is adopted as a convenient strategy of avoiding “national taboo” subjects. People end up “putting up appearances” on the basis of brave masks beneath worried faces yet there is an elephant right in the dining room which can be seen by everybody but then everyone professes ignorance and feigns normalcy while swearing and calling each other names behind the scenes.

One participant clearly demonstrated this when asked his opinion on the current Shona and Ndebele relations. He responded with so much hesitation in the following way:

*Mmm yeah (with a sigh) you see things are getting better between these two ethnic groups because things used to be bad way back.*

Apparently, these words were said with a grin but the body language and the verbal language were somehow disconnected. The participant could not clarify or shed light on how things were getting better and how bad were things back then. This sounded like unwillingness to open up and hence an answer, which seems like an effort to avoid self-implication and possible stigma. More importantly, this was a question, which was coming from someone with a Shona background to person from an Ndebele background. Maphosa figuratively captured the subject of pretences in this way:

*Think not about the spirit of togetherness and the one proud of Sisonke (togetherness). They are all nothing but propaganda statements made during political rallies and are good for nothing except appeasing voters and they certainly do not describe the truth about our nation. The animosity between the two major ethnic groups in Zimbabwe the Ndebele and Shona is so real and so strong it can almost choke you to death. Be it in church, at the work place, in educational institutions, in social and entertainment circles in the media, in the political arena, at sports and arts or in the streets, you can feel, touch and smell it. It is appetising and tempting, you can serve it as main meal for breakfast, as starter for lunch and as dessert for dinner. It manifests itself in all forms and shapes demons during delivery. (2011:4).*

Despite all this, there is deafening silence on the part of government, which has made efforts towards painting and celebrating a picture of a 'united nation'

## **8.6 Politics of belonging or ethnic chauvinism**

Despite the role played by ethnicity in defining people culturally, politically, historically, geographically and linguistically, ethnicity is a convenient instrument used in distinguishing outsiders from insiders. In personal interviews, the first two questions were connected to the identity and its link to ethnicity and nationality. More than half of Ndebele speaking participants expressed that they identify themselves ethnically first as Ndebele people and then nationality came second. The common explanation given by most participants in this group was that ethnicity defined who they are first based on culture, history and language, while nationality tends to dilute



that ethnic distinction and yet they viewed it as very important. Thus, they prefer to be Ndebele first and Zimbabwean second. One Ndebele participant pointed that:

*I used to think of myself as a Zimbabwean first, but I then later realised that as Ndebele we are always second class and then I concluded that maybe I wasn't truly Zimbabwean.*

The aspect of ethnicity and nationality delves into the politics of citizenship; there are many instances where Ndebele are labelled and made to believe that they are always second best by virtue of being “latecomers” and a minority ethnic group in Zimbabwe. This has led to so much frustration and as a response; there has been a tendency to amplify the Ndebele-ness concept well ahead of Zimbabwean-ness. This also helps in illustrating why some Ndebele people have closer affinity to South Africa than Zimbabwe.

*As Ndebele people our origins are found in Zululand which is in South Africa and we are proud of that part of us and we will always remember that and cherish it. In fact we feel closer to South Africa than Zimbabwe.*

The frustration with the Zimbabwean identity is closely linked to the Gukurahundi violence, which made the Ndebele to be more conscious of their ethnic identity more than before because it was used as an instrument of persecution. While Zimbabwe to them represents a system of oppression, which actually attempted to annihilate them altogether, South Africa is remembered with so much nostalgic feelings. Therefore, it is not surprising that most of the radical movements and pressure groups from Matabeleland, which are pushing for the idea of separation from Zimbabwe, are based in South Africa. To these radical movements and pressure groups, secession has been seen as the only way that can insure that they disentangle themselves from the perceived Shona hegemony and oppression. However, it must be pointed out that this is not a new narrative as such and its origin can actually be traced back to the period even before Gukurahundi. Quoting the 4th of January 1930 Chronicle soon after the December 1929 faction fights between the Shona and Ndebele in Bulawayo over Bulawayo Msindo (2006:438) indicated that:

*They (Shona) had clearly become a threat and to evict them from the Ndebele town had become necessary. Such sentiments were often expressed at social platforms such as beer drinks and even during one official meeting with the Native Commissioner (where it was pointed out that): why are these people here'? We do not go to their country to molest them and take their jobs and wives. Let us drive them.*

Upon reading, this one may be forgiven for believing that this as narrative coming from the 2008 or 2015 Xenophobic attacks in South Africa. It was actually coming from colonial Zimbabwe in light of fights between the Shona and Ndebele to control Bulawayo in 1929. This demonstrates how ethnicity was used to distinguish outsiders from insiders and this explains why by then or even now Mashonaland was and is still treated as a different country from Matabeleland. Similar sentiments are still emerging eight decades later. Perhaps the description by Ndlovu-Gatsheni of “Ndebele particularism” may help to understand the issue (2008:37). To Ndlovu-Gatsheni Gukurahundi (2008:37) hardened the feelings of Ndebele particularism. However, from the Chronicle quotation it seems as if the Ndebele particularism has always been there even before Gukurahundi a point, which has been confirmed by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008). It, however, appear as if the concept of particularism is not only limited to the Ndebele people also, it also applies to the Shona as well even though Ndlovu-Gatsheni prefer to call it Shona triumphalism. Ndebele peculiarity was, and is still based on defending the penetration of Matabeleland turf, which is in essence restoring the autonomous pre-colonial Ndebele polity. While Shona particularism, has been, and still hinges on, unapologetic penetration of every corner of, Zimbabwe. This, because the Shona, feel and think, that Zimbabwe, belongs to them. This has been done regardless of the consequences, this has been captured under the narrative of resurgence of Shona nationalism, and Shona scholars like Mutsvairo, Vambe, Samkange, Mudenge, Kahari, and Chanaiwa have illustrated it. The resurgence of Shona nationalism which depicts Shona particularism was generally expressed by almost all Shona participants who either regarded themselves as Shona first and then Zimbabwean second or those who alternatively thought of themselves as Zimbabwean first and Shona second. Some of them expressed it in this way:

*I regard myself as Shona first and Zimbabwean second and it makes me feel proud because our rich history as Shona people is seen by building Great Zimbabwe.*

*I view myself as Zimbabwean as a first and Shona second and this is because a nation comes first before the tribe but there is a link between the tribe and the nation.*

The veiled belief of linking the romanticised great Shona past and modern Zimbabwe has made most Shona to think that they should always play a leading in almost

everything in Zimbabwe. This was also witnessed by the Shona dominance in the debate of naming the country, which was highlighted in chapter 3. This ethnic chauvinism gives an insight on the Shona insensitivities against other minority groups in Zimbabwe. A Shona and former ZANLA guerrilla quoted by Ndakaripa (2014:25) pointed that, 'the Ndebele ruled in the pre-colonial period, the British ruled in the colonial period'; 'it is now our turn'.

The situation has been worsened by the fact that the Shona constitute majority among black in Zimbabwe and they have used that majority as basis to dominate politics in Zimbabwe. This rationalises the perception why the Ndebele and other minority groups feel that they will never get a fair share given a fair chance given these dynamics, which foster dominance of the minority, by the majority. Because of these dynamics, some Ndebele do not feel accepted as Zimbabweans. To those Ndebele who feel ostracised Mugabe is the epitome of Shona dominance and Gukurahundi was an attempt by Shona to wipe off the Ndebele from mother earth, while Nkomo represent the spirit and interest of the Ndebele. As indicated earlier even in sport Dynamos football club represents Shona while Highlanders represents the Ndebele. It came as a no surprise that even at Solusi University where this research was conducted students have social soccer teams whose ethnic composition reflects the Shona and Ndebele dynamics. Rizolona is a social team made up of Ndebele speakers and so their supporters; Swagga is made up of Shona and its following is Shona as well. This demonstrates that while both the Ndebele and the Shona are conscious of their identities, there is evidence that point that these ethnic cleavages and particularism do slip into brazen ethnic chauvinism many times. This is expressed through stereotyping of each other. Therefore, the conflict between these two ethnic groups demonstrates the clash of two *particularisms*. The Shona particularism, which is stoked by triumphalism, seeks to maintain Shona hegemony regardless of how other minority groups feel about it. While Ndebele particularism seeks to rewind the clock to the pre-colonial Ndebele hegemony and autonomy regardless whether it was fair or not. The ethnic rivalry also demonstrates intergenerational transmission of anger and vengeance on both sides. The core aspects to the struggle have essentially been over the same issues which are that of power and the "*othering of each other*" in order to maximise and consolidate that

power. Thus, this struggle has been presided by different generations or actors at different times. Carl Stauffer, who researched in Matabeleland, bemoaned the existence of what he termed intergenerational transmission of antagonism:

*The intergenerational transfusion of hate is even more alarming when it is discovered to emerging in diverse social sectors outside the parameters of politics, such as in the media and entertainment industry, the arts culture (music, drama and dance) and sports arena. (2009:151).*

## **8.7 Is peace possible?**

Despite all the acrimony, gloom and despair it seems to me that not all hope is lost yet. Perhaps it is the dynamic nature of working with young people, which convinced to have this conviction. I had two questions on the interview guide, which sought to find out if it was possible to bring peace between Shona and Ndebele and what it would take to have that envisaged peace. One Shona participant pointed that “This is not our battle to fight “, to me this represented a group whom I referred to and classified as the optimists who were positive about the possibility of building peace between the Shona and Ndebele.

### **8.7.1 The optimists**

Optimists were of the opinion that peace is possible and this small group had more Shona than Ndebele. Within this group Shona speakers were of the belief that the bad blood the two ethnic groups should not have a bearing to the younger generation because they were not participants in the past violence. Ndebele speakers within this group believed that peace is possible but they pointed out clearly, that the starting should be by acknowledging and apologising for the Gukurahundi atrocities. Even though the young Ndebele participants did not directly experience Gukurahundi themselves, they still feel the pain by virtue of belonging to the group that was ruthlessly persecuted. Even though they expressed optimism, they indicated clearly that they expected government and communities to play a leading role. Generally, the feeling has been that government lacks serious commitment towards addressing the issue. One Ndebele speaking participant argued, “Government should take a leading role, but the biggest problem is that some of the people in government are part of the problem”.

This concern is very real and dovetails well with what some scholars suggested as the main challenge if senior government officials are involved in state violence. Any attempts to get real justice and long term solutions will not be easy because the “the big fish won’t fry themselves” (Brown and Spiram 2012:244). Ndebele participants also noted that there was need for government to come up with a formula, which promoted fair allocation of resources. The economic development of Bulawayo and other Matabeleland provinces and for the creation of job opportunities in those areas will go a long way in bringing peace as indicated by an Ndebele speaking participant who said, “If opportunities are made available especially for the young people who are suffering from unemployment, people can live together peacefully”.

This suggests that the problem of unemployment and economic marginalisation serve as stark reminder of the terrible past. Therefore, these young may not have felt the direct violence from the toxic relationship between the Shona and Ndebele but they continue to endure the price-contaminated relationships in the form of structural violence. Vambe (2012:294) who conducted a research to assess the perceptions of Gukurahundi using respondents from across different ages also shares this belief. Adult respondents were largely concerned by the need to address issues of justice and were of the opinion that that perpetrators should be brought to book. However, the youthful participants were largely worried about lack of employment and the challenges of marginalisation. This effectively means that the youths were concerned with structural violence more than the direct violence, which happened earlier.

### **8.7.2 The pessimists**

The pessimists group was small group composed of mostly Ndebele speakers and its composition was influenced by what had happened in the past and the current problems of unemployment and economic marginalisation of Matabeleland provinces. An Ndebele speaking participant suggested that, “government has not been serious. They are afraid to tackle the issue from the past and they are insincere about the current plight of Matabeleland”.

This seems to have created a hopeless situation for some people and this has made them lose all the hope. Government is normally an institution, which is expected to rise above the occasion and give hope and inspiration to all who are governed by it.

However, if you have a scenario like the one where some of the prominent officials in government are implicated in the very issues that the government is expected to tackle with fairness, and then government itself loses credibility and ceases to be that epitome of hope, pessimistic sentiments such as the ones expressed above are very much understandable. The pessimism gains power from some of the statements that have been expressed by some government officials that portrays a picture that to government Gukurahundi was now a closed chapter. The belief by some government officials is that revisiting the past will open old wounds. The Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa was quoted saying in the Herald of 19 July 2011 saying

*We do not want to undermine efforts by our national leaders to re-unite the people. If we open healed wounds by discussing such issues, we will be undermining and failing to recognise the statesmanship exhibited by President Mugabe and his counterpart Dr Joshua Nkomo when they signed the Unity Accord in 1987.*

Many scholars and NGOs not only from Matabeleland who questioned if the wounds from Gukurahundi had healed in the first place have rebuked these claims. The fact that wounds had closed was not tantamount to healing and the signing of the Unity Accord had no direct correlation to healing. While the signing of the Unity Accord, which will be discussed in the next chapter, was an important milestone to the conflict, it only stopped direct violence and did it address neither structural violence nor foster healing.

The structural violence which characterise the post Unity Accord epoch might have drained away optimism from some Ndebele speaking people. This has also been exacerbated by the fact that was alluded to earlier, which is that the Shona dominates the current government and future governments are likely to be like that given the ethnic pattern that characterise voting in Zimbabwe. It gives very little hope in terms of the much anticipated government commitment and action. Many Ndebele people suspect the Shona of deliberately promoting the letting sleeping dogs lie syndrome out of moral guiltiness and hence they do not see any serious or honest engagement on the issue.

### 8.7.3 Those sitting on the fence

The group of fence sitters had more Shona than Ndebele speakers; this group expressed doubts about the possibility of lasting peace and yet, expressed cautious optimism about the possibility of lasting peace between the two ethnic groups. The most common explanation given was connected to the nature of the conflict between the Shona and Ndebele. A Shona speaking participant expressed that, “the conflict goes back to history and some of the people who were involved died many years ago and who can apologise on their behalf? “This apparently brings to fore the complexities of tackling protracted social conflicts, which happens to be nature of Shona and Ndebele conflict where victims and perpetrators continue to exchange roles in a vicious cycle of chronic violence. Within the Shona and Ndebele conflict there seems to be silent contestation not only about the conflict itself but also on who should apologise to whom first and for what. While survivors and victims of Gukurahundi who suffered both directly and indirectly have made it clear that acknowledgement and apologies from government are key to healing and reconciliation; there are some Shona people who still believe in the narrative that says “the child of a snake is a snake and your forefathers ate our cattle and also killed our forefathers” (Alexander *et al* 2000:222). Hence the existence of some Shonas who believe that Ndebele should not only just apologise, but they should apologise first for the violence perpetrated by the Ndebele to the Shona in 19<sup>th</sup> century before Gukurahundi.

This view has, however, been castigated by Tshuma who believes that Gukurahundi and Ndebele raids were worlds apart, to him;

*Lobengula and Mzilikazi eras were defined by the law of the jungle - survival of the fittest and everyone was fighting everyone while the Gukurahundi era falls under the modern era governed by international laws. (Standard 20 August 2010).*

Unfortunately, such debates over who should apologise first and who second, together with arguments about whether this happened prior or after the promulgation of international legal statutes, are not helping anyone. There is no honest engagement, which is opposed to these flavoured ethnicities political debates. In fact, it is such inflammatory debates, which create many “*doubting Thomases*” who find it more convenient to sit on the fence out of fear, given the emotional and deep-

rooted nature of the Ndebele and Shona conflict. It makes people dissociate themselves from actively participating in peace process based on the thinking that it is the role of the government or rather government should take the leading role. However, the Participatory Action Research (PAR) based study recently done by Dumisani Ngwenya (2014) brings a lot of hope because it certainly proved that even victims themselves with the mobilisation and help from committed individuals and organisations they can heal themselves and build peace within themselves and possibly to others as well.

My praise for Ngwenya's work should be understood as an attempt to sanitise government's abdication to meet its obligations and responsibilities. It simply means that we are increasingly finding ourselves in situations where governments or perpetrators are not forthcoming to apologise, but down there in the communities, people will be hurting. The question now is for how long communities should have to wait for government or perpetrators to show remorse and genuinely commit themselves. It also emerged from the fieldwork that despite the anger and disillusionment in the failure to get any mobilisation towards instituting honest engagement, young people expressed eagerness in participating in such for a forum should the opportunity presents itself. This made it easier for me to come up with the experimental group of twelve participants to engage in building friendships between the Shona and Ndebele as a way of promoting mutual respect and engagement. Drawing inspiration from the German-Jewish dialogue which consists of children of Holocaust survivors and descendants Nazi perpetrators, the German-Jewish dialogue proved that even the descendants of victims and perpetrators can engage in forging friendships without spending too much time dissecting or debating on who should apologise first and then who comes second.

## **8.8 Summary**

The fieldwork results and documentary analysis on the nature of Shona and Ndebele relations have revealed that what exist between the two groups is a cosmetic peace which is characterised by a no war-no peace scenario. While, a mere surface outlook may lull the observer into believing that the conflict is latent, but a deeper analysis reveals that relational fissures emanating from ethnic cleavages are growing and indeed "the elephant is in the dining room". Pertinent issues obtaining to the



relationship indicate that there is serious bitterness and mistrust, which is largely connected to the Gukurahundi atrocities and the well traceable history of animosities, which goes back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The polarisation represents the confluence of Shona and Ndebele particularisms and intolerance. The mistrust and resentment of each other have been simmering for many years, manifesting it openly on the internet debates, which have provided a convenient outlet valve. However, it is the worsening economic situation facing Zimbabwe over the recent years, which is now making the conflict more apparent. The next chapter will analyse efforts that were made by government using a top approach at reconciliation.

## **CHAPTER 9: A TOP DOWN EFFORT AT RECONCILIATION: THE 1987 UNITY ACCORD**

*A peace agreement is no guarantee against violence. (Darby 2006:1)*

*This was an agreement between uNkomo and uMugabe.*

### **9.1 Introduction**

Many hailed the Unity Accord agreement, signed between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU on 22 December 1987, as a milestone achievement. This was largely because it managed stop the devastating and brutal violence, which was taking place in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. However, like many other negotiated settlements, which are sometimes manipulated by political elites, the Unity Accord became a people's "agreement of accommodating one another". The Unity Accord was largely successful in as far as stopping direct violence was concerned. This chapter will demonstrate that while the Unity Accord was supposed to be an important starting point, it unfortunately became an end in itself instead of being a means to an end. This was largely because there was an absence of follow-through implement principles encapsulated by the Unity Accord agreement with honesty, whose contents were not only questionable but flawed and vague as well. Thus, the Unity Accord brought negative peace and failed to make the much-anticipated strides towards positive peace and social cohesion. It merely ended direct violence and allowed it to be replaced by structural violence.

### **9.2 Post resolution dynamics and the dilemma of negotiated settlements**

The signing of an agreement or accord as way of ending on going violence and hostilities is always hailed as a phenomenal achievement towards peace. However, inasmuch as the signing of an agreement is an important step it must be noted that the signing does not automatically transform the animosities overnight. There are so many instances where signatories and their supporters were deceived by merely

signing an agreement and then failed to move forward to give the agreement the necessary oxygen and enable it to take off and reach its final destination. The reasons for the failure are varied but very common and this chapter endeavours to illustrate how PF ZAPU and ZANU PF leaders fell into the common trap associated with conflict-resolution based peace agreements.

### **9.3 Unity Accord as an “elitist way of accommodating one another”**

One of the most popular responses, which came from the participants when asked about their understanding and purpose of the Unity Accord of 22 December 1987, was that “it was an agreement between uMugabe and uNkomo”. The other common response was that “it was between PF ZAPU and ZANU PF”. Upon reflection these responses illuminated so many things to me some of which have been also been covered by secondary literature. The fact that Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe signed the agreement is unimportant because they were expected to do that anyway since they each represented their political parties and followers. However, it is the manner in which the leaders “accommodated each other” in terms of how to share power which seems to have been prioritised at the expense of coming up with a comprehensive arrangement which should have captured the interests and aspirations of all the key stakeholders and all Zimbabweans.

Even though it may be understandable that under the representative democratic principles, elected leaders have the mandate from the electorate who ascended them to their respective offices. Therefore, when they come up with decisions and act on those decisions the supposition is that they will be doing so on behalf of those who gave them the mandate. Unfortunately, the case of the Unity Accord indicates that politics played a much more influential role than issues to do with unity or peace building. Yet according to Mashingaidze (2005:87),

*The keyword in post-conflict reconstruction is reconciliation. The government, social organisations, the churches, and the entire population have to come to terms with the past in one way or the other. The Unity Accord... was elitist and embodied a top down approach of governance. Nkomo and Mugabe signed the agreement and then sold it to the people. The grassroots were never consulted in the peace making and no reconciliation efforts were made.*

The first five clauses of the agreement, which captures what was agreed upon, demonstrate the exclusionist nature of the agreement:

- That ZANU PF and PF ZAPU have irrevocably committed themselves to unite under one political party.
- The Unity of political parties shall be achieved under the name Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF).
- That Comrade R. G. Mugabe shall be the first secretary and president of ZANU PF.
- That ZANU PF shall have two deputy secretaries who shall be appointed by the first secretary and president of the party.
- That ZANU PF shall seek to establish a socialist society in Zimbabwe on the guidelines of Marxist-Leninist.
- That ZANU PF shall seek to establish a party state.

These clauses demonstrated that politics reigned supreme and much emphasis was placed on endeavours towards harmonising the political balance sheet rather than issues that were core to the establishment of genuine peace and real social cohesion. While all this was taking place, it was being done at the expense ordinary people who had so many expectations from the agreement. As illustrated by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003:18),

*The Unity Accord was aimed at restoring cordial relations, peace and security in Zimbabwe. The cordial relations were not only to be restored between the military and civilians, but between the people of Matabeleland and the government, and also between the two major political parties in the country.*

However, it appears as if only the last clause from the above-mentioned Unity Accord clauses was addressed and the first two were not adequately addressed. Most of the participants acquired the knowledge of the Unity Accord from second order narratives which include High School study of history because all of them were born a couple of years after the signing of the Unity Accord. It also seems as if most of them were influenced by the government's Zimbabwe School Examination Council (ZIMSEC) dictated syllabus which tends to teach history from the official government's interpretation of events which is designed to what was noted by Tendi as "making ZANU-PF the alpha and omega of Zimbabwe's past present and future" (2009:7) . This is what ( ) the Terence Ranger as the teaching of patriotic history (2004) has interpreted. The ZIMSEC history syllabus portrays an image unity of purpose, which came as result of the signing of the Unity Accord at the same time showering praises to the leaders who spearheaded the signing of the Accord. One

Shona speaking participant demonstrated the influence of patriotic history in the following way, “the Unity Accord was signed to bring unity between ZAPU and ZANU following the disturbances caused by dissidents in Matabeleland”.

This served to reveal not only the central role played by political parties but it also reveal the role played by elites in influencing how they wanted the Unity Accord to be remembered. Officially, the Gukurahundi atrocities are referred to as the “disturbances” in Matabeleland caused by “dissidents” and nothing more. This probably influenced political elites to overestimate their capabilities while at the same time underestimating the influence and capabilities of their citizenry. This has also made some politicians especially those from Mashonaland to think that by signing the Unity Accord, Gukurahundi issues were now water under the bridge as highlighted in chapter 8. This raises a number of issues including those of the real motives of the unity accord. In South Africa Archbishop, emeritus Desmond Tutu highlighted the challenges, which they encountered in setting up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) where perpetrators advocated for a blanket amnesty (1999:30). The issue of the blanket amnesty, which was promoted by the Unity Accord, will be covered later in the chapter.

Declaring that Gukurahundi was a closed chapter was synonymous to imposing with imposing closure to both victims and survivors. This may explain why some people in Matabeleland believe that Unity Accord agreement was signed by PF ZAPU under duress hence the coining of the term “a surrender document which saw PF ZAPU being swallowed by ZANU PF” (Gatsheni-Ndlovu 2008:189). The failure of the Unity Accord to bring into context the problems associated with state or politically propelled projects. State propelled projects usually suffer from political interference by the political elites (Muchemwa *et al* 2013). One Ndebele speaking participant indicated that, “the Unity Accord was good on paper, but it was never fully practiced. A lot of discrimination is still taking place”.

This demonstrates one of the many expectations that ordinary citizens had about discrimination. The failure to have an inclusive process that should have captured the views of the people was one of the biggest undoing of the Unity Accord. Citizens pinned their hopes on politicians who seemed to have their own agendas like the

consolidation of political power through the creation of a one party state. These were rather self-serving interests by political elites and had nothing to do with the citizens who were probably in need of reconciliation more than the one party state.

It seems the political elites had their own way of doing things, which explains why participants regarded the Unity Accord as an agreement between Mugabe and Nkomo; and between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU. There was no stakeholder buy-in during the process where citizens, civil society, and other key stakeholders could have contributed by giving their input. This was not done before or even after the signing of the Unity Accord so the document merely remained only as a political document. The politicisation and the personalisation also created the problem of discontinuity. This means that it is not possible to discuss the Accord outside the realm of politics between Mugabe and Nkomo and their demise will probably mean the end of the Unity Accord. Such shack up signs became visible after the death of Nkomo in 1999. His death did not just mark the weakening of the Unity Accord but it also witnessed the rise of assertive and radical groups from Matabeleland who questioned the cost and benefits of remaining in the Unity Accord.

What is also coming out is the fact that outside Nkomo and Mugabe; PF ZAPU and ZANU PF the Unity Accord is simply non-existent. This reflects a structural defect of “*elitising*” what was supposed to be national project by narrowing its focus on party politics, which masqueraded as a “national project”. More importantly, the problem with most political elites is they will always put an effort towards protecting themselves and those close to them. Hence, the expression by Brown and Spiran (2012:244) that “the big fish won’t fry themselves” is very instructive; in fact, the big fish would rather find the smaller fish to fry instead. By this, token elites will not self-implicate themselves and their close allies, but rather they manipulate the processes, which they preside over in order to cover their tracks. Mpofu described the Unity Accord as “an elite pact of forgetting” and this was done using political alliances as a way of band aiding a deep and festering wound (2013:116). This was just as good as postponing a problem as seen by how the Unity Accord is faring two decades after its signing. The biggest beneficiaries of the Unity Accord seem to be the Shona elites followed by their Ndebele counterparts. Gatsheni-Ndlovu (2003:19) suggested that:

*The Accord was imposed on the people by the political elites and as such it was an authoritarian nation building strategy by ZANU PF. The accord dealt only with political rebuilding based on long lasting political settlement and the definition of a power sharing between erstwhile disputants.*

#### **9.4 Lack of clarity on the Unity Accord**

The Unity Accord left so many questions unanswered and this could be linked the problem of clarity on the part of the agreement. Even though it is understandable that it was going to be a mammoth task, which demanded a delicate act of balancing out in order to bring peace between the two ethnic groups, it seems as if the two leaders missed the bigger picture of people's expectations particularly the people of Matabeleland. One Ndebele participant pointed out that:

*The Unity Accord failed because there is still bitterness and rivalry between the Ndebele and the Shona. We are not united; maybe proper education will help to change things.*

Another Ndebele participant added that, "if we are united why is it that we do not have many opportunities in Matabeleland as compared to people in Mashonaland?"

The contributions illuminate that more than two decades after the signing of the Unity Accord which ended violence, young people have in mind what they thought should have been covered or addressed by the Unity Accord. So the question is did the leaders had a proper understanding of people's interests and expectations? The contents of the Unity Accord and its outcome tell a different story. Because from what is emerging people generally expected the Unity Accord to tackle some of the following issues:

- Peace and security – so that one could live in any part of Zimbabwe without fear
- Healing and reconciliation- Following the traumatising violence it was essential for healing to take place so that the Shona and Ndebele could reconcile and co-exist together.
- Forgiveness- This subject brings closure to both victims and perpetrators and it sometimes come just before healing and reconciliation or at times, it can come after healing and reconciliation depending on the prevailing circumstances.

- Restitution and compensation- Following the loss of relatives and property and the other basic infrastructure that can sustain a decent livelihood, some form of restitution and compensation was going to go a long way in facilitating the return to normalcy.
- Economic development and provision of opportunities- the disturbances had derailed the much-needed social progress and economic development so much that the affected provinces required some form of “affirmative action” in order to catch up with the provinces that were not affected.
- A sincere apology and acknowledgement of wrong doing- Government should have apologised acknowledged that what happened was wrong unjustified and then re-assure people that what happened would not be allowed to happen again.
- Set up mechanisms that promote continuous engagement- this should have been in the form of an all-inclusive and broad based peace-building platform that enable the two groups to have an honest engagement dialogue to explore ways of promoting the transition from negative peace to positive peace.

These are some of the key issues among many others highlighting people’s expectations. The inability to have the key issues addressed explains why the Unity Accord failed to live up to expectations. It also appears as if there was a crisis of expectations from the people, which the leaders failed to encapsulate into the agreement or after the agreement. Even though it is easy to criticise, but when it comes to politicians it must be acknowledged that it is easier said than done to expect politicians to come up with a comprehensive peace-building program. It must also be noted that some of the contents of the Unity Accord were unclear and ambiguous. Part of the Unity Accord preamble reads as follows:

*Conscious of the historical links between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU in the armed struggle and through alliance under the banner of Patriotic Front; Cognisant of the fact that the two parties jointly command the support of the overwhelming majority of the people as evidence by the general election results of 1980 and 1985 respectively; Desirous to unite our nation ;establish peace, law and order and to guarantee social and economic development and political stability; Determined to eliminate and end the insecurity and violence caused by dissidence in Matabeleland; convinced that national unity, political stability, peace, law and order social development can only be achieved to the fullest under the conditions of peace and unity primarily of ZANU PF and PF ZAPU.*



From the preamble of the Unity Accord, it is clear that the pertinent issues under the social, economic development and political stability were too generalised. The issue of insecurity and violence were all linked and limited to the activities of dissidents only. The Unity Accord left out many things unqualified and maybe in anticipation that some things were going to sort themselves out in due course which unfortunately did not happen. While it was impossible for the Unity Accord to capture everything about what had happened or what was to happen in future relations between the Shona and Ndebele, one would not be wrong to expect a government driven policy to address the fundamental issues of future peace.

Nadler (2012:131) confirmed this by pointing out that there is need to define the goal of unity and reconciliation clearly, before embarking on it and nothing must be left to chance. A good example of a clearly defined goal could be that of social integration or separation and mutual acceptance (Nadler 2012:131). Merely defining the goal(s) of unity and reconciliation is not enough; there must be some sort of a roadmap about the steps that could lead to the attainment of the set goal(s). In the case of Unity Accord, the most notable goal was that of unity through a one party state. As to what steps and how that unity or the one party state could address pertinent issues such as technical or transformative peace-building that was never made clear or maybe it was just non-existent.

The other crucial issue, which was noted by some participants, was the unfairness nature of the Unity Accord. Both Shona and Ndebele participants noted this feeling that the Unity Accord was unfair to the Ndebele people and PF ZAPU. One Shona participant even noted that, “the Unity Accord did not work because it gave Shona people more advantages and better representation than the Ndebele and that was unfair”.

An Ndebele participant also made this comment.

*The Unity Accord was unfair to Nkomo and his people, for example look at the name of the party, it remained ZANU PF and the name PF ZAPU disappeared altogether because it was absorbed by ZANU PF.*

The name of the “new party” after the signing of the Unity Accord became ZANU PF and indeed PF ZAPU as an entity disappeared. Ndlovu-Gatsheni also confirmed this

by indicating that ZANU PF swallowed PF ZAPU in the name of unity (2008:189). Thus, the feeling of unfairness also emanate from the fact that ZANU PF was actually a splinter group, which emerged from ZAPU in 1963 split. However, the Unity Accord seems to have ignored that part and pushed for the name ZANU PF to prevail over that ZAPU the original party where ZANU PF actually emerged. Perhaps a new and neutral name could have been fair or a name, which was going to capture values of both parties, was going to be fairer than assuming the name of just one party, which insinuated that ZANU PF was in essence “the senior partner” in the arrangement. This view is also confirmed the 18/11/14 uMthwakazi Review columnists who pointed out that:

*If ever there was unity then both PF ZAPU and ZANU PF should have been discarded. So in this Accord ZANU PF had the honours to retain their party name, their symbol and had their leader automatically being named the leader of the “new party” while PF ZAPU salvaged ZANU PF second Vice President. All PF ZAPU positions are second ranks to ZANU PF.*

In Tanzania when Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) which was the ruling party of mainland Tanganyika merged with Afro Shirazi Party (ASP) from the Islands of Zanzibar in 1977 a new party with a new name was formed which they named Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) in Swahili and which loosely translates into Party of the Revolution. The name of the country also transformed into United Republic of Tanzania in an effort to capture the spirit of togetherness. It is not surprising that Tanzania has been a stable and peaceful country in East Africa and CCM is still a very strong party, which is yet to lose an election.

The second issue, which also compounds the feeling of unfairness, is the setup, which technically makes a Shona person the obvious President of the party and the country and then naturally confining an Ndebele person to Vice Presidency. Even though the set up did not endorse this as a permanent arrangement cast in stone, it has unfortunately become a convention that the President shall be Shona deputised by an Ndebele lieutenant. The unfair part was obviously worsened by the fact that there are two Vice Presidents who are designated as the First Vice President and Second Vice President. That gave a clear impression of Shona dominance because out of the three top most positions in the country the Shona people occupy two. This set up prevails up to this day as seen in the appointment of Emmerson Mnangagwa

who is Shona as the first Vice President and Phelekezela Mphoko an Ndebele as the second Vice President. Even though there is, veiled attempt to make them appear as if they are the reality is the first Vice President is the clear successor to the President Mugabe one way or the other as per the 2013 constitution. According to the constitution section 101 (1) which says, “If the President dies, resigns or is removed from office the first Vice President assumes office as President” (2013:45).

The precedence, which was set at the highest level, has been replicated in both private and public institutions. This has been a source of friction, especially given the fact that the people were made to believe that there is unity between PF ZAPU and ZANU PF. Yet one ethnic group seems destined to play second fiddle with no real possibility of ever occupying the highest office in the land. This may help in understanding why some radical groups have taken a position to withdraw from Zimbabwe as they feel that the only way to get opportunities is to go the separate way. It also substantiates claims made by the shadowy “Grand plan document”. The frustration from this perceived unfair arrangement saw some senior members from PF ZAPU like Dumuso Dabengwa and the late Thenjiwe Lesabe leaving ZANU PF to revive PF ZAPU citing unfulfilled promises and unfairness as their main reasons. In essence, ZANU PF seems to have been the biggest beneficiary of the Unity Accord.

### **9.5 Unity Accord and the stopping of violence**

The area of violence is one area in which the Unity Accord has been credited. Following the signing of the Unity Accord agreement the Fifth Brigade withdrew from Matabeleland and Midlands’s provinces where it was operating, the unit was disbanded, and its members were re-assigned to some units of Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA). Under the terms of the Unity Accord, government declared a blanket Amnesty in 1988 under which a pardon was extended to dissidents who had surrendered (Mashingaidze 2005:86). This saw violence and insecurity by both Fifth Brigade and dissidents ending. The end of violence was major step which was expected to be followed a period of peace and economic development. This unfortunately did not become the case and those who quickly celebrated the Unity Accord perhaps did not understand the complexities associated with the anatomy of violence in post-conflict scenarios.

Violence can exist in three forms, which are direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence. In this particular case, only the first two will be of interest. Direct violence is the most commonly known form of violence because it is very visible and its impact overt so much that it quickly draws attention. Direct violence is usually expressed in the form of war at macro levels or it can be in the form of domestic violence, which is largely witnessed at micro levels. Structural violence is very subtle, but equally lethal like direct violence, in some instances it is referred to as “soft genocide”. Structural violence is characterised by unjust systems, policies, or structures that causes death, harm, and suffering based on what could be avoided if all things are being equal.

For people from Matabeleland ending direct violence was good but it was not good enough as highlighted by one participant from Matabeleland,

*There are no opportunities in Matabeleland for young people like us; the very few opportunities that arise are taken by people from Mashonaland areas. This is why a lot of young people are unemployed and poor.*

Mashingaidze confirmed this when he found out that “the Unity Accord ended the war but did not bring peace” (2005:84). Indeed the Unity Accord managed to stop the on-going atrocities from direct violence, but looking back after two decades the Unity Accord failed to create a foundation, which was supposed to spearhead the ending of structural violence. This is not to say the Unity Accord was unimportant, it was of course an important stage but it only stopped direct violence and created negative peace and nothing else beyond this.

This means that issues such as inequalities, which persist, are clear signs of structural violence. One problem, which has dogged Matabeleland provinces particularly Bulawayo City has been the problem of water. Although the problem is historical, there was anticipation that after independence the government was going to prioritise the issue through the long-term solution of drawing water from Zambezi River under the Matabeleland- Zambezi water project. The project failed to take-off due to the violence from 1981 to 1987 and the end of violence under the auspices of the Unity Accord rekindled the hopes that the project was going to be implemented. Instead, government embarked on other big water projects in Shona speaking areas including the big Tokwe Mukosi dam in Masvingo while leaving the people from

Matabeleland dry. Because of lack of prioritisation of projects, most people from Matabeleland feel that the unequal development and marginalisation is deliberate and well orchestrated. The inability by government to bridge the gap between Matabeleland and other provinces also contributed to the problems of de-industrialisation of Bulawayo City. This has seen a number of companies relocating from Bulawayo to Harare citing water problems and other viability challenges, leaving people in Bulawayo unemployed. Although the closure of companies has been linked to a myriad of other factors which are at times even beyond the government of Zimbabwe, but the fact that a company closes in Bulawayo and re-opens in Harare sends tongues wagging given the mistrust that already exist. One participant from Matabeleland pointed that, “everything that is special is taken to Harare or is done in Harare, and we are left with nothing here in Bulawayo”.

The existence of structural violence demonstrated the lack of a follow through to the Unity Accord in terms of implementing the necessary technical peace building. This point in particular was also supported by Ndlovu-Gatsheni who pointed out that the Accord not underpinned by a comprehensive post conflict peace building which is imperative for the development of human security based peace (2003:32). It is only through a comprehensive peace-building program that the long journey from negative peace to positive could be embarked upon. The failure by the Unity Accord to address structural violence has been caused by the very unfortunate and wrong impression that by resolving direct violence the Accord had also automatically addressed all other forms of violence. The concept of “hitting two birds with one stone” does not necessarily apply in the field of peace building. Each type of violence demands special attention and special intervention. By this token, the Unity Accord failed to dispel the suspicions as highlighted above by the participant who wrongly believed that everything that was good was happening in Harare.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni has suggested that by signing the Unity Accord “tensions were suspended rather than removed” (2003:31). The people probably did this in general in the interests of giving peace a chance. However, the suspicions were not allayed due to the continuation of structural violence in the form marginalisation and unequal access to necessities, which both are real but also imagined in some instances. A clear testimony of these suspicions and tensions was seen during the run up towards

the current new constitution of Zimbabwe in 2012 where the issue of devolution and decentralisation of power became one of the contentious issues. In Mataberland the majority of the people advocated and campaigned for the devolution and decentralisation of authority in anticipation that decentralisation was going to give them increased autonomy to determine their progress and destiny. In Mashonaland areas, the campaign advocated for a unitary model predicated on centralised government and reduced autonomy. Much of the campaign from those in Mashonaland areas argued that devolution of power was dangerous and would lead to divisions along ethnic lines. Even though the view, which prevailed in terms of popularity, was that of devolution of power, the view was never incorporated well in the constitution because it was watered down and it is now more on paper than in reality.

The failure to understand the anatomy of violence was also demonstrated by the failure to appreciate the long-term impact of psychological violence on both survivors and perpetrators. Besides the obvious physical wounds, violence leaves behind serious emotional wounds as well. Thus, the end of direct violence does not necessarily signify the end emotional pain, trauma, or other stress disorders associated with exposure to extreme violence. These require transformational peace-building which emphasis what Machakanja identified as “the healing of spiritual souls which is a core stepping stone to the foundation of durable peace” (2010:1). The Unity Accord failed to put in place both psychotherapy and social therapy programs to address the special needs of those affected, hence the absence of social and psychological closure. The emotional wounds created by violence will continue to haunt both the victims who seem to have been left in cold to heal them. There is of course one unique story, which appeared in an online newspaper Bulawayo24 that featured a story of a former Fifth Brigade soldier who made a surprise visit in the company of a Catholic Priest to ask for forgiveness to the relatives of the people he killed during Gukurahundi. He pointed out that, “I could not live with my conscience. That’s why I am asking for your forgiveness for what I and other soldiers did to you”. This aptly demonstrate that even perpetrators are victims of their own violent actions and they are haunted their violent deeds (Bulawayo 24 2014).

Violence especially in which people are killed violently like in the case of Gukurahundi has a spiritual dimension as well and this is very much in line with the African spiritual beliefs. The belief is that when someone kills another person that act alone is not only against that person's living family members, it also goes further to that person's ancestral spirits. If there is, no acknowledgement and restitution the avenging spirit will haunt both his family and the perpetrator seeking closure. In most instances victims of Gukurahundi atrocities just "disappeared" and there has not been proper burial of their remains. This is a cause of disagreement between government and the relatives of the late victims who wish to properly bury the remains of their relatives and conduct proper burial and traditional rituals. Therefore, besides the physical, psychological, and emotional closure there was also need for spiritual closure, which was never allowed to see the day of light under the terms of the Unity Accord.

## **9.6 No peace dividend**

After a period of war and violence when peace eventually comes, the newfound peace ought to bring with it some tangible incentives, which should enable people to value peace as sacrosanct. The concept of peace dividend is based from the belief that resources, which were being channelled to military, and other security affairs in general will now be channelled towards peace and other post conflict developmental projects. In other words, a peace dividend must work in such a way that enables "benefits" that accrue from peace to outweigh the "benefits" that can accrue from pursuing war or violence as a way of attaining an objective. A participant from Matabeleland pointed that:

*Tribalism especially against the Ndebele is an on-going thing and that is why I feel that we Ndebele people did not get anything from the Unity Accord. Just look at the distribution of wealth, which is benefitting more?*

This statement amplifies the common narrative of marginalisation and underdevelopment experienced by Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. Ngwenya confirmed this when he pointed out that "the citizens of Matabeleland failed to reap the peace dividend of the Unity Accord" (2014:34). Without any meaningful peace dividend, the post conflict dispensation becomes a nightmare and may make people undervalue the negative peace due to the absence of tangible benefits, which they

believe they should be enjoying. In the case of people from Matabeleland, it seems people expected the end of discrimination coupled with economic justice. This probably explains why the Unity Accord is not regarded so highly in Matabeleland areas and Bulawayo area in particular. A state of peacefulness is very important but peace alone without practical benefits is meaningless to those facing post conflict poverty and discrimination. As confirmed by Ndlovu-Gatsheni earlier own animosities and hatred had just been temporarily just to give peace a chance to work (2008). By giving peace a chance, people will be closely monitoring the situation in anticipation of benefits. If the benefits are not delivered, the animosities can easily be re-ignited with even more vengeance. Mkandla quoted by Ncube (2006:20) had this to say, "The Unity Accord was a non-event we don't want to hear anything about it...who is benefiting? Certainly not the people of Matabeleland."

A ZANU PF politburo member from Matabeleland who was quoted in the Newsday of 02/08/11 saying also expressed similar sentiments:

*We are made to believe it was agreed programmes would be set up to catapult Matabeleland and Midlands to the levels of other provinces that were not affected by Gukurahundi, but nothing of that sort ever happened until now.*

The frustration indicates the disappointment and exasperation with the Unity Accord as result its inability to change the economic environment. As pointed in section 9.3 it seems elites from both sides who manipulated the Unity Accord to forge political alliances mostly enjoyed the benefits of peace. The issue of the peace dividend becomes integral especially when the generations, which did not experience the conflict and violence, come to age. This has been confirmed by the research conducted by Vambe in Midlands and Matabeleland areas (2012). He noted that the most frustrated group due to due to lack of employment opportunities was the youthful age which did not directly experience the Gukurahundi atrocities (Vambe 2012). It seems to this group peace should translate into tangible economic benefits. The generation of those who actually experienced the violence may respect peace for its own sake, especially when they compare the before and after situations. However, this may not necessarily apply to the youthful generation, which did not witness much benefit from negative peace. This actually helps in understanding why the youthful group has been mostly involved in radical politics, which saw some



pushing for the agenda of secession from Zimbabwe. The anger and frustration from the youth is almost difficult to miss and the situation seems to be getting worse as government continues to bury its head in the sand. A female opposition leader Marcelina Chikasha pointed that:

*What seems to be worrying is that the issue is no longer between the people of Matabeleland and ZANU PF, but it has now cascaded to being between the Shona and Ndebele.*

This situation transmuted into this largely because there has not been any meaningful intention by government to address the issues. Only a few NGOs and community-based organisations have made bold attempts into discussing the challenges of Gukurahundi and their implications to Shona and Ndebele relations. Maybe government merely expects people to just forget, forgive, and move on without any healing which lead into the next theme of believing that amnesia can act as a form of forgetting, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

## **9.7 National amnesia**

The Unity Accord did not carefully consider the crucial aspects of forgiveness and reconciliation. In fact it was the political elites who “forgave each other” if ever forgiveness existed in the Unity Accord. Political elites accommodated each other well at political level but made a wrong assumption that what seems to have worked for them at the top echelons of power was naturally going to cascade down to the grassroots effortlessly. Unfortunately, reconciliation issues cannot be left to fate and chance or to a mere hope that the situation will resolve itself using a blanket Amnesty like the one announced by government in 1988 soon after Gukurahundi. The Amnesty of 1988 like the one that came before it in 1980 was not thought out well in terms of ascertaining its implications to victims and survivors. The 1988 Amnesty was hurriedly done without taking time to consider other possible alternatives. Just as other hurriedly implanted peace arrangements constructed during the heat of the moment they tend to be short term based while in the end worsening the very situation, which they wish to address (Muchemwa *et al* 2013).

Even though a blanket Amnesty may seem to be good to those who were perpetrators, it unfortunately gives the wrong impression of promoting a culture of impunity. An Amnesty is also tantamount to the promotion of national amnesia where

people are simply expected to just forget what happened and move on. The biggest problem with national amnesia is that it promotes national malaise due to its belief in the culture of silence. With time that silence gives a false comfort, which may be wrongly interpreted as a sign of peace. This is very dangerous because underneath that silence and false comfort the embers from anger and unhealed hearts will be burning in a situation, which makes that false comfort and silence unsustainable and unpredictable as well.

To government the Unity Accord of 1987 and blanket Amnesty of 1988 were tantamount to closure of Gukurahundi. This has been manifested by various efforts to thwart or criminalise any debates on Gukurahundi or gagging anyone who is viewed as invoking Gukurahundi memories. Anyone who dares to raise the issue in public is treated with suspicion and he or she may face arrest like what happened to the former Minister Moses Mzila Ndlovu during the Government of National Unity (GNU). Minister Ndlovu was arrested for allegedly presiding over a memorial service in commemoration of Gukurahundi victims in Lupane area of Matabeleland North. Ironically, Minister Ndlovu was one of the three ministers who headed the National Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation, and Reintegration, which had been formed under the auspices of the GNU to address issues of past violence and reconciliation. In 2011 a Catholic Priest Father Marko Mabutho Mkandla was arrested for conducting a church service in Lupane in commemoration of Gukurahundi victims. In 2010, a visual artist Owen Maseko was arrested for putting a Visual Art exhibition in a Bulawayo Art Gallery in commemoration of Gukurahundi atrocities. The same issue also landed the Acting Director of Bulawayo Gallery Voti Thebe into hot water.

These efforts to silence the talk or to criminalise any efforts that touch on Gukurahundi have been condemned as sign of double standards and a brazen display of lack of courage, tolerance and political will to tackle the unfortunate past of the country. A good example of such double standards by government can be seen in how government has made strong attempts to fossilise the memory of the liberation struggle. This has been done using various national events coupled by government sponsored musical galas to “remind” citizens about the liberation

struggle and the atrocities committed against African nationalist by the successive colonial regimes.

These memorialisation efforts by government have also witnessed a campaign that saw the exhumation and re-burial of liberation struggle fighters including some who were found in disused mines and other shallow graves. While there is nothing wrong in commemorating the brutality and violence of the colonial regime or giving decent reburial to the liberators of the country, the big question is why the same memorialisation is criminalised when it comes to the victims of Gukurahundi? The only memorialisation that seems to matter to government in light of Shona and Ndebele relations is the one done in conjunction with the government's "master narrative" of celebrating the signing of the Unity Accord of December 22 1987. This saw government declaring 22 December as a public holiday to commemorate the National Unity day and sometimes this is done through government sponsored musical galas. This "selective amnesia" has riled the people of Matabeleland so much that some pressure groups have used the Unity Day to mourn the "swallowing" of PF ZAPU by ZANU PF rather. All this happened largely due failure to engage in honest dialogue before and after the signing of the Unity Accord. This saw government taking the easy route of announcing a blanket Amnesty. Besides sweeping things under the carpet, buttressing impunity and promoting a culture of silence this covers deep wounds with a *band-aid* and these wounds are still festering and will continue to fester without healing. One participant from Harare highlighted that "for Gukurahundi to be addressed there was need for Unity Accord to acknowledge and also compensate the affected families".

Participants from both ethnic groups also suggested the issue of compensation. This confirms what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003) and Mashingaidze (2005) both found. However, the issues of compensation and restitution could have been raised and discussed had the parties embarked on genuine dialogue in order to transform the past. Genuine dialogue is having a pleasant conversation about unpleasant things in a civilised way, it is also about confronting those hard and painful facts from the past no matter how unpleasant they are, and this is the only way to transform (Moyo 2009). However all that possibility was taken away in the name of national amnesia and silence? One participant from Matabeleland pointed in anger that all this

indicate, “Nkomo was tricked by Mugabe”. At political level, politicians saw the Unity Accord as closure and yet to ordinary citizens both Shona and Ndebele there was no closure and this has been noted by debates, which have been rife on the Internet over the past few years. These debates also demonstrate that all official efforts to induce closure or silence to people have made the debate livelier than before through using other platforms outside the scrutiny of government like various forms of social media and internet. Stauffer (2009:151) aptly captured this when he observed that:

*Of grave concern for those researching the impact of Matabeleland violence in the 1980s is the apparent transmission of those ethnic animosities in both Ndebele and Shona communities to the next generation with an unwitting degree of emotional veracity and fervent antagonism.*

## **9.8 Summary**

The Unity Accord was an imposed peace document. The Accord created an illusion of false comfort which was based on fake political and ethnic stability, which masked existing political hostilities and ethnic fissures. However, a fake political and ethnic stability without genuine solidarity and social cohesion is not quite meaningful because it is not sustainable and cannot withstand the test of time. In fact, it exacerbates the very problems that it seeks to avoid or hide. Thus, the Unity Accord postponed the problem by creating fake unity, which was only validated for as long as ZANU PF was in power and for as long as the Ndebele were playing second fiddle role to the Shona. That is neither genuine peace nor genuine unity. Given the limited abilities which apparently manifested by the failure to change the stereotyping, the next chapter presents the effort made by this research in an attempt to find the possibilities of changing attitudes using a people to people engagement to build friendships.

## **CHAPTER 10: ENGAGING IN DIALOGUE TO BUILD FRIENDSHIP**

*The cultivation of friendship does not just happen suddenly. Friendships are nurtured over time as friends learn to experience one another in mutuality.*  
(Waghid 2010:61).

### **10.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and discuss the process, activities, and the action, which developed in an endeavour to promote mutuality and friendship among the participants in the experimental group. The experimental group was similar to what Lederach described as “the conflict-transformational platform” (2012:3). In this particular instance, the transformative platform endeavoured to build friendships in an effort to transform mindsets from prejudice-based mutual suspicion and disrespect to empathetic-based trust and mutual respect. Dialogue based on the Transcend Method was instrumental to the whole process because it facilitated engagement and contact between participants. The engagement and contact were structured to cover the following themes: communication, identity, perspectives sharing, integration, and mutual action to promote solidarity and atonement.

### **10.2 The journey to building friendships**

To people who were not ordinarily friends, the journey to friendship represents transformation. This resonates well with the Transcend Method (see chapter seven section 7.6) of which the central belief is that in order to address conflict there must be a transformation of actors’ relationships. Conflict parties cannot continue to act and behave in the same way and yet expect a change in the relationship. Thus, the attempt to build friendship represents a creative and ambitious attempt at dealing with conflict between polarised groups. The Transcend Method of Conflict-transformation views conflict as a source of potential development or brutal violence – depending on how it is handled.

### 10.2.1 Participants' bio data

| Age          | Number of participants | Percentage  |
|--------------|------------------------|-------------|
| 18-21        | 7                      | 32%         |
| 22-25        | 15                     | 68%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>22</b>              | <b>100%</b> |

**Table 10.1:** Participants' age

As can be seen from the table above, 22 participants participated in the dialogue from the initial targeted 24. Two members voluntarily opted out. Participants were selected using purposive sampling method (see chapter seven). The table also indicate that the participants are young adults whose age is between 18 and 25. The motivation of choosing young adults had to do with fact that young adults are more receptive to change than adults who have hardened attitudes and more importantly it makes sense to invest and transform the young generation because such an investment can “sow seeds” for transformed generation (see chapter three section 3.3).

| Sex          | Number of participants | Percentage  |
|--------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Male         | 13                     | 59%         |
| Female       | 9                      | 41%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>22</b>              | <b>100%</b> |

**Table 10.2: Participants according to sex**

Despite having been slightly outnumbered, female participants were in fact very active and more open in the dialogue sessions.

The table below indicates the journey and steps taken toward building friendships.

| Date     | Steps           | Participants involved | Purpose   |
|----------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|
| May 2013 | Initial contact | 2                     | The initial contact had to be made well ahead of time because |

|                       |                                  |    |   |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----|---|
|                       |                                  |    | I expected the process of obtaining clearance to take some time due to expected protocols. My first contacts about gaining research access were the Pro-Vice Chancellor of Solusi University and the Dean of Faculty of Arts. It took about three weeks to get the response   |
| 29 June 2014          | Initial meeting                  | 29 | Potential participants were recruited through a public announcement in a weekly church service and initially 43 participants indicated interests in participating, but eventually 29 attended the initial I meeting. The initial meeting with the potential participants who had responded to the call for volunteers intended to clarify issues pertaining the research and then to select the 24 participants for the research. |
| 7 July–14 July 2014   | Interviews and FGDs              | 24 | The interviews and FGDs were firstly meant to gain an understanding of the current nature of Shona and Ndebele relations. The second purpose was to have a pre-intervention evaluation of the attitudes. The third purpose was to arrange for the dialogue sessions.  |
| 30 July–1 August 2014 | 1 <sup>st</sup> dialogue session | 12 | The first dialogue session was designed for ice breaking by discussing communication and its role in conflict and in improving understanding of each other.   |
| 30–31 August 2014     | 2 <sup>nd</sup> dialogue session | 12 | A perspective sharing was a theme designed for participants to share personal stories, observations and experiences on ethnicity problems between the Shona and Ndebele...  |
| 28–29 September 2014  | 3 <sup>rd</sup> dialogue session | 11 | The third dialogue session tackled the issue of identity and how it is linked to the politics of ethnicity  |
| 26–27 October 2014    | 4 <sup>th</sup> dialogue session | 11 | The integration dialogue session promoted and interrogated ways that can facilitate integration and   |

|                             |   |    |  |
|-----------------------------|---|----|--|
|                             |   |    | coexistence.   |
| 16–17 November 2014         | 5 <sup>th</sup> dialogue session            | 11 | The socialisation dialogue session promoted the idea of working together among participants to discuss and finalise a plan a joint activity. |
| 5 December 2014             | 6 <sup>th</sup> dialogue session and Action | 11 | This was the implementation of the tree-planting activity.   |
| 31 March 2015–14 April 2015 | Interviews                                  | 22 | These were individual interviews, which were meant to analyse the post-intervention attitudes of both the experimental and control groups.   |

**Table 10.3: Steps taken to build friendships**

### **10.3 First session: Ice-breaking and communication**

The first dialogue session was difficult for the participants as well as me in that neither of us knew what to expect. The typical program structure of the dialogue session was simple and was followed in all the sessions. We started with greetings followed by the opening prayer. I would then lead us into the dialogue discussion theme of the day to kick-start the engagement process. The session ended with a reflection on the key issues discussed during the session, planning for the next dialogue session followed by the closing prayer. There were breaks for refreshments and lunch.

The first dialogue session held a crucial role as icebreaker. We started by inviting a volunteer amongst the participants to help list participants’ expectations as well as the general rules that were to govern the conduct of participants during the dialogue sessions. Expectations that were offered included the following:

“I just want to participate, share my thoughts, and listen to others and maybe I can find if there is any chance for peace between the Shona and Ndebele problems”. (Sic)

“I want to see if there is hope for the future and see how far we can go as a group”.

“I am here for adventure and also to hear each other’s opinions”.



The main purpose of the first dialogue session was to initiate the whole dialogue session and to serve as a pacesetter. In fact, much of the success of the whole intervention depended on the impact and impression made by the first dialogue session. Very importantly, the session also sought to initiate what could lead to future bonding among the participants. There was no previous or current working relationship between the participants and myself prior to this research. Some participants knew each other as other students at the university before the dialogue, while others were interacting for the first time. The aim was to establish a sufficient level of understanding in order to facilitate effective communication and rapport. I should here that the knowledge gained from the Alternative to Violence Program (AVP) training came in handy in helping me to sharpen my facilitation skills (see chapter seven section 7.8.1).

The topic on communication was of key importance because of the centrality of communication in conflict handling in general and in human relationships in particular. The topic was again also highly relevant in helping set up the initiatives of establishing trust among participants. Even though some of the participants were acquaintances, they did not know each other well enough especially across ethnic lines. One Shona participant had this to say,

*Some of us we know each because we are all students at this institution and because of that we meet at different platforms... and we communicate but that communication is confined to certain issues only like discussing an assignment. But we don't go beyond the official level of interaction.*

Even though some of the participants were acquaintances, they were not that close to each other. Other participants also confirmed and shared their opinions on the dearth of communication in human societies in general. My role was to facilitate and stimulate participation among the participants during the dialogue. In my introduction, I emphasised the importance of communication in human relationships. As pointed out by Harris “each of us sees, hears and experiences the world uniquely; we spend our lives bridging the differences between our perceptions (and the needs and wishes they generate) and the perceptions of others” (2011:124). In this research, it means communication was the key tool in bridging the differences of perceptions.

Lake and Rothchild believe that information failure is a major contributor to the development of conflicts as groups misrepresent or misinterpret information about other groups (1996:46). In fact, many conflicts escalate due to failure to communicate effectively. I emphasised what open and honest communication meant and also highlighted the idea that the purpose of dialogue is not to reach an agreement or to win the other person or group but rather to listen and to be listened to so that there would be empathy, understanding and appreciation of one another. I even borrowed an insight from a Nigerian dialogue meant to build peace between Muslims and Christians, which claimed that while conventional wisdom believes the biggest killer is HIV and AIDS, the biggest killer now in the world is a “new” disease called Human Relationship Deficiency Syndrome (HRDS) (Ivorgba 2010). Communication therefore becomes key lifeblood in maintaining good relationships.

Contrary to my fears that the participants were going to take time to understand what we were doing, they seem to have had a reasonable understanding and appreciation of communication. It also emerged from the discussions that what inhibits communication are preconceived ideas, including some exaggerations of what some people are made to believe. This usually came through because of socialisation. A Shona speaking participant pointed that:

*As I was preparing begin my studies here at Solusi, I heard so many stories that the Ndebele people are very hostile to Shona people. However, this was not the kind of scenario, which I saw when I came here. I am not saying everything is okay-yes there is tension but it's not as it was portrayed to me.*

Another Shona participant indicated that:

*The treatment that you get in Matabeleland depends on how you conduct yourself. I noted that communication is very important. Language can bring people together. I have made an effort to learn Ndebele and sometimes I respond in broken Ndebele at times people make fun out it, but I am happy that my Ndebele skills have improved a lot as compared to the time when I came here.*

The issue of language had an implication on the communication that we were building in our dialogue sessions. We began using the English language in the session and participants suggested that we should use Ndebele and Shona as well. However, it was agreed that each time we mix and interchange the languages and it was essential to translate and simplify the meaning to others to enable

understanding and learning. This, it was felt would go a long way in improving communication between the two ethnic groups.

It was further suggested by some participants that in order to enhance communication within the group members agreed to set up a *WhatsApp* group platform. This made communication easy because every participant had a cell phone that was compatible with this social media platform. This platform enabled the members to post messages on a central platform and allowed conversations to take place since members could instantly respond to each other. All twelve members gladly joined *WhatsApp* as well as the group. By virtue of having been co-opted to the *WhatsApp* platform group, I had the chance to observe what the members were discussing. I deliberately chose not to contribute but to be an observer to the dialogue conversations since I was the dialogue facilitator. The creation of a *WhatsApp* platform group enabled easy and affordable communication. To my surprise, the platform group was given the name “The blended” by the members and that eventually became the name of the research group.

The consensus by the participants was that there was a need for members to get to know each other well. It also came out clearly that communication is inevitable and natural between people in any society because human beings are interactive by nature. Some participants confessed that even though there is a tendency for people to associate with those who belong to one’s ethnic group, the reality is that you may at times be in a group made up of some people who speak different languages. This has happened frequently in lecture, tutorial groups and other university activities and the way we interact in these situations communicate certain messages, deliberately or otherwise. Participants generally admitted that people did not take time to understand the other person and were prejudiced. This resonates with the observations made by Gene Knusder-Hoffman, “that an enemy is the one whose story we have not heard”. The only way to get to know the other person’s story is by communicating effectively. The first dialogue session started in a more promising way than I had anticipated. Perhaps it reflects the advantages of working with young people. We also used this session to discuss and plan the logistical issues surrounding the second dialogue, which was scheduled for three weeks later.

## 10.4 Second session: perspectives sharing

The second dialogue session was on perspectives sharing (see table on the journey friendships). This session had to be postponed from the week ending 18 August 2014 to the week ending 31 August 2014, due to four participants of the experimental group attending a church meeting at short notice. Fortunately, all the members managed to attend the dialogue session on the rescheduled date. The second session on perspectives sharing saw participants sharing personal life experiences with special focus on the polarisation between the Shona and Ndebele. Sharing of experiences and perspectives enabled participants to get a better understanding of the diversity that exists and it proved to be an important exercise. Perhaps the first session on communication resulted in good icebreaking so that participants were more forthcoming than in the first session. Participants demonstrated that young people did not view each other as enemies *per se* but neither did they view each other as friends. A Shona speaking participant pointed out that,

*Personally I don't have any problem with Ndebele people. I just view them as any other normal people in Zimbabwe, but the problem is the tension, which makes it difficult to get very close. Somehow you just realise that things are not okay and there is very little that you can do about the situation.*

This unspecified tension between the Ndebele and Shona it seems was making it difficult for the young people to connect to each other. Even though they were acquaintances, there was some invisible wedge or barrier, which was inhibiting the process of reaching out to each other. This made friendship very important in addressing conflict because, according to Waghid, “a friendship involves the development of closeness and this enables friends to relax their boundaries and become stimulated by one another” (2010:56). In line with the nature of Shona and Ndebele relations, this means that boundaries were still strong. To relax these boundaries, friendships had to be developed first. The biggest challenge has been the socialisation that young people get when being raised at family level.

An Ndebele-speaking person interviewed by Carl Stauffer illuminated this socialisation well when he indicated that:

*It was something that was unfortunately taught at home you know it was in home whereby you were told not to play with Shona kids you know, they want*

*to wipe us out. So unfortunately that was the issue, that's how we were taught. It was tough – it was tough for you to survive. I mean remember you could be beaten for speaking in Shona. Because I think what happened is there's lots of people who suffered a lot, who lost lots of their relatives, so what happens is they hate the Shona. The Shona language maybe just evokes those memories you know, they become emotional and just beat up a Shona person. (2009:147).*

This statement dovetails well with some statements on intermarriage, which were raised in chapter eight. The idea of safeguarding intermarriage was tantamount to advancing a notion of ethnic purity. Where such marriages exist, they are sometimes faced with challenges of intolerance from relatives. One participant who has a Shona father and an Ndebele mother commented as follows:

*My mum is Ndebele and my dad is Shona, unfortunately my parents are divorced, so I was raised by my mother, but I maintained ties with my dad and also my relatives from his side. I am very fluent in both languages, but sometimes I get confused because the things that I hear about the Shona when I am with my Ndebele relatives confuse me and things that I also hear about the Ndebele people when I am with my Shona relatives also confuse me. It's like I am now torn in between the two because there is a Shona part of me and also an Ndebele part of me. (Sic).*

Painting everyone with the same brush means giving labels to some people who are innocent of the toxic environment that exists between the Shona and Ndebele. Many people face this predicament and one participant pointed out that, “not all Shona people are bad and not all Ndebele people are bad”. Paul Siwela who is leading a secessionist movement called the Matebeleland Liberation Organization (MLO) commented as follows: “We are all aware that not all Shonas hate Matabeles and not all Shonas support what president Mugabe is doing to the Matabeles” (03/12/12 Zimeye.com). These comments go hand in hand with the belief that there is always something good about each person and there is something bad about each person. Despite this, individuals amplify the side they wish depending on what they stand to gain or lose in any given situation.

It came out from the participants that each person in the group had a different life experience and background. Within these experiences, there are certain key turning points that remain imprinted in one's mind and which may influence one forever. This happens by circumstances and not by choice. From this dialogue session, participants seem to accept that people came into what they are largely due to

socialisation over which they had very little or no choice. A speaking Shona speaking participant had this to say, “As young people we need a fresh start of course, but we don’t know how to go about it”.

This resonates very well with the belief that while we cannot change our past circumstances, we can at least do something to change our future by presently making appropriate decisions.

Participants bemoaned what they saw as the general lack of empathy between the two ethnic groups. They indicated that society is too quick to judge an individual and the judgement is motivated by existing beliefs and other common societal trends. One Ndebele participant shared an experience of some problems that he had with his Ndebele friends who accused him of associating too much with Shona-speaking people. The participant said that the Shona-speaking people concerned were not his friends as such but his colleagues in a tutorial group; due to some group assignments, they were therefore meeting regularly. However, this did not go down well with some of his friends who accused him of being brainwashed by Shona-speaking people. He had little choice about the tutorial group he found himself in because there were more Shona-speaking people than Ndebele-speaking people in the class did. This experience made me realise that the interaction of students during lectures and tutorial groups was indirectly forcing interactions across groups.

Despite interactions, it was noted that outside the lectures and tutorial group meetings, participants chose to hang out with friends from their ethnic groups. I then suspected that the issue of language and culture could have had a bearing to such choices and the other determinant was that of ethnic boundaries which influenced members to relax “personal boundaries” only when hanging out with friends from their ethnic group (Waghid 2010:50). Participants confessed that it was normal to see Ndebele students associating together as a group or Shona students associating as a group. Even though there were cases of friendships across the ethnic divide, friendship within ethnic groups seemed to be stronger than across the ethnic divide. This reflects the general polarisation, which exists at macro level. Perhaps those who discourage intermarriages were still motivated by the need to “respect” or fear of the “invisible ethnic boundaries”.

During the second session, participants made a decision to prepare and share the meals. The first dialogue session did not include a cooked meal instead but the suggestion now made was that participants would cook meals and then eat together. They would choose what they wanted to prepare; all I had to do was to bring the required ingredients and leave everything to them. I saw this as another way of enhancing togetherness and the possible relaxation of boundaries.

The idea of preparing meals and eating together seemed to be an important activity. Firstly, it marked the start of participants taking initiatives on their own. Secondly, it created a sub-platform within the main platform of dialogue to facilitate informal mingling. The second dialogue session ended with the affirmation from the participants that people from different backgrounds are products of those backgrounds. Since, people have no choice over their backgrounds; it would be very unfair to judge them based on their circumstances and not their preferences.

### **10.5 Third session: Identity**

The third dialogue session was held on the week ending 29<sup>th</sup> September 2014. Sadly, one Ndebele participant dropped out from the group citing other academic pressing commitments and the group remained with 11 participants who all managed to attend the session. We started the session by having a general overview of the previous dialogue session where the focus was on perspective sharing. This was done by allowing each member to give a personal reflection on the previous session. The reflective exercise was important because it provided an important recapitulation and facilitated continuity, and more importantly, there was a connection between the perspective-sharing theme and the theme on identity, which was the subject of the third dialogue session. During the personal reflections, participants demonstrated signs of good grasp of the key issues that we had covered previously. It was also interesting to note that with each session there were always some notable and visible improvements in terms of enthusiasm when compared to the last session.

The purpose of the third dialogue session was to explore and enable participants to interrogate their perceptions of ethnicity and cultural differences. We began the session by exploring and briefly sharing with participants the observations that had been made by some scholars on how identity issues and its related politics had

created problems found in societies with multi-identities. I even shared an example from Rawlinson (2003) that human beings have a universal propensity to form collective identities in order to distinguish outsiders from insiders and this could be done on ethnic, racial, class and gender lines. The idea of giving this brief talk on identity was neither to give a lecture nor to influence the participants but rather it was a way to kick-start the session.

Participants indicated that the issue of identity was very important in human societies because it gave people some roots but there was a point of contestation on why people fight based on identity. Different reasons like scarcity of resources, unfair distribution of power and resources, and greediness and intolerance were cited as some of the reasons why human beings clash based on identity. The discussion demonstrated the expected lack of consensus by the participants in a situation, which has been reflected by academics as well. Under normal circumstances identity – be it across the ethnic, racial, political, or cultural lines – represents mere compartmentalisation of different people and their categories. However, identity can be a convenient instrument or rallying point to mobilise identities in order to gain certain societal benefits such as power. If we look at the example of ethnic based conflicts, it echoes the sentiments made by Cordel and Wolff that “ethnic conflicts are not about ethnicity per se” but rather demonstrate some ethno-political conflicts between the concerned ethnic groups (2010:81). In essence, it is the other factors between the other groups, which provoke ethnic conflicts. However, I have observed that if the core issues between the ethnic groups are not resolved conflict becomes more about identities than over differences between the differently identified groups. When one juxtaposes the Shona and Ndebele relations in Zimbabwe 1 may realise that it is not about what happened between the Shona and Ndebele in the historical past; it is now purely a problem of the relationship between the Shona and the Ndebele.

One of the most important values of dialogue in general is creating an environment respectful listening to one another. For Transcend dialogue, in particular the key is to bring parties into an engagement process so that what seemed incompatible is unlocked. The idea is not to win the other person but to transcend and make what



was incompatible very much compatible and that alone constitutes a major step in conflict-transformation.

Participants testified that indeed identity creates labels, which at times force those linked to that identity live, or at least pretend to live, in accordance to that identity. At times, this may even go against their individual conscience. However, because of ego and the need to gain acceptance by fellow members or society they end up choosing to flow with the currents rather than against it. This was noted as a challenge by the participants who acknowledged that even if they fully appreciated that what happened between the Shona and Ndebele in the past was wrong and that what is happening now is still wrong, they found themselves caught in between. One participant from Harare pointed out that even though he noted that there was a general stigma against dating Ndebele women from a general Shona perspective, he saw no problem with inter-ethnic romantic relationships. Even though he admitted that he had not considered marriage, his views illuminated the special characteristic of young adults of willingness to be adventurous. The university setup also gave the participants some level of freedom, which enabled freethinking and some powers, or freedom to make certain decisions, which they do not ordinarily have when they are home.

Participants generally reported that identity issues promoted the issue of labelling each other and calling each other names. One example, which participants mentioned, was the naming of provinces like Mashonaland or Matabeleland. This was seen as an obstacle to the (re)integration of the people as this seems to label areas and to depict the people who are expected to be found there. The labelling was also noted to be promoting certain stereotyping, which is based on origin and that origin is inextricably connected to one's identity. This brings into context a crucial aspect, which was raised by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) on whether "Zimbabweans really exist?" If sub-entities like ethnic identities are still sacrosanct, as they seem to be to some people, then it means the country still has a long way to go in as far as nation building and peacebuilding are concerned.

Participants, especially those from Mashonaland provinces who happen to speak Shona disclosed that they have been victims of identity in many instances. The most

common victimisation happened after attending a football match between Highlanders and Dynamos at Babourfields stadium in Bulawayo. The violence, which ensued after the match, saw supporters from both teams attacking each other. The violence reflected the ethno-political dimension of the relationship between the Shona and Ndebele and not genuine football rivalry or hooliganism as observed in chapter eight sections 8:3. Clearly, this experience, which was shared by the participants who witnessed it, enabled other participants to see how bad things were between the two ethnic groups. A Shona participant pointed out that:

*To a greater extent, this helped me to understand that, we are living in the country where hatred still exists because personally I thought it was something which ended long back.*

So now, the question that required answering was whether the young people could do something and achieve what their parents had seemingly failed to address. If the answer is no, then there is no bright future between the two ethnic groups. If the answer happens to be yes, then the next concern would be what it is that these young participants could do differently compared to what their elders had done. These became key issues that the participants grappled with by the time we ended the third dialogue session. I also encouraged participants to continue the talk even without my presence using their *WhatsApp* social media platform. It was very important for the participants to get used to talking on their own because the next dialogue session, which happened to be the fourth one, had a thrust on exploring ways or activity that could promote integration. The dialogue on integration was expected to come up with a decision on what practical action participants could take to enhance solidarity among them and set into motion continued interaction in the near coming future.

## **10.6 Fourth session: Promoting integration and blending**

The fourth dialogue session was scheduled on the week ending 27<sup>th</sup> of October 2014. Previously, in the third dialogue session, participants had ended the dialogue with an affirmation that during the period in between the third dialogue session and the fourth session they were going to brainstorm on what they can do as a group to enhance solidarity and friendship among them. Therefore, the purpose of the fourth dialogue session was to finalise the brainstorming and finalise the issue. Participants

were going to share ideas on what action to take on their own to help in dismantling prejudices.

The period in between the third and fourth session had witnessed the interesting sharing of ideas on *WhatsApp*. However, what was of concern was the kind of activity to take on that small scale. The general feeling and concern had been that the problem of polarisation between the Shona and Ndebele was a national problem and therefore something too big to tackle on such a small scale. Therefore, I noted a feeling of incapacitation on the part of the participants as they felt that their hands were somehow tied up. Even though there was an interesting vigour and eagerness to do something, the feeling of incapacity was noticeable.

I also noted this was one of the biggest challenges of using Action Research where it is easy to arouse the interest of the participants and to encourage them to do something about their situation. Suddenly, however, they realise that their efforts may not yield much because the problem is so big. During the dialogue discussions, participants expressed the need to have government involved in the process of addressing the polarisation of relationships. This was a good suggestion because it is the role of the present government to spearhead processes aimed towards improving peace among its citizens. The role of track I am always crucial in any efforts that are aimed towards improving peace at national level. However, in the case of Zimbabwe track I have been part of the problem. This is what probably motivated scholars like Ngwenya (2014) to engage players in track II and III to promote self-healing using Participatory Action Research (PAR). This study had more or less the same thrust of engaging the youthful participants in a track III effort to build friendships, which may go a long way in transforming mindsets.

During the dialogue, I realised that as a facilitator I had to explain and clarify to the participants that while the group was indeed small, whatever little efforts they were going to come up with would nonetheless be important. It had been proven elsewhere that small steps could have an impact not only on the world but also to those involved in the process. These sentiments were clearly captured in the statement by Mead, which says, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens may change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has".

After clarifying the potential that lies with small groups, participants began to gain confidence and confirmed that as young people they felt they should not continue to be tied by the mistakes of their elders. Their challenge had been that they wanted something big to do but this was difficult in terms of navigating through the bureaucratic processes and logistics – it was also not possible given time constraints vis a vis the participants’ academic obligations.

#### **10.6.1 Doing something about building peace**

During and after lunch break participants continued to discuss and explore issues about doing something practical that would promote solidarity within the group. Given the fact that end-of-semester examinations were one and a half month away, the consensus among participants was that whatever they had to do had to be confined to the Solusi University community. I explained to the participants that the activity that they were going to settle on had to have a shared task or tasks within it. The notion of a shared task was meant to promote both formal and informal engagement and socialising. Among the participants, some were studying peace and had always toyed with the idea of growing trees to commemorate the international day of peace. Due to some logistical challenges, however, they had failed to do that and they now shared that idea with the rest of the participants and suggested it as a practical way of promoting solidarity among them.

The idea of planting trees for peace is apparently not a new phenomenon in peace activities; in fact, it has been a practice done in many parts of the world. It is not about the physical act alone but it is about the symbolism that comes with the act. Trees in many societies symbolise life because they sustain human life on planet earth by providing oxygen and the presence of trees signify the presence of life. Thus, embarking on tree planting may appear like a simple act but it was a symbolic and meaningful act as well. In as much as it was not a difficult task some protocols had to be followed with the university authorities in order to get the green light. The fourth dialogue session ended with participants settling on tree planting as their joint activity and setting tentative dates for the activity. Participants also agreed that this had to be done at the end of November or in early December. In between, I had to work with a representative of the participants to get approval for the relevant university authorities in order to get the required permission to plant the trees. It was

agreed that the dates for the fifth dialogue session should coincide with the tree-planting exercise.

### **10.7 Fifth dialogue session: Socialising and planting to grow trees**

Thereafter we immediately initiated the process and approached authorities about our tree-planting suggestion. It took us a week to get the necessary permission and we were given the general areas to choose from for our tree planting. We met for the fifth dialogue session on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 to plan the finer details and activities for the day. Participants decided to do the tree planting on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2014. During the action, planning participants indicated that they were going to do their best to help maintain those trees as a group. That would help in keeping in touch with each other as well. The number of trees that they agreed to plant was twelve fruit trees with each representing the initial number of participants in the experimental group.

### **10.8 The sixth and final dialogue session: Planting trees for peace**

From the final discussion and planning for the activity to plant trees, I had about three weeks to obtain the twelve fruit trees. In those three weeks, it was interesting to note that members continued with their chats on tree planting. Within two weeks, I had put trees in place and was now waiting to travel to Solusi for the tree-planting day and the final dialogue session on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2014. The idea of planting trees for friendship and peace was not just going to be a day of fun. The exercise was also going to provide a climax to our dialogue sessions. More importantly, it provided participants with an opportunity to connect both formally and informally. The notion of acting together promoted the idea of contact, which had been initiated by the dialogue sessions.

During the final dialogue, which preceded the tree-planting ceremony, members were largely giving personal testimonies and reflections on the journey, which they started in July 2014 to December 2014. The general experience of participants indicated that the journey has been a revelation and that it was their first time to be on such a platform and they shared interesting moments both formally and informally. The following are examples of participants' testimonies:

*Guys this was an interesting exercise I think we should continue to meet and even recruit more members, what do you think?*

*I have learnt a number of things not only about the Ndebele and Shona conflict but about life in general.*

At this stage, I should admit that I was more of an observer than a facilitator as I was taking down notes on what the participants were doing and saying. The tree planting was well planned and we ended the session just chatting over lunch. As observed from the snippets of participants chatting over lunch I wondered how they were going to reflect overall process. Even though the final dialogue session had provided participants with an opportunity to enhance mutual atonement, I was still not sure, whether the whole process had made a difference – I had three months to wait for the evaluation of the process using follow-up interviews on all the participants in the two groups including those who were in the control group.

## **10.9 Summary**

The idea of bringing people together to become friends is not an easy one. It requires tolerance, coexistence, and mutual respect. The cultivation and growth of friendship does not just happen, more so for groups that had become victims of a vicious and toxic environment. Even though participants expressed that they did not perceive each other as enemies *per se*, this did not mean that they were friends. The participants were “neither friends nor enemies” but were products of a toxic and tumultuous history. Therefore, the six dialogue sessions were an endeavour to create space and intentional platform to enable participants to connect using dialogue. While participants appeared seemingly positive by the end of the final dialogue session and tree-planting activity, I had to give the participants three months before evaluating the meaning of the whole dialogue exercise and its impact. This is the discussion of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 11: EVALUATING THE OUTCOME

*"This is not our battle to fight".*

### 11.1 Introduction

This chapter grapples with evaluating the outcome of the peace-building intervention, which was implemented in chapter ten. Even though this research was conducted based on a small sample of twenty-four participants and non-participants, the outcome of the intervention produced encouraging results. Despite the fact that it is very difficult to generalise and replicate the outcome of this research just as it is the case with research conducted using an Action Research Design, the outcome of this intervention nonetheless demonstrates that engagement in the form of dialogue can indeed make a difference. The contact that comes with face-to-face engagement can bring out constructive initiatives from the participants. Although the change may appear tiny like a drop in the ocean, it nonetheless makes what I saw as a meaningful contribution in its small way.

### 11.2 Role and importance of evaluation in peacebuilding

Evaluating the outcome of an intervention is an essential element in Action Research. More importantly, in peacebuilding efforts, it is crucial to have a reflective practice or culture, which is an act deducing lessons from success or failure of an intervention and assessing the outcome of the intervention (Lederach *et al* 2007:1). Over the recent years peacebuilding interventions have faced some criticisms on the basis that there was very little or no evidence that illustrate the effectiveness of such interventions. Therefore the role and importance of evaluating a peace-building intervention can never be over emphasised because peace builders have an obligation to assess whether their work is changing the state of conflict or not and this can only be known by evaluating their interventions (Church 2008:3). According to the Organisation of Economic Co-operation Development (OECD) the term evaluation means, "assessing the merit and worth of an activity", It offers a systematic and objective appraisal of an intervention" (2008:1). To Church and

Rodgers “evaluation is the systematic acquisition and assessment of information gathered on specific questions to provide a careful feedback for a program” (2006:93). In essence, an evaluation in Action Research is not just a post-mortem of an intervention but rather it is a continuous audit of an on-going research with intention to learn the research cycle. Peacebuilding evaluation is seen as evidence based process designed to understand the impact whether positive or negative from a peace-building intervention (Blim 2011:2).

According to the OECD, the evaluation of a peacebuilding program has to be guided by some of the following points (2008:2):

***Relevance***

“Does the intervention relate in a meaningful way to current key driving factors of the (potential) conflict? Are the outputs based on logical or sensible assumptions or theory of change on which the activity is based? Are outputs consistent with the objectives of reducing or preventing conflict”?

***Efficiency***

“Are/ were the activities cost efficient? Is this the most efficient way to contribute peace”?

***Impact***

“What happened as a result peacebuilding activity? What were the positive and negative changes produced directly or indirectly, intended and unintended? How did the intervention impact affect key conflict actors or affect on-going conflict creating or peace promoting actors”.

***Effectiveness***

“To what extent were the objectives achieved? What factors contributed to the achievements”?

***Sustainability***

“Will the benefits be maintained after the research”?

The evaluation approach adopted in this thesis is going to be guided by some of the key points highlighted by OECD.

### **11.3: Preliminary evaluation of the short term outcome of the intervention**

It is very important to reiterate that the evaluation carried in this study is a preliminary short-term outcome of the intervention. This was done based on data obtained from



the post-intervention follow-up interviews with participants (both the experimental group and control group) that were carried out three months after the intervention. Measuring only the short-term outcome was largely determined by the nature of the study and the length of the intervention, which was over a period of six months. While a medium- or a long-term intervention would have been ideal, it was not possible to do it in Research project that was being conducted for a doctoral study of which the fieldwork timeframe I anticipated to be completed in twelve months.

### **11.3.1 Beneficial engagement**

Dialogue is more than mere talking; dialogue fosters engagement that promotes contact. A Shona speaking participant confirmed that:

*With my fellow group members we are now closer to each other than before because we now know each better than before. We can now visit each other's room and besides that we also keep in touch using our WhatsApp group platform.*

This probably signifies and confirms what Gordon Allport as the impact of contact and engagement (1954) identified. Allport advanced that with face-to-face encounters it is possible to reduce prejudices as parties get to know and appreciate each other better. Contact also helps in demystifying misinformation about each other. In ethnic conflicts Lake and Rothchild noted that information failure results in misinformation and this is a major contributor to ethnic rivalry as groups misinterpret information about the other groups (1996:46).

During a follow-up interview, a participant said:

*The dialogue and even the entire process were extremely insightful. I was made aware of various feelings and attitudes shared between the two ethnic groups. I saw that although the Ndebele ethnic group has its grievances, some want to work towards a brighter and better Zimbabwe, but past crimes committed against them seem to prevent. This is quite understandable as there is still a long way to go for an all-out discussion on this matter.*

This demonstrated that participants did not just gain an understanding of each other; there was also a growing empathetic understanding and appreciation of the other. This is an important step in the demystification of misinformation and myths. Participants testified that even though they did not view each other as enemies they were not yet close enough to regard each other as friends. However, they

acknowledged that participation in the dialogue made them to be more tolerant toward one another than before. One participant who had earlier stated that she had to change her room because she was sharing with a Shona-speaking roommate and they were having some problems, which affected their coexistence, testified that the dialogue had improved her tolerance. The participant explained that:

*My Shona language skills, have improved a lot and I guess this is because this semester I am staying with a Shona-speaking roommate and I am getting along with her very well. I am actually teaching her isiNdebele as well and she has been helping me to improve my understanding of Shona language.*

This may not be a huge change in terms influencing change between the Shona and Ndebele at macro level because this is all happening at micro level but it is pinpointing a pocket of change for the better. It demonstrates the beneficial and transformative potential of the intervention to the individuals who participate in dialogue unlike those who had not. This helps the individuals to have an influence on those whom they meet as well. While this may not be easily transferable at macro level, it still gives some reasonable grounds to appreciate the relevance of Action Research in peace building. An outcome, which demonstrates a shift in terms of tolerance and relationship building no matter how small the scale may be still, represents an improvement to me. Perhaps one of the possible reasons why earlier on the participant changed rooms could have been the question of little tolerance. In addition, the fact that she was now acknowledging the she was sharing a room with a Shona-speaking person and saw no problem with that demonstrated some change, which is interesting and promising. Even though they may not be friends yet, the fact that they were coexisting well gave hope that they could possibly become friends in the future. Porter who explained that has confirmed this point:

*One simple, effective way of dismantling typical stereotypes is to take people out of their mundane contexts into workshops, youth camps where people engage with the other for the first time and surprisingly discover that they are “normal” human beings. It is impossible for many to picture themselves as someone else’s enemy. (2007:47).*

This resonates well with the realisation noted earlier in chapter nine that each group did not want to be seen as an enemy. Effectively, it means that engagement promotes contact, which helps participants to express themselves because they know someone is listening, unlike disengagement, and intolerance, which threatens

peaceful coexistence. Contact enables parties to appreciate each other and to discover the humanity in everyone. This goes a long way in challenging dominant narratives, which tend to influence many people to the extent of making such narratives conventional wisdom. A participant who indicated that aptly expressed this, “as Shona and Ndebele we are all human beings, what we just need is not to be judgemental upon each other’s customs and beliefs”.

Respecting the humanity in others signifies a good trajectory, which demonstrates moving beyond tolerance and coexistence to mutual respect. The development of mutual respect may result in continuous communication and development of friendships. Despite the fact that the follow-up interviews were conducted three months after the intervention, I noted that participants maintained contact close communication using the affordable *WhatsApp* social media platform. The use of *WhatsApp* as a model of communication was an unintended outcome of the intervention. This made it easier for six participants, who were now on the work-related industrial attachment and were therefore no longer on the university campus. The successful use of *WhatsApp* enabled the intervention to be relevant. According to OECD the outputs of a peace-building intervention must be based on logical or sensible assumptions in the context of the conflict.

However, it must be noted that some of the benefits of engagement and contact in peace building have come under criticism. Lanfranc questions the assumed relationship between peaceful individuals and peaceful societies (2013:33). According to Lefranc, the approaches that aim to transform individuals just like the one used in this thesis, “work to transform individual prejudices and emphasise relations among ordinary people” (2013:34). Lefranc reiterates that such individualised therapeutic techniques cannot guarantee peaceful societies. Similar sentiments were raised by a few participants in the experimental group and almost all of those in the control group. In the words of one Ndebele participant, “The Ndebele wound will never heal it is too deep for a small group like this”. Another Ndebele speaking participant was honest enough to ask, how can a small group like ours change big problems that were caused by some powerful people?

These sentiments are indeed quite strong and very important and they cannot be ignored in an evaluation. In response to the valuable raised concerns, it must be clearly pointed out that a peace-building intervention can never and should never promise too much or promise to bring solutions about like magic. Experiences from other interventions elsewhere have demonstrated that small pockets of progress may be registered or the intervention may fail altogether. However, no matter how small the success or how big the failure, it nonetheless provides valuable lessons which makes future peacebuilding interventions worthwhile and it underscores the fact that there “are alternatives ways of relating that create constructive initiatives to further peace and security” instead of violent based routes (Porter 2007:7). To Harris, There Are Always Alternatives (TAAA) that should be explored despite some gloomy outcomes that are at times realised (2004: vii). And peace-building practitioners must have the imagination to think creatively beyond and beneath the polarised narratives that tend to be generally influenced by what Porter identified as “dualistic mind-set of viewing things as either black or white; it works or it doesn’t work; it is either you are with us or you are against us” (2007:7). Such beliefs have failed to give peace a chance to grow from its nascent pockets or to allow small pockets of engagement and dialogue to blossom because such small ventures are deemed too small to change the world. Small pockets of success, which sometimes appear insignificant to conventional wisdom, emanate from what was identified by Lederach as moral imagination (2005). For Lederach,

*...moral imagination is the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not exist. (2005: ix)*

Firstly, such a moral imagination has produced pockets of success, which attempt to understand the causes of peace unlike conventional wisdom, which seems to have invested more in trying to understand the causes of conflicts.

Secondly, this underscores the fact that the success of a peace-building intervention cannot be measured in terms of its quantitative gains only – the qualitative aspects matter as well because they illuminate to the world alternatives that are outside of the web of polarised and dichotomised narratives that dominate societies. In fact, the

“small pockets of success” managed to do what the “big pockets” have failed to do or hesitated to do over the years.

Thirdly, the success of small pockets resonates well with one important principle of Conflict-transformation, which claims that for peace building to be successful Conflict-transformation must adjust to the ever-changing nature of conflict during the pre- and post-violence phase. In this research, it was realised the conflict between the Shona and Ndebele had a worrisome intergenerational transmission of animosities which threatens future peace. However, the intervention enabled notable change to be realised and this was signified by the difference between the experimental group and the control group. Such a change could not have come by coincidence and could only be attributed the benefits of engagement and contact as proven by Gordon Allport six decades ago.

### **11.3.2 We are all victims of the situation**

What furthermore emerged from the dialogue was that the interaction enabled the participants to find some common ground. Even though this was an unintended outcome of the dialogue, it seems the participants “realised” that they were in this situation of polarised relationships not by choice but due to past mistakes, which were beyond their control. As indicated earlier, young Shona and Ndebele people are recipients of the antagonism through intergenerational transmission of animosities. While the participants did not suffer or participate directly in the Gukurahundi violence, they simply inherited the animosities through socialisation and collective memory. Because of these participants acknowledged there was indeed tension among them and this can be illustrated in the words of one Ndebele speaking participant, “what happened in the past is now affecting us all in a way even though we were not there”.

A Shona speaking participant who indicated, “Personally I have no problems with Ndebele people it’s just that one finds oneself in a situation where you are just caught in between these things”, supported these words.

To me these statements were more of revelations that practically manifested that there is nothing separating young Shona and Ndebele people from each other, but the systemic and structural divide are what is maintaining the rift between them.

Perhaps what is lacking or needed is a rallying point that would transcend the present animosities. The society and government failed them by not availing such platforms. Therefore, the Transcend dialogue was meant to create what Lederach described as transformative platforms (2012:3). Thus, Transcend dialogue was not only just to promote engagement and learning from each other – the transcendence component means rising or imagining above the complexities of the present conflict.

During the follow-up interviews conducted to understand the impact dialogue, I observed a change in the language of participants, as they seemed to have realised that they were not gaining anything by perpetuating the animosity against each other. Participants explained that despite all the tension and animosity they realised that there was one thing that united them which was the fact that they were all young people who were looking forward to a better future. One Shona participant noted that:

*It's us the youths who represent the future, so if we are educated even our own elders try to manipulate us into fighting we should be able to voice our concerns and be able to stand together.*

An Ndebele participant shared that, I think education is the key; with education it's possible to challenge some of the barriers that prevent us from getting closer to each other".

I saw this as an improvement, which is linked to the impact of the intervention. The transformative impact of transcendence dialogue should enable participants to find a breakthrough where the incompatibility element is lifted (Galtung 2009:110). Actors and goals can remain unchanged but the incompatibility must be identified and lifted. In the Shona and Ndebele conflict, the incompatibility seemed to be the systemic and the structural divide. Beyond this divide, the young Ndebele and Shona participants are just like any other young Zimbabweans. This could be seen as some shift of mindsets, which illustrate that participants were no longer viewing each other antagonistically but rather as potential partners. This was after realising that they faced the same problems, which were beyond their power but had more or less the same dreams about life. Before the intervention, the following statements were made during the Focus Group Discussions:

*It's difficult for the Shona and Ndebele to live happily together.*

*If you are Ndebele stick to your Ndebele.*

*I don't think it's possible for Ndebele to live peacefully with the Shona because a lot has to take place for that to happen.*

The tone was largely negative and after the intervention, the follow-up interviews revealed statements, which indicated a noticeable shift from hopelessness to signs of what I, saw as positive as seen in the following statements:

*We have to move on.*

*We are all human whether Shona, Ndebele, or Kalanga we are just people no matter how our backgrounds are.*

*I think living together is possible, what are needed is tolerance, understanding, and forgiveness.*

Thus, the change of tone insinuates some level of progress. Such progress or shift of tone was not registered with the control group. The control group participants testified that they did not see much hope out of the situation between the Shona and Ndebele. Effectively the participants from the control group continued to sing from the same hymnbook of negativity and hopelessness. In fact, they explained that there were too many preconditions to be fulfilled before anything serious could be achieved. This was different with the experimental group participants where one participant pointed out “this is not our battle to fight.” This statement aptly captured and acknowledged what OECD indicates as to what can happen as result of peace building. One important key indicator when evaluating the impact and effectiveness of an intervention is to identify its impact on potential conflict creating and peace promoting actors.

Paradoxically, the youths have been identified as a potential conflict creating and potential peace-promoting group. At global level it has been noted that conflicts and violence are prone in societies with a huge “youth bulge”<sup>3</sup>. Zimbabwe is a typical country with such a bludgeoning youthful population. According to the 2012 national

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<sup>3</sup> A youth bulge is a situation depicting a population with larger cohorts of young people than the population of adults. In such a scenario an inability by government to provide employment in the face of such a youth bulge increases the risk of violent conflicts.

census 41% of the country's population is below the age of 15, while 21% is between the ages of 15 and 24 (CSO 2012:48). United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) identified Zimbabwe as one of the countries with a potentially threatening youth bulge within its population. Essentially, this makes the youths in Zimbabwe potential conflict creating agents especially given the current economic challenges facing the country.

Ethnic tensions and incredibly high unemployment levels facing the country can be a terrible combination for peace. However, in this research I found that if platforms are created for youths to interact and share experiences using dialogue they can actually be potential peace promoting agents instead of allowing them to be just potential conflict promoting agents. Therefore, the intervention also indicates that not only can young people be transformed; they can also help in transforming others. This confirms and underscores the importance of working with the youth in building peace. According to Darby, a peace-building intervention must always make an effort to identify the "ripe" moment especially before the hardening attitudes in order to maximise the intervention success potential (2011:13). In this research, I advance that it should not be just the "ripe" moment in terms of the stage of the conflict but the "ripe" moment in terms of the status of the actors or the potential actors. In this research, the "ripe" moment came in the form of working with the youthful participants who were between the ages of 19 and 23. Despite having been influenced by socialisation and other structural societal constraints, I was convinced that their attitudes against each other were not yet hardened. While I acknowledge that their attitudes toward each other were generally negative, never at one moment did they refer to or indicate that they perceive each other as enemies. Rather they are more or less like competitors who are merely worried about their future and therefore their ability to be transformed is still within range.

The other crucial question, which ought to be interrogated when evaluating a peace-building intervention, is how sustainable the gains will last after research. For this research, it was noted that at least three months after the intervention participants showed signs of having maintained some of the benefits because members were still actively communicating and interacting on their *WhatsApp* group platform. As for the possible long-term impact of this intervention, I do not have an idea. Even though



this was beyond the scope of this study, during the post-intervention interviews one participant suggested that they were contemplating recruiting some new students into the group and converting it into some form of a social club or movement where they will be regularly meeting and planning activities. This was an exciting promise and I made a personal commitment to follow up – which is of course beyond the scope of this study.

### **11.3.3 From pessimism to cautious optimism**

Boundaries or borders do not just exist in territorial sense; there are emotional, cultural, ethnic, gendered, and personal borders as well. Tension and divisions between adversaries create invisible yet very strong borders that inhibit proper interaction to the people who have such boundaries. The existence of such borders is seen by relationships characterised by hyperactive vigilance between the conflicting parties. Any crossing of those borders is not taken lightly due to high levels of hyperactive vigilance. This explains why it has not been easy to make friends across the ethnic divide. This belief has been captured by the words of one Ndebele participant who said:

*If you are Ndebele you should stick to your Ndebeles, if you are Shona stick to your Shonas because we are like oil and water. Where I come from if I bring an Ndebele girl as a wife I risk becoming a family outcast because of that marriage and this actually happened to one of my relatives. (Sic)*

A Shona speaking participant said, “I will not get married or get involved with an Ndebele guy because my auntie advised me not to date Ndebele guys because we are just different people”.

The existence and erection of emotional boundaries represent the opposite of what friendship and mutual respect stand for. Waghid who identified that friendship is characterised by the “relaxation of boundaries which enable friends to be stimulated by one another” (2010:50), illustrated this. One participant shared an experience that he observed during the early first lecture in the lecture room, students sat along noticeable ethnic lines and this happened subconsciously. However, as the semester progressed they slowly began to interact more and more and the sitting arrangement began to change. The existence of boundaries takes away hope and creates pessimism between parties to the conflict. According to Lake and Rothchild ethnic

conflicts are caused by collective fears for the future (1996:46). This means that if nothing is done to address the fears, invisible boundaries will continue and hopelessness will continue to prevail.

I observed that during the very first dialogue session, participants were a bit uneasy. This may have been because they had no idea of what was going to happen and some of them were getting closer to each other for the very first time. However, I believe that invisible boundaries may also have contributed to that. I later noted a gradual change as the dialogue sessions continued. Participants also confirmed such changes in terms of interaction of participants as well. One participant acknowledged that:

*There has been an improvement in our group you see, M, T, and P were comfortable around me during the early days of our meetings, but from the way we ended our meetings they were now closer to C, E and G as well. There is a bonding effect which has developed as group members.*

These observations could be signs of the bonding that took place as result of what was observed and popularised by Allport in 1954 see chapter three section 3.3. Groups who believe that they have vast differences due to both visible and invisible boundaries may realise that the more they interact the more likely they are to discover the humanity in each other. By discovering the humanity in each other and dignifying that humanity, it leads to empathy and the dismantling of prejudices. This sometimes leads to the relaxation of boundaries, which may result in the development of friendship. This will of course take time and will require sustained effort and complementarities from both parties. The most important thing about such a move is that it seems to be a trajectory in the right direction. Secondly, a sound alternative has the means and capacity of breaking the vicious cycles of disengagement and mistrust.

This is very important for a peacebuilding intervention that is handling an ethnic - motivated conflict. As indicated and acknowledged from the very onset of this study, ordinarily an ethnic conflict depict not just the substantive issue(s) or problem(s) between the ethnic groups involved, but it also manifests in what can be called a “people problem”. A “people problem” is simply a relationship problem between the ethnic groups involved. This is a situation, which arises as ethnic groups develop

prejudices against each other and begin to treat each other as enemies. Once the “people problem” ensues it will persist with or without taking due consideration of the substantive issue(s) in the conflict. Therefore, any attempts or efforts to address the substantive issue(s), which excludes the “people problem” or the relationship problem, will not yield the much-anticipated positive outcomes. It is therefore logically important to find a way of dealing with the relationship problem so that the parties will transcend and unlock the prejudices that block lines of communication. Consequently, relationship building through friendship is not an end but rather a means to an end. Once that relationship is established, conflict parties may find it easier to explore alternatives that tackle the substantive issue(s) in an environment characterised by mutual respect and understanding. Without such a platform, it is inconceivable to talk about substantive or core issue(s) to the conflict when the environment is clouded by prejudices.

One of the yardsticks that can be used to find the impact of a peace-building intervention is to find what was produced as result of the intervention and this can be the intended or the unintended outcomes. One notable issue, which was raised in chapter eight, was the problem of pointing fingers to each other. This is quite normal and as in most conflicts, people find it easier to take sides or to blame the other party and this may lead to problems. By acknowledging it as a problem, I am not saying people in a conflict should not apportion blame to those who are causing problems and keep quiet pretending that everything is okay when it is not. It is only that at times the pointing of fingers at each other can stall progress. Those who blame sometimes-set preconditions, which they feel, must be fulfilled before they can forgive. Unfortunately, at times perpetrators or those who are being pointed may not be forthcoming for reasons best known to them. This has been the case in Zimbabwe: Ndebele people mostly blame President Robert Mugabe in particular and the Shona in general for the problems existing in their relations. Unfortunately, President Mugabe and most of the individuals blamed in Gukurahundi have not been very forthcoming as expected. As fingers continue to point at them without any recourse, should the nation remain locked in this praetorian situation? The accused may even die without even acknowledging or asking for forgiveness and then what happens?

A considerable number of Shona people in general have made strong efforts in exonerating themselves while levelling the blame on Mugabe and ZANU PF for Gukurahundi. For young Shona it is even easier to argue that they were not there when all the sordid acts were committed. Eventually it becomes an endless blame game. While participants could not easily escape the trappings of this reality as noted in the pre-intervention interviews and FGDs, the post-intervention interviews reflected a slight shift. Some participants testified that even without the chief “culprits” acknowledging or asking for forgiveness, ordinary Shona citizens can show remorse, acknowledge the wrongs, and ask for forgiveness. One Shona speaking participant expressed his opinion in this way, “I think we should apologise as Shona people, we are all blamed, and personally I feel sorry about everything that happened in the past”.

I interpreted this not just as a veiled act of shouldering group responsibility, but as acknowledging responsibility as well. Such statements may mark the beginning of progress and contribute immensely to building friendships because it is not a defensive stance and it shows remorse. Of interest is the fact that there was also a shift among Ndebele participants. Inasmuch as there was a general feeling of being short-changed, some Ndebele participants did not believe in pointing fingers. One Ndebele participant felt that, “not all the Shona people are bad some people think and it’s not fair to paint everyone with the same brush”.

This is what the political leaders have failed to do; they seem to have been caught up in a dualistic mind-set. For these young participants to have that kind of imagination it must have been somehow linked to the impact of the intervention. This is also demonstrated moral imagination, which is linked to Conflict-transformation process. To Lederach,

*...moral imagination requires the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationship that includes our enemies; the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without reliance on domestic polarity. (2005:5).*

This complements the idea of not just finding common ground, but it also entails even the idea of “creating common ground”. In section, 11.3.2 of this chapter I indicated that participants noted that they had become “victims” of a situation that

was not of their own making and that was an important milestone in finding common ground. In principle, this has the potential of diluting the toxic environment of distrust and suspension (Lake and Rothchild (1996:48).

#### **11.3.4 Tree planting and the lessons of working together**

Dialogue sessions were the platform to facilitate engagement, however, I realised there was need to have something more practical as well to complement the ultimate efforts of dialogue and it was up to the participants to choose something practical on their own. My role in that practical process was to provide the necessary logistics and resources for the process to enable it to be successful.

The purpose of practical action was to create another sub-platform for participants that would promote the idea of planning and working together to implement their agreed plan of action. Given the time constraints, the agreed activity was not expected to be very big, but rather the whole idea was to enable participants to be creative, initiative and come up with something that would promote working together and get to know each other better. This was not the first activity for participants to do together, during the dialogue, sessions there were other minor activities like preparing meals and eating together which also contributed, to the spirit of togetherness in a way.

Participants demonstrated encouraging organisational skills as they shared ideas about the entire process from getting permission to plant trees to identifying the areas where the trees were to be planted. The planting of symbolic trees for peace was completed successfully and it demonstrated a good teamwork spirit. Reflecting on the tree-planting activity, I believe by identifying and settling on tree planting as action of acting together it again demonstrated moral imagination. Even though tree planting may appear to be a simple or small activity, it has some significance and symbolism in peace. Trees have a direct link to human life through their provision of life sustaining oxygen, food, shelter, and medicines. Thus, in a way trees are like peace itself, we cannot sustain a decent life without them inasmuch as we cannot afford to do the same without peace. Planting trees could be equated to planting peace because it is a symbolic gesture that supports life.

The experimental group participants may not have become close friends yet by the time the intervention ended, but by mutual action, which they demonstrated in working together, it is possible that mutual affection could develop among them. This is very important the mutual action of building peace dovetails very well with Conflict-transformation, which is about transforming relationships and the environment, which threatens peace. Without mutual action and mutual affection, mutual destruction threatens peace, therefore peace building through Conflict-transformation is about taking deliberate action to transform that which is threatening peace and stability into the imagined of what it ought to be. The control group was not exposed to all these transformative features of peace building and this probably explains why the group remained unchanged. The control group members did not show any signs of appreciating values from mutual action and mutual atonement when compared to the experimental group, which went through all the dialogue up to the tree-planting action. The differences that I observed from the individuals in those two groups represented the gradual change, which had taken place in nine months. That to me was a sign of progress and hope, which is worth noting and is attributed to the intervention.

### ***Lessons from tree planting***

Participants confirmed that the tree-planting activity offered valuable lessons to them as individuals. One Shona participant had this to say:

*Tree planting was the best exercise for me because we managed to work together to produce something tangible as a group, in fact it was special outreach to the Solusi community at large.*

Another Shona participant said, “I think I managed to learn something about the power of unity. No matter how different we are, working together is always a good thing”.

The tree-planting exercise created another special space within the on-going conflict-transformation platform. Tree planting was not just a physical act, it created a focal point for all the participants and it became a befitting way of bringing the dialogue sessions to an end. Sadly, during the post-intervention interviews, I realised that some trees were affected by the dry spell, which affected the country during the Solusi University vacation when the participants were also away on vacation.

However, members expressed eagerness to replant the wilted trees. In fact, I had to arrange for them to get new trees, which they will replant without my direct involvement. My involvement will be limited to logistical support through providing resources to procure more trees. The interest in replacing the lost trees indicated that tree planting offered valuable lessons. It also enabled them to sustain some level of togetherness. This is very important because it is one of the hallmarks of Action Research of maintaining some links with participants even after the official completion of the field research. The sustainability potential of the intervention is also a sign of a successful Action Research and it depends on maintaining some links with participants even after the research.

The other important yardstick that helps in understanding the impact of peace building is the aspect of efficiency. This aspect interrogates whether intervention was the most efficient way of contributing to peace. My observation about the question whether the efficiency benchmark was achieved is both yes and no. Yes in the sense that the participants in the experimental group in particular managed to learn something by virtue of being part of a small group, which facilitated an intimate opportunity as participants managed to cook food together, eat together, and share experiences and listen to each other's stories. No in the sense that even though the findings which emerge from this research illuminate light and hope to relations between Shona and Ndebele at micro level, the success at micro level fails to guarantee success at macro level. However, such is the nature of Action Research. Each context always has its own findings and these are not obliged to pass the test of generalisation and replication. Consequently, every answer is always tentative and open to modification. This explains another reason why I settled for the preliminary short-term evaluation of the intervention rather than to speculate on the long-term impact, which was beyond the scope of this study. According to McNiff and Whitehead, "answers are incommensurable" (2006:37). Sometimes people have to live with dissonance and do the best they can under the prevailing circumstances. In peace building it takes transformed individuals to transform the world and the vice versa of this scenario is not always certain.

## **11.4 Participants' overall reflections and assessment of the project**

The majority of participants expressed appreciation for having participated in the dialogue. Participants testified that they initially joined the group out of curiosity and interest to see what was going to happen. However, as dialogue conversations began to unfold, participants shared special moments and memories, which were beneficial.

### ***Educating***

One participant pointed out that:

*It was an educating experience which definitely made a lot of sense to me.*

Another participant noted that:

*I didn't expect much initially, but I think it was an enlightening experience for us young people to discuss and share together.*

Other participants who indicated that also confirmed this:

We actually need more of these projects because education is key. Some of the mistakes that people make are as result of lack of knowledge.

### ***Understanding***

Gaining a better understanding and appreciation of each other came out because of dialogue sessions. Participants acknowledged that they had never participated in a platform of this sort of talking together and sharing experiences across the ethnic divide. Participants highlighted that inasmuch as some of them have been on speaking terms before the dialogue sessions the talk was just general talk and it never entailed discussing real core issues between them as Shona and Ndebele. Therefore, the dialogue sessions touched on issues that people seldom talk about yet they affect the relationship between the Shona and Ndebele. One Ndebele speaking participant highlighted that, "sharing experiences enabled me to realise that we have almost the same understanding of issues that are affecting us as young Shona and Ndebele".

Other participants observed the following:



*Some of the issues that exist between the Shona and Ndebele are very difficult to address but I think I now have an understanding of some of those issues.*

*To a greater extent, it helped me to understand that we are living in a country where hatred and anger still exists because personally I thought it was something which ended long back.*

### **Unity of purpose**

Working together from the first dialogue session to the tree planting demonstrated some unity of purpose. Participants acknowledged that by doing some worthwhile activity together like the planting of trees instilled a sense of togetherness. A sense of unity was demonstrated in the follow-up, which was made by participants checking on their trees. This encapsulates and demonstrates the unity, which characterized their group efforts.

### **Getting new perspectives**

Participants gained new perspectives, which they attributed to their involvement in the dialogue sessions. Participants explained that when it came to Ndebele and Shona relations they had been influenced by different sources. At times, they got conflicting perspectives, which left some of them even confused. However, some participants explained that after the dialogue sessions they gained better perspectives because of listening to each other's stories.

One participant pointed out that,

*Personally I never had serious problems with Ndebele people, in fact I have always wanted to learn to speak Ndebele and from this participation I am developing even new perspectives of the Shona-Ndebele problems.*

Another participant highlighted that:

*We as youth we are the ones to work on promoting peace in our country and to correct the past mistakes. This dialogue challenged me in the sense that I also want to be involved in the national healing process in our country.*

### **Can we change others?**

Even though participants appreciated how they had gained a better appreciation of each other, some participants also pointed out that, they faced a dilemma and were worried that the work of building bridges requires more work and more people. Two important hypothetical questions were on whether is it possible to transform those

who are very bitter? In addition, how do you deal with those who deliberately refuse to acknowledge their mistakes? Participants felt they needed to do more but somehow they felt powerless and incapacitated in terms of how to change systems or other individuals – who do not even see the reason for them to transform. In a way, it means some participants felt that the problem was too big and therefore it required a bigger response than what we were trying to do and achieve in our small dialogue group.

## **11.5 Summary**

This chapter evaluated the outcome of the peace-building intervention. The evaluation found that the short-term outcome of the dialogue had shown noticeable progress and hope. There was a shift as participants manifested what I saw as some transformative impact, which is attributed to conflict-transformation through contact. I believe that the experimental group registered such gains, marginal, as they may appear to be, while the control group remained unchanged. This could not have been by coincidence or accident. This also illustrated that intentionally created spaces, platforms can make a difference, and perhaps it is not too late to have many more of them. While the gains are at micro level based on preliminary short-term evaluation of the impact, in my opinion they give considerable reasons for hope. Salomon also confirms, “Interventions have positive effects on attitudes, feelings, stereotypes, and willingness to contact” (2013:2). However, there are limits to the registered success, as gains may be eroded after sometime and hence there is need to come up with some post interventions program(s) for the sustenance of the gains (Salomon 2013). Even though the success is not always guaranteed, it still gives hope. The next chapter will wrap up the study by giving a summary and conclusion.

## CHAPTER 12: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

*Intergroup peace education can have a positive impact in situations of intractable conflict (Lazarus 2011:443).*

### 12.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis by summarising the entire research journey from the introduction to the outcome of the research. The thesis made an ambitious attempt to build friendship between the Shona and Ndebele in Zimbabwe. The study began by tracing and analysing the nature of relations Ndebele and Shona tracing them from the past to the present nature of relations. The study then revisited efforts and activities undertaken at track I level using a top down approach in order to arrest the fractious relationship between the two ethnic groups. This was followed by a track III intervention action using a Transcend dialogue process based on two samples of Shona and Ndebele participants. Finally, a preliminary evaluation of the short-term outcome of the intervention was carried out.

### 12.2 Research Aim and Objectives

The main aim of this thesis was an attempt to build mutual understanding and peace between Shona and Ndebele people in Zimbabwe.

The research objectives were:

- To gain an understanding of Shona attitudes towards Ndebele and vice versa
- To critically interrogate initiatives that have been undertaken in an effort to promote reconciliation between Shona and Ndebele after the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987.
- To design and implement a dialogue process involving Shona and Ndebele people with the aim of building mutual understanding, friendship and respect.
- To carry out a preliminary evaluation of the short-term outcome of this intervention.

## **12.3 Summary of findings**

The theoretical framework aspect of the research and the relevant peace theory were discussed in chapters two and three. The thesis was guided by John Paul Lederach's Conflict-transformation theory as its main theoretical framework and it was supported by Gordon Allport's Intergroup Contact hypothesis as the sub-theory.

Conflict-transformation is largely concerned with the relationship between conflicting parties. It captures the human dimension in conflict settings by emphasising the compatibility of conflicting parties' relationships and their needs rather than concentrating only on dynamics responsible for the asymmetry. Peace through transformation is based on the assumption that the humanity in each person enables each human being to be capable of love that can dilute and overcome the feelings of hatred. In other words, Conflict-transformation goes beyond and beneath the conflict surface by interrogating the attitudinal, structural, and behavioural patterns of the conflict. The transformation of attitudes, structural and behavioural patterns is achieved through transforming individuals' behaviour, beliefs, and withdrawing allegiance from institutions that promotes violence. Conflict-transformation seeks to build peace by transforming a culture of violence into a culture of peace. However, it must be pointed out that all the activities of Conflict-transformation must be done strictly by non-violent means, because the means of attaining peace must be consistent with the goal.

Gordon Allport's Intergroup Contact hypothesis was adopted because it complements and dovetails well with Conflict-transformation. According to Allport using interpersonal and intergroup communication based on direct and face-to-face interaction, it is possible to reduce intergroup prejudices and animosities. Dialogue can facilitate contact, engagement, and interaction, which are capable of transcending and transforming the negative interdependence into positive interdependence. Contact may enable people to (re)discover the humanity in each other, which may go a long way in humanising and transforming each other. The notion of utilising dialogue as a Conflict-transformation platform to build friendship was part of creating intentional interactive spaces for building peace.

The Research Design and Methodological issues of the thesis were discussed in chapters six and seven respectively. Since this study endeavoured to build mutual understanding and respect through building friendships, I saw it befitting to adopt an Action Research Design. Firstly, it must be made clear that the concept of Research Design adopted in this thesis is as defined by Johan Mouton who described it as “a plan or a blueprint on how you intend conducting the research” (2001:55). While a Research Design is technically interconnected to the Research Methodology, the two are conceptually different (see section 6.2). Secondly, Action Research was adopted to facilitate a practical process of engagement using two small samples of Shona and Ndebele participants in an effort to build friendship.

Action Research is grounded on the belief that world problems require real and practical solutions. The essence of Action Research is to come up with reasonable and sound observations of the problem situation and then design, implement and evaluate the outcome of the intervention. The emphasis is on doing “with” instead of “doing for” the communities facing problems. The active participation of the community and the researcher defines the hallmarks of Action Research. The ontological basis of Action Research is influenced by the idea that Action Research practitioners perceive themselves as agents of transformation, while the main epistemological assumption of Action Research is that the production and discovery of knowledge is an unending process. Hence, in Action Research there are no final answers to anything. Effectively, this means that the outcome(s) of an Action Research-based inquiry is preliminary and tentative; and should be open to social critique.

An Action Research-based study does not and should not search for predetermined or fixed outcome that can be generalised and replicated elsewhere. The Action Research findings remain context based and particularistic to the said case. Nonetheless, one may be able to draw valuable lessons on what may and what may not work in future research. Thus, for Action researchers, knowledge is not just a product of meticulous discovery; it can be a product of creation based on trial and error (McNiff and Whitehead 2006:35).

The Research Methodology reflected how the research was conducted with special attention to methodological paradigm, sample size, sampling technique, data collection methods, ethical considerations, validity, and reliability.

In this thesis, I adopted a qualitative research paradigm because of its ability to capture and illustrate human behaviour and condition in social settings. In my opinion, a qualitative paradigm was far better placed to explore people's experiences, feelings, and perceptions better than a quantitative or a mixed methods paradigm. Berg's observation that "[c]learly, certain experiences cannot be meaningfully expressed in numbers" (2009:3), was very instructive in this research. In other words, qualitative research emphasises quality rather than quantity.

A small sample of 24 participants was purposively selected in order to provide an intimate opportunity for participants to engage and interact effectively. From this total group of 24 participants, 12 participants formed the experimental group while the other 12 non-participants became members of the control group. The experimental group underwent a sustained Transcend dialogue over a period of 6 months, while the control group did not go through the sustained Transcend dialogue. However, both groups were interviewed before and after the dialogue in order to compare the possible transformative impact of the intervention.

Data collection methods consisted of interviews, FGDs and observation. The mixing of data collection methods was exercised to enhance methodological triangulation. Data analysis was done employing two methods: interpretive thematic analysis and discourse analysis. The choice of using manual methods of data analysis was largely influenced by the qualitative nature of the research and the nature of the Research Design. Interpretive thematic analysis is a form of inquiry, which entails analysing data in order to identify emerging behaviours, perceptions, and attitudes. Discourse analysis involves extrapolating the deeper meaning of words and expressions, which are ordinarily hidden in verbal speech. The interpretive thematic analysis is concerned with identifying theme from data content while discourse analysis interrogates the context and manner in which the message was conveyed. The idea of using two methods of data analysing in one research was done in order to enhance qualitative validity and reliability of findings.

Validity and reliability aspects in a qualitative research paradigm do not have the same meaning and interpretation as in a quantitative paradigm or in a positivist's vocabulary. This is precisely because qualitative research deals with the social reality of the human nature and not atoms or molecules. Hence, validity and reliability are perceived through the prism of trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and conformability: not through mere generalisation and replication of findings. Such is the nature of a qualitative research paradigm especially when it is used in conjunction with an Action Research Design.

The ethical aspects of the research endeavoured to ensure veracity of the research while at the same time being respectful to the participants and the "gatekeepers". The "gatekeepers" in writing (see appendix) granted permission. I was also guided by the code of conduct of practitioners applying the Transcend dialogue (see section). I also took time to inform and clarify to the participants that their participation was purely voluntary and were free to discontinue if they wished to do so. Two participants dropped out citing other pressing commitments elsewhere. The research was eventually completed with 22 participants and non-participants.

### ***Objective Number 1***

Objective number one was covered in chapters 4 and 8. Chapter 4 addressed the objective by tracing the historical background of the relationship between the Shona and Ndebele after the latter's arrival in 1838–39. The review of literature demonstrated that rivalry between the two ethnic groups could be regarded as a generational struggle locked in the historical animosities and clashes, which started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following the establishment of the Ndebele State in south western parts of Zimbabwe, the new state made serious efforts to extend its suzerainty and hegemony both by direct and indirect means; peaceful and violent means. Those who towed the line by paying tribute were spared and those who were considered recalcitrant by refusing to pay tribute were raided. Thus, the evidence suggests that the relationship was clearly antagonistic from the onset. However, the situation was exacerbated by some opinionated exaggerations, which unfortunately went on to be accepted as facts. The exaggerations came in three forms: Firstly, it was the Ndebele who projected themselves as a powerful state that had prevailed against all the odds to establish a powerful state. Secondly, the colonial writers

demonised the Ndebele as a bloodthirsty and violent people who senselessly murdered the Shona; these writers propagated that it was the colonial rule that had stopped the “genocide”. The third exaggeration came from the Shona who claimed legitimacy over Zimbabwe and accused the Ndebele for “disturbing peace” that prevailed prior to the arrival of *“Madzviti”*. All these had devastating cumulative repercussions to the relationship between the two ethnic groups.

It seems the Shona never accepted the presence of Ndebele people in Zimbabwe and they viewed them as “foreigners”. This created a serious relationship problem of mutual suspicion, disrespect and distrust which has evolved over a long time and has been presided over by different generations and passed on through intergenerational transmission of trauma and antagonism.

In the pre-colonial period 1839 to 1889, the struggle between the two groups manifested very little co-operation because intermittent raids and counter raids usually affected it. During the colonial period 1890 to 1980, the two ethnic groups became victims of colonial rule and the struggle continued in the form of competition for occupying the little space created for Africans by colonial rule as evidenced by the 1929 Shona-Ndebele faction fights in Bulawayo. Paradoxically, during the same colonial period the two ethnic groups managed to forge a marriage of convenience motivated by fighting against the common foe. The struggle against colonial rule witnessed some noticeable co-operation cutting across the ethnic divide but the marriage of convenience never blossomed as evidenced by the violent clashes along ethnic fault lines culminating the split of ZAPU along ethnic lines.

Independence, which came in 1980, failed to bring the much-anticipated joy as far as ethnic relations were concerned. Due to the long history of intolerance of each other, the “triumphant Shona” saw nothing wrong in their post-independence dominance over the Ndebele, while the Ndebele – who were struggling in coming to terms with 1980 electoral defeat – found this situation both unacceptable and abominable. Mistrust and insecurity ensued and the combustible environment got the spark from the dissident problem in Matabeleland and Midlands areas. Mutual suspicion, disrespect for one another and insecurity were the key issues to the Gukurahundi violence and these have been in existence in the Zimbabwean polity for many years.



However, it was the ZANU PF government's response to the situation, which saw a disproportionate response creating a disaster out of a crisis. Ever since the violent disaster, the relations have been worse and the two ethnic groups are still stuck on the edge of a potentially combustible environment. That is the trouble with fake political and ethnic stability; it is largely meaningful because it fakes social cohesion and mutual trust. This means that the ethnic polarisation is most likely going to continue unabated with greater intensity if no action is taken.

The real and imagined marginalisation of Matabeleland has made the Ndebele people feel unwanted in Zimbabwe. Participants indicated that the polarisation and antagonism between the two ethnic groups is historical but it was worsened due to the Gukurahundi violence. Participants also confirmed that the dominance by the Shona in almost all spheres of what matters in Zimbabwe was another source of friction. The Ndebele feel dominated, undermined, ignored, disrespected, and discriminated against merely because they are Ndebele. This has led to the rise of some radical elements within the Ndebele community who are now pushing for a complete secession of Matabeleland from Zimbabwe to establish an independent Republic of Mthwakazi.

### ***Objective number 2***

Chapters 5 and 9 attempted to address the demands of objective number two. The Unity Accord of 1987 ended the violence but it unfortunately created a false sense of ethnic coalition, which was devoid of true nationhood and positive peace. The issue of genuine peace building, nation building, and equity were conveniently swept under the carpet in the name of the Unity Accord. This created an illusion of political and ethnic stability, which currently exists in Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, government publicly projects an image of a stable society but behind that veil of “stability”, ethnic discontentment and disenchantment remain unaddressed. The Unity Accord was a top down and track I intervention, which concentrated, on political unity and political accommodation of the elites. Empirical evidence from literature has questioned the sincerity behind the Unity Accord and it has often been labelled “a surrender document” which failed to mend the bridges and the broken national contract (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2004). The Unity Accord only addressed direct violence which was, of course, a good starting point but was unfortunately not good enough

because it failed to deal with structural violence. Participants also confirmed that nothing tangible was gained in terms of real peace dividends from the Unity Accord, because people are still polarised. The gains in track I did not cascade down to track III. The post-Unity Accord arrangement perpetuates the dominance of the Ndebele by the Shona through systemic structures that relegate Ndebele people to peripheral positions. The past violence between the Shona and Ndebele left many unhealed hearts and festering wounds. Hence, what the Unity Accord that it postponed dealing with the problem while creating a warped model that can operate only for as long as the Shona are in power with other minority groups – that includes the Ndebele – perennially relegated. This constitutes neither genuine peace nor sustainable unity.

### ***Objective number 3***

Chapter 10 fulfilled the key aspects of objective number three of building friendship using a small sample of Shona and Ndebele people. The chapter described the intervention, which was applied in an attempt to build peace through building friendship. A transformative platform was created in the form of face-to-face dialogue sessions, which were aimed towards building mutual respect, understanding, and possibly friendships. As conversations began to unfold during the dialogue sessions participants shared experiences, moments, food, and memories together over a period of six months. Positive relationships were created because of contact and engagement. In an effort to enhance mutual action, participants embarked on a symbolic planting of trees for peace. Participants acknowledged that the wrongs of the past were indeed threatening the peaceful existence of the two ethnic groups.

### ***Objective number 4***

The fourth objective was that of carrying out a preliminary evaluation of the short-term outcome of the intervention. The evaluation was done in the form of follow-up interviews to both the experimental group and the control group. The evaluation revealed notable positive changes, which indicate hope and noticeable progress for the participants in the experimental group. Such noticeable changes were not observed within the control group. Participants in the experimental group indicated that the dialogue conversations had created a special intentional platform for them to talk and listen to each other. Participants testified that such a platform had never been availed to them before. Participants acknowledged that as young people, they

did not regard each other as enemies *per se*, but they noted that they existed in a toxic environment, which made them to inherit past enmity. Participants found some common ground by apparently “realising” that technically they were all “victims” and products of past animosities that were beyond their making or influence. Participants began to reach out to each other through moral imagination, which saw them questioning some of the past decisions that were made by the political elites. To me, such assertive thinking and interrogation demonstrated two things, firstly the impact of dialogue in peace building and secondly it highlighted that peace building can transcend core issues of the conflict through creative and constructive alternatives of addressing relationships first before dealing with core issues.

## **12.4 A personal reflection**

The research has been an amazing personal experience and a learning experience as well. I did learn a number of things from the participants and from the dialogue process and chief among them being that it is possible to transcend the socio-political matrix of a conflict. The study confirms what may appear to be common wisdom, but strangely, this wisdom is often ignored by society. My greatest fear, which concurs with the findings made by Salomon, has been that the gains could be “eroded” with time (Salomon 2013). Therefore I have made a commitment to continue stimulating communication (between the former participants and myself and among former participants themselves) using the *WhatsApp* social media platform. My hope is that this interaction will continue for as long as possible because to me it represents an amazing, simple, and affordable form of promoting post intervention interaction.

## **12.5 Conclusion**

The overall conclusion of the research is that while the Shona and Ndebele relations may seem tumultuous and intractable, it is not too late to make amends and build peace. The absence of genuine spaces and platforms for people to talk and listen to each other is actually depriving people the chance of realising the humanity in each other. This can be confirmed by the realisation “an enemy is one whose story we have not heard”. Engagement at micro level can indeed transform individuals for the better. Even though this may not be generalised and replicated everywhere it nonetheless illuminates valuable lessons and it must be acknowledged that it is

transformed people who are capable of transforming others and of transforming the world for the betterment of humanity. Margaret Mead advises to “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed its only thing that ever has”. The dearth of genuine space for people to talk and listen to each other was actually permitting what should be spaces for genuine engagement to be filled with disengagement, mutual trust and other fractious tendencies.

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# Appendix I

## Building Friendships between Shona and Ndebele Ethnic Groups in Zimbabwe

Cyprian Muchemwa  
Reg. Number: 21346774

Supervisor: Professor Geoffrey Thomas Harris

### Pre-Dialogue Interview Guide

#### Introduction

The research is being conducted in order understand the nature of Shona and Ndebele relations in Zimbabwe. I am conducting this research for a doctoral degree at Durban University of Technology in South Africa. I am interested in understanding the perceptions, feelings and opinions of Shona on their Ndebele counterparts and vice versa. The questions that I am asking are linked to the topic building capacity for friendship between the Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups in Zimbabwe. Everything that you are going to say will be used solely for this only and not any other purpose. In order further protect your privacy in terms of views and identity; your name will not be used. Do you have any questions or anything that require clarification from me before we start?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Sex |  |
| Age |  |

### Opening questions on Identity

1. Do you think of yourself as a Zimbabwean first or Shona or Ndebele?

Probe: identity, culture, language, history.

2. How does that make you feel?

Probe: perceptions, proud of what? prejudices and stereotyping.

### Questions on perceptions

3. Can you tell me any stories pertaining the Ndebele/Shona people that you have heard?

Probe: perceptions

4. What is your view of the Shona/Ndebele relations in Zimbabwe?

Probe: animosity, tribalism and nature of issues at play.

5. Do you think that Shona and Ndebele relations are an important aspect in Zimbabwe? Explain.

|                   |       |           |          |                   |
|-------------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly<br>Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-------------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

### Questions on integration

6. Describe your experience(s) of living with the Shona/Ndebele.

Probe: existent of contact, its nature and effect on relations

7. Have you personally been a victim of ethnic discrimination? Explain.

Probe: response to conflict, perceptions on discrimination, specific event or ongoing issue.

### Questions on Shona and Ndebele relations

8. Do you think the Shona and Ndebele dislike each other? Why?

Probe: how have relations evolved over time and with what consequences.

9. Is it possible for the Shona and Ndebele to live happily together? Explain your answer.

|                   |       |           |          |                   |
|-------------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly<br>Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-------------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

10. What is your understanding and views of the Unity Accord which was signed in December 1987?

Probe: opinions on the role of government in the whole process.

11. Did the Unity Accord improve relations between the Shona and Ndebele?

|          |       |           |          |                   |
|----------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|



|       |  |  |  |  |
|-------|--|--|--|--|
| Agree |  |  |  |  |
|-------|--|--|--|--|

### Questions on improving relations

12. What do you think could be done to build Shona and Ndebele relations at community and national level?

Probe: views on what has been done and what can be done.

13. Responsibility towards mending relations

| <b>Responsibility towards mending relations</b> | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Undecided</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| It is the role government                       |                       |              |                  |                 |                          |
| It is the role of individuals                   |                       |              |                  |                 |                          |
| It is the role of communities                   |                       |              |                  |                 |                          |
| It is the role NGOs/faith communities           |                       |              |                  |                 |                          |

14. Have you done anything to improve the relationship between the Shona and the Ndebele?

Probe: personal involvement and creativity in relationship-building.

15. Is it possible for the Shona/Ndebele to have Shona/Ndebele friends?

|                |       |           |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

16. Do you have Shona/Ndebele friends? Explain?

Probe: how are friendships made considerations?

### Conclusion

## **Appendix II**

### **Building Friendship between Shona and Ndebele Ethnic Groups in Zimbabwe**

Cyprian Muchemwa  
Reg. Number: 21346774

Supervisor: Professor Geoffrey Thomas Harris

#### **Post Dialogue Interview Guide**

##### **Introduction**

This is a follow up interview to the dialogue that you participated three months ago for research that I am doing in order understand the nature of Shona and Ndebele relations in Zimbabwe. The questions that I am asking are linked to the topic building capacity for friendship between the Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups in Zimbabwe and the dialogue that you participated. Everything that you are going to say will be used solely for this only and not any other purpose. In order further protect your privacy in terms of views and identity; your name will not be used. Do you have any questions or anything that require clarification from me before we start?

1. Can you briefly explain the objectives of the dialogue which you participated?
2. Do you think the objectives of the dialogue were met?
3. Which aspect of the dialogue did you enjoy most and explain why?
4. Which aspects of the dialogue were not enjoyable and explain why?
5. Can share with me your view on the level of participation that came from the participants from the first session to the last one.

6. From your observation of what happened in the dialogue sessions can the Shona and Ndebele live peacefully as friends?
7. Is there any new knowledge that gained by participating in the dialogue session?
8. Which aspect(s) do you think need to be addressed to improve relations between the Shona and the Ndebele?
9. Is there anything that you think you can do differently after participating in the dialogue sessions?
10. What are your perceptions of the Shona/Ndebele if you compare them before after the intervention?
11. In your opinion what do you think of the future of Shona and Ndebele in Zimbabwe?
12. Given the chance, would you recommend anyone to participate in a similar dialogue?
13. What can be done to improve a dialogue such as the one you participated in?
14. What is your overall assessment of the entire dialogue?
15. Is there anything that you wish to share with me about the Shona and Ndebele in Zimbabwe?

## **Appendix III**

### **Building Friendship between Shona and Ndebele Ethnic Groups in Zimbabwe**

Cyprian Muchemwa

Reg. Number: 21346774

Supervisor: Professor Geoffrey Thomas Harris

## Appendix III

### Focus Group Discussion Guide

#### Introduction

I would like to start by thanking you for coming today. My name is Cyprian Muchemwa and I am a doctoral student at Durban University of Technology. During the next nine months I am going to be conducting a research on building capacity for possible friendship between the Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups. Feel free to express your views, experiences and opinions. Different views will be accepted and respected. Everything that we are going to discuss will be confidential and will be used exclusively for research and nothing else. Participation is voluntary and should feel the need to discontinue, you free to do so and I will respect your decision. During the discussion I will be taking down some notes and with your permission I will be happy to record the entire discussion so that I do not miss any of your opinions and any of opinions and views. The discussion will be for two hours.

**Introductions:** Group member's introductions will be done in the form of self-introductions.

1. At national level describe how the Shona and Ndebele relate to each other.
2. Is one or either of these groups being disadvantaged? Explain.
3. Do you think co-existence between Shona and Ndebele in Zimbabwe is possible?

|                |       |           |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

4. Do Zimbabweans hold stereotype of each other? Give examples.
5. What can you say about allocation resource and opportunities at national level?

| Allocation of resources and opportunities | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Shona/Ndebele share equally               |                |       |           |          |                   |
| One group disadvantaged                   |                |       |           |          |                   |
| One has more privileges                   |                |       |           |          |                   |

6. Does ethnicity impact friendships?

|                |       |           |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

7. How can the Unity Accord be judged in terms of its achievements?

8. As a group you describe the nature of Shona and Ndebele relations before and after the signing of the Unity Accord?

9. What is the position of this group regarding ethnicity in the systems/structure of governance at national level?

| <b>Systems of governance</b>       | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Undecided</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Ethnic stereotype has an influence |                       |              |                  |                 |                          |

10. Do you think dialogue and engagement can improve relations between Shona and Ndebele?

|                |       |           |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|

11. What role can individuals play to improve Shona and Ndebele relations? Elaborate.

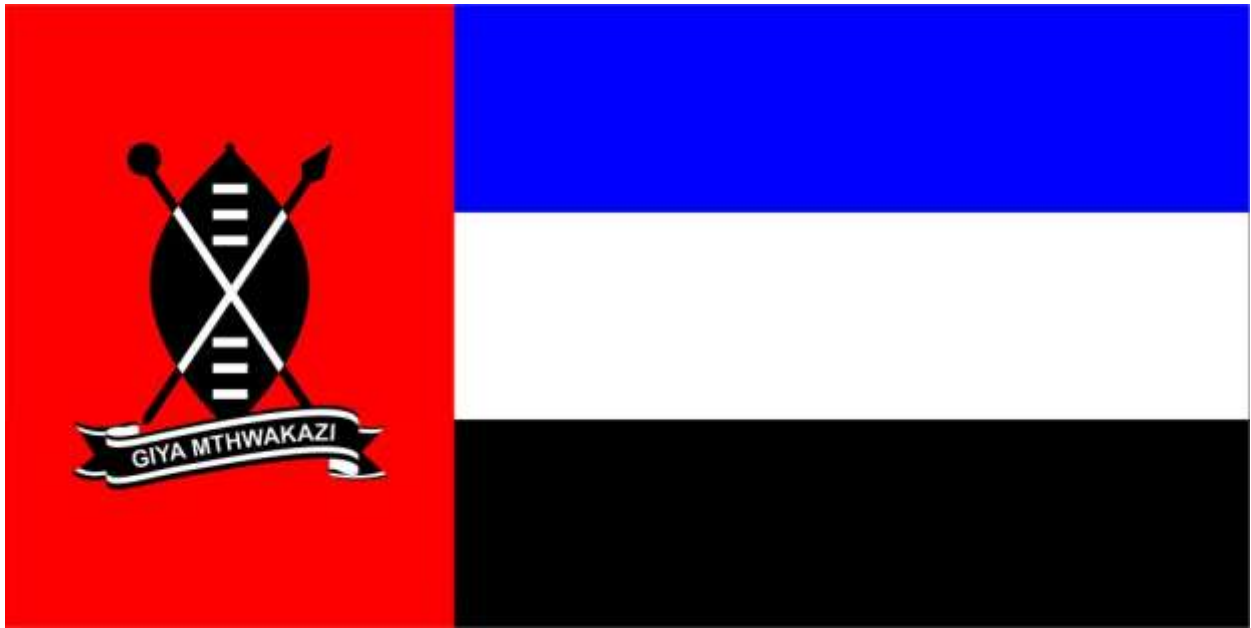
12. What would Shona like the Ndebele know about Shona?



The envisaged map of future Mthwakazi Republic.

Source: <http://www.africafederation.net/Matabeleland.htm>

## Appendix IV



The flag for the envisaged Mthwakazi Republic

Source: <http://www.africafederation.net/Matabeleland.htm>



