



**Transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens in Masvingo;
Zimbabwe.**

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Philosophy: Public Administration-Peace Studies in the Faculty of Public Management at
Durban University of Technology

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Declaration of originality

This is to certify that the work “*Transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens in Masvingo, Zimbabwe*” is entirely my own and not of any other person, unless explicitly acknowledged (including citation of published and unpublished sources). The work has not previously been submitted in any form to the Durban University of Technology or to any other institution for assessment or for any other purpose.

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I hereby approve the final submission of this thesis.

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Abstract

The study discussed ways of transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens in Masvingo, Zimbabwe where political party supporters had failed to cope with the aftermaths of election-related violence since 1980. The motivational factor for carrying out this research arose from the philosophical perspective that working together for a common goal builds sustainable and durable peace. This study was underpinned by the peace and power theory which promotes working together in cooperative and peaceful ways. The study was carried out with a sample of 36 participants from the key informants and focus group discussions from which an action team of 10 participants was formed. The overall aim of this study was to explore the use of peace gardens as an intervention strategy in transforming post-conflict relationships with specific objectives being to explore the causes and effects of election-related violence in Masvingo, Zimbabwe and to examine the use, effectiveness, and challenges of using peace gardens in transforming post-conflict relationships. The type of inquiry used in this study was advocacy participation world view while the research design was a qualitative paradigm with exploratory action research and evaluation components. Data for the study was generated through focus groups, interviews, and participant observations. The study findings revealed that politics and elections were the main causes of conflict in Masvingo with hate speech, the creation of division and partisan distribution of food as tools by which the conflict was enforced. The findings revealed the effectiveness of peace gardening as an intervention strategy in peacebuilding through its ability to dismantle barriers of division, hatred and thereby creating debate platforms for conflict resolution modalities among former political rivals. Though the results of this peace gardening intervention strategy demonstrated embedded yielding effects of action research, the study concludes that peacebuilding initiatives do not work like magic considering the sensitivity of politics and conflict. Participants in action research do not change their attitudes overnight, a scenario which calls for more or prolonged intervention cycles in promoting durable peace.

Key words: Peace gardens, Peacebuilding, Post-conflict and Transformation

Dedication

This research is dedicated to my supportive and loving wife Placidia, daughters, Tariroyashe and Elisaphine and son Takundanashe (TK).

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List of acronyms

AT	Action Team
ATP	Action Team Participant
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CAZ	Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
DUT	Durban University of Technology
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FPZ	Forum Party of Zimbabwe
KI	Key Informant
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-N	Movement for Democratic Change- Ncube
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change- Tsvangirai
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PF- ZAPU	Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African People's Union
PGs	Peace Gardens
RF	Rhodesian Front
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZimPF	Zimbabwe People First
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolution Army
ZLHR	Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights
ZPGT	Zimbabwe Peace Gardening Trust
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement

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PART I

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

“Let us continue to be united and address our differences peacefully. The strongest response to violence is peace. The strongest response to hate is love. God bless Zimbabwe” Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa (Gono 2018)

1.1 Introduction

This study seeks to explore the transformation of post-conflict relationships via Peace Gardens (PGs) in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. This study is supported by the peace and power theory which is grounded in the emancipatory standard created by Paulo Freire (1970) in his classic text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The emancipatory standard calls for working together with others fairly and cooperatively in ways which promotes peace, reinforces team work and challenges competitive and divisive ways as promoted by Mattaini (2008: 1). The peace and power theory is complemented by the contact and conflict transformation theories in underpinning this study. The chapter explores the background to the study and provides a brief synthesis of the research context and also gives an overview of political violence in Zimbabwe, type of inquiry and data collection methods used in this study, peace and power theory and the research problem. The chapter also highlights the aims, causes of election-related violence in Masvingo, PGs, a summary of the research findings, research design, the motivation for carrying out this study and ends by providing the dissertation structure.

1.2 The background to the study

Zimbabwe's elections that have been held regularly since independence in 1980 have been damaged by election-related violence that left post-conflict challenges among the people in Zimbabwe and Masvingo rural district in particular (Zvobgo 2016). While some scholars have linked the issue of political violence to the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in Zimbabwe in 1999, others argue that it was already evident during the first democratic elections in 1980 (Mlambo 2014). This study purports that the issue of political violence needs to be traced as far back as 1840 when the Ndebele people invaded Mashonaland.

As pointed out by Chikwanda (2014: 6), the issue of linking political violence with the formation of the MDC sounds popular due to the alarming levels of political violence ranging from torture, intimidation, displacements, abductions, and killings experienced thereafter. As pointed out by LeBas (2016), the 2000, 2005, 2008 and the 2013 general elections resulted in 28,938 reported cases of political violence, more than 20,000 displacements, 10,000 serious injuries and more than 186 deaths being experienced from the two main political parties. The post-election period in Masvingo has seen people remaining divided, relationships broken and people continuing to regard one another as political rivalries. Chikwanda (2014) in his study entitled 'Combining Sport and Mediation Skills for Community Healing' contends that Zimbabwe never made meaningful attempts to prosecute perpetrators of violence to acknowledge their transgressions since the national leadership protected them by overriding the constitutional prerogative through granting them presidential exoneration. The element of election-related violence also recurred in the 2000, 2005, 2008 and the 2013 elections and that actually propagated the degree of fear and humiliation among the victims (Zimbabwe Human Rights 2007).

The aftermath of election-related disturbances is continuously being felt in Masvingo by political party supporters whose rights were violated during the election-related violent campaigns. These political party supporters from both the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the MDC parties now live together in communities on a daily basis but remain divided along partisan lines. The community's 67% populace shows signs of broken relationships with partisan politics, disunity and continuous reference to each other as political adversaries becoming the order of the day in Masvingo (LeBas 2010: 435). There are sad cases where community members are failing to attend their neighbours' funeral ceremonies on the basis of political affiliation and the memories of past election-related acts.

The high unemployment rate in the Welkom Hoek area which is currently pegged at 87% also exacerbates the level of conflict in the area (Zimbabwe population census 2012). The economic situation in the area leaves the community members vulnerable to manipulation by politicians who promise them money and food hand-outs for engaging in violent acts during election campaigns (Fuller 2010). It is important to point out that political differences are hard to overcome since some people gain material or monetary benefits from the political parties and are therefore less likely to adjust their views. That scenario has led to high levels of distrust among community members and foiled cooperative attempts in the country as a whole (Alexander and McGregor 2013: 752). The recurring election-related violent attacks on rival political party supporters degenerates the social stability of communities already

affected by other forms of violence, such as intolerance, broken relationships, exclusion and impunity that threaten to destroy the social and political fabric. Evidence has revealed that both the MDC and ZANU-PF supporters in one way or another were active perpetrators in election-related political violence in Zimbabwe which has left hundreds of people dead or maimed and thousands displaced (Sachikonye 2010).

It is against this background that this research sought to examine the prospects of using peace gardens as a tool for transforming post-conflict relationships in Masvingo, Zimbabwe in ways that enhance political broadmindedness among political party supporters. The goal of this study was centered on transforming post-conflict relationships which were caused by past acts of prejudice, marginalisation and violence between political party adversaries. This study strove to inspire communities through the development of new intervention strategies aimed at dissuading them from using violence in future through upholding the model of tolerance and diversity through peace gardening (see the discussion in section 6:1 to 6. 7). Considering that election-related violence has been a growing concern for many peacebuilders, I also saw the need to join others by embarking on this study which strove towards the promotion of peace in communities through transforming their post-conflict relationships via peace gardens.

1.3 Research Context

This study was carried out in Zimbabwe's Welkom Hoek communal farmlands in Masvingo province. The area is a semi-urban environment which lies 18 kilometres east of Masvingo town. The area, like other parts of the country, was affected by political polarisation which left political party supporters failing to cope with the aftermaths of election-related violence and broken relationships. The scenario discussed above warranted for the transformation of post-conflict relationships in the area. The situation in Welkom Hoek portrayed a divided and disunited community whose relationships have remained strained as a result of the political memories of what happened during the past election-related instabilities.

The Welkom Hoek community was of particular interest to me since Masvingo province became the second Zimbabwean province after Matabeleland to switch its allegiance from the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) to the opposition MDC. That development resulted in an upsurge of political violence which caused strained relationships among the local opposition party supporters. The levels of intolerance has not declined since 2000 (Sachikonye 2010: 5).

The 2000, 2005 and the 2008 elections results saw Masvingo province scoring very high numbers in their opposition vote, a situation that propelled them to be labelled as opposition sympathizers and created strained relationships with the ruling party supporters who strongly felt betrayed by the voting pattern. The new development prompted the establishment of 'bases' which were then manned by the ZANU-PF youth militia (Zimbabwe human rights NGO Forum 2000: 17). These bases became camping points for torturing "teaching/disciplining" people who did not support the ruling party and to force them to change their support back to ZANU-PF. The exercise resulted in the burning of houses, loss of livestock, deaths and maiming of people a scenario that created untold hatred among political party supporters.

1.4 Political violence in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has a long history of political violence dating back to pre-colonial times. Violent wars against the colonialists around the 1890s, the Shona-Ndebele conflicts, black resistance to white administration's domination around the 1960s and the violence associated with the war of liberation are some of the highlighted examples meant to justify the above assertion (Moyo 2013). As noted above, LeBas (2006) also concurs that the country's politics has for a long period been embedded in a tradition and practice of violence that arose more than half a century ago. The consequence of such a violent history has been a society traumatised by fear, withdrawal and collective depression (Sachikonye 2010: xvii). The past memories of violence, intimidation, and harassment still weigh heavily among the victims of political violence in Masvingo province.

For the purpose of this research, political violence was contextualised to refer to election motivated violence perpetrated against supporters of either the opposition parties or the ruling ZANU-PF party supporters.

Since 1980, the country's elections have been marred by political violence ranging from torture, abductions, harassment, murders, and displacements. Election-related political violence has become a common feature in Zimbabwe especially after the formation of the MDC¹ in September 1999. Elections have been held on a regular basis since independence in 1980 but they have not been verified as free and fair by some international and regional

¹. Movement for Democratic Change is the strongest opposition party to have emerged in Zimbabwe since the country's attainment of independence in 1980, it was formed in 1999 and its president at the time of writing is Morgan Tsvangirai.

bodies (LeBas 2016: 3). The national authoritarianism has also cascaded down to communities who have also embraced this dishonourable practice and are tormenting, killing and intimidating political opponents.

It is frequently assumed that election violence on the African continent has become very common and is perpetrated by the incumbent regimes and more frequently prior to elections instead of afterwards; the Zimbabwean situation has not proved otherwise (Sachikonye 2010). The main protagonists in the Zimbabwean political violence were both ZANU-PF and the MDC supporters (Sachikonye 2010). Violence, however, was heavily skewed in favour of ZANU-PF since it was the ruling party and had access to exploiting state security forces such as the police, army and the secret intelligence (Fuller 2010, Musanga and Manase 2016).

As stated by Ranger (2013), ZANU-PF, prior to the elections managed to divide the nation into 'revolutionaries²' and 'sell-outs'. The idea of labelling someone a sell-out invites and seeks to rationalise violence and promote the rhetoric of intolerance which were the key factors in provoking the post 2000 political violence. The effects of party polarisation were most severe to those living in rural areas. They experienced violence and intimidation and as a result, tens of thousands fled to the cities (LeBas 2006). I grew up in an area where political violence was so acute and divided families and neighbours and I have been inspired by LeBas' philosophy that violence is never a good strategy for resolving or managing conflicts.

Institutionalised violence succeeded in sowing widespread fear and trauma and also left a large residue of resentment, frustration, and thirst for reprisal among the populace in Zimbabwe (Federal Information & News Dispatch 2008). If this situation goes unabated or unless sensitively handled, the sparks of injustice and the pursuit of retribution could create explosive conditions for future detonation (Ngwenya and Harris 2015). The issue of political violence has gone down to affect even family relationships. There have been frightening levels of deterioration in family connections as a result of partisan politics (Musanga and Manase 2016). There is no doubt that political violence has created discord, hatred and

². Revolutionary is a term commonly associated with the ruling party in Zimbabwe. It refers to people who participated in the liberation war. If someone fought during the war of liberation and decides to move out of the ruling party to form or join another political party s/he loses the title and will be regarded as a sell-out.

disharmony among communities over the years (Fuller 2010), (see Chapter Two, sections 2.2 to 2.15).

1.5 Overview of the sample and the research design

The sample for this study comprised of 36 participants drawn from both the key informants and focus group discussion participants. The 10 participants, who were equally drawn from the MDC and ZANU-PF, constituted the study's action team (AT). In this study, I used a qualitative action research design which included the exploratory, action research and the evaluation components since the study was intended to offer the participants an opportunity to reflect and try to transform their conflicts. The exploratory component of the research helped to answer the first two objectives of this study while the third and fourth objectives were answered under the action research and preliminary evaluation components. The type of inquiry I used in this study was advocacy participation worldview. I preferred the use of an action research design for this study since it involved studying shared patterns of behaviour and actions of people in Masvingo's Welkom Hoek area in their natural setting and proffering an intervention strategy meant to transform their post-conflict relationships.

1.6 Research Problem and Aims

Zimbabwe's elections, which have been held regularly since independence in 1980, have been strained by election-related violence that left post-conflict challenges among the people in Masvingo rural district (Zvobgo 2016). The aftermath of the election-related disturbances is being felt in Masvingo by political party supporters who were hurting and killing each other as either victims or perpetrators of violence during the election-related violent campaigns. These people are now living together in communities on a daily basis but have remained divided along partisan lines and are showing signs of cracked relationships.

Partisan politics, disunity and continuous reference to each other as political adversaries continue to remain the order of the day in Masvingo (LeBas 2006: 435). There are sad cases where community members fail to attend funeral ceremonies at their neighbours' residences on the basis of political affiliation and the memories of past election-related acts.

The high unemployment rate in the area that is currently pegged at 87%, this exacerbates the level of conflict in the area (Zimbabwe population census 2012). This economic situation in the area leaves the community members vulnerable to manipulation by politicians who promised them food and money in return for engaging in violent acts in the upcoming

elections (Fuller 2010). The level of distrust among community members is very high and that is foiling any cooperative attempts in the area (Alexander and McGregor 2013).

There have been some initiatives of bringing the local community together in the past through sports and money lending projects but the lack of cooperation, disunity, and division seriously hampered such initiatives. The consequences of such a damaged community have been a society lacking trust of each other and characterised by broken relationships based on past memories of violence (Sachikonye 2010).

This research proposed, through the peace and power theory, a study that used peace gardens in transforming post-conflict relationships. There was need to train the local community in developing new ways of solving their problems in ways which promotes cooperation and transformation (Schirch 2004: 19). It is important to note that peace gardens in themselves, however, are not the only solution to the post-conflict challenges in Masvingo but an example of one that can be useful. Peace gardens are representative of initiatives that bring people together and give them a common purpose to benefit all.

This study was intended to contribute new knowledge in peacebuilding since the use of peace gardens in transforming post-conflict relationships has been an under-researched area, discussed further in the following chapters.

1.7 The overall aim of the study

The overall aim of this study was to explore the potential use of PGs as peacebuilding tools in transforming post-conflict relationships in Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

1.8 The specific objectives of this research were:

- To explore the causes and effects of election-related violence in Masvingo, Zimbabwe;
- To examine the use, effectiveness, and challenges of using PGs in transforming post-conflict relationships;
- To design and implement an intervention strategy together with the AT, aimed at transforming post-conflict relationships;
- To undertake preliminary evaluation of the outcomes of the initiated intervention strategy.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

The study on the transformation of post-conflict relationships was carried out in Welkom Hoek community which is situated in Masvingo rural district in Zimbabwe. Theoretically, this study falls within the confines of peacebuilding and is supported by the peace and power theory. This theory is grounded in the emancipatory standards created by Paulo Freire that call for working together with others in fair and cooperative ways promoting peace, reinforcing team work and challenging competitive and divisive ways as promoted by Mattaini (2008: 1). The study is also complimented by Allport's contact theory and the conflict transformation theory.

The underlying assumption of this theory is that every single human relationship includes the utilisation of force, yet there is typically one individual or a group of individuals who have relative power in that gathering's structure. Regardless of such power imbalances individuals always look for space in life where they are moderately free from rivalry and confrontation, and where participation and peace wins (Chinn 2001; Chinn and Falk-Rafael 2014). The other assumption of this theory points out that while conflict is inevitable in all human relationships, people recognize the value of cooperative ways of working together (Chinn and Falk-Rafael 2014: 63-64) a move which prompted the Welkom Hoek community to attempt peace gardening as a unifying method.

The research is also guided by the peace and power theory's pillars whose thrust is associated with constructing non-violent cultures that include recognising the contributions and success of others, acting with respect, sharing power to build the community and also making peace (Mattaini 2008: 2). All the theoretical assumptions and pillars became the guiding principles for the action team during the peace gardening venture.

The components highlighted in the use of peace and power theory relate constructively with the study in transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens since it promotes working together in fairly cooperative ways, promoting peace among political rivalries and challenging competitive and divisive tendencies. The underlying components in the peace and power theory blend well with Allport's contact theory especially on his call for equal status, cooperation and common goals (Allport 1954).

Though Allport is renowned for using his contact theory in the understanding of prejudice, the theory however complements other theories in peace studies such as the peace and

power theory in understanding and dealing with conflict and peacebuilding. The table below shows the conditions for meaningful contact as highlighted in the contact theory;

Table 1 Allport's contact theory

Condition	Meaning	Example	Evidence
Equal Status	Members of the contact situation should not have an unequal, hierarchical relationship.	Members should not have an employer/employee, or instructor/student relationship.	Evidence has documented that equal status is important both <i>prior</i> to (Brewer & Kramer, 1985) and <i>during</i> (Cohen & Lotan, 1995) the contact situation.
Cooperation	Members should work together in a non-competitive environment.	Students working together in a group project.	Aronson's 'jigsaw technique' structures classrooms so that students strive cooperatively (Aronson & Patnoe, 1967), and this technique has led to positive results in a variety of countries
Common Goals	Members must rely on each other to achieve their shared desired goal.	Members of a sports team.	hu and Griffey (1985) have shown the importance of common goals in interracial athletic teams who need to work together to achieve their goal.
Support by Social and Institutional Authorities	There should not be social or institutional authorities that explicitly or implicitly sanction contact, and there should be authorities that support positive contact.	There should not be official laws enforcing segregation.	Landis' (1984) work on the importance of institutional support in reducing prejudice in the military.

Source: (Everett 2013)

The peace gardening initiative strove to be guided by principles borrowed from the contact theory through the presentation of a platform which does not create unequal relationships and thereby promotes and encourages members to work in non-competitive ways during peace gardening. The lack of competitive ways in peace gardening would allow members to rely on each other and build friendship and respect so as to achieve their desired goal of transforming their post-conflict relationships.

1.10 Peace gardens

Gardens come in all sizes and shapes and have brought people of different age groups together, transmitting heritage stories, dismantling cultural barriers and integrating members into their food systems (Hoffman 2010: 174). There has been a long history of using gardens for various reasons such as empowering communities, improving people's psychological well-being, social relations and restoration of good health (Erickson 2012: 89). The past decade witnessed a surge in the manner Zimbabweans valued gardens when one considers

their mass establishment though their drive centered on maintaining sustainable rural livelihoods and for household nutritional purposes (Chazovachii, Mutami and Boora 2011).

PGs is a term used in this study to mean any enclosed portion of land used for the purpose of cultivating vegetables but with the purpose of transforming post-conflict relationships (Webster 2015). Gardening can be an individual, family or a cooperative activity which requires cooperation and this study proposed collective gardening that served as both the means of addressing economic challenges as well as transforming post-conflict relationships among people from Zimbabwe's main political parties. Considering that a great deal of research has been conducted in the use of gardens for empowering communities, improving psychological well-being, restoration of good health, rural livelihoods and communal cooperation, there is however, some glaring evidence showing that the use of gardens in transforming post-conflict relationships among political rivalries using action research has been under-researched (Erickson 2012: 89).

The use of action research serves as a new component in the use of PGs to transform post-conflict relationships and that is why I preferred to use PGs as an intervention strategy in this study. Peace gardens were considered for this study by the action team on the basis that they reduce unemployment and increase food availability thereby reducing the high levels of poverty that partly contributed as a major cause of violence in communities. There is overwhelming evidence that when people work together, that reduces their divisions. This study has provided a detailed explanation on why the action team preferred peace gardens as an intervention strategy in Chapter Six, section 6.4.

1.11 Type of inquiry and data collection methods

The type of inquiry used in this study is the advocacy participation worldview while the research design is qualitative, combined with exploratory research design, action research and evaluation components (Creswell 2009: 5). Since this was a qualitative research, methods of collecting primary data for the research included interviews, participant observation and focus group discussions (see the detailed discussion of these data collection methods in Chapter Five, sections 5.11, 5.12 and 5.13 respectively). The outcome of this research was intended to improve the local community's dialogue skills, non-violent problem-solving skills and the generation of new knowledge through the use of PGs to transform post-conflict relationships (mentioned above).

1.12 An overview of important findings

The main findings of this study revealed that politics and elections have been the main causes of conflict in Welkom Hoek community with hate speech, divisions, and partisan distribution of food serving as tools by which the conflict was enforced. The study also revealed that family disputes and prophetic healing churches became contributory sources of conflicts in communities. The study findings further revealed that peace gardens are effective as an intervention strategy in transforming post-conflict relationships as they provide debating platforms for peace-related issues in ways which promote friendships and respect, cooperation and rebuilding relationships and sharpening the participants' gardening skills as elaborately discussed in the findings in Chapter Nine, section 9.3.1 to 9.3.9. Regardless of the success stories associated with the peace gardening intervention strategy, the study findings, however, revealed that progress was derailed by economic and climatic challenges and the national programmes such as the Biometric Voter Registration, the Presidential Interface rallies and the general election campaigns as presented in the detailed discussion in Chapter Six, section 6.13.

1.13 Significance of the Study

There are no known publications of an action research nature on the use of peace gardens in transforming post-conflict relationships which have been carried out in Zimbabwe to date. As such, this research plays a pivotal role in serving as the basis for philosophical methodologies and foundations of peacebuilding practice in this country. The study contributes positively towards building durable peace among political rivals in Zimbabwe, a feature that improves the quality of intervention strategies used by other peacebuilding players and organisations. This study, in consultation with the local community, came up with a context specific intervention strategy that marks a deviation from the normal trend of imposed projects on communities in a trickle-down manner. This study addressed the real issues that affected the Welkom Hoek community in a manner they deemed fit. The action research approach helped in providing another array on the methods available for usage in peacebuilding and conflict resolution platforms in order to enhance effectiveness.

1.14 Scope of the study and delimitations

This study was carried out with a small group of 10 participants drawn from Zimbabwe's two main political parties, MDC and ZANU-PF in Welkom Hoek communal farmlands over a period of one year. The research findings from this study may not, therefore, be reflective of the views of the people from Masvingo province as a whole. I was only able to carry out a

preliminary evaluation for this study considering the three year time frame which was set for the completion of this academic study. Long term impact evaluation could have fallen outside the study duration and could have required additional funding.

1.15 Motivation for carrying out the study

The motivational factor for carrying out this research was precipitated by my desire to see the Welkom Hoek community in Masvingo living peacefully and in harmony with one another and also arose from the philosophical perspective that working together for a common goal builds sustainable and durable peace. My experiences while living in violent post-conflict communities in Zimbabwe also motivated me to carry out this study. I was also motivated to carry out this research through the desire to contribute new knowledge in the transformation of post-conflict relationships through the use of PGs.

The research also contributed towards the realisation of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal number 16 of 2030 that calls for the promotion of peace and justice (United Nations 2016). Lastly, I was motivated that this study on transforming post-conflict relationships via PGs would make the Welkom Hoek community conscious of the fact that it was too dangerous for them to ignore the destructive nature of election-related violence. I was also motivated to present this community with an opportunity to participate in their own post-conflict transformation process after witnessing many cases of election-related violence among the Welkom Hoek Community.

1.16 Dissertation Structure

This study that sought to transform post-conflict relationships in Masvingo, Zimbabwe via PGs comprises of five parts. The first part contains a single chapter detailing the general background to the study as well as the general overview of the entire thesis. The second part comprises of three chapters all of which constitute the literature review section and the appraisal of related literature to this study. The third part of this study comprises two chapters that discuss the research design, methodology and the data collection methods employed in this study and the intervention strategy chapter. Part four of the study contains three chapters which encompass the data, presentation and analysis chapter, the emerging themes and the preliminary evaluation chapters. Part five of the study comprises of a single chapter which discusses the summary, conclusion and recommendations drawn from the entire study. The study comprises of ten chapters which are categorized into five parts and are explained below:

1.16.1 Part I: Background to the study

Chapter one provides the background to the study, the aims and objectives of the study and the overview of the entire thesis.

1.16.2 Part II: Review of related literature

Chapter Two explores the historical analysis of the causes and effects of pre and post independent political developments in Zimbabwe and how they contributed towards the current divisions, disunity and conflict which are prevalent in Zimbabwe and Masvingo province's Welkom Hoek community in particular.

Chapter Three examines the historical background, use, effectiveness and challenges associated with gardening. The chapter also discusses the relevance of literature to this study and the conceptualisation of key terms used in the study, such as PGs, post-conflict relationships, and transformation.

Chapter Four reviews the peace and power theory and its applicability to the study on transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens.

1.16.3 Part III: Research Methodology

Chapter Five describes the research design, methodology, and data collection methods used in this study. The sections in this chapter discuss in detail the qualitative action research design and the data collection approaches used in this study.

Chapter Six presents the research context (peace gardening), the community in which the research was carried out, the selection of the participants and the ethical considerations and possible reasons why this intervention strategy was preferred.

1.16.4 Part IV: Data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings

Chapter Seven explores the discussion on presentation and analysis of the data which was gathered through observations, interviews and the focus group discussions. Chapter Eight discusses unique findings which I never imagined would emerge from this research and the data analysis and presentation chapters.

Chapter Nine explores the pre and post intervention periods in Welkom Hoek communal farmlands and also evaluates the preliminary effects of using PGs and action research in transforming post-conflict relationships.

1.16.5 Part V: Conclusion, summary and recommendations

Chapter Ten presents the summary of the entire study, research journey, conclusion, and proffers some recommendations and areas for further study.

1.17 Interpretation of key terms

This section discusses key terms used in this study.

1.17.1 Peace gardens

PGs are understood in this study as enclosed portions of land where people from a diverse political divide grow vegetables and crops together, not only for their family consumption and sustenance of their livelihoods as in other ordinary gardening ventures but mainly for transforming their past strained relationships due to past election-related violence. PGs are used in this study as an intervention strategy where people of diverse political orientation carry out vegetable farming together in order to transform their negative attitudes towards one another into positive ones. While common gardens have been used for other purposes including community building, using them for peacebuilding and transforming former political party rivalries has remained an unexplored and under researched area.

1.17.2 Peacebuilding

The term peacebuilding is a comprehensive concept which encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict towards more sustainable, peaceful relations (Care International United Kingdom 2012: 04). Okoro (2010: 40) also defines peacebuilding as a process which entails “all stages of conflict from the pre-conflict stage to the post-conflict phases, with the aim of laying a basis for sustainable peace in the war-torn societies”. In this study, peacebuilding will be understood as measures being put in place to mend broken relationships and transform conflict towards peaceful relations among people from diverse political parties.

1.17.3 Post-conflict

Post-conflict is understood to mean the period which comes shortly after violent conflicts, in this instance, election campaigning that would have been carried by rival political parties and subsequently ceased with the situation remaining tense for some time between the victims and the perpetrators. This understanding of post-conflict does agree with Junne and Velkoren (2005) who also define post-conflict as the situation experienced when open

warfare has come to an end or that stage when hostilities would have ceased but the parties involved continue to experience the effects of violence.

1.17.4 Transformation

In peacebuilding, this term is used to refer to the process of mending relationships and fostering change which orients communal relationship in a new direction and to different levels. In this study, the term refers to the process of reconciling relationships between the supporters of the country's main political parties: ZANU-PF and the MDC.

1.18 Summary

This chapter introduced the overview of the study, the context of the study, the research problem and aims, type of inquiry and data collection methods and the theories underpinning this study. The chapter also highlighted the motivational factors which influenced me to carry out this study and it also provided the dissertation structure. The next chapter reviews the literature related to this study.

PART II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

CHAPTER TWO: THE BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN ZIMBABWE

As clear as day follows night; ZANU (PF) will rule in Zimbabwe forever. There is no other party besides ours that will rule this country...Robert Gabriel Mugabe (Kadembo 2008: 01)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the requirements for the first objective of the study that calls for a discussion on the causes and effects of party-political violence in Zimbabwe. The first part of this chapter provides a synthesis of the background information about the pre and post-election actions that the political parties have employed in Zimbabwe since the pre and post-independence era to manipulate political supporters. The subsequent sections address the political background of Zimbabwe's general elections held from 1980 to 1989, examining the political dynamics underpinning the ensuing recurrence of violence in general from the period around 1840 and the violent elections experienced from 2000, then to the present era. The chapter also carries out a discussion on the emerging trends which are deduced from the background information.

2.2 Historical analysis on political violence in Zimbabwe

This section explores the historical analysis of the events which led to the birth, development and proliferation of political violence in a manner that has not only tainted relationships but has seen the concept of using violence to solve problems becoming an acceptable method in this country. The sections below discuss how the concept of violence evolved and finally degenerated into acceptable practices. Although the concept of political violence in Zimbabwe can be traced before the invasion of Mashonaland by the Ndebele, this study however, takes the invasion episode as its referral starting point for the historical analysis of political violence.

2.2.1 The Ndebele invasion of Mashonaland in 1840

This section explores the concept of violence from the period the Ndebele people arrived and settled in Zimbabwe in 1840. As pointed out by Garlake and Proctor (2007: 156), the

arrival of the Ndebele people in Zimbabwe from Mosega in Botswana marked yet another chapter in the history of the use of violence among the tribal societies in this country. The history of the Ndebele people under King Mzilikazi was characterised by the use of violence, a concept which they resorted to in order to obtain crops and cattle. In addition, they levied a tax/tribute to subordinate states, on which they survived (Mlambo 2014: 26). When the Ndebele arrived and settled in Zimbabwe in 1840, they continued using violent raids to force the indigenous Shona people to provide them with grain, women, iron tools and able bodied men and girls, a feature which strained relationships among these groups possibly up to the twentieth century (Beach 1986).

The Shona chiefs that refused to pay tribute to the Ndebele people in the 1850s, such as Mutinhima and Chirimanzu, were punished severely through incessant violent raids which resulted in the collapse of the Rozvi state (Ranger 1997). While the Ndebele people were implicated in bringing the concept of using force and violence to induce submission from subordinate states, it is important to note that the signs of resistance by the indigenous people were an indication that they were also disposed to violence. This phenomena of violence was later on imitated and modified by colonial masters, pre-independence liberation movements and post-independence political movements (Mlambo 2014).

This historical narrative of the Ndebele invasion of the Shona described a series of conflicts and tainted relationships among the people based on tribal, ethnic and subsequently, on political lines. Resistance by the indigenous people was met with severe punishment and the precedence of the use of coercion for personal or organisational gain had therefore been set. It is interesting how other institutional and nationalistic movements were to follow and modify the use of violence for coercion purposes in the future.

Though very little has been documented on the linkage between the Ndebele invasion and the use of violence by nationalistic movements' years after this event, it is important to note that political violence cannot be understood in isolation. The political violence which became rampant after the attainment of political independence in 1980, I argue, is partially linked to the violence which was exhibited during the 1840 invasion of Mashonaland by the Ndebele. The only notable variations might be on the scale and intensity of the violence under discussion but the recurrence is striking.

2.2.2 The invasion of Zimbabwe by Colonial masters

The British conquest of Zimbabwe in the late 1800's and early 1900 marked yet another violent chapter in the history of this country. The British capitalist under Cecil John Rhodes persuaded the British government to take over Matabeleland, since they had easily taken over Mashonaland. Cecil Rhodes believed that by taking over the country through the use of force, that violence was going to make British capitalists not only very rich but also they would be presented with platforms to bring civilization and progress to the entire country (Garlake and Proctor 2007: 66).

The settlers used force during the colonization of Matabeleland during the 1893-1894 Anglo-Ndebele war. They engaged in similar violent acts during the 1896 first *Chimurenga* (War of Liberation) that was also characterized by violence and by the use of dynamites to force the indigenous people to surrender. The Shona who had been exposed to violence unleashed by the Ndebele earlier, together with the Ndebele people, were on the receiving end of the British colonialists who used violence as the means to conquer the local population and obtain submission from them (Zvobgo 2016). When the Ndebele and the Shona resisted colonial practices, which they regarded as divisive and suppressive, they were subjected to repressive laws and violence which was not very different from what they had experienced during the Ndebele invasion (Prew *et al.* 1993: 13).

The use of violence or force to achieve desirable outcomes from the subordinates was slowly degenerating into an acceptable norm in the country. The indigenous people waged a war of liberation after realising that independence was not going to be achieved without waging a violent war against their adversaries. The colonial masters resorted to the practice of using violence to suppress resistance, a feature which was making violence a norm in resolving issues among individuals and groups. The lack of political tolerance that was exhibited by the colonial masters became a model that Zimbabwean political parties emulated and executed later on after attaining political independence in 1980.

2.2.3 National Liberation Movements

As a reaction to colonialism, the indigenous people formed liberation movements whose main agenda was to redress the colonial imbalances, at first through peaceful means, but later on they resorted to the use of violence, a feature that was not only becoming common but slowly was becoming a permanent fabric in the Zimbabwean society. Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), was formed in 1962 after a similar movement called the National Democratic Party (NDP) had been banned and was led by Joshua Nkomo (Garlake and

Proctor 2007: 133).The newly formed party continued with the organization and encouragement of peasant resistance in both rural and urban areas, however, later on, differed in ideology on how to continue with the war against the colonial masters. That disagreement resulted in the formation of the splinter group called ZANU-PF in 1963 with Ndabaningi Sithole as the leader.

ZAPU and ZANU-PF started competing for supporters and as a result some fighting between these two parties started. ZAPU, which had been the dominant party, resorted to the use of violence against the breakaway ZANU-PF party in order to maintain power by concocting criminal charges against their opponents, with clashes among party supporters in Harare and the Midlands area becoming very frequent.

While ZANU and ZAPU were fighting a common enemy, they were also violent towards each other to the extent of exchanging gunshots each time they met in the battlefields. According to Mlambo (2014: 148), the split of ZAPU and ZANU threw the fight against imperialism into chaos as their followers fought running conflicts in the streets with supporters turning against each other in an irrational orgy of violence that distracted their attention from their fight against colonialism. The lack of political broadmindedness demonstrated by these two parties set the precedence for similar violent political in the future.

From this discussion I noted that the violent nature demonstrated by ZANU-PF in dealing with its political opponents is an ideology which it inherited from the pre-independence liberation movements which had resorted to similar tactics before 1980. Considering that ZANU suffered some political onslaughts after the split with ZAPU during the war of liberation, there are chances it resorted to violence especially after the attainment of independence in order to retaliate for the past wrongs which they experienced and, of course, to consolidate its ascendancy to power.

The ZANU-PF party continued to use tactics of violence in dealing with any form of resistance, copied, I posit, from the Ndebele people during the Shona raids, the colonial masters and from ZAPU after their split in 1963.The post-independence events demonstrated the violent nature of ZAPU as a party when a group of its disgruntled members, who were referred to as dissidents by the ruling government, started causing mayhem in Mashonaland and parts of the Midlands.

As a result of the culture of violence that had already been set in motion, ZANU-PF reacted to these violent acts by unleashing an operation known as *Gukurahundi* (the first rain of the

planting season which washes away chuff) between 1982 and 1983. This study does not dwell much on the fine details of what occurred during that operation but gleaned that it was very violent and resulted in a series of deaths estimated around 20,000 (CCJP and Legal resources foundation 1997). The concept that violence begets violence was clearly manifesting itself and violence culminated into an acceptable culture.

2.3 Background overview on post-independence political violence

As pointed out by Mawawa (2016: 01), Zimbabwe is believed to have a long tradition of political violence dating back to the pre-colonial times with the country's main political parties ZANU-PF, ZAPU and MDC all exhibiting long-standing histories of descending on and reacting ruthlessly to rival political parties and dissenting voices. The pre and the post-election periods, since the first democratic elections in 1980, were generally characterized by intensively violent election campaigning and intimidation from ZANU-PF, ZAPU and the MDC (Sachikonye 2010; Mlambo 2014).

As pointed out by Kriger (2005: 03), the methodologies that ZANU-PF and its rival political parties such as ZAPU had been utilizing as a part of their broad political race since 1980, included systematic violence and coercion of the rival political parties before, during and after elections. While scholars such as Moyo (1993) and Masunungure, Dulani and Braton (2016) have been credited with labelling ZANU-PF as the dominant political party in election-related violence, the information discussed above has demonstrated that all political parties were responsible for political violence in one way or another. The lack of political broadmindedness among political party supporters ended up triggering broken relationships, hatred and lack of social cohesion in communities.

As purported by Ngwenya (2014), political violence has dependably been used by ZANU-PF since 1980 as an apparatus to turn results in its favour. While Ngwenya (2014) singled out ZANU-PF as the only violent party since 1980, it can be noted that there were skirmishes which were fuelled by ZAPU. If the dissidents who wreaked havoc in Mashonaland and part of the Midlands were linked to ZAPU, then it is justifiable to state that both parties were violent and that they both used violent means with the intention to turn election results in their favour. Since ZANU-PF was the ruling party and was in control of state apparatus, it made sure that culprits of election-related violence have been enjoying exemption from prosecution since the first democratic elections in 1980 (Laasko 1999b). Besides intimidation, both ZANU and ZAPU are believed to have engaged in party-political homilies

that demonized their key adversaries as conservative, seditious, tribal and orthodox partners of the Western governments (Sachikonye 2010) .

2.4 The first and second democratic elections

The 1980 general elections were the first democratic elections to be held in Zimbabwe, accommodated by the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979. This agreement officially brought the *Chimurenga* to an end between the Rhodesian Front (RF) and the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and Zimbabwe People's Liberation Army (ZIPRA) forces (Kriger 2005; Mlambo 2014). According to the CCJP and Legal Resources Foundation (1997), since 1980, the country's elections have been soiled by political violence ranging from torture, abductions, harassment, murders, and displacements.

While Kriger (2005) and Sachikonye (2010) point out that as early as the 1980s, ZANU-PF was already accused of intimidating opposition party supporters, especially those that belonged to Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African People's Union (PF-ZAPU). This did not mean that the later was passive during the attacks. As one of its election tactics, ZANU-PF made false proclamations that it was the only party that had the potential to bring peace and rule the country (Shaw 1986). The following statement by Robert Mugabe concurs with this highlighted assertion when he pointed out that:

'As clear as day follows night; ZANU-PF will rule in Zimbabwe forever. There is no other party besides ours that will rule this country' (Kadembo 2008: 01).

Regardless of such false and biased proclamations from the ruling party and its leadership, the opposition parties also used every platform available to challenge such remarks and dismissed them as blatant indoctrination and manipulation meant to coerce people into voting for other parties. This practice of indoctrination and manipulation has also been used by opposition political parties. They also advised the prospective electorate during their campaigns that the 'economic medicine' required to resuscitate the country's dwindling economy is known only by the opposition political leadership. This concept of indoctrination is therefore not only associated with ZANU-PF but with all political parties in the country.

Traditional leadership, particularly in communal regions, was used within liberation party's campaigns. They would mobilise all their villagers to attend to both ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU campaigning meetings in their respective strongholds with some degree of force (Arnold, Garber and Wrobel 1985). The same mechanism of manipulating traditional chiefs continued to be used with the present government accused of giving paramount chiefs state-of-the-art

cars in order to buy their allegiance for political gain, while opposition political parties in their election manifesto were also making tempting promises to the traditional leadership in the event that they won elections (Garlake and Proctor 2007).

In both the 1980 and the 1985 elections, the ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU youthful supporters moved from door to door, thrashing their rival followers whom they referred to as snakes (Compagnon 1999). This scenario justifies the assertion that the use of violence as part of their strategy to uphold their ideology was a common feature among the country's political parties that seem to have been copied from ZAPU and later on mastered by ZANU-PF up to the present day. The most recent election of 2018 resulted in violent clashes between those in opposition and the ruling party (Independent 2018).

In the first two general elections held in 1980 and 1985 respectively, the ZANU-PF party employed systematic violence against other political parties, Ndebele civilians and PF-ZAPU authorities, months prior to the political ballot with thousands of them being pressured to purchase ZANU-PF cards. PF-ZAPU leaders in retaliation advised their support base to do the same in the name of self-defence (Tevera 1989). The fact that opposition parties also encouraged their supporters to resort to violence dispels the widely speculated assertion that ZANU-PF is the only violent party in Zimbabwean politics. Shortly before the 1985 general elections, the ZANU-PF party, through its state agents, carried out an arms search in Bulawayo's townships which the ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo dismissed as a bogus act and declared its findings as an election stunt which was designed to demoralize his supporters (Zvobgo 2016). While ZANU-PF was resorting to the use of violent tactics, it did not necessarily mean that its rival parties were passive and not retaliating.

Munslow (1980) and Kriger (2005) agree that as early as the 1985 general elections, consent for holding meetings by other political parties was frequently denied and, if allowed, those who attended were regularly assaulted by ZANU-PF youth cadres while voters were given the option to pick between death and life. Munslow (1980) further posits that PF-ZAPU, which was under Joshua Nkomo's leadership and was the main opposition party whose supporters were alerted about the dangers of voting for any other political party besides ZANU-PF, was also resorting to similar antics in their stronghold areas in Matabeleland. In both the 1980 and the 1985 elections again, there were glaring acts of using force by the two main political parties directed towards rival party followers. The police however seemed not to have interfered in curbing those acts of violence, a situation which gave the ruling party an upper hand in those conflicts (Makumbe and Compagnon 2000).

2.5 The 1990 general elections

The harmonized plebiscite held in 1990 occurred in a new radical political framework as the viciousness which had previously been targeting the PF-ZAPU supporters and all Ndebele civilians ended after the parties' adoption of the unity agreement of 1987 between the leaders of ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU (Kriger 2005: 17). The two parties (ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU) had merged into one party whose name remained ZANU-PF with Robert Mugabe becoming the new president and Joshua Nkomo becoming the vice president (Ncube and Nzombe 1988). Authoritarian trends, however, remained, considering that two violent political parties had merged together, their policies reinforced by the state of emergency laws that suppressed college and university students and the media (Makumbe and Compagnon 2000: 143).

One of the founding members of ZANU-PF, Edgar Tekere, was expelled from the party in 1988 for his vilification of corrupt tendencies and gluttony of political leadership. He formed a different political party called the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) in 1989 (Moyo 1993). As highlighted in the Parade (1990: 13), ZUM contested the 1990 general elections but was denied permission to hold open mobilisation meetings due to the highly sensitive situation controls which were in place at that time and the threat of violence against its party's supporters.

There was evidence that the elements of violence were still rampant, a feature which continuously strained relationships among political party supporters each time the nation approached election time. ZUM was disparaged by ZANU-PF for its association with the Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe (CAZ) which had links traced back to Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front party with its leader Edgar Tekere being portrayed as a mercenary and a puppet of the former colonial masters (Christine 1990: 01). This has become a trend not only in the ZANU-PF party up to today, but in all other Zimbabwean political parties regarding anyone who thinks or acts contrary to the party leadership as a traitor who deserve nothing less than being booted out of the party.

The case of the former vice president, Joyce Mujuru, who was expelled from the party in 2014 and the sacking of Emerson Mnangagwa in 2017 on allegations of intending to dislodge the ZANU-PF leadership of Robert Mugabe comes to mind. As if that was not enough, the sacking drama did not only end in the ruling party but later on encroached in the opposition spheres where Tendai Biti, Welshman Ncube and Elton Mangoma found

themselves dismissed from the MDC as well for criticising its late leader and founder Morgan Tsvangirai (Mlambo 2014).

Voting for ZUM was viewed as an appeal to go back to war, an open call for death and also warranted withdrawal or denial of patronage from opposition voters (Lemon 1988). The Youth who were responsible for perpetrating violence against opposition supporters did not get any reaction from the police since the ruling party was taking advantage of the security apparatus over its political rivals (Kriger 2005: 17) .

As highlighted by Moyo (1993: 212), those who stood as party candidates for ZUM risked their lives, with the party candidate for Gweru central, Patrick Kombayi, being shot in broad daylight with the police taking no action against the attackers. Moyo (2013: 219) went on to point out that there were some post-election disturbances which saw a call being made for ZUM supporters to be expelled from their houses and jobs and to teach them 'lessons' for having opposed ZANU-PF in the elections and there was also a serious witch-hunt for ZUM supporters in all government departments. The ZUM political leadership also perpetrated violence by liaising with their support base to do everything possible to defend themselves, a situation which fuelled the political skirmishes to frightening levels.

Having noted similar trends in the previous elections as discussed in sections 2:3 and 2:4 respectively, it can be deduced that the issue of election-related violence and intimidation of rival political support base was slowly culminating into a culture of acceptable violence whose ideological traits can be traced back to the first democratic elections in 1980. The outcome of such violence, as argued earlier, has always been broken relationships, hatred, lack of trust and family disintegration resulting in lack of social cohesion.

2.6 The 1995 general elections

The 1995 general elections were marked by serious complaints from ZUM and other rival political parties that objected to the unreasonable constituent laws, unreasonable presidential powers, absence of media networking and state funding which benefited the ruling ZANU-PF party only (Staffan 1997). The above highlighted complaints saw the main rival political party (ZUM) boycotting the 1995 elections, and paving the way for the newly formed political party by Enoch Dumbutshena called the Forum Party of Zimbabwe (FPZ) and ZANU which was led by Ndabaningi Sithole to contest the elections (Laasko 1999a: 167; Kriger 2005). The governing party was still accused of denigrating the opposing parties towards, during and after the elections (Mandaza and Sachikonye 1991). Trumped-up

charges were levelled against opposition leaders and activists while the FPZ leader was portrayed as a betrayer of the struggle and a colonial stooge (Tor 1995: 86). Such allegations have been used against any individuals or parties that opposed the ruling party and have been used as a manipulative strategy since the first democratic elections in 1980.

The ruling party's perceived terrorisation of ordinary citizens was instigated before the election campaigns with the electorate being aware that voting in favour of the ruling party was the only guarantee for harmony, while opposition parties were accused of brewing conflict, quarrels and instability in the country (Makumbe and Compagnon 2000: 153). The threats of resuming the *Chimurenga* war against those not accepting results if the opposition won was real and people and the general electorate were threatened that they would be denied support if they voted in favour of the opposition (Makumbe and Compagnon 2000: 168). The young people in the party obtained waivers of prosecution after tormenting opposing citizens, just as they are doing in the current scenarios. Law enforcement agencies were hesitant to take action against them (Laasko 1999a: 150). The result of these election clashes were broken relationships, animosity, misgiving, family disintegration and lack of communal unity as pointed out earlier (see section 2.5).

2.7 Political violence 2000-2016

Even though the country has been holding its democratic ballot vote on a regular basis since independence, those elections have not been regarded as free and fair by some international and regional bodies' standards (LeBas 2016: 3). The state has routinely been accused of using political violence as a manoeuvre to persecute opposition groups and their supporters (Pasquale and Garcia-Ponce 2015). The above allegations are not balanced, however, considering that while the ruling party might have used political violence and intimidation, it is equally important to point out that opposition supporters were also responsible for perpetuating violence in the name of self-defence as discussed in earlier sections.

According to Berger (2008: 01) and (Kynoch 2009), the period between 2000 and 2008 saw the political, economic and social crisis of the country reaching its lowest **ebb**. Apart from the *Gukurahundi* disturbances of 1982-1987, the period under discussion has been associated with the most extreme political violence since the accomplishment of independence in 1980. For some political experts, the general election campaign in the year 2000 may have shown another face of the ruling party, ZANU-PF's violent campaign methods, there seems to have been a reluctance in tracing other similar inclinations which had happened in the past and

could be traced as far back as the 1980 general election period as discussed earlier (Kriger 2005: 01) (see sections 2.4,2.5 and 2.6).

The 2000 elections came after ZANU-PF had held a plebiscite on its anticipated constitution which was rejected by the people by a 54% vote, with Robert Mugabe castigating the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) for mobilising the electorate not to vote in favour of the proposed draft constitution (Sachikonye 2010).The referendum outcome also demonstrated the violent nature of the opposition party supporters, who showed elements of violence during their advocacy campaigns: it is unfair to regard and castigate ZANU-PF as the only participant in the Zimbabwean violent political discourse.

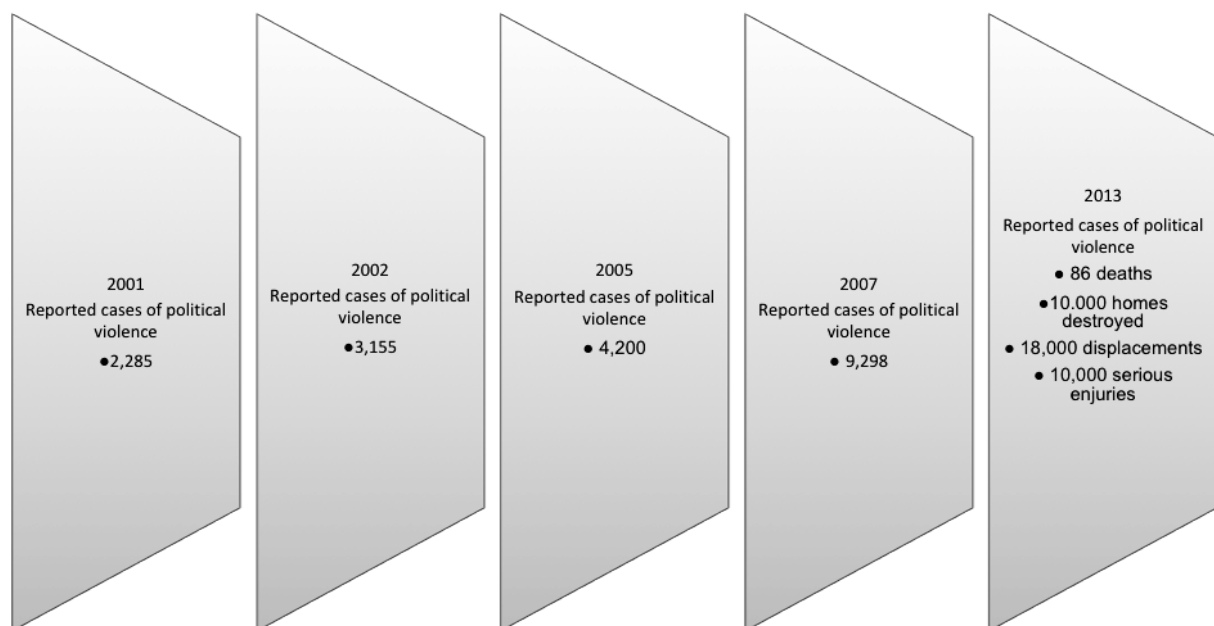


Figure 1 Reported cases of political violence between 2000 and 2013 (own data)

The diagram above presents a summation of the evidence on reported cases of political violence. The diagrammatical illustration is mine while the data comes from both LeBas (2016) and BBC Monitoring Africa. As noted from the diagram, the level of political violence was continuously going up as demonstrated by the continuously surging figures between 2001 and 2013 from two thousand two hundred and eighty three to thirty eight thousand and eighty six including eighty-six deaths (BBC Monitoring Africa 2015; LeBas 2016).These high levels of political violence were perpetrated by both ZANU-PF and MDC supporters. Such high levels of political violence have left huge scars of broken relationships, hatred, and lack

of trust, aspects which have disrupted social cohesion in general. Although election-related political violence was prominent during the first democratic elections in 1980, it became a more distinct feature in Zimbabwe after the launch of a strong opposition political player called the MDC³ in 1999. It is no wonder that the above figures continued to surge (Bratton and Masunungure 2008).

It is widely believed that the party political landscape of this country has been chiefly moulded by the ZANU-PF's⁴ party-political leadership and philosophical supremacy (Musanga and Manase 2016). Research has demonstrated that there has been a radical shift from the initial party ethos, which did not make one person in the party to be the centre of power (Masunungure 2014). The national authoritarianism has cascaded down to communities which have also embraced this dishonourable act and are tormenting, killing and intimidating political opponents (Sachikonye 2010). Violence has actually stayed as a disease that fragments the country's political philosophy and stunts its development (Musanga and Manase 2016).

Exposure to state authoritarianism does not lead residents to have a high degree of trust in state-owned establishments, the president, the ruling party, parliament, local officials or the police, nonetheless, this has been the Zimbabwean reality for more than three decades with the resulting fear (Pasquale and Garcia-Ponce 2015). The evidence discussed above shows that violence is mainly associated with the ruling party but also the opposition, a feature which is seen by some as stemming from the Ndebele invasions, the colonial masters and the leaders of the pre-independent political party called ZAPU. One is compelled to conclude that the violent traits exhibited by the ZANU-PF party are a clear manifestation that violence begets violence.

Alexander and McGregor (2013) notes that partisan political violence became the crucial turning point in Zimbabwean history where people were perceived as politically correct only if they belong to either ZANU-PF or the MDC (Zimbabwe Situation 2008). The main protagonists in the Zimbabwean political violence discourse were both ZANU-PF and the MDC (Sachikonye 2010). Musanga and Manase (2016) pointed out that the perpetration of

³MDC is the strongest opposition party to have emerged in Zimbabwe since the country's attainment of independence in 1980, it was formed in 1999 and its founding president was the late Morgan Tsvangirai.

⁴As noted, ZANU-PF is the ruling party has been under the leadership of Robert Mugabe since 1980

political violence was heavily tilted in favour of ZANU-PF since it was the ruling party and had access to manipulating national security services such as the police and the army. Suttner (2010) also stated that in Zimbabwe, violence has been established as a way of building a dictatorial government that is disrespectful of the people's civil liberties, including the manifestation of their preference through the ballot system, a situation which had earlier been exhibited by the colonial masters (Garlake and Proctor 2007).

Zvobgo (2016) stated that the Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe was responsible for fuelling violence through inflammatory statements. This statement concurs with the assertion that force has been an apparatus of choice that has been used if and when resistance parties threatened to dissolve ZANU-PF's base and referring to these opposing assemblies as 'puppies' demonstrated the highest level of political intolerance (Southall 2013). Regardless of these violent traits demonstrated by ZANU-PF, it is fair though to highlight that other political parties like MDC, ZUM and ZAPU have had their fair share of theatre in perpetuating political violence in the country.

As stated by Ranger (2013), ZANU-PF, prior to the elections, managed to divide the nation into 'revolutionaries'⁵ and 'betrayers'. The idea of labelling other people as political betrayers invited and sought to rationalise the use of force and promote the rhetoric of prejudice which was the vital factor in infuriating the post-2000 political violence. The first election contested by the MDC in 2000 was characterised by torture, murder, abductions, and intimidation but the newly formed opposition political party produced an exquisite performance where the party managed to win 57 of the 120 contested seats with the ruling party winning 62 seats while ZANU Ndonga won only 1 seat (Zimbabwe Situation 2008; Masunungure, Dulani and Braton 2016). This substantial development worried ZANU-PF and decided to resort to their old tactic of violence against the MDC party supporters and leadership (Zvobgo 2016).

As pointed out by Cauvin (2000), the leader of the European Union Observer Mission, ZANU-PF leaders endorsed the widespread use of violence and sanctioned the use of coercion and terrorization against political rivals which ended up contributing to the atmosphere of fear which was so glaring during and after the electoral vote campaign

⁵. Revolutionary is a term now associated with the ruling party in Zimbabwe. It refers to people who participated in the liberation war. If someone fought during the war of liberation and decides to move out of the ruling party to form or join another political party s/he loses the title and will be regarded as a sell-out.

(Bratton and Masunungure 2008).The group of political criminals that had gone around the country terrorising people and had been rounded up by police were given presidential pardon as opposition leaders watched helplessly on 13 October 2000 (Zimbabwe Situation 2008).The report by Cauvin (2000) and the observations by (Bratton and Masunungure 2008) lacked some balance in that they did not mention the violent acts carried out by opposition political parties such as the MDC.

While more than 100 MDC supporters were reported killed, thousands were injured in politically motivated beatings and more than 20,000 people were displaced, it is vital to also point out that ZANU-PF had its support base succumbing to deaths, injuries and displacements from their homes (Zimbabwe Situation 2008).The violent situation was the same again in the 2005 general elections and the level of intolerance had actually reached frightening levels. The same old tactics of violence against the opposition leaders and their supporters saw the election results once again going in the ruling party's favour (Southall 2013).

The violence noted in 2000, 2005, and 2008 and the 2013 general elections signified a margin of terror which induced fear among the electorate and tipped election outcomes in favour of the incumbent regime (Gregory 1981).While this institutionalised violence succeeded in sowing widespread fear and trauma, it left a large residue of resentment, frustration, and thirst for reprisal among the populace (Federal Information & News Dispatch 2008). If this situation goes unabated or insensitively handled, the sparks of injustice and the pursuit for retribution could create explosive conditions for the future detonation (Ngwenya and Harris 2015).

Given the political challenges which have been described and highlighted above, it is argued that it is not easy for Zimbabwe or any other country to move forward without nation-healing, rehabilitation, and reconciliation. The concept of peace gardening which is discussed in subsequent chapters (i.e., Chapter Seven) was aimed at promoting holistic development including transforming post-conflict relationships which call for both nation-healing and the promotion of reconciliation among former political rivalries. There is evidence that as Zimbabweans, we have maimed ourselves in a wide range of ways for a fairly lengthy period and, as a result, there is resentment and fear among the traumatized citizens of contributing meaningfully to nation-building (CCJP Publication 2014: 6).

As noted from the above discussion, Sachikonye (2010: xvii) also concurs that the country's politics has, for a lengthy period, been entrenched in a traditional act of force which emerged

many decades ago. The consequence of such a violent history has been a society devastated by terror and shared despair. The past recollections of brutality, terror, and threats from their rival political opponents, still weigh in heavily among the victims of political violence in Masvingo province and in Zimbabwe as a whole.

2.8. Recurring trends from Zimbabwe's general elections

The sections below (see sections 2.8.1 - 2.8.4) discuss recurring trends which have emerged from the countries' past elections since 1980.

2.8.1 Lack of formulated reconciliation strategies

One of the core causes of violence in this country is that after its attainment of political independence from Britain in 1980, reconciliation was not prioritised as was done in other countries such as South Africa, where official policies and practices at government levels were formulated to promote truth telling and forgiveness. The "forgive and forget" pronouncement which was initiated by Robert Mugabe without the consultation of the victims did not yield any meaningful result, especially after the *Gukurahundi* atrocities and the recurring election-related violence. The people whose friends and relatives perished under Robert Mugabe's political leadership, especially during the *Gukurahundi* atrocities, do not believe and buy the remarks which he incorporated into his inauguration discourse as the first democratically elected leader of the independent Zimbabwe (De Waal 1990; Ngwenya and Harris 2015). In that inauguration speech Robert Mugabe highlighted the reconciliation concept of forgiving and forgetting when he said:

'If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and an ally with the same national interest, 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. The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten.....' (De Waal 1990: 48)

With no formulated practical reconciliation strategies since 1980, there has always been some glaring evidence that Zimbabwe was sitting precariously on a time bomb which was likely to detonate and cause high levels of violence at any juncture. The failure to stick to his inauguration speech has served as one of the many causes of political violence in this country as the same man ended up becoming dictatorial, overstaying in power and silencing those that opposed him in painful manners.

2.8.2 Formation of new political parties

The formation of new opposition parties after contested elections since 1980 have seen the birth of ZUM in 1989, ZPF in 1990, MDC in 1999, MDC-T in 2000, MDC-N in 2000 and Mavambo in 2000 as well, developments which generated alarming levels of political violence ranging from torture, intimidation, displacements, abductions and killings (Chikwanda 2014: 15). Evidence available shows that 2000, 2005, 2008 and the 2013 general elections have resulted in 28,938 reported cases of political violence, more than 20,000 displacements, 10,000 serious injuries and more than 186 deaths. This scenario exposed the Zimbabweans to psychological, social and economic deprivation (Zimbabwe Human Rights 2007). Prior to the formation of the above highlighted opposition parties, the ruling party ZANU-PF had been enjoying a monopoly in the political field without any meaningful opposition since 1980, especially after the signing of the Unity accord with PF-ZAPU in 1987 (Mlambo 2014).

2.8.3 The culture of political violence

Violent wars against the colonialist around the 1890s, the Shona-Ndebele conflicts, black resistance to white administration's domination around the 1960s and the violence associated with the war of liberation are some of the highlighted examples meant to justify the above assertion (Moyo 2013). Violence in the Zimbabwean political arena, particularly in the years 2000–2008, has been endemic, leaving a trail of destruction of the social fabric, brutalization of communities and huge cleavages within and between communities. The experience of fierce clashes between political rivalries in this country has been direct and personal for a while, and perpetrators of political disturbances are well known community members. Such a scenario has made violence, intolerance, fear, and hatred a Zimbabwean political terminology.

Political violence in Zimbabwe is typically characterised by roaming bands of youth mobilised by political parties targeting the homes, livelihoods, and even lives of opposing political party supporters. In many cases, ringleaders arrive from outside the community and force local youth to commit violent acts against their neighbours, with the implicit approval or explicit support of local leaders. Pervasive fear of one's neighbours and of the other party's supporters is poisoning community relationships and rending apart what little remains of the nation's already frayed social fabric.

The primary fault line along which violence occurs is political identities. Historical, root causes of tension such as land distribution, access to economic resources, and ethnic

identities, have been oversimplified and manipulated by the political parties to consolidate and mobilise their bases and entrench social divisions that serve their purposes. The instrumental use of political violence has destroyed the social cohesion that undergirded and sustained traditional and formal institutions for conflict resolution (Catholic Relief Services 2012).

The above discussion illustrates how violence breeds more violence and deeper divisions leading to a cycle of violence that continues for decades and as such, justifies the importance of this study.

2.8.4 Political polarisation among citizens

Polarisation among Zimbabweans has been the immediate outcome of political violence. Polarisation has depressed social institutions and made normal life in some communities impossible since violence has created hatred among community members, relatives and neighbours against each other (CCJP 2009). Years after the violence in Zimbabwe, the victims of violence have remained bitter about the physical assaults and the trauma that they encountered. As pointed out by Chikwanda (2014: 07), there was much mistrust, lack of cooperation and polarisation amongst nationals along socio-economic, political, racial, tribal and ethnic divides, that made Zimbabwean societies very delicate. In situations where violence seems to have subsided, latent conflicts have continued to manifest themselves throughout the country's history. Political violence in Zimbabwe has generated a divisive form of conflict along prejudiced politics and the use of violence to get one's way and stay in power (CCJP Masvingo Diocese 2013). The post-election period has seen people remaining divided and continuing to regard one another as political rivalries. Chikwanda (2014: 08) and Ngwenya and Harris (2015) argue that Zimbabwe never made a meaningful attempt to prosecute perpetrators of violence and to acknowledge their transgressions since the national leadership protected them by overriding the constitutional prerogative through granting them presidential exoneration. This has recurred in 2000, 2005, 2008 and the 2013 elections and that actually propagated the degree of fear and humiliation among the victims (Zimbabwe Human Rights 2007). Evidence has revealed that all political party supporters, in one way or the other, were active perpetrators in election-related political violence in Zimbabwe which left hundreds of people dead or maimed and thousands displaced (Sachikonye 2010).

It is due to this context that this study strives to examine prospects of using Peace Gardens (PGs) which is discussed in the coming chapters as an alternative intervention strategy to

enhance political broadmindedness among political party supporters. The ultimate goal of this research was to transform post-conflict relationships among political party adversaries. It was my wish that after this exercise, the people from my action group would have developed new ideologies, which would dissuade them from the use of violence in future through upholding the model of tolerance and diversity.

2.9 Effects of political violence in Zimbabwe

Political violence, as already noted, has caused a series of problems including forced displacements, abductions, torture, killings, rape of women and children and broken relationships (Chikwanda 2014: 15). The issue of political violence has affected even family relations, where in some cases the children and the parents or wives and husbands fail to relate well as a result of their different political affiliations. The Zimbabwe Situation (2008) and Musanga and Manase (2016) concur that there has been a frightening level of deterioration in family connections as a result of partisan politics. Brutality exhibited by the perpetrators of violence was extraordinary and the attacks on women, children and the elderly shamed the memory of all true heroes of the liberation struggle (Zvobgo 2016).

According to Kondowe, Mapara and Makonese (2013), the wider effects of violence are still occurring in Zimbabwe with fear and the spawning of mental disorders whose prevalence and depth that still need to be comprehended. As highlighted earlier in this section, political violence has not only created discord and hatred but has also perpetuated widespread disharmony among communities over the years (Fuller 2010).

As a result of the highlighted effects of political violence, this study therefore proposed a peace intervention strategy aimed at transforming these damaged post-conflict relationships via PGs. As noted, the thrust of the purported intervention strategy was aimed at promoting political broadmindedness among people of different political divides, to work together and resolve their differences in peaceful manners.

2.10 The degree of influence of the past political history on current Zimbabwean conflicts

The historical background of Zimbabwe has a very strong influence on the current state of conflicts in the country. In section 2.2 above; the historical analysis of political violence was explored. This section considers the degree of influence of the past on current conflicts. So important is the historical influence that understanding the present situation requires a clear understanding and appreciation of the past historical events on which the present is

buttressed. This discussion reviews and reflects on three historical epochs that shaped the political discourse and conflict in the country: pre-1890, post 1930 and post 1979. This discussion views these three time periods as fundamental to the current conflict in Zimbabwe (see sections 2.10.1, 2.10.2 and 2.10.3 respectively)

2.10.1 The pre-1890 political discourse

As pointed out by Beach (1986), pre-1890 the political systems in this country were feudal with the Rozvi Mambos as the reigning federal authority. The mass immigration of refugees and asylum seekers of Ndebele people following the Shaka-led upheavals or Mfecane in what is now South Africa disastrously shifted the balance of power in Zimbabwe. This new political dispensation introduced the new concept of tribalism, conflict and ethnic mistrust between the Shona and the Ndebele people on a scale never experienced before in this country, a scenario which has continued to exist up to this day (Mlambo 2014).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008) highlight that even the origin of the monumental *Gukurahundi* disaster that served as the climax of the Ndebele-Shona skirmishes could be traced back from this highlighted era on the basis that the indigenous Shona society depicted themselves as fatalities of Ndebele invaders who continuously deprived them of their livestock, beautiful women and disrupting their otherwise orderly and peaceful lives. The coming in of the colonial settlers made the situation worse when one note that the settlers took advantage of this state of conflict and manipulated the situation to their advantage and introduced even worse *divide and rule* tactics between these two ethnic groups. This aspect of taking advantage of the situation has remained a divisive political discourse up to this day.

2.10.2 The Post-1930 political discourse

This period is significant in the history of conflict in Zimbabwe in that the 1930 Land Apportionment Act was passed into law. This piece of legislation proffered the distribution of land disproportionately between the black majority and white minority. The African farmer was 'peasantised' by the act because he had to seek urban employment to supplement farm produce. On the other hand, the white immigrants, who were paupers or ordinary civil servants, were heavily empowered as prime agricultural land was allocated to them at minimal costs or as severance packages for participating in the European Great Wars. A race conflict of a new dimension and magnitude had been created on a scale never experienced before in this country until the Lancaster House Peace Settlement.

As pointed out by Mitchell (2014), more than twenty years after independence, 4,500 white-owned commercial farms are located upon approximately one-third of the country's agricultural land and are situated on the best farming land in the country. The current distribution of land is one of the most obvious enduring legacies of the colonial period. The lopsided distribution of land is a frustrating reality for many rural peasants. Since the attainment of Zimbabwean independence in 1980, the unresolved land question has continuously re-emerged on the political scene shortly before parliamentary or presidential elections. This shows one of the ways in which past events are continuously impacting on the current Zimbabwean conflict.

2.10.3 Post 1979

The Policy of Reconciliation pronounced by the country's then Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe, gave hope for ending conflict in Zimbabwe. Ominously however, the policy did little to address the tribal conflict that had become manifest in the pre-1890 period. Instead, independence in Zimbabwe re-ignited the ancient tribal conflict between Ndebele and Shona speaking people following dissident brawls in western Zimbabwe that degenerated into disastrous revenge attacks.

In support of the above view, Mabhena (2014: 137) assertively argues that it was the rise to power of the Shona dominated ZANU-PF that created conflict between the two ethnic groups, Ndebele and Shona, resulting in the unleashing of the fifth brigade in 1983 and 1984 as revenge for the attacks on Shona people by marauding Ndebele warriors under Mzilikazi and later Lobengula (Mlambo 2014). The economic marginalisation of Matabeleland can be traced and attributed to the ethnic politics of revenge discussed above. The nation is, today, in an inert tribal conflict because of the *Gukurahundi* disaster, a situation that asserts how the past political developments are impacting the country's current conflicts.

2.11 Summary

In order to have a deeper understanding of the conflicts in Zimbabwe, I have argued that there is a need to appreciate the historical contexts in which political conflict originated in Zimbabwe. Literally, the entire conflict situations in the country today are reflections and consequences of the past historical events. This chapter highlighted information about the recurring features which came out of the Zimbabwean elections since 1980 which warrants the justification for transforming post-conflict relationships among Zimbabweans. This background discussion has demonstrated the continuous use of the following tactics which are evident up to this day, namely intimidation of opposition political supporters, reference of

going back to war if the ruling party did not win the elections, death threats, and the use of the youth and the war veterans in mobilising support for the ruling party. This chapter also helped in demonstrating the recurrence of violence in all the general elections which have been held since 1980 to the present, and in addition, the chapter also highlighted that if conflicts remain unsolved, they lead to disunity and deep frustrations which tragically result in destructive acts of violence as the means of resolving problems. The chapter in addition explored the causes and effects of political violence in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. The next chapter discusses the use, effectiveness and the challenges associated with gardening.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF GARDENS, USE, EFFECTIVENESS AND CHALLENGES

If we are to speak meaningfully about reconciliation, we cannot ignore its shadow side which is conflict, conflict of presuppositions, conflict of interests and political aspirations, none of which may be ignored if there is a prospect of real peace. Victor De Waal (1990)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature directly and indirectly linked to the various uses of gardens and addresses the requirements of objective number two of this study, which embraces the use and effectiveness of PGs for transforming post-conflict relationships. The concept of using gardens for various reasons, including rebuilding communities, restoration of good health and wellness is not a new phenomenon, observed throughout history to the present (Erickson 2012: 89). It is from this ancient historical use and effectiveness of gardens for various purposes that this study strove to incorporate the aspect of using gardens for the transformation of post-conflict relationships. The views of various authorities in the use of community gardening and how the concept of PGs can be used to transform post-conflict relationships among political party supporters are also explored. The literature reviewed in this chapter highlights the historical background of gardening and the transformative aspects that have taken place within the history of gardens in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas since ancient times. The specific focus of this review is primarily on community gardens with reference to individual gardens.

3.2 Community gardens defined

This section explores various definitions that have been given by various scholars in relationship to the term community garden. Lum (2014) points out that gardening has now become a popular pastime among urban dwellers around the world, while Glover (2003) regards gardens as segments of land situated in an urban domain that is utilized to create nourishment. Gardens benefit both individuals and groups. Ferris, Norman and Sempik (2001) conceive gardens as globally perceived and as a critical technique for enhancing sustenance of supplies and expanding doors for open space, greenery, relaxation and recreational exercise. Community gardening implies numerous things to numerous individuals, for example, some people regard them as places for developing nourishment

and blossoms in the company of their acquaintances and fellow citizens (University of Missouri Extension 2015). The same source highlights that for others, gardens are perceived as places to reconnect with nature or to get a physical workout, whilst others partake in the gardening process for constructing and reviving feelings of the group among fellow citizens. It is noted that these gardens take numerous shapes and structures.

Pearson, Firth and Maye (2011) argue that as a result of their long traditional antiquity, gardens have changed with their definition becoming indistinct, while Lee (2015) highlights that gardens are neighbourhood spaces designed and developed by local people on vacant land in rural or urban communities and the growing of produce is usually done on shared lots that have been divided into smaller plots for each household and community's use.

As pointed out by Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny (2004) modern day gardens have not only served as destinations for the creation of green products from the soil but that they additionally work as meeting places for different occasions by various people. In addition, gardens have been utilised as a group-advancement procedure to address privately characterised issues and to enhance social, financial, and ecological conditions in troubled neighbourhoods.

Nyland (2014), on the other hand, defines gardens as places where neighbours gather together for the purpose of growing plants while maintaining pieces of open space. Pearson, Firth and Maye (2011: 556) perceive these similar gardens as gathering places that reinforce networks through agreeable endeavours, a wellspring of pride among occupants, a noticeable result of land stewardship and a healthier urban condition and also distinguish them as common spaces that bring people together, inspiring shared action. Such gardens are very diverse in size.

Such definitions of community gardens indicate the power that is associated with gardening, that is, of being able to bring people together. Political party supporters could, therefore, be brought together, a feature which could result in the transformation of their post-conflict relationships.

Martin (2015) argues that a community garden is additionally comprehended and characterised as a land parcel planted by a gathering of individuals in a neighbourhood group and that these gardens can be either possessed by people, nearby boards, not revenue-driven associations, or some type of group trust. These gardens change from area

to area yet by and large give fresh vegetables and also cultivate community association between nearby occupants (Collective-evolution 2016).

I refer to the above defined gardens as Peace Gardens (PGs) in that while the main thrust for such gardens is centred on poverty reduction, food production, enhancing rural livelihoods, and income generation, improving nutritional value and many other reasons, PGs are aimed at transforming post-conflict relationships among political party supporters. The intended aim was to promote their planning and working together for the enjoyment of all and heal their damaged relationships from the past political violent acts.

Having traced the definitions given by various scholars in the above peace gardening discussion, it also becomes useful at this stage to highlight that PGs were defined in this study as portions of land owned either by distinct kinfolds or by the whole community for engaging in vegetable gardening collectively, with the main purpose of mending past damaged or tainted relationships (Broad and Garret 2013). The material discussed so far in this chapter is mainly definitional in content and studies about the history and effectiveness of the gardens will follow in the later sections of this chapter (see section 3.3). The next section will address the history of gardens and the various changes which materialised in gardening transition with the passing of times.

3.3 The history of gardens

This section explores the historical transformations which have taken place in the history of gardening and that will have a strong bearing on the understanding of the use of gardens in the contemporary situation. Qasm and Dunnet (2000: 40) highlighted that gardens have been associated with human settlement throughout history. Though the admiration of the gardening venture has been waning over some time but considering the fact that individuals have been engaging in gardening for ages, chances are that these same people will keep on engaging in these gardening exercises (Community Economies 2009; Sparkle People 2016). Armstrong (2000), Pearson, Firth and Maye (2011) and Erickson (2012) are some of the many researchers who provided abundant evidence that the gardening process has a rich tradition, and it is interesting to perceive how individual reasons for gardening and styles for engaging in this process have changed throughout the years.

Cameron, Manhood and Pomfrett (2010: 01) support the notion that there is an extensive variety of scholastic material on gardens, much of which have highlighted their advantages. Ohmer *et al.* (2009: 378-379), likewise bolster the above thought by highlighting that public

gardens can be exploited as an influential device in improving troubled groups, advancing feasible community development, growing civic engagement and preservation practices (Draper 2014). This understanding is also linked to the thrust of this study, which strongly assumed that PGs have the potential to mend tainted relationships among political party supporters in areas where political violence had been experienced.

History demonstrates that earliest gardens seem to have been grown for hands-on reasons where people grew vegetables in the ancient world; that encompassed cultivating and working on the plants grown in the garden during ancient times (Local Histories 2014). After the Roman government had conquered the Egyptians in 30 BC, they were believed to have introduced new eastern ideas about gardening and that is believed to explain how the concept of gardening encroached on the African continent. The Egyptian populace strongly believed that their deities liked gardens and so temples were constructed with some gardens around them. That same period saw some rich Roman individuals creating small gardening places close to their fortresses that they laid out with hedges and vines (Local Histories 2014).

Chitongo and Magaya (2013: 197) aver that community gardening has dependably been connected with the possibility of cooperation through history and the idea initially started when early humans collaborated with others to kill creatures for survival. Individuals have been coordinating with others to accomplish objectives that they could not reach if they acted independently and individually.

There is a developing pattern of urban people to interface with nature and make more attainable and practical nearby nourishment frameworks. Inner city communal gardens have been appearing through urban, same for rural communities for some time (Collective-Evolution 2016). Part of a town's agricultural transformation was the improvement and sprouting of gardening plots which were appearing in urban areas, college grounds and primary and secondary learning centres and also at corporate workplaces and homes (University of Missouri Extension 2015; Martin 2015). Similarly, the contemporary situation has seen the emergence of gardens and the call for using them in transforming post-conflict relationships.

3.3.1 Gardening developments between 900-612 BC

As pointed out in Local Histories (2014: 01), the period between 900-612 BC saw the superior class people in Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar start to launch gardens which

contained pools or water courses. These developments were slowly making inroads in the historical background with some modifications in their shapes and sizes. The fall of Rome witnessed the decline in formal gardening activities but the clerical institutions continued to make gardens spaces for growing aromatic plants and that became a prominent activity and use of gardens throughout the world (Local histories 2014).

The middle age time frame saw the Islamic state in the seventh century with Persian influence develop gardens and cultivation while the late thirteenth century saw rich individuals starting to develop and build up a few gardens for delight and additionally for vegetable consumption (Collective-evolution 2016). The same period saw gardens being protected through fences for insurance from wild creatures and for the arrangement of detachment (Local histories 2014; Lee 2015).

3.3.2 The fourteen and fifteenth century gardening developments

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw another move in the history of gardens where religious communities developed gardens for restorative herbs, vineyards and vegetables. Thoughts regarding gardening changed amid the sixteenth and seventeenth century and saw gardens being divided into parts for flower beds, regularly laid out in squares isolated by rock ways. Potatoes and tomatoes were brought into Europe during that period (Local histories 2014; University of Missouri Extension 2015). These transformative changes were showing interesting developments in the historical development of gardens and ever since then such changes have been continuously unfolding until these contemporary times.

Cooperation and being in harmony with nature has been the way people have acted for eons. More recently in history, especially with mechanisation, the planet has suffered nearly irreversible damage with the destruction of vast forests for wood, pollution of the oceans, rivers and lakes, pollution in the air resulting in climate change and the use of harmful chemicals. Further, animals are being mistreated for food. Such acts are mainly driven by greed. Conflicts play an important role in the destruction of nature. Respect for nature was and in some instances is still the way many people including Africans lived.

The return to gardens is also in harmony with such respect for nature as these gardens are unlikely to destroy the land. The respect for nature may well be one of the motivating factors for people to want to farm, apart from the basic reason of food production. There is something very peaceful and calming about working on the land, producing one's own food, caring and watching flowers and plants grow and this has played a crucial role in fostering

the growth and effectiveness of community gardening, an element which is vital in the perpetuation of peace gardening as a way of transforming post-conflict relationships.

3.3.3 Eighteenth-century gardening developments

As implied by Qasm and Dunnet (2000), the mid-eighteenth century saw many individuals defying formal gardening cultivation and favoured a more normal style with two of the most well-known gardening specialists of the eighteenth century being William Kent and Charles Bridgeman (Hortist 2014). The period 1725 saw the arrangement of the general public of gardening workers in England which was another dynamic improvement in the verifiable foundation of the advancement of gardening enclosures amid this period. In any case, joy gardens were still just for the high society and the white collar classes (Local histories 2014). Poor individuals still utilised the gardens for developing vegetables since they had neither the time nor the cash to develop plants for joy, unlike their affluent counterparts.

3.3.4 Gardens during the First World War and the Great Depression

Gardens started as an approach to give land and specialised help to unemployed labourers in extensive urban communities and to show civics and extraordinary work penchants to young people. During the First World War, the law-making body elevated gardens to supplement and develop private support sources (University of Missouri Extension 2015). The same source points out that during the Great Depression, public gardens paved way for those who were not formally employed in developing basic food. During that period, both private and state land provided people with gardening plots for cooperative gardening with more than twenty three million families benefiting from that exercise (University of Missouri Extension 2015). It was from that progression that gardens started assuming various roles and uses, but the use for transforming post-conflict through the use of gardens was not popularised as noted from this background information.

3.3.5 Gardens during the Second World War

The success of gardens amid the Second World War encouraged people to grow food for individual usage, enjoyment and for upgrading souls. When the Second World War was over, several gardening programs remained in place, and it was those gardening practices that offered the rise to the restoration of gardening ventures in the 1970s (University of Missouri Extension 2015). The resurgence of gardening in the 1970s was a reaction to urban from rural migration, swelling inflation, ecological fears and a longing to construct neighbourly associations. City wide associations helped individuals with obtaining land,

building greenery enclosures and creating instructive programming. Adjacent tenants, confronted a bunch of urban issues, used gardens to reconstruct neighbourhoods and expand community gardening projects (University of Missouri Extension 2015).

3.3.6 Nineteenth century gardening developments

The nineteenth century saw the establishment of the Horticultural Society in 1804 and transformed into a majestic culture in 1861. Various new plants were acquired into Europe including the monkey enigma or Chile pine (Qasm and Dunnet 2000). The end of the nineteenth century and the commencement of the twentieth century saw some gardening specialists being affected by human expressions and craft developments (Local histories 2014). Around the same time, as earnings rose, gardening turned into focused interest and eventually brought forth the establishment of the Garden History Society in 1965 (Qasm and Dunnet 2000; Local histories 2014).

3.4 Overview of the historical background of gardens

Gardens as discussed above came in all sizes and shapes. They brought people of different age groups together; allowed for the transmission of heritage stories, dismantled cultural barriers and integrated members into food systems (Hoffman 2010). The historical background also proved that there has been a long history of using gardens for various reasons such as empowering communities, improving people's psychological well-being, social relations and restoration of good health (Erickson 2012: 89).

Having been initiated back in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, gardens resurfaced strongly during the course of the Second World War in 1939 (Maroyi 2009). There was a resurgence in many developed economies, for example, Britain and Australia: today, as noted, gardens come in all shapes and sizes (Pearson, Firth and Maye 2011: 555).

Having looked at the historical background of the gardens in this section, I have noted that gardens had a very long historical tradition and that there is good evidence that they were used for various reasons. It is important to note at this stage that the purpose of using gardens for transforming post-conflict relationships among rival political parties' supporters has not been practiced before, especially in Zimbabwe, a feature that made this research not only interesting but unique.

3.5 The use and effectiveness of gardens

There is an extensive variety of scholarly material on community gardening, much of which features their advantages (Armstrong 2000; McCormack *et al.* 2010). Allen *et al.* (2003) note that in a setting of neoliberalism, group gardens have turned into a teaching innovation to encourage qualities like individual duty, confidence, self-improvement, self-change, as proved through group cultivating in schools and distressed neighbourhoods. They also reveal that gardens are ways in which inhabitants decorate urban neighbourhoods, enhance access to fresh produce, and connect with youth.

Gardens have been used for the purpose of uniting neighbours on a small scale and have produced positive community building outcomes since time immemorial on the African continent (Cohen, Vega and Watson 2011). The historical background demonstrated that gardens became prominent not only in Britain but also in Western Europe in the 1830s. (Wakefield *et al.* 2007; Local histories 2014). Gardens became widely used in the American city of Detroit in the 1890s, while in Africa gardens are believed to have existed since pre-historic time (Taylor and Francis 2009).

A country like Zimbabwe which has experienced a series of violent political episodes, for example, during the 1893 war of dispossession in Matabeleland, the *Gukurahundi* atrocities of the early 1980s and the post and pre-election epochs after the 2000, 2002, 2005 and the 2008 elections, would benefit immensely from using peace gardens' as a framework. This study thus endorse that a bottom-up approach would promote political tolerance. Lederach regarded community empowerment as one of the essential aspects of conflict transformation, one which actively envision and respect human and cultural resources from given settings. It is further argued that gardening has played crucial roles in building community leadership and also served as meeting places for community deliberations to discuss issues concerning their welfare directly or indirectly (Community gardening 2016). Allen *et al.* (2003: 421) point out that there is available proof that gardening has played a crucial role in encouraging social cooperation and the supervision and coaching of young people. This aspect is vital in the sense that it fosters unity and family cohesion, an aspect this study anticipated to transform post-conflict relationships via PGs in Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

Chazovachii, Mutami and Boora (2011) observe that there has been a mass establishment of gardens in Zimbabwe. The priority has been on keeping up practical jobs and nourishing the family unit, however, these gardens have provided opportunities for enhancing social

capital, promoting interactions and social inclusion (Glover 2003). As noted earlier, literature has demonstrated that gardens have the potential to transform relationships but have not been used extensively for transforming post-conflict relationships. It is vital to note that the functions of the gardens goes beyond food production itself, since they have an interdisciplinary role in promoting a sense of focus for communities that often have little access to gardening lands within their neighbourhoods (Maantay 2001).

Current exploration on gardening proposes that it enhanced neighbourhood access to garden fresh produce, promoted community wellbeing and reduced criminality in their communities (Allen *et al.* 2008). Gardens can also provide a setting with the possibility to advance an assortment of formative resources while making positive healthful situations for youth. Community specialists can likewise utilise gardening programmes as a chance to instruct communities about preservation and ecological issues (Ohmer *et al.* 2009) .

Despite the fact that there are several extensive research studies which have analysed results of youth support in gardens, accounts propose that adolescents benefit from paid vacation openings, procuring aptitudes, kinships, intergenerational connections, and finding out about cultivating and nourishment (Allen *et al.* 2008). There is also a developing form of research showing that group gardens encourage social collaborations and the supervision and tutoring of youngsters (Allen *et al.* 2008).

Alaimo *et al.* (2008) pointed out that community gardening is gaining attention nationwide as an approach to increase the production and availability of fruits and vegetables for urban residents. Neighbourhood and community gardening can offer affordable and convenient access to fresh produce, particularly for urban populations with limited access to supermarkets. Most studies have researched the benefits of community gardening for community development: there is limited research assessing the association between participation in community gardening and dietary intake.

Sithole, Nkala and Dube (2012: 249) posit that group gardens have made more fresh produce available to communities; however, the lack of data limits the full understanding of the maximum capacity of these gardens. The same authors also point out that academic investigation has since concluded that group gardens do assist family unit nourishment security, improve the qualities of eating routine and contribute colossally to limit destitution among urban families.

Ottmann *et al.* (2012) points out that gardens give a chance to individuals and their families to appreciate nutritious nourishment at practically no cost. They therefore tend to eat more healthy products on a more regular basis. Group gardens gives the chance to individuals from various foundations to meet together, which is the main thrust of this study (Collective-evolution 2016). They encourage a feeling of belonging and the interests of the group are for the most part observed and monitored by the gardeners, bringing about a cleaner space and a more dynamic neighbourhood community.

The other critical utilisation of gardens in communities is that of group arranging which creates a feeling of group possession and stewardship and fosters the advancement of group identity (Community gardening 2016). A garden represents people's only contact with nature and their chance to express themselves creatively. That groups come together is promising in terms of the value of gardens to the transformation of post-conflict relationships (Qasm and Dunnet 2000: 40; Schottish heritage 2014). Research has shown that gardening activities have the potential to improve relationships (Hoffman 2010: 173). Much of the gardens writings usefully pronounce how these specific enterprises thrive to build a sense of communal harmony and transform post-conflict relationships along the way (Armstrong 2000; Mitchell and Hancock 2012) .

The discussion carried out in this section demonstrates that community gardens have served as a multi-faceted way of bringing cultures together to strategise and toil and demonstrates how a communal scheme can benefit all members (Pax Christi 2015).

3.5.1 Community gardening for health benefits and leisure activities

Throughout the last quarter-century, research has taken place to evaluate the medical advantages of contact with nature. As argued by Erickson (2012: 100) a strong establishment of proof exists that affirms positive health benefits when individuals have admittance to nature, either by inundation, for example, being in a recreation centre or garden setting, or by visual access, for example, such as a view through a window. Puet *et al.* (2014) and (Health Services 2016) were also of the opinion that working collectively in the gardens provides a basis for recreation and anxiety relief, increasing feelings of unity among vulnerable communities. The same authors point out that home and community garden projects have established a broad collection of benefits to susceptible populations in various settings while improving access to the quality and quantity of food with home gardens helping to improve nutritional variety and micronutrient position (Community economies 2009).

Community gardening is now regarded as a source of education in that all ages can attain and share information linked to gardening, cooking, nourishment and wellbeing. Some gardens have programs that provide training in horticulture, commercial management, administration development and market gardening (University of Missouri Extension 2015). Zeeuw (2004) pointed out how urban agricultural projects not only result in food and income, but also in higher self-esteem amongst gardeners, enhanced self-management capacity and capacity building for the community.

With many individuals now living in urban situations, communal gardens offer an escape from the solid wilderness and rushing about of city living. Gardening itself offers many benefits such as stress relief, helps with building esteem, and helps fight depression as well as offering physical health benefits such as increased dexterity, cardiovascular development and strength building. Academics have also found community gardening to represent the single biggest risk reduction for dementia, reducing incidence by thirty-six per cent while another study estimated the risk reduction at forty-seven per cent (Collective-evolution 2016).

Research-based proof exists to demonstrate that each of the four therapeutic segments referred to above can diminish stress and along these lines enhance other well-being results. This is supported by the remarks that the task of peacebuilding is also to find ways of incorporating gardening into the work of peacebuilding. Subsequently, that creates a space where people in conflict can express themselves, heal and reconcile themselves through gardens (Shank and Schirch 2008; Erickson 2012: 92).

Pearson, Firth and Maye (2011: 555) purport that gardens facilitate people's desire to reconnect with nature and the community while University of Missouri Extension (2015) points out that gardening requires physical movement and thereby enhances general physical well-being. Interaction with plants and having admittance to nature lessens stress and increases gardeners' feeling of health and belonging (University of Missouri Extension 2015). Creating gardens as spots for reclamation of wellbeing and health has been watched through history, from ancient times until the present. Current research from an assortment of scholastic orders uncovers that contact with nature decreases stress, which prompts enhanced wellbeing results (Erickson 2012: 89).

Community gardens are credited with creating specialised learning amongst the gardeners through their casual communication, information about how to run a venture and that gardening advances the idea of meeting other similarly invested individuals (Cameron,

Manhood and Pomfrett 2010). These various benefits that can be derived from gardening are therefore important to be used in transforming post-conflict relationships via PGs in order to bring harmony amongst the various political party supporters.

Research has demonstrated that more than 10 million energetic plant specialists make gardening one of their most recreation exercises in Britain while private gardens are the most intensely utilised sort of open air space and speak to the most successive contact with nature for the vast majority (Qasm and Dunnet 2000: 40). The gardens, for the most part, make a wonderful domain and for some individuals in this way, working in the garden is seen as a way to unwind and that gardens likewise display a picture to whatever remains of the world in passing on impressions of status and territoriality (Qasm and Dunnet 2000: 43).

Although most communal garden programs before the nineteen-seventies were generally viewed as transitory answers for nourishment deficiencies, financial challenges and city emergencies, most advocates today assert that gardens have permanent, long-term benefits that give various advantages to people, families, and groups. Gardens empower individuals without an appropriate place of their own to develop excellent products of the soil for themselves, their families and their communities, perhaps in places that need supermarkets or other new sustenance outlet. Some exploration shows that gardeners eat more fruits and vegetables (Bremer, Jenkins and Kanter 2003; University of Missouri Extension 2015).

3.5.2 Gardens and local business promotion and criminal activities reduction

Previous research has demonstrated that the other vital use for gardens is to provide people with the opportunities of meeting their neighbours which ultimately give birth to building clubs or neighbourhood associations (Armstrong 2000). These associations then help in increasing 'eyes on the streets' and also provide a sense of working together and protecting each other - thereby serving as a crime prevention mechanism. The use of gardens has generally been recognised by police department's world over especially in urban and semi urban areas as an effective community crime prevention strategy (Community gardening 2016). This idea might be compatible with the impression of using gardens as a way of curbing political violence amongst political party supporters. It is important to note that while this aspect was being perpetuated, Qasm and Dunnet (2000: 43) were also of the opinion that gardens were also particularly used for therapeutic aspects, also documented in previous research work.

The commercial benefits of gardens are just as various as the people and produce grown in them. There is evidence to suggest that gardens make communities safer and studies

concur that aggression and violence were significantly lower among those people who lived near some green space than those who lived in more barren conditions (Collective-Evolution 2016). Gardens also foster and help provide employment, education, and entrepreneurship and they provide opportunities for a wide variety of people, including students, recent immigrants, and homeless people. They can also have the benefit of reducing the cost for local councils, as vacant lots can be magnets for litter and criminal activity. All of this often comes at little or no cost to the city. Developing and maintaining garden space is less expensive than parkland area, in part because gardens require little land and 80% of their cost is in labour (Baker and Harris 2007; University of Missouri Extension 2015)

History has proved that community gardening has the potential to reduce criminality rates, for example, in the community of North Philadelphia, USA, which was once full of unoccupied, run-down buildings and overwhelmed with crime, drugs, trash and neglected people as well as dilapidated infrastructure. Not only did communal gardening diminish crime rates but it also caused a ripple effect which resulted in the people deciding to do gardening in other areas. That development of introducing the garden in the North Philadelphia area saw people taking care of their own properties, looking out for one another and completely transforming their neighbourhood into a cherished environment with low crime rates (Sarich 2013) .

3.5.3 Gardening and surrounding property prices and peacebuilding

Gardening has the potential to unite people and as a result, a united community and people are always in a better position to easily defy its crises of development, nationhood, and stability (Enaruna 2014). Gardens positively affected adjacent property costs and there was a concurrence from some researchers which indicated that gardens increased surrounding property values by up to ninety five per cent while supplementary analysis revealed that they also provided a context through which the neighbourhood youth were able to make contributions to their community (Allen *et al.* 2008). They played a key role in transforming previously unused and unsightly lots into attractive communal gardening areas that produced food for neighbours (Collective-evolution 2016).

Prakash (2015: 177) purported that gardens could be utilised to encourage fellowships amongst victors and losers with the trust of changing foes into companions and neighbours. This situation presents gardens as an instrument that could be utilised to disassemble the slim line that isolates the victors and the adversaries. The thoughts created from Prakash's work entitled 'our friendship gardens' was focused on declaring that companionship rises

above contrasts and respect differing qualities and that it serves as one of the many fruits and organic gifts harvested and shared in the commons created by these types of gardens. While (Prakash 2015) was viewing the use of gardens as tools for building friendships, (Maroyi 2009) was of the view that traditional gardens could best be used for sustainable agroforestry system and rural livelihoods.

As pointed out in University of Missouri Extension (2015), gardens foster a sense of community identity, ownership, and stewardship. They provide a place for people of diverse backgrounds to interact and share cultural traditions. It is from this background that this study called for the use of PG to transform post-conflict relationships (Allen *et al.* 2008). As professed by Shank and Schirch (2008), gardens could be used to transform relationships which were the main thrust of this study. He argued that for peace to replace violence, relationships need to be created using an array of processes that address trauma, transform conflict and do justice. From this view, therefore, these processes would give people opportunities to create long-term, sustainable solutions to address their needs and gardening, in this case, would serve as a transformation key principle in all peacebuilding programmes including transforming post-conflict relationships.

Research has been advanced by various scholars that the use of gardens in general for community building is paramount (Armstrong 2000; Mitchell and Hancock 2012). Allen *et al.* (2003: 427) pointed out that gardens also provided a context that promoted the development of positive peer interactions and friendships amongst intergenerational groups a component that can be very useful in the quest to transform post-conflict relationships via PGs as well.

There is a solid conviction that gardens are capable of cultivating peacebuilding and they additionally serve as a system for advancing a dialogue on social and political issues. Gardening can be utilised as one of the numerous variety of procedures that can be utilised as a quiet device to replace brutality and re-make broken connections, and transform conflict and they can likewise be utilised to educate about joblessness, defilement, and class contrast in this manner representing the convergence amongst gardening and peacebuilding (Shank and Schirch 2008: 01).

It is essential to deduce that from the points highlighted above in connection with the use and effectiveness of using gardens for various reasons, there is a strong belief that they have proved very powerful in fostering peacebuilding and as such the idea of using PGs for transforming post-conflict relationships makes sense. Community gardening among the youth and the adults in general are essential as in the garden, they yield closer connections

in the area, fellowships among the adolescent, and chances to create interpersonal aptitudes in transaction, conflict resolution, and communication (Allen *et al.* 2003: 426).

3.6 Peace gardens

PGs are a boundless method for uniting groups to strategise, work and administer a shared task for the delight of all and they were built up with the principle reason to offer a space of calm where individuals could go when incapacitated or offer settlement to each other (Pax Christi 2015). As highlighted by De Waal (1990), there is need to speak meaningfully about reconciliation taking into cognisance of the ugly side of conflict, which encompasses the conflict of presupposition, conflict of interests and political aspirations none of which may be ignored if there is a prospect of real peace. All these aforementioned conflicts can be addressed as purported by this study through the use of Pgs. These gardens help people to consider what peace could mean, resemble, feel like, when they begin to think about the shape, sorts of plants and help people to consider their immediate environment (Graham *et al.* 2005; Baker and Harris 2007; Pax Christi 2015). The diagram below gives a summation of the various roles played by PGs.



Figure 2 The role of peace gardens (Shank and Schirch 2008)

Gardens have of late been used for the following reasons;

- remembering the individuals who have endured or deceased through political brutality.

- creating a position of celebration of individuals in the group who have offered meaning to solidarity and forgiveness.
- making a place where community residents make envisaged images of their expectations for peace.
- a place where fresh food and ideas are developed and imparted to group members.

3.7 Peace gardening as a tool for transforming relationships

As highlighted by Shank and Schirch (2008) and Together for Health (2011), for peace to substitute brutality, broken associations are re-connected using an assortment of techniques that address trauma and transform a series of conflicts while providing people with opportunities to make long-term, reasonable solutions to address their needs. Peacebuilders enthused about transforming relationships can utilise the community gardening venture as a medium to recuperate from individual or shared trauma, thereby strengthening social interactions, helping political party supports to interconnect with each other in ways which encourage real discourse and understanding and changing undesirable vitality into constructive vitality which happens to be the main thrust of this study.

3.8 The African tradition of *Ukusisa* (to help) in South Africa

Having discussed the effects of community gardening internationally and having noted their embedded effects in fostering togetherness and enhancing cooperation, it is useful to discuss a slightly different tradition in Africa, which has similar goals and values of community gardening and peace gardening, that is, a Zulu tradition which is known as *Ukusisa*, or to help. There are many ways in which helping can occur, for example, the Zulu tradition in which people who were better off than others in the community would share their stock with those who were poor by giving them a cow and a bull (Hlongwane 2016). In this example, the tradition refers to the system of lending cattle to someone who does not have and allowing that person to keep the cattle and return them back once it has bred. Thus, a fellow member of the community who is poor is assisted out of poverty by being lent a cow (Dandala 2009:260). The practice protects the dignity of the poor person. The poor person is politely asked to look after the cow and when the poor person obliges, the cow will provide milk and manure to the poor person. After some years, the owner will reclaim the cow but the poor person will be entitled to one or two calves as seed capital for his or her new herd. This is a way of sharing wealth that is positive and affirming *Ubuntu*. It is dignified, productive and embedded in African culture. The method of sharing wealth strengthens individuals and the community.

As highlighted by Hlongwane (2016) these cattle were the full responsibility of the person that received them and that it was important to inform both the worker at the local dip tank and the local Induna (chief) about the process. There was no set time limit to keep these cattle. They were returned when they have multiplied and the receiver will only return the two cattle that he was initially given, although some people returned more than the received cattle as a sign of showing their appreciation.

While community gardening promotes cooperation among community members the tradition of *Ukusisa* also signifies the African way of promoting similar values and goals through what the African continent has adopted as *Ubuntu* or *Unhu* (John 2015) and (Rukuni 2007). This tradition demonstrates the diverse avenues which are available for promoting interdependence and working together, none of which should be viewed as sub-standard. Nussbaurn (2003) explains the validity of this tradition in fostering *Ubuntu* which saw families in a rural village “lending” cows together with bulls to newly married couples until offsprings from those cows were produced before taking back the original cows and bulls. The concept of *Ubuntu* and cooperation was realised considering that the offsprings would stay with the newcomers, leaving them with their own venture capital and their self-respect. This mutual tradition promotes kindness and love of humanity in ways which promoted community building and sharing (Kunene 1979). This tradition is also practiced in Zimbabwe but it is called *Kurunzira*. Apart from gardening, there were other traditions in Africa meant to promote community and help. *Ubuntu* encourages sharing to ensure that teamwork is rewarded (Dandala 2009:275). The process of sharing wealth does not only encourage economic growth but it also involves key African values such as dignity, community and self-respect. In the cow example, a sense of responsibility towards the cow is expected. It was not common and would be shameful for a person looking after a cow to let it die. Even if the cow is stuck in the mud, a man who values his cows would urge his herders to rush and slaughter it before it dies (Dandala 2009:275).

Over time challenges arose with the arrival of missionaries in South Africa (Houle 2009:16): new converts started questioning some of their cultural practices and interactions with non-believers were limited. This in turn affected the humanitarian tradition of *Ukusisa* and in some instances, it fell away.

3.9 Challenges associated with the use of gardens

This section reviews literature linked to challenges associated with the use of gardens as a way of addressing the requirements for objective number two, which embraces the challenges of using PGs to transform post-conflict relationships. The debate on the use and management of gardens for whatever purpose would be incomplete without an exploration of the challenges encountered during the gardening venture. It is interesting to note that there is nothing such as perfect gardening since all gardening activities are prone to some challenges in one way or another (Pleasant 2014). This section therefore, explores possible challenges associated with peace gardening with the diagram below giving a summation of these challenges discussed in detail in the subsequent sections in this chapter.



Figure 3 Challenges associated with gardening (own data)

3.9.1 Lack of managerial skills and patience

One of the major challenges identified some years ago with gardens is that they are management intensive and they demand patience, time and the capacity to work with people (Schmelzkopf 1995). Thus, having people who meet all the above-mentioned traits in order to make meaningful contributions in gardening is somewhat a challenge. In Zimbabwe, the practice of gardening is generally associated with people who lack articulate management skills.

Determining the ability and skill to work well with other people is a mammoth task and occurs as a challenge in peace gardening. The gardening produce takes some time to yield and that does not augur well with people who want quick fixes. That lack of patience is a serious challenge in a gardening venture as gardening takes time to yield results just like peacebuilding. Management skills are also not easy to come by and as a result, gardening projects normally fail to sustain themselves often due to poor management skills. There is need, therefore, to have organisations that make this kind of training available to farmers to enhance peace gardening.

3.9.2 The effects of climate change on gardening

Throughout the years, climate change in many parts of the world has been described by expanding variances with extreme ramifications on various human exercises, particularly farming (Sango and Nhamo 2015: 90). Such impacts are exceptionally glaring in developing nations that predominantly rely upon rain. Agribusiness constitutes the foundation of these nations, particularly the economies of Sub-Saharan Africa, given that other than guaranteeing the maintainability of rural livelihoods, it is additionally a noteworthy contributor towards the countries' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Gur *et al.* 2015).

Climate change has currently been accepted as one of the most genuine ecological dangers in the battle against hunger, malnutrition, disease, and poverty in Africa, for the most parts through its effect on farming efficiency (Anselm and Amusa 2010: 01). Zimbabwe has also been affected seriously by this challenge as the country has been experiencing a series of drought episodes in the past two decades. Climate change continues to pose uncertainties to weather patterns with the recent 2016 EL-Nino induced drought in Zimbabwe also impacting negatively on agriculture in general and thereby posing a challenge to those who specialise in activities such as peace gardening (Chinamasa 2016: 19).

The extreme changes in weather designs which have been propagated by environmental change in recent years have genuinely and adversely influenced community gardeners as the hot summers have brought on heat worries to the gardeners whose primary business will have been hard hit (Harris 2015). The shortage of rainfall and lack of irrigation systems in many parts of Zimbabwe has exacerbated things for those taking part in peace gardening. The situation is worse off in Masvingo province which falls under region five which naturally is associated with receiving minimum rainfall: this has served as a serious challenge in peace gardening.

3.9.3 The use of force in gardening

The issue of using force to have things done and to implement rules is one element related with gardens that might also serve as a serious challenge in that instead of resolving conflicts, they may create conflict, trauma and resurrect past fears. The colonial legacy, the war of liberation and a series of political violence epochs in this country have also instilled the use of force in the general populace as the only tool for getting things done (Mlambo 2014). Due to the continuous levels of conflict, the Zimbabwe population has lived with trauma for a while and the element of the use of force has continuously been passed on from one generation to the other in what was described by Ngwenya and Harris (2015) as inter-generational conflict.

In gardening activities in Zimbabwe, where youth and elders will be working together, chances are very high that the youth will be forced to carry out the main duties like watering and carrying out routinely repairs on fencing even without their consent. Such scenarios will, therefore, kill the prime purpose of developing sustainable conflict transformation models aimed at addressing power imbalances and force is used instead to get things done. Gardens have the potential to serve as places of disagreements where divisions might arise and divergent expectations can be practiced (Poulsen *et al.* 2014: 76).

3.9.4 Theft, vandalism, and mismatch of goals experienced during gardening

Theft and vandalism are some of the general challenges associated with gardening in general. Theft is generally carried out by adults who will not be members of those gardens while vandalism is generally carried out by wandering animals and young children either by design or by default (Sithole, Nkala and Dube 2012: 255). Theft is also exacerbated by the melting economic situation and the high levels of hunger and unemployment which are currently pegged at 90%. Since the majority of Zimbabweans are languishing in poverty and unemployment, they are compelled to steal in order to address hunger challenges and generate some revenue from the sales made from the stolen garden produce.

Another factor that exacerbates the challenge in gardening is the mismatch of goals and expectations between gardeners (Schmelzkopf 1995). It is important to make sure that people taking part in gardening should have compatible goals in order to make the best out of the gardening venture. As pointed out by Yu (2012) the common challenges in gardening are funding, lack of training of the gardeners, lack of strategic planning and the concern of vandalism and security issues.

3.9.5 Maintenance and participation challenges

Maintenance and participation constitute some of the difficulties connected with peace gardening and if it is improperly executed, maintenance or complete lack of it, vis-à-vis participation, aggravate the difficulties connected with peace gardening. Group cultivating is support concentrated as there is a need for the grass to be cut, equipment needs to be repaired and it will be a test for the group individuals to have abundant time to take care of every one of those necessities (Erickson 2012).

It has been noted that garden pioneers typically come and go, year in and year out because of varied reasons and as a consequence of that difficulty, challenges normally emerge on account of looking for consistency (Pleasant 2014). One of the other common challenges in peace gardening is that all individuals may not react in a similar way to common habitats. A few components, for example, internal peace and a profound affair of affection are common to all individuals as recuperating qualities (Erickson 2012).

3.9.6 Power imbalances experienced during gardening

Another challenge associated with peace gardening is that in some circumstances, the gardening activity will end up creating power imbalances among those participating in the gardening. Instead of addressing power imbalances, the gardening venture will end up promoting the conflict and some people will start to play dominant and suppressive roles thereby serving as a challenge to the peace gardening venture (Tesoriero 2006). Chances are very high that those who will be taking part in peace gardening will end up experiencing intrapersonal conflicts amongst themselves if the initiative is not well planned and managed.

3.9.7 Developing partnership with local agencies

The need for establishing and developing a partnership with local agencies and organisations is another challenge associated with peace gardening. Community practitioners should develop strategies to strengthen partnerships with agencies and organisations that contribute to gardening initiatives, as well as linking programs more strongly to community development strategies. The sustainability and expansion of community conservation and gardening programmes rely on building and strengthening strong relationships and partnerships with community partners (Ohmer *et al.* 2009)

3.9.8 Rural to urban migration and the land redistribution in Zimbabwe

The establishment of gardens close to urban centres has now been struck a serious blow as dairy activities and grazing areas have now taken over as a focal point. Those carrying out

dairy activities and rearing cattle around Zimbabwean centres are given more privileges and liberties in carrying out their duties than those carrying out gardening activities. It is this negative perception therefore that serves as a challenge to peace gardening. There has been a serious rural to urban migration in Zimbabwe during the past ten years and, as such, there has been a massive increase in the demand for housing, a development and feature that has affected peace gardening in that they are now suffering from competing demands with those people and cooperatives looking for urban residential houses (Blake and Cloutier-Fisher 2009: 797). Those that have been carrying out gardening activities in semi-urban centres and supplying the urban chain stores with fresh produce were affected seriously by this development.

Though the ownership of land was one of the crucial motives for waging the war of liberation in Zimbabwe, the manner in which it was claimed back left a lot to be desired in that it also negatively affected a series of established activities. The deterioration in gardening activities coupled with the rural to urban migration and the chaotic land redistribution have contributed towards the country's loss of its bread basket status in the SADC region (Nyatsanza 2012: 16). This, therefore, is identified as one of the many challenges associated with peace gardening.

The Zimbabwean situation after the 2000 land grab from the white farmers created some challenges for peace gardening in that all the prime land was taken for growing cash crops like tobacco, sugar cane, and soya beans and used as grazing land (Mlambo 2014: 257). Using prime land for gardening purposes was and is still viewed as improper utilisation of land and those who purport such activities are regarded as betrayers of the struggle. So, the challenge in this scenario is that gardening is not prioritized as a very important venture in this regard.

Convincing those in power to advocate for the importance of gardening to ordinary people is a real challenge. The glaring example is that portions of land which have been reserved for gardening around Masvingo town was invaded by land-seeking multitudes and have already turned the areas into residential plots or grazing areas. There are some existing studies which have discovered that garden volunteers were occupied with peace gardening programmes and felt that the venture profited their groups or communities. Maintaining unpaid worker engagement after some time might be a mammoth test (Ohmer *et al.* 2009).

3.9.9 Economic and water challenges

Zimbabwe has encountered a phenomenal decrease of about 21% in all human advancement pointers for as far back as the past sixteen years. In spite of the introduction of group gardens in dry season inclined zones of Zimbabwe, destitution still endures among the defenceless and vulnerable crowds, thus rendering gardening as useless and an insignificant venture in addressing natural disasters. Gardening is a fairly expensive venture to set up, when one considers the fencing needed for its construction and the irrigation facilities needed to establish thriving watering sources in drought prone areas.

The economic meltdown in Zimbabwe makes it practically impossible for people to be able to set up standard and secure gardens without some grant advancements. This challenge would make it difficult for action team members to rely solely on peace gardening and, as such they end up engaging in some other activities which will spin some money faster for them to survive and fend for their families. These varied commitments are likely to confuse members who will end up losing some interest and attention in gardening (Zivenge *et al.* 2016).

The possibility to enhance family, group and national sustenance and nourishment security through community gardening is high if issues of water accessibility and cost of inputs are addressed. The economic situation in the country is so bad that people are battling for mere survival and sparing some surplus money to buy equipment for use in peace gardening is now a big hurdle and this serves as a major drawback in the success of gardening (Chitongo and Magaya 2013). Apart from the economic challenges experienced in the country, the few business people who sell some input like fertilizers do so at exorbitant prices and thus posing a great challenge in the gardening venture.

Water challenges are some of the common trials and main obstacles associated with gardening. The climate change phenomenon has seriously affected this country which has been receiving erratic rainfall for the past two decades and has turned gardening into a complete nightmare (Chitongo and Magaya 2013). Sinking boreholes could have been a wiser solution to the above-mentioned challenge but the problem is that the initiative in this country is very expensive as those who offer such services charge amounts which are not below US\$2,500.00. Inadequate supplies of both surface and underground water, especially in Zimbabwe, due to its close proximity to the Kalahari desert is proving to be a serious menace towards gardening ventures (Sithole, Nkala and Dube 2012: 255). As a result of these water challenges, community gardeners resort to using untreated sewage water,

especially those in urban centres, thereby putting consumers of their gardening produce at a health risk.

Ferris, Norman and Sempik (2001) and Blake and Cloutier-Fisher (2009) all concurred that the mismatch of goals and expectations between the gardeners and other community members are responsible for discordant relationships in gardening ventures. One good example is that of the Zimbabwean situation: before the 2000 land redistribution wave, the semi-urban land was mainly reserved for market gardening and dairy farming. This was done to supply urban markets with constant and reliable fresh gardening produce and milk but when the "land grab wave" started all semi-urban land was taken and used for completely different purposes thereby denoting a sharp mismatch of goals.

3.9.10 Market availability

As highlighted by Chitongo and Magaya (2013), market availability is one of the key challenges encountered by beneficiaries in the market gardening venture and attempts by some partners to find some market for community gardeners have failed to yield meaningful success due to the price wrangle and the quality of the produce. The nation is currently facing stiff competition from the gardening produce being smuggled from South Africa and is viewed as better in quality and is sold at cheaper prices. Those developments serve as challenges to those engaging in gardening locally.

3.9.11 Keeping the momentum among participants.

Those people who walk very long distances to go to their garden sites and participate in gardening confront a different set of challenges. That kind of scenario would ultimately kill the enthusiasm among participants and the exercise becomes very risky, especially when sending young girls to the garden, who can be prone to abuse along the way. The other challenge to gardening is that, though ample evidence has pointed towards positive benefits to peace gardening, the momentum among participants might be difficult to keep considering that the hard work and commitment associated with peace gardening might be a reason why participants may choose to withdraw from the gardening venture. This has been noted in circumstances where many people join community gardens at the beginning of the project and gradually disappear into thin air due to the kind of commitment that will be required (Poulsen *et al.* 2014: 75).

Difficulties that may be encountered in gardening may include keeping the vigour levels high among the participating members as a mechanism of managing the drop-off rate of

individuals taking part in the gardening venture. The other challenge in peace gardening, however, is that of managing dissension between individuals in various communities (Cameron, Manhood and Pomfrett 2010). These kinds of challenges will, in the long run, affect a gardening venture in that maintaining the element of consistency will be a challenge and the concept of building cohesion among members will have been missed. This challenge will also create problems in that once an established member leaves the project, there will be some need for inducting new members with gardening skills; a requirement that is retrogressive because it is a difficult task retraining new members.

3.9.12 Security and safety issues

Some other challenges associated with peace gardening are that the participants' security and safety might not be guaranteed, particularly after dark, especially in areas which are not electrified and such kind of concerns normally compel participants to slowly lose momentum in the gardening project (Poulsen *et al.* 2014: 75). In rural areas, there are strong fears of being attacked by snakes or some other harmful animals and this is another great challenge in peace gardening.

3.10 Effects of the reviewed Literature on this study

As highlighted in this chapter, there is abundant literature on the various uses of gardens world over. Much of the data has been focused on the role that gardens have played in community building and improving sustainable livelihoods. Nonetheless, it is vital to highlight that available literature on action research on the transformation of post-conflict relationships in the peacebuilding field through PGs remains very limited. As I was exploring this subject, I noted that in Zimbabwe there are no published studies that have been carried out on this subject, save for limited literature available from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which have also carried out short term projects on the use of gardens for peace building amongst Zimbabwean women only (Kandemiri 2014).

I also had to look elsewhere all over the world and on the African continent for similar studies but found insubstantial literature, a situation which made my literature review very challenging. What has emerged from the studies is that action research is a useful tool for conflict transformation and that each conflict is distinctive and as such requires exceptional approaches in resolving them. Though in this study, I did not essentially strive to imitate or reproduce similar approaches from the studied literature, since the information on using PGs for transforming post-conflict relationships was scarce, however, my research profited a lot from the perceptions gained from the studies available on the use of gardens for community

building in general. I am cognisant of the immense contributions to the gardening history that several scholars have made, most of which focuses on the various uses, benefits and the challenges associated with gardening. I however strongly feel that the concept of using the same gardens for transforming post-conflict relationships among political party supporters have not been fully and adequately addressed and that justifies the relevance of this study in peacebuilding.

3.11 Summary

This chapter was an exploration of the historical developments of gardens, their use and effectiveness before examining the challenges associated with community gardening. It has been contended in this chapter that though community gardens have a series of benefits as highlighted, the practice of gardening is however dogged with challenges as highlighted (see section 3.7). The chapter briefly explored an African tradition called *Ukusisa* which has similar goals and values with community and peace gardens. The different use of gardens highlighted in this chapter shows that garden utilisation for transforming post-conflict relationships has truly been under-researched and as such justified the purpose of carrying out this research.

The next chapter explore the theories that underpin and guide this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PEACE THEORIES FOR TRANSFORMING POST-CONFLICT RELATIONSHIPS

Peace and power is an emancipatory group process drawn from several traditions around the world for working together in cooperative and peaceful ways, and in ways that challenge the status quo and lead to social and political change in the direction of equality and justice for all. (Chinn and Falk-Rafael 2014: 62)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the key theoretical issues framing this study. The main theory which underpins this study is the peace and power theory by Mattaini (2008), complimented by the conflict transformation, the promotion of nonviolent cultures and the contact theory. The complimentary of the peace and power theory with the other theories was preferred on the basis that they all serve as emancipatory group processes which work well in promoting transformation of social conflicts and fostering working together in peaceful ways. The chapter explores the origins of the peace and power theory, the key concepts and the understanding that it offers to peacebuilding. The chapter also briefly discusses the additional and complimentary theories underpinning this study which are Alport's contact theory, promoting nonviolent cultures and the conflict transformation theory and the theoretical lens they offer for this present study on transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens (PGs).

4.2 Peace and Power theory defined

This section defines the peace and power theory as the mass system for empowerment, cooperation, growth and cohesion (Chinn 2013). Peace and power theory is understood as a set of premeditated principles used to overcome the undercurrents that establish the advantages for some other groups or individuals while disadvantaging others. Chinn and Falk-Rafael (2014: 62) defined peace and power as:

An emancipatory communal procedure that is derived from a couple of customs around the globe for cooperating in pleasing and non-violent courses, and in ways that test current situations while also provoking societal and public transformation in the event of equity and value for all.

From Chinn and Falk-Rafael's definition above, it makes sense, therefore, to point out that the peace and power theory could tally well with this study since the aspects of group processes and cooperation stand out as its central purpose too. The notion here is that humanity is one people, living in one world and as such, there is no need for fighting one another. The theory here is not only promoting peaceful coexistence but is going a step further by encouraging people to be tolerant and also accommodate the concept of conflict resolution. This kind of concept discussed above is practiced well in Botswana where arguing or conflicts are not tolerated and the locals have managed to embrace and live with that cultural expectation without any problems. Interestingly, this practice must not be confused with negative peace. The locals do hold divergent views but they have an organised systematic way of resolving conflicts. The other concept deduced from the definition of this theory is that if a reasonable number of people change their behaviour towards groups they are in conflict with, the expectation will be that more people will embrace non-violent strategies towards resolving their misunderstandings.

The above definitions of peace and power theory insinuate that there is no need for communities or people from different political organisations to fight or quarrel but if they however do quarrel (which is normal), there is need to resolve such conflicts in a progressive and peaceful way. The discussed definitions of peace and power theory in this section show how the theory could relate well with the peace gardening concept that seeks to promote harmony in the Welkom Hoek community in Zimbabwe. As indicated by Mattaini (2008) the discussed definitions of peace and power theory show it as a vehicle for the reinforcement of communal cohesion and the opening of new avenues for managing conflict in settings of peace.

4.3 Origins of peace and power theory

This section discusses the origins of the peace and power theory. The origins of this theory posit that peace and power require a democratic concept that includes the power of diversity and for every voice in the community to be heard (Buzan 1984). The components of peace and power are designed in such a way that each and every individual is empowered to speak, act, learn, and to be fully involved in events and activities which affected their lives in one way or another (Chinn 2013b). The background concepts of peace and power enshrine democratic traits which are essential in facilitating transformation of tainted relationships.

Peace and power theory is reported to have been drawn from the group process ideologies which were advanced by Paulo Freire in his writings in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire

1970). The call for community members to participate in community education and to organise themselves into groups so as to take part in community education projects seem to have given birth to the idea of intergroup contact which is incorporated in both the peace and power theory and the conflict transformation model (Freire 2005). The Brazilian educator's writings have made an impact in the field of education but also have similar implications in the struggle for national development and peacebuilding.

The peace and power theory was selected to underpin this study as a useful paradigm, relevant in transforming post-conflict relationships as called for by this study. In addition, this theory could also serve as a useful tool in enhancing community cohesion and community empowerment as pointed out by Okazaki (2008). A proper scrutiny of this theory's origins reveals its versatility and applicability in various contexts including the transformation of post conflict relationships in peacebuilding.

The mechanisms highlighted in the origins of peace and power theory shows how it could relate well with this study on transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens. The two study areas both call for working together in fair, cooperative ways. Peace promotes infrastructures among not only political rivals but among community members more broadly and challenge the effectiveness of competitive and divisive ways. The origins of this theory demonstrates that this theory is concerned with nurturing and empowering its participants in ways that build strong community bonds, a component that is vital in this study were there is need to transform post-conflict relationships through the use of PGs. The discussion on the origins of this theory has demonstrated that it was conceptualized as a serious commitment in bringing about change. They would work together in such an initiative as a peace gardening. This therefore could make the peace and power theory a unique framework in transforming post-conflict relationships by offering opportunities for community members to work together in ways that promote the re-mending of tainted relationships that had been perpetuated by political differences.

4.4 Other disciplines that have employed the peace and power theory

In a study by Chinn (2014), he indicates that this theory was used in the context of the health professions. The outcome was in the improvement of relationships between nurses and patients. It is from that background that assumptions have been built on the concept's applicability in the field of peacebuilding and conflict resolution studies. It is from this context, that is, the need for trust to be built in order for conflicts to be resolved, that Bishop stated:

'If people benefit from increased trust and confidence, they will capitalise on opportunities to consolidate peace' (Bishop 2012: 5) .

As noted from the above statement by Bishop (2012), the concept of peace gardening, which is the main intervention strategy purported by this study, was designed to build trust among the local communities and in ways which create windows of opportunities for enhancing peace among the former political rivals.

Apart from the focused use of the peace and power theory in the health profession by nurses, literature also revealed that the same concept was used by feminist writers. Feminist writers often focused on developing a worldview which would not tolerate the practice of disadvantaging women: in this study, no group or gender was intended to be disadvantaged. This theory was relevant to peace gardening since it seeks to address the disparities between political parties and their support bases. Furthermore, peace and power are perceived as a methodology for building group and organizational societies that are incompatible with violence and intimidation. There are many often untested violent corrective action programs; the peace and power system depends on tested, classical behavioural research. Evidence demonstrates that group and communal projects could have the capacity to decrease violence by almost half, and may also lessen the force of the remaining 50% of the violent levels (Chinn 2013).

The investigative sectors and clarifications contained the seeds from which the theory of peace and power developed (Chinn and Falk-Rafael 2014). It is intriguing to note whilst one application was developed by medical professionals, this also turned out to be a mechanism for building cooperation among communities or groups which have been affected by conflicts (Pranis 2005). This theory therefore indicates a close relationship and relevance with this study in that it also calls for peacebuilding mechanisms and transforming post-conflict with the thrust of eradicating conflict.

4.5 The key concepts of peace and power theory

This section discusses the key concepts of the peace and power theory. These key concepts include: masculine power and exercising one's will in the world; the desire for serene spaces in life; the understanding that conflict pervades all human relationships; accommodating ways of working together and the use of power by dominant individuals or groups. The manipulation of power has a bearing on people's lives considering that such decisions have the potential to fuel conflicts in communities (Hooker and Czajkowski 2016: 7). These

assumptions are based on social standards of mainly Western cultures and in all other societies' world over where gender variance is prevalent. This study takes these key concepts as its establishment on which the theoretical thinking will be based. The diagram below gives a summation of the five fundamental traditions of peace and power theoretical framework that will be discussed in this study. The information contained in the diagram comes from Chinn (2013) while the diagrammatical illustration is mine.

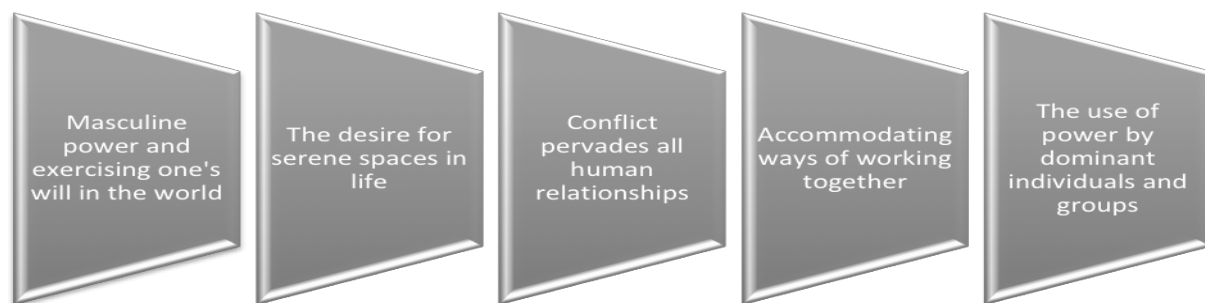


Figure 4 Five concepts of peace and power (own data)

4.5.1 The use of power by leading individuals and groups

Every human relationship somehow includes the utilisation of power that can be used in ways that promote harmony and also create individual prosperity. However, the overarching impression of power in human connections is incompatible, where a few people utilise power over others in ways that serve the interests of those with significant influence and not the interests of the majority (Tesoriero 2006: 71).

Normally there is one individual, or an assembly of individuals, who have relative power in any group structure, and in this manner have a tendency to have the capacity to impose their will, or their qualities, on those with less power (Hlatywayo *et al.* 2010). In countries which are under autocratic leadership such as Uganda and Zimbabwe to mention just but a few, the leaders normally dictate the pace in ways that please them only and those that support them. The dominance of the Shona people over the Ndebele tribe and the dominance of ZANU-PF over other opposition parties like the MDC formations in Zimbabwe come to mind. The usage of power in such cases is likely to result in trauma on those that will be suppressed and is continuously passed on to future generations through what is called multigenerational transmission of trauma (Hooker and Czajkowski 2016).

4.5.2 The desire for serene spaces in life

Individuals generally look for spaces in life where they are moderately serene, free from rivalry and power imbalances, and where collaboration and peace prevail. The private space

of the home is ordinarily perceived as an asylum, as a position of safety, as a place where one does not need to compete. It is unfortunate that the home is failing to provide such kind of service which is desired by many people but are finding this aspect to be elusive. Previous literature demonstrated that since it is impossible to avoid all sources of stress, and as it would not be to our advantage to do so, there is need therefore for humanity to look for places of peace and quiet where they can regularly visit for relaxation (Melgosa 2008: 95).

This study sought to promote the use of PGs as alternative places for providing such peaceful and calm spaces which are free from rivalry and power imbalances. In South Africa, the Durban botanical gardens provide such a space while the Centenary Park in Bulawayo and the Harare gardens in Zimbabwe and the Alfredo Coimbra family garden and Ananvie II community garden in Angola and Benin respectively serve as such spaces (Slow food foundation for biodiversity 2017). The community gardens can serve as an extension of this mentality of having a quiet place which helps people to be free from conflicting environments.

4.5.3 Masculine power and exercising one's will in the world

In western social orders, the general population domain has a tendency to be connected with mannish power, with the capacity to practice one's will in the world and with that which is powerful (Tesoriero 2006: 14). Open standards tend to require individuals or assigned groups to apply their will against the will of the majority. Public spheres, especially in industrialist societies, rely upon foreswearing and repudiating a considerable lot of the qualities that guarantee the trustworthiness of the home environment. Illustrative types of popular government require the practice of the will of the majority of the will and needs of the minority. Participatory types of democracy endeavour to address the deceptions that the larger part can employ over the minority by giving approaches to individual voices from the minority to listen, and practices where the trade off and collaboration are esteemed over the rivalry.

4.5.4 Conflict pervades all human relationships.

Conflict can be taken care of in treasured ways, but helpful methods for managing conflicts require participation and a common desire for the benefit of the good of the whole (Chinn 2013). Destructive ways to deal with conflict prompt harmed connections and conditions that are not easily repaired. Constructive ways to deal with conflict do not ensure positive results for the connections involved; however, they do accommodate individual and collective development that promotes positive change. This concept demonstrates that conflict is not only common among the human race but is also healthy and there is need to put measures

in place to train communities in issues that deal with conflict resolution and mitigation strategies.

4.5.5 Accommodating ways of working together.

This section examines accommodating ways of working together and demonstrating how this is related to this study. Previous research findings from Chinn (2013) have demonstrated that late patterns in governance have borrowed from the standards that are normal in private life because of a general acknowledgment that individuals yearn to have some impact on what happens, and that when people feel more associated with the system, they encounter a more prominent level of fulfilment. The establishment of PGs in Zimbabwe used in this thesis as an attempt aimed at transforming post-conflict relationships among political party supporters who experienced waves of violence during the previous election campaigns. This intervention strategy was purporting to promote methods of working together in ways that would transform the previously tainted relationships among the communities which were earlier negatively affected by different political affiliations.

4.6 Motivation for using complimentary theories

This study, as noted previously, is guided by the peace and power theory but is, however, complemented by conflict transformation and contact theories. The cultures of promoting nonviolence are also used as a complementary component to the abovementioned theories. This complementary concept was preferred on the basis that all the theories serve as emancipatory group processes which work well in promoting transformation of conflicts and working together in peaceful ways. The theories complement each other well in the promotion of post-conflict relationships.

4.7 Core practices for promoting nonviolent cultures

This section addresses the four core practices which are aimed at promoting and establishing nonviolent cultures which are summed in the diagram below;

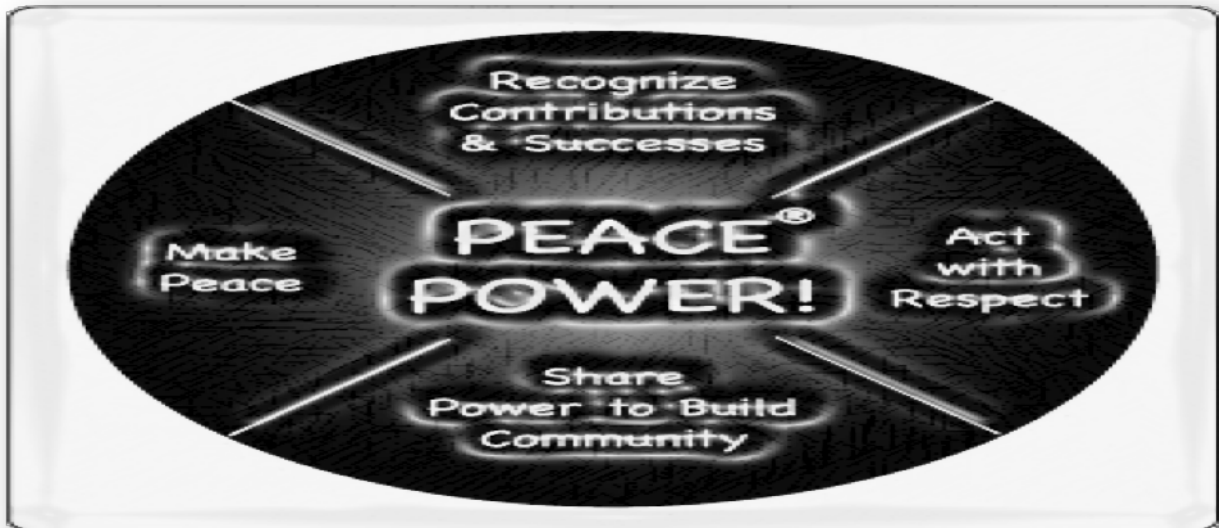


Figure 5 Core practices of promoting non-violence (Mattaini 2008: 1)

4.7.1 Make Peace

Skills to resolve conflicts and heal relationships are very critical in peacebuilding and transforming post-conflict relationships. This peace and power theoretical framework depicts that finding solutions to particular conflicts is often not enough; there is a need to reconstruct, transform post-conflict relationships and heal the relationships damaged by various forms of conflict including political violence (Fontana 2004). These healing processes are critical to healthy communities, which in turn support positive action by all community members and peace and power is presented as one way for structuring such healing. In organizations and communities, family group meetings (*indaba*) and related structured processes are demonstrably effective for resolving serious conflicts, promoting healing in communities which will earlier have been ravaged by political violence.

For the effectiveness of these peace healing initiatives, such nonviolent practices need to be practiced following indigenous formulated mechanisms. This study proposed that the use of PGs can be a tool that has to be used by communities to make peace as they would be doing gardening together regardless of the fact that they would be coming from different political affiliations. This practice called for a harmonious working relationship in the PGs

between ZANU-PF and other opposition parties in Zimbabwe including MDC, and Zimbabwe People First⁶ (ZimPF).

As advanced by Lauff (2008: 106) peace gardening just like sport has the potential to create conducive environments for transforming post-conflict relationships. He noted that sport can provide a safe, structured and friendly environment for people to begin to share their emotions through verbal and non-verbal communication. The emphasis highlighted in the above argument is centred on building social cohesion and encouraging community members to interact and communicate with each other in peaceful ways which cultivate cooperative and supportive environment.

4.7.2 Recognise Contributions and Successes

Recognition and strengthening of commitments to the community and other positive activities are the heart of building another culture: there are many reviews that augment the power of such acknowledgments in contexts of all sizes, from the smaller scale culture of the family to bigger systems in associations and groups. The recognition of brain chemistry and its link to accomplishment and cooperation, and how it conflicts with hostility is noted by Mattaini (2008). Explorations recommend that basic peace tools can expand levels of recognition generously. Peace and power offer a broad menu of empirically grounded instruments which neighbourhood projects can choose and adjust to significantly building levels of acknowledgment and to keep up those levels functioning within the family and group cultures. The assumption by this thesis is that PGs also have the potential to promote such positive cultures among former warring political party supporters in Masvingo community in Zimbabwe.

4.7.3 Share Power to Build Community

As highlighted by Mattaini (2008: 01), the sharing of power is a method for living with others harmoniously. Family and group methods incorporated into the peace and power methodology give alternatives to empower contrasting forces and blessings to be perceived, all to have strong voices, and all to contribute and share obligations regarding collective outcomes. A culture of shared power depends on strengthening respect and bringing the potential force of various endowments and assets to the table (Karlberg 2005). For youth, the

⁷ Zimbabwe People First is a new political party in Zimbabwe which was formed in 2015 by disgruntled members who had either been suspended or expelled from Zanu PF. It is under the leadership of former vice-president of Zimbabwe; Joyce Mujuru.

sharing of force shows that there are peaceful, non-coercive approaches to impact their reality, and aides them to find and make their own particular power. The engagement in peace gardening is another intervention strategy aimed at empowering communities in the manner that would promote both the sharing of power and the building of peace in Zimbabwean communities.

The current Zimbabwean situation has already demonstrated that people have the potential to practice power over others in families through force, competition and manipulation, elements which are very rampant in the Zimbabwean scenario (Sachikonye 2010). In public life, while loyalties are typically expected from some in the group and not so much from others, competing loyalties are much more pronounced. In private territories secrets that damage anyone or the group are typically not well tolerated and the peace gardening concept is also framed with this idea in mind where people will be encouraged to communicate openly with one another in ways that promote peace and shun damaging secrets which will end up perpetuating conflict.

Cooperation is valued in both private and public territories, however, in public life, the cooperation is limited and is not expected for all. In private life cooperation among all members tends to be not only valued but often is a matter of necessity. The PGs can therefore be used in ways that would help and foster this aspect of cooperation among former political rivals, further, in ways that would transform their past tainted relationships into harmonious ones and promote the aspect of resilience. Having experienced ugly political violence and historical trauma during 2000, 2005, 2008 and the 2013 elections, people can still be encouraged to demonstrate their ability to accommodate others without breaking and the ability to withstand hardships and recover through their deliberate attempts to work together in the PGs (Barge 2016: 34). The core concept of power is power with and not power over which breed despotic tendencies.

4.7.4 Act with respect

The concept of respect calls for members to desist from discouraging others in ways that eradicate or reduce their confidence (Meyer 2017). The concept by Meyer (2017) also highlights that acting with respect and learning to let go of the past is the best model for learning how to embrace peace. Respecting others happens to be at the heart of this peace and power strategy and since the action research component works with small numbers, it was designed to work well with this theory considering the fact that the strategy encourages

working in small groups. Working in small groups, as pointed out by Mattaini (2008), builds cohesion and helps people desist from looking down upon one another.

4.8 Some truths about conflict

In one of her Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR) training manuals, Barge (2016) highlighted the following true components about conflict which are also vital in this peace and power theoretical framework:

- Conflict and violence are not the same
- Conflict is destructive when it is addressed with violence which can lead to broken relationships, destruction, and even death
- Many positive solutions have been created due to non-violent approaches to conflict
- When addressed non-violently, conflict is the way of challenging what is not fair and making the world a better place.

4.9 Conflict transformation

This section discusses the conflict transformation theory in complementing both the peace and power theory and the contact theory that underpin this study. As purported in this study, local communities are encouraged to formulate indigenous mechanisms in resolving post-conflict relations, whilst conflict transformation promotes comprehensive and wide-ranging approaches emphasising support for groups and local actors within conflict communities instead of relying on outside actors such as NGOs or individual donors in resolving conflicts. The concept of transformation recognises that conflicts are transformed gradually, through sequences of smaller or larger changes as well as definite steps carried out by various acts (Wani, Suwirta and Payaye 2013).

Conflict transformation represents a new foray of literature in the field of resolving conflicts. Existing mechanisms such as conflict management and conflict resolution have been redesigned as the need for new concepts in dealing effectively with emerging complexities has been identified within the dynamism of conflicts (Miall 2004). According to Galtung (2000: 03), conflict transformation happens at all levels of conflict such as at global, social, inter or intrapersonal levels. Conflict theorists who wrote about conflict transformation were (Miall 2004) and (Galtung 2000), popularised by Lederach (1997). Conflict transformation is defined by Lederach (1997: 14) as the process to mean:

“To envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships”.

As noted in the above definition, the determination of conflict transformation is to create positive change processes that are aimed at reducing violence, a feature that was key in this study as it strove to transform relations positively among political party supporters, even those who did not see eye to eye before the peace gardening intervention strategy. Since relationships have visible and invisible dimensions, conflict transformation calls for constant nurturing by trained peacebuilding practitioners in engaging measures meant to bring constructive and positive change among former warring or conflicting parties such as the MDC and ZANU-PF supporters (Smith 2012).

Conflict transformation mirrors the development of change processes that explicitly focus on creating positives from negatives and improving relationships, a concept which is encouraged by this study (Lederach 2003). The country's complex election-related political conflict utilizes Lederach's conflict transformation model very well and justifies the peace and power theory and the peace gardening intervention strategy in this study. The fact that conflict transformation prioritises the eradication of fear among community members and calls for mutual understanding and harmony among conflicting members make it compatible with the peace and power theory which strives for the eradication of fear among victims of political violence and for the promotion of harmonious relationships and cooperation through the peace gardening initiative. The conflict transformation drive is aimed at ending undesirable conflict elements by creating positive desired ones just like the peace and power theoretical framework. The diagram below shows an illustration of conflict transformation:

The Big Picture of Conflict Transformation

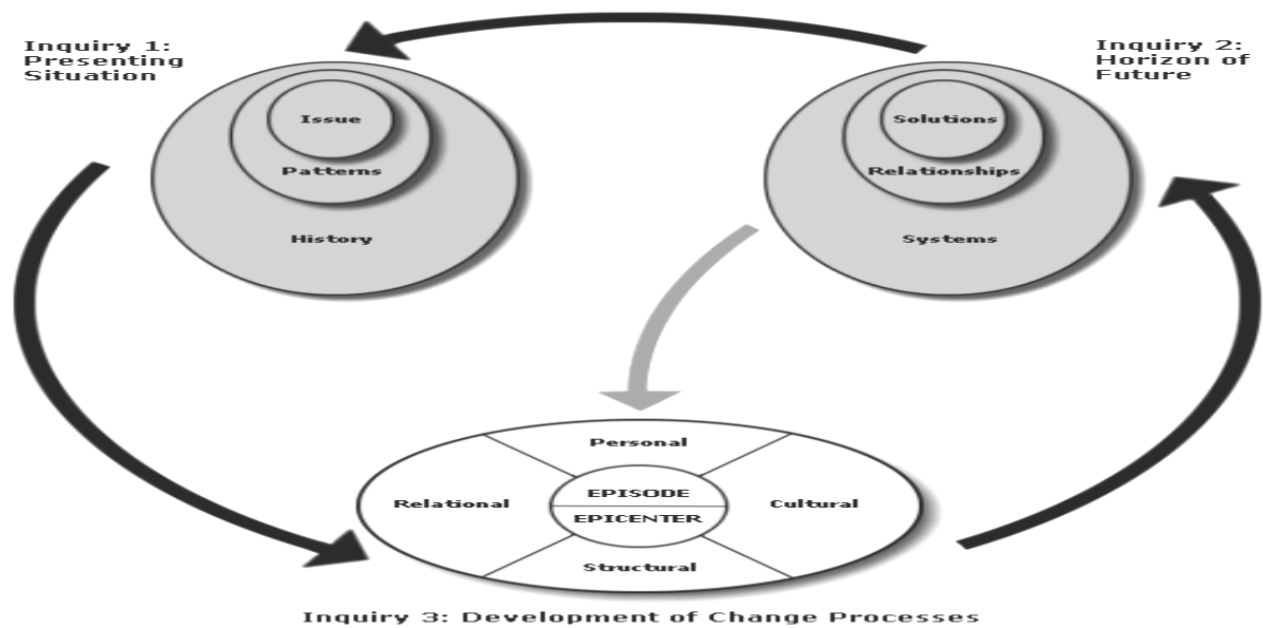


Figure 6 Conflict transformation flow (Lederach 2003)

Adapted from Conflict transformation: Moving beyond intractability (2017).

www.beyondintractability.org

The diagram above illustrates Lederach's illustration of the conflict resolution process where the first port of inquiry calls for the gathering of conflict parties together for the mapping exercise and the identification of the conflict actors and the causes of the conflict in question. The conflict pattern and its history are explored in the first port of inquiry a similar process carried out towards the implementation of the peace gardening intervention strategy aimed at transforming post-conflict relationships in Welkom Hoek community. The second inquiry in the diagram addresses the issues revolving around common beliefs and ownership of the conflict transformation process. This inquiry calls for relationship patterns that are meant to resolve prevailing conflicts. As shown on the table, the third port of inquiry is where the development of change processes takes place. This is the stage where technical expertise is required in the peacebuilding field to formulate change machinery approaches. The peace approaches formulated at this stage must not be short-term but should target to promote long-term durable peace and change (Lederach 2008). The conflict transformation flow has strong bearing on the Zimbabwean situation since peace practitioners may borrow some few tips in coming up with solutions to address the various conflicts bedeviling the country.

4.10 Intergroup contact theory

This section explores briefly the contact theory which is used in this study as complementary to the peace and power theory and the conflict transformation model which underpins this study. As pointed out by McKeown and Dixon (2017: 01) “research on intergroup contact has developed exponentially over the past ten years and such exploration has classically extolled the benefits of positive interaction between members of traditionally divided communities, particularly on outcomes related to prejudice reduction”. The intergroup contact theory was first proposed by Allport who suggested that positive effects of intergroup contact occur in contact situations characterised by four key conditions: equal status, intergroup cooperation, common goals, and support by social and institutional authorities (Allport 1954; Hewstone and Swart 2011; Everett 2013: 01). This theory could augur well with the Zimbabwean situation being discussed in this study where political party supporters from the MDC and ZANU-PF have remained divided by political party lines for the past nineteen years, with almost every aspect of daily life for the majority of Zimbabweans being determined by which political party one supports or they are perceived to support (Peace Direct 2017: 06).

Contact theory is hailed as one of the most successful ideas in social psychology in promoting positive interaction between members of different groups in ways that reduce intergroup prejudice and conflict in general (Pettigrew 2008). The drive of the contact theory is that of promoting the equal status and equal cooperation among participants, complementing the peace and power theory with its concept of “power with”. The combined theories call for ways that seek to promote equal status, rebuilding positive relationships and cooperation (Pettigrew 2013). The proponents of meaningful conditions for contact theory are well articulated in the table discussed earlier (see section 1.9). The contact theory is used in this study to complement the peace and power theory together with the conflict transformation model in resolving conflicts and transforming post-conflict relationships.

4.10.1 The Limitations of contact theory

Though the above section has given a brief history and the popularity of the contact theory, it is vital to also point out the limitations associated with this theory. There is a school of thought purported by Paolini (2014) that reminds us that there is danger in negative contact experiences since they have the potential to exacerbate rather than improve intergroup relationships. This school of thought agrees with the assertion that:

*“Wrong kinds of contact could strengthen adverse mental associations that we have and promote an increase in negative emotions and stereotypes”
(Allport 1954: 264)*

The above-expressed views show that regardless of the positive effects associated with contact theory, there is evidence that if the groups are not properly organised; they may breed more hatred, anger and further aggravate bad relationships among conflicting parties in situations that will not improve intergroup relationships. Considering my personal experiences during this study, I noted that there is the need for proper planning, formulation of a guiding process to follow (see section 8.4) and commitment in ensuring that intergroup relations yield positive desired outcomes.

4.11 The nexus between peace theories and transforming post-conflict relationships

From the discussion carried out in this chapter, I conclude that the peace and power theory corroborate the overarching argument developed in this study that peace gardening has the capacity of transforming people's relationships in post-conflict communities in an exclusive way. While the historical background of this theory points out that peace and power have a clear association with nursing's core values of caring for patients, it is important to deduce that the same core values are applicable in peacebuilding. Peace gardening helps to promote amicable relations. The more the people relate to each other during the gardening sessions, the less likely they will become violent towards each other and will create conducive environments for developing nonviolent strategies for dealing with their communal conflicts.

The PGs could, as discussed in this chapter, serve as reconciliation initiatives meant to heal the persisting wounds of historic injustices in Masvingo and Zimbabwe in general (Yamamoto, Pettit-Toledo and Sheffield 2016: 5). This theoretical framework and the practice of peace and power adds dimensions to political broadmindedness with respect to group processes and political support bases including processes such as leadership, decision making, and conflict resolution.

While this theory was at first looking at the relationships between nurses and patients in the health fraternity, it is exciting to note that in peacebuilding the same theory could also be used in promoting citizen targeted peacebuilding programmes which are crucial in not only advancing human rights but also play a crucial component in promoting conflict mitigation (Ditlman, Samii and Zeitzoff 2017). This nexus is therefore demonstrating the relevance and

the applicability of this theoretical framework of peace and power to the study on transforming post-conflict relationships via PGs.

Given the traditional structures and contexts in which former political disputes are encultured and dealt with, it is no wonder that the ideas of peace and power can be received with scepticism especially in communities that are used to political indoctrination and manipulation. Yet the ideals that these political rivals also learn, including caring for others and nurturing wellness and maximum human potential prompt an abiding hope that the promises of peace and power in human affairs might be possible even in post-conflict environments.

The general components and values of peace and power which were highlighted in this theoretical framework are closely evident in peace gardening and are compatible with the principles for both peacebuilding and community transformation. These vital values include cooperation, sharing, and respect which were also discussed in this chapter as the vital pillars in promoting non-violent cultures. These help in acknowledging and repairing the damage of grievous transgressions which are signalling the general public's commitment towards peace and the transformation of post-conflict relationships through reparative justice (Yamamoto, Pettit-Toledo and Sheffield 2016: 5).

A proper analysis of the peace and power theory, the conflict transformation model and the intergroup contact theory shows how these theories are compatible with Shona traditional values that also promote tolerance, intergroup relations and the rebuilding of strained relationships among its members. The compatibility of the peace theories and the Shona values makes it easier therefore to consider transforming post-conflict relationships since people still believe in the concept of harmonious coexistence and non-violent ways of resolving communal conflicts even though they are still battling with the recurring problem of political and election related violence. The underlying components in the peace and power theory blend well with Allport's contact theory especially on his call for equal status, cooperation and common goals. Though Allport is renowned for using his contact theory in the understanding of prejudice, the theory, however, complements other theories such as that of peace and power in understanding and dealing with conflict and peacebuilding.

4.12 Summary

This chapter highlights the relevance and applicability of the peace and power, conflict transformation, promoting nonviolent cultures and the contact theory to this study, thereby

making it unique and original. It starts by defining the peace and power concept and then delves into the origins of this theory. The chapter also explores the five concepts of peace and power and the core practices of promoting non-violent cultures. The chapter also discussed how conflict transformation and the contact theories are also used as complimentary partners in this study. This chapter demonstrates the theory's applicability in peacebuilding and conflict studies and also maintains that in spite of being described as an old theory, peace and power remains relevant and justifiable in guiding this study towards coming up with a framework for transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens.

The next chapter discusses the research design, methodology and data collection methods employed in this study.

PART III

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses aspects related to research methodology, research design and the data collection methodologies which I used in conducting this study with the intention of achieving its objectives. The chapter also discusses issues surrounding sampling procedures, population, pretesting, anonymity, data analysis and ethical issues. The chapter also explores advocacy/participation worldview which was used as the type of inquiry to underpin this study. This section of the study also pays attention to the philosophical framework and assumptions which guides and underpins this research.

5.2 Research design

In this study, I use a qualitative action research design. The qualitative action research design is being promoted by the Peacebuilding Programme at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) whose thrust is centered on seeing peace graduates contributing towards peacebuilding endeavors and resolving conflicts in their respective communities and beyond. As I have pointed out in my introduction, this part of the study also discusses, though not in detail, the philosophical assumptions which underpin this research (see section 6:1). The study follows an exploratory Action Research (AR) design and at this juncture the study gave me the first opportunity to design an intervention strategy which I employed with my AR team. Though the journey was hectic at times, it really remained an awesome experience as it played a crucial role in sharpening my observation and interviewing skills as well as providing me with the opportunity to see the result-yielding effectiveness embedded in AR. According to Creswell (2014: 3), a research design is defined as:

‘The plan and the methodology for an investigation that traverses the choice from broad presumptions to detailed techniques for information accumulation and analysis’.

On the other hand, Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) also highlighted that a research design is concerned about the arrangement, collection, and exploration of data aimed at attaching significance to the exploration study. The design for my study on 'Transforming

post-conflict-relationships via PGs in Masvingo; Zimbabwe' have three components, namely: the exploratory, the AR, and the evaluation components. The exploratory component of the research helps to answer the first two objectives of this study while the third and fourth objectives are answered under the AR and evaluation components. The type of inquiry which I use in this research is an advocacy participation worldview while the research design includes exploratory, AR and evaluation components (Creswell 2009: 5).

The nature of this research required me to develop an investigative qualitative research project. This AR plan is appropriate for this study in that it helps in promoting the understanding of the social phenomenon of a particular community holistically and facilitates an in-depth understanding of the aspect being studied. As purported by Yin (2009: 18), in AR, a case study is well-defined and understood as a practical inquiry that explores the contemporary phenomenon in detail of its genuine setting or life context. As such, real emphasis is placed on the formulation of an intervention strategy to the research problem, which thrives to transform post-conflict relationships among political rivals via the use of PGs. The use of the PGs as an intervention strategy caters for and addresses the action component of this research.

With the nature of the research design I used for this study, it proved difficult to pre-empt the possible intervention strategies in the design stage until after the exploratory research was carried out. The views of the Action Team (AT) were regarded as critical in the formulation of such intervention strategies. The following possible intervention strategies were envisioned and agreed upon: (i) the establishment of a peace garden where rivalry political supporters were working together, (ii) participant observations, focus groups discussions and interviews were used to generate data for this study; and (iii) the evaluation of the intervention strategy preliminary outcomes was done together with the AT. The main purpose of this AR design was to confirm that the evidence attained allowed me to answer the research questions as distinctly as possible (Shannon-Baker 2016).

5.2.1 Advocacy/participatory worldview

This study adopted the advocacy participatory worldview because it contained an action agenda for transformation and reform that was intended to influence change in the lives of the participants in Masvingo's Welkom Hoek communal area and other marginalised groups in similar contexts (Creswell 2009). A worldview may be defined as the philosophical conventions the academic investigators makes about reality, how information is procured, and the techniques for getting data (Creswell and Clark 2007). As emphasized by Burke

Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007), advocacy/participatory inquiry emerged during the 1980s and 1990s from scholars who strongly felt that post-positivism unfairly imposed theory and structural laws that did not suit the conditions of marginalised people in society or socio-economic inequalities that needed to be addressed.

Creswell (2009) propounds the notion that participatory worldview could be intertwined through local political undertakings and programmes as a way of enhancing and building trust between the researcher and the co-researchers. It also strives to develop meaningful ways of addressing the concerns of the local people suffering from political manipulation and deprivation (Creswell and Clark 2007). In addition, advocacy/participatory worldview is adopted since the study seeks to address important and topical issues that include political broadmindedness, democratic community participation in electoral processes and community sustainability. In that regard, the participants were engaged as active collaborators in the inquiry (Creswell 2014).

One of the advantages of adopting an advocacy/participatory worldview in contexts where the residents of localities are marginalised was based on the view that it helped marginalised communities free themselves from constraints in the political arena, media, power relations and gain access to available natural resources (Burke Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner 2007). The advocacy/participatory worldview has also been described as emancipatory since it has the potential to assist people to salvage themselves from oppression and unfair power structures that limit self-determination and self-development (Creswell 2009). As though that is not enough, worldview naturally aims to advance political deliberations that are aimed at fostering change by engaging the local communities as collaborators in the inquiry, an aspect which we carried out through our peace gardening project with my AT (Creswell and Clark 2007).

5.3 Justification for research methodology used

As highlighted in section 5.2, the design which I employed in this study is qualitative AR. It is important therefore to begin this section by defining qualitative research before justifying the design's appropriateness for this study. Creswell (2014) defined qualitative research as an orderly and laborious type of research which employs data collection approaches such as review of documents, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic observations. The main benefit of a qualitative study as pointed out by Davies (2007: 132) revolves around its emphasis on settings and the sense of social lives and experiences for the sake of theory and inductive-propelled investigation to create theoretical ideas.

The design for this research is qualitative AR as highlighted earlier on (see section 5.2) and it is suitable for this study in that it involves studying shared patterns of behaviour and actions of people in Masvingo's Welkom Hoek area in their natural setting. I carried out the research with my AT over a period of one year. This AR design was suitable for this investigation since it explored the understanding and meaning of persons or crowds credited to their communal or human difficulties (Creswell 2014: 43). A qualitative design was preferred for this study since it employed three data collection methods, namely, interviews, observations, and FGDs which helped in enhancing the research's validity and trustworthiness (see sections 5.11, 5.12 & 6.1).

The qualitative AR design helps in generating definite data through an in-depth exploration of participants' daily experiences and also tends to uncover the underlying motivations behind the local people with regard to their opinions, attitudes, perceptions and behaviours. Investigative research strives to form the realities and gather new knowledge and to regulate whether there are interesting patterns in that newly generated knowledge (Mouton 1996: 103). Since this study deals with the post-conflict scenario in the communal farmlands, the qualitative methodology helped people to share their emotional stories, express their opinions and feelings in FGDs during in-depth interviews.

5.4 Action research defined

Since the design for this study is qualitative action research, this section will explore its definition, uniqueness (see section 5.5), importance (see section 5.6) and gives a brief historical background and the challenges associated with this design as discussed in section 5.7. As professed by O'Brien (2001: 01), a series of titles have been attributed to AR with the common ones being participatory research, collaborative inquiry, emancipatory research, action learning, and contextual AR. In his attempt to give the simplest definition of AR, O'Brien (2001: 02), pointed out that it referred to learning by doing where a group of people identifies a problem, does something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, try again, a situation which makes the process cyclic.

More succinct definitions of the same term are highlighted below with Ramirez, Krantz and Gilmore (1986: 161) defining AR as

'Some form of problem-solving research involving a close collaboration between academic and managerial staff as it seeks to contribute towards organizational effectiveness and the development of a management theory'.

Thus, there is a dual commitment in action research to study a system and concurrently to collaborate with members of the system or community in what is together regarded as a desirable direction. Accomplishing this twin goal requires the active collaboration of the research and the participant, and thus it stresses the importance of co-learning as a primary aspect of the research process". Taylor on the other hand viewed action research as:

'The aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to further the goals of social science simultaneously'.

From the above discussed definitions, I deduced that AR is predominantly concerned about both the practical and scientific ways of carrying out research, a feature which makes it unique and relevant for the study on transforming post-conflict relationships. The concepts of collaboration, learning by doing, problem identification and problem-solving feature very well in the above definitions and also formed the basis of my study. This study together with the motivation I got from my supervisor changed my mind-set with regards to AR, which I earlier viewed with suspicion and had underrated its strong impact in positively changing communities.

5.5 The uniqueness of AR

What distinguishes this type of research from other general professional research practices is that in AR the researcher studies the problem systematically and ensures the intervention strategy is informed by theoretical considerations with the greater part of the researcher's time being spent on refining the methodological apparatuses, on collecting, analysing, and presenting data on an on-going, cyclical basis (O'Brien 2001: 02) .

The other aspect which also differentiates AR from other types of research is that the main focus here is hinged on turning the participants into co-researchers since there is this general acceptance that societies learn best and more willingly apply what they have learned when they do it themselves (O'Brien 2001). Dick (2000) on the other hand pointed out the uniqueness of AR by highlighting that it is renowned for being:

- cyclic in that similar steps tend to recur, in a similar sequence;
- participative on the basis that the clients and informants are involved as partners, or at least active participants, in the research process;
- qualitative as it deals more often with language than with numbers; and

- reflective in that critical reflection upon the process and outcomes are important parts of each cycle.

From Dick's comments above, I deduced that the cyclic component, the participatory aspect by the AT, the aspect of dealing with small numbers and the re-strategising aspect after evaluating the outcomes feature prominently as discussed in earlier sections (see section 5.4). The diagram below shows the cyclic steps in AT,



Figure 7 Cyclic steps in AR (Dick 2000: 01)

The above diagram was catered for in this study by considering that the planning stage of the cycle was carried out in identifying the problem of election-related violence which haunts communities in Zimbabwe since 1980. The action part of the research was carried out during the peace gardening phase with the reflection exercise being carried out through a preliminary evaluation which informed the AR team on what needed to be done again to make the intervention strategy more successful.

This study made sure that the AT I worked with during the peace gardening venture did not only become co-researchers but more importantly that they should be able to positively transform their post-conflict relationships and enhance their political broadmindedness. The AR component also caters for the social dimension in that the intervention strategy takes place in the Welkom Hoek communal farmlands which serve as the real-world environment for the locals as they strive to transform their post-conflict relationships via PGs.

5.6 The importance of AR

AR is of paramount importance in the field of research considering the sense that it creates an optimal opportunity for change and learning to take place in communities or nations which will have experienced some hostilities (Stringer 2014). The 1990s witnessed a surge in popularity in AR and its acceptance as an effective method in peacebuilding. For that reason, this study is resorting to this research design on the basis that passive research alone is insufficient when the goal is change and transformation AR is dynamic in that it creates an optimal opportunity for change and learning to take place not only to the researchers but to the participants as well (Freire 1970) .

As alluded to earlier in section 5.3, this study is guided by AR principles in working with the people in Welkom Hoek communal farmlands with the thrust of transforming post-conflict

relationships via PGs. There is a need to highlight its historical background and other vital components associated with this brand of investigation. AR has the capacity to react to the developing needs of the emerging circumstances such as the one on post-conflict relationships as purported in this study. AR is flexible in comparison with other research designs with the provision for the use of indigenous languages during the AR exercise making the process accessible and advantageous to other designs.

Since AR is a collective action amongst associates, this study, therefore, promotes the search for solutions to everyday, real problems experienced in societies, or looking for ways to improve conflict resolution skills and increase high levels of political broadmindedness (Ferrance 2000). Rather than dealing with the theoretical components, AR allows practitioners to address those concerns that are closest to them, ones over which they can exhibit some influence and make some desired change (Ferrance 2000: 07). This is what this study strives to achieve in as far as the transformation of post-conflict relationships via PGs is concerned, where participants from rival political parties were brought together.

5.7 A brief history and challenges of AR

I will give a very brief overview of the history of AR in this study. As highlighted by McFarland and Stansell (1993: 14) the history of AR is traced back to Kurt Lewin whose work on AR was developed during the 1940s in the United States of America and was credited with the authoring of the term AR. The prominence of AR was mainly noted in the educational field during the 1990s but as pointed out by McFarland and Stansell (1993: 15) the use of AR, however, got some challenges during the mid-1950s on the basis that it was regarded as:

‘Unscientific, little more than common sense and the work of amateurs’.

According to Stringer (2007: 9), AR also suffered a considerable decline during the 1960s due to its perceived association with radical political activism and the questions which were raised against it concerning the rigor and the training of the research participants. As a result of the negative perceptions that action research was getting during the above-mentioned period, interest in action research waned over the next few years as experiments with research designs and quantitative data collection became the norm. Interest in the use of AR temporarily faded away due to the increased interest in quantitative research design which was regarded as standard and the in-thing during that period.

The quantitative research design was viewed to be more scientific and as a result, was generally acceptable in the eyes of many researchers. The 1970s, however, saw the re-

emergence of interest and usage of AR with educational practitioners' trying to link the scientific research designs and methodologies in solving educational issues. This brief historical background on AR has demonstrated that it has four basic themes which are: 1) the empowerment of participants; 2) collaboration through participation; 3) acquisition of knowledge, and 4) the promotion of social change. These noted basic themes are vital aspects which also underpin my quest for transforming post-conflict relationships via PGs.

5.8 Examples of AR projects

The tables below present two selected examples of AR projects in diverse settings and their outcomes.

Table 2 An example of an AR project in Nepal

Location: Nepal	Objectives:
To comprehend the usefulness of peacebuilding projects in relation to the respective TOCs of the project.	
To combine lessons learned from peacebuilding projects and provide recommendations for effective programming for other and future programmes	
AR procedure	
Research tools such as interviews, FGDS and observations were used for data collection over a six-month period in 2010. A total of 14 participants were interviewed along with three FGDs. This data was analysed through narratives and tables for qualitative data and through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for quantitative data.	
Key findings	
The participants recognized the efforts of the AFP in reducing violent conflicts in their educational institutions and felt that the Youth Peace Dialogue Centres (YPDCs) established by the AFP were effectively serving as common platforms for the political youth to hold their discussions, both formal and informal. The youth, who was once seen on the frontline of strikes, was now willing and eager to solve issues through dialogue and cooperation. Furthermore, 86% of the respondents acknowledged that the AFP's programme and empowerment efforts had brought positive personal behavioural change	

Source: (Shonhiwa 2015)

Table 3 An example of an AR project in Nicaragua

<p>Location: Nicaragua</p> <p>Objective</p> <p>The objective of this analysis was to explore how people progressed from negative, survival-oriented co-existence to positive co-existence.</p> <p>Research procedure</p> <p>Qualitative interviews were used in this study.</p> <p>Key findings</p> <p>Nearly 80% of the cross-examined participants stated that they 'have made their peace' with their neighbours from the other side, that their children play with children from parents who had formerly been adversaries and that they themselves have close friends among the former enemy community.</p>
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Source: (Shonhiwa 2015)

5.9 Case studies of AR in Peacebuilding

This part of the study highlights selected case studies of AR in peacebuilding which have so far been carried out by scholars from the Durban University of Technology. As highlighted by Makwerere (2017: 89), there has been a tremendous rise of literature on AR in peacebuilding and it is encouraging to note that the Durban University of Technology is not remaining behind as it is also playing a tremendous role to that effect. Annexure 1 gives a summary of selected key methodological issues and findings from the peacebuilding graduates at the DUT which serve as proof to the institution's seriousness towards promoting peacebuilding and generating new knowledge in the field.

5.10. Data collection methods

This section discusses the data collection methods which were used in generating data for this study.

5.10.1 Measuring instrument

The research used interviews, participant observation and focus group discussion guides in getting data pertaining to the examination, causes, and effects of electoral violence and how

PGs could be used in transforming post-conflict relationships in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. The interview guide, focus group discussion guide and observations guides were used as key instruments in obtaining and generating data (see Appendices I, J and L respectively).

5.10.2 Recruitment process/data collection

In-depth interviews were conducted with purposely selected local government leadership, councillors, village heads, traditional chiefs, political party supporters, police officers, and NGO officials. FGDs were held with the local support base of the political parties in question. Observational data were also collected since it contributed to the generation of first-hand insights which supplemented data from key informants and FGDs and thereby enhanced the validity and reliability/trustworthiness of my research findings.

5.10.3 Invitation to participate\informed consent

Information and consent letters were sent out to participants and these were translated from English to Shona to cater for the majority of non-English speaking participants who were to take part in this research (see Appendices F and H). Once consent have been sought from the study participants, data collection followed thereafter. After having the interview sessions and FGDs and a thorough explanation about the next action to take, recruitment of the AT then followed on a voluntary basis. The AT then implemented the intervention strategy and evaluated the preliminary outcomes.

5.11 In-depth interviews defined

Kvale (1996: 14) defines interviewing as: "an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasises the social situation of research data". In interviews, the interviewer extensively probes the respondent to give answers to very personal aspects and issues in an unrestricted manner (Muchengetwa and Chakuchichi 2010: 48).

An interview as encapsulated by Davies and Hughes (2014: 194) is not just an ordinary conversation but it is one with a purpose, and in a research project, it is the researcher who defines that focus to ensure that he retains a high degree of control over the topic while granting the participants full scope to determine the nature of the responses. Boyce define an in-depth interview as a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a relatively small number of informants to explore their perceptions of a particular idea, situation or program. Harrell also define an in-depth interview as a

discussion, usually one-on-one, between an interviewer and a respondent either over the telephone or face-to-face, with the purpose to collect information on a specific set of topics.

5.11.1 The use of in-depth interviews in this study

In this type of research, the respondents provided the primary data of the study. Interviews were particularly useful since I intended to get the story behind the participant's experiences, feelings, knowledge, and opinions. It worked well as a follow up to other research instruments such as focus groups in order to further investigate their responses. The interviews provided me with detailed data considering that participants were given sufficient duration to explain their viewpoints and opinions freely. I intended to interview all the 10 key respondents from political party leadership, local leadership, and security personnel. This allowed the interviewees to share their free opinions on the potential use of PGs in rebuilding politically damaged communities. Interviews were encouraged by Kvale (2007: 1) when he said that 'If you want to know how people understand their world and their lives, why not talk to them?'. As an exploratory research, the interviews were preferred since they were expected to generate participants' life experiences in relation to political violence in their area.

Data collection using in-depth interviews was conducted according to the following chronological plan (Adapted from Boyce and Neale (2006: 06)):

- Setting up the in-depth interviews with key informants and explaining to them the purpose of the interview, why the participant has been chosen, and the expected duration of the interview;
- Seeking informed consent of the participant in accordance with the recommended ethics
- Conducting the in-depth interview after obtaining consent
- Summarising the data immediately after the interview
- Verifying the information
- Data analysis through transcription
- Report writing

The information I obtained from the community members showed that they really needed some intervention strategy to facilitate the transformation of their relationships they portrayed

as bad and broken due to political affiliation and election-related violence during the interviews and the FGDs.

5.11.2 Advantages of in-depth interviews

Some of the main advantages of using in-depth interviews are that they provide participants with the opportunities to provide historical information while still allowing the researcher to have control over the line of questioning (Creswell 2014). The other advantage of using in-depth interviews is that I was granted the opportunity to explain and clarify some of my questions and that the process of probing further increased the accuracy of the data collected (Kvale 1996). The main attribute of an in-depth interview is its ability to produce detailed information about the thoughts, feelings or behaviours being explored from a small sample (Driscoll *et al.* 2007). The other main advantage of in-depth interviews is that they yield much more detailed information that cannot be available from other data collection methods and during an in-depth interview exercise, the respondents were more relaxed and comfortable (Boyce and Neale 2006).

5.11.3 Disadvantages of in-depth Interviews

There are apparent disadvantages of in-depth interviews which include among other things the aspect that the process is prone to bias (Creswell 2009). In-depth interviews are inherently time-consuming to conduct, transcribe and analyse the data (Patton and Cochran 2002). Also, a well-trained interviewer is needed for the process to yield sufficiently rich and detailed data (National Science Foundation 2002). Another disadvantage is that the results of in-depth interviews are not generalisable because usually small samples are involved (Boyce and Neale 2006). An understanding of the advantages and disadvantages will, therefore, inform appropriate use of in-depth interviews as a data collection technique for this study.

5.12 Participant observation

Observation is a way of collecting very useful data in research and is very valuable in social sciences as it gives authentic and unlimited information (Muchengetwa and Chakuchichi 2010: 49). In this strategy, I was part of the environment where I made observations with the knowledge of the people being observed. This involved the understanding and observation of the reality and physical setting of the supporters of both ZANU-PF and the MDC in Masvingo's Welkom Hoek communal farmlands. There was need to have a checklist of events and items to be observed as those highlighted in the guiding of the observation

process. The findings from this research instrument were used in conjunction with data from focus groups and interviews methods in order to enhance its reliability and validity/trustworthiness.

5.12.1 Challenges associated with participant observation

Several hitches have been identified when conducting participant observation in the field of research. Research reminded me that I must always remember that I would be located in a social setting for the sole purpose of social science research and that I should be involved and yet be detached (Gale 2008). This would help me in preventing the risks of over identifying with the participants and in keeping my neutrality in the setting. Ethical glitches are also frequently raised for the researcher through being placed in a marginal role with the result that stress and anxiety have to be managed throughout a study (Gale 2008). This is frequently the case in covert studies where the researcher would be unable to take notes or to use a range of other methods of research and often violates principles of informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality (Lauder 2003). The participant observer therefore needs to manage the study by being aware of the problems encountered in the research process by engaging in critical self-reflection of the research experience and by bringing the study to a successful close (Bourdieu 2003).

5.13 Focus Group Discussions defined

Focused group discussions (FGDs) are an innovative way of holding in-depth interviews with a number of people at the same time but there is a need for them to be planned efficiently so that they become effective (Muchengetwa and Chakuchichi 2010: 48). Morgan (1997: 6) also reiterated that FGDs refers to a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher. In essence, it is the researcher's interest that provides the focus, whereas the data come from the group interaction. Freitas *et al.* (1998: 01) have also defined FGDs as a unique type of in-depth interview accomplished in a group, whose meeting presents parameters defined with respect to the composition, size and interview procedures. Finally, the National Science Foundation (2002: 52) defined an FGD as a gathering of between eight to twelve people who share some common characteristics relevant to the evaluation while Harrell and Bradley (2009: 14) defined FGDs as a dynamic group discussion used to gather information.

5.13.1 The size and characteristics of FGDs

The main characteristics of FGDs commonly cited include people's participation, a sequence of assemblies, the generation of qualitative data, and homogeneity of the participants (Dilshad and Latif 2013). FGDs have also been credited for being able to obtain more in-depth information on beliefs, perceptions, insights, attitudes, or experiences, and gathering additional information to quantitative data collection (Morgan 1997). The participants influence each other to interact through the answers they give to the ideas and considerations during the discussion (Freitas *et al.* 1998).

In terms of the group size, Kvale (2007) recommended 6-10 participants to take part in the FGDs while Rubin and Rubin (1995) proposed 6-12 participants. There is a strong assertion that fewer than 8 participants were to make the discussion dull while more than 12, however, were fairly difficult to moderate (Stewart and Shamdasani 2015: 64). Having too many participants in the FGDs is likely to deny other participants ample time to make their contributions. This research, however, because of its nature, where both political parties needed equal representation, made use of 12 participants taking part in the FGDs. I purposefully gave equal attention to both political parties by giving their members equal quotas in the FGDs. As Stewart and Shamdasani (2015) pointed out, FGDs are expected to clarify and augment the data from interviews and observation methods and build upon data reliability and validity.

5.13.2 Conducting the FGDs

FGDs were conducted in three stages namely: planning, the conduct of meetings, and data analysis. Planning is considered critical to the success of FGDs (Freitas *et al.* 1998; Dilshad and Latif 2013). For this study the planning stage involved elaboration of the questions, identifying the participants, and defining the place to conduct the meetings.

The conduct of the interviews involved moderation of the discussions while data analysis took the form of transcripts of the interviews, which were then evaluated and articulated in a report which constituted part of this study. While Davies (2007: 179) purports that the maximum number of FGDs should be six, this study however, held two FGDs to generate data with each meeting intended to last ninety minutes. The first FGD was held before the implementation of the intervention strategy while the second one was used as an evaluation tool meant to map and re-plan the way forward after the establishment of PGs with the thrust of transforming post-conflict relationships.

5.13.3 Merits and demerits of FGDs

The table below outlines the major merits and demerits of FGDs;

Table 4 Merits and demerits of FGDs

Merits of FGDs	Demerits of FGDs
Allows collection of a suitable amount of data in a short time	Demands thorough groundwork before conducting it
Has low cost	Data analysis is more difficult to perform
Promotes spontaneous interaction of participants	Demands well-trained moderators
Helps in construction of questionnaire when it precedes a survey	Much effort is required to assemble the groups
	Discussion needs a conducive atmosphere

Adapted from (Freitas *et al.* 1998: 05)

It is important to note that the merits of the FGDs highlighted above justify their adoption as one of the data collection techniques used for this study. It has also been argued that in spite of the demerits, FGDs still facilitated the collection of useful data that created the basis for formulating a framework (Freitas *et al.* 1998). I used the FGDs on selected residents from Masvingo district's Welkom Hoek communal area with the purpose of firstly, getting my AT and secondly making an evaluation of the preliminary outcomes of the intervention strategy employed in this study.

5.14 Sampling procedure

I used purposive sampling in getting participants for interviews and FGDs (Dane 2011). The interview sessions gave room for me to use snowballing techniques in tracing key respondents. Snowballing facilitated the identification of key informants and those participants who were cooperative in similar exercises. As a result of convenience, ease, and availability of some participants, I preferred the use of purposive sampling as part of the exploratory design (Dane 2011). I worked with Non-Governmental Organisations, the Catholic Commission for Justice which has operated in the Welkom Hoek communal farmlands area for more than a decade to carry out the sampling procedure.

5.14.1 Sample size/population

Mugo (2002: 01) defines sampling as a system, demonstration or technique for choosing a reasonable sample, or an illustrative portion of the masses to determine the highlights of the entire populace. Mugo further explains that the purpose of sampling is to draw conclusions about the population from the sample. A sample is essentially a finite part of a population whose characteristics are selected to gain information about the entire population (Mugo 2002: 01). In addition, when managing individuals just like this case study, an example will be an arrangement of respondents chosen from a bigger populace for the survey purpose. The main advantage of using samples is that it provides information more quickly, especially where the population is large or difficult to access (Scheaffer 1999). The author further emphasised that data obtained from the sample can describe the characteristics of the population. The other advantage of sampling includes reduced research costs, greater accuracy, speed and efficient conduct of research and greater flexibility (Mugo 2002).

Since this research is an AR, the sample size comprised of 36 participants; with Morgan (1997) suggesting that for meaningful data collection, the point of saturation will be used to determine the frequency of interviewing participants. I therefore continued interviewing participants until the time when participants no longer brought anything new in their responses, (point of saturation).

5.14.2 What does population in the study refer to?

Greenstein and Davis (2013: 48) define the population in research as the complete and inclusive collection of all theoretically defined elements while (Davies 2007) refers to it as the category of people from which I drew the sample. The population has further been defined as a group of persons, objects or items from which a sample is obtained for measurement (Mugo 2002: 01). In addition, (Scheaffer 1999: 01) also define population as a collection of elements about which an inference has to be made with special emphasis on that the marked populace should be carefully defined. Since the population of attention targeted adults and Youth from ZANU-PF and MDC, each member who belongs to either party is an element in that population.

5.14.3 The population in the study

There are 211,215 people in Masvingo rural district who constitute the population in this study (Zimbabwe population census 2012). These were current statistical records since the next population census would be conducted in 2022.

5.14.4 The sample population

The total study population for both key informants and FGDs comprised of 36 participants. The AT comprising of 10 participants from the two main political parties, was drawn from the study population of 36 participants. Morgan (1997) suggests that data saturation should be used to determine the sample size. This sample was generated from both adults and Youth who are political party supporters and other Zimbabwean nationals living in Welkom Hoek communal farmlands in Masvingo. Children and other apolitical Zimbabweans who lived in this area were excluded from the research processes.

5.14.5 Why a sample population was used

The sample population according to (Mouton 1996: 136) is used to address representativeness among the population under study. I chose to work with both the Youth and adults from ZANU-PF and MDC on the basis that during the election-related violence, they both participated as victims and perpetrators. I strongly believed that the same population had the potential to serve as agents of change after the intervention strategy. I resorted to the use of purposive sampling in order to come up with the AT comprising of 10 participants. I consulted the gatekeepers before moving into the area to sample who to work with and implement the intervention strategy.

5.14.6 Sampling procedure and appropriateness

Non-probability sampling was used in getting participants for both interviews and FGDs since it works well in the exploratory design (Dane 2011). Druckman (2005: 151) explains that non-probability is ideal for exploratory research because there is always a need for in-depth information from a small number of participants. This worked well in this research which was politically sensitive in nature. The provincial leadership for both the MDC and ZANU-PF referred me to the village representatives who then helped in the identification and provision of the 12 supporters list. The District administrator helped me to identify the councillor, village head, and the one traditional leader. The district police officer also helped in availing two police officers for the task. The local NGO, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace provided one member for the research and also helped in the purposive sampling procedure of other participants for the study. Below are the tables showing a representation of the participants to be purposely selected for this research;

Table 5 Key informants for interviews (own data)

	Category of key informants	Number of participants
Welkom Hoek Communal farmlands	Traditional leader	1
	Political leaders	2 (one from each political party)
	Police officer	1
	Party supporters	2 (two from each political party)
	Village head	1
	Councillor	1
	Farm owner	1
	NGO representative	1
Total	10	

5.15 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The study included political party supporters and other Zimbabwean nationals who lived in Masvingo province's Welkom Hoek communal farmlands. Children and other apolitical Zimbabweans who lived in this area were excluded from the research processes.

5.16 Pretesting

Caspar *et al.* (2016: 23) define pre-testing as a miniature of information accumulation process that includes all approaches and resources that were utilised amidst information gathering carried out before the actual data gathering exercise. The drive for the pretesting exercise was to assess the research instruments before the commencement of the actual research (Hibben and Kelley 2015). Also, pre-testing helped in highlighting whether sufficient response categories were obtainable and whether any useful questions were consistently missed by the participants (Caspar *et al.* 2016). This helped in perfecting the research instruments and questions with the aim of achieving the research objectives and also provided me with the opportunity to detect flaws, limitations within the interview and FGDs guides respectively (Kvale 2007) in Turner (2010).

5.16.1 How was pre-testing undertaken?

One mini focus group discussion which comprised of eight participants and three in-depth interviews were carried out as pilot sessions to a fairly small sample size of people. Participants that would have taken part in the pilot study project were however not co-opted in the actual research exercise. This helped in perfecting the research instruments and the questions with the aim of achieving the research objectives.

5.17 Data analysis

The qualitative data was analysed using the thematic approach, which is a categorising strategy for qualitative data (Boyatzis 1998: vii). Analysing data means dissecting the complex whole into its parts and it usually involves reducing it to manageable proportions and then identifying themes and patterns from that data (Mouton 2001: 161). Once the intervention methods had been implemented the AR team will conduct a preliminary evaluation of the programme. De Vos *et al.* (2011: 450) suggested that an evaluation needs to be done when something new has been created and, in this case, PGs had been established. The evaluation of the peace garden was done in the form of set insightful questions to determine whether there was a positive change in the community's broken relationships.

Mouton (2001) proposed that data analysis should actually begin in the field and points out that the earlier the researchers started to ascertain developing themes. This entailed reviewing notes and sorting the data into categories. Since I did not have transcribing skills and expertise, I was compelled to seek the services of a professional transcriber to transcribe recorded interviews and focus group discussions.

5.18 Delimitations/scope

In terms of the geographical location, the study area was one selected district in Masvingo province in Zimbabwe. Participants in this research were residents of the Welkom Hoek communal farmlands and the administrative staff of the district and development partners. Welkom Hoek communal farmlands are a fairly remote community and have poor to extremely poor road transport networks. Therefore, results from this research are applicable to Welkom Hoek communal farmlands and similar contexts but may not be universally generalised to other contexts.

5.19 Limitations of the study

Considering that this investigation used an AR method approach, the implication was that it would cost more in time and resources. To counter the effects of limited time and resources on the quality of the results this, research would only be confined to Masvingo district's Welkom Hoek communal farmlands where accessibility is relatively high and good. As such the results of the study would not be generalisable to other situations and beyond the specific population or contexts to which the research sample would relate.

5.20 Research context

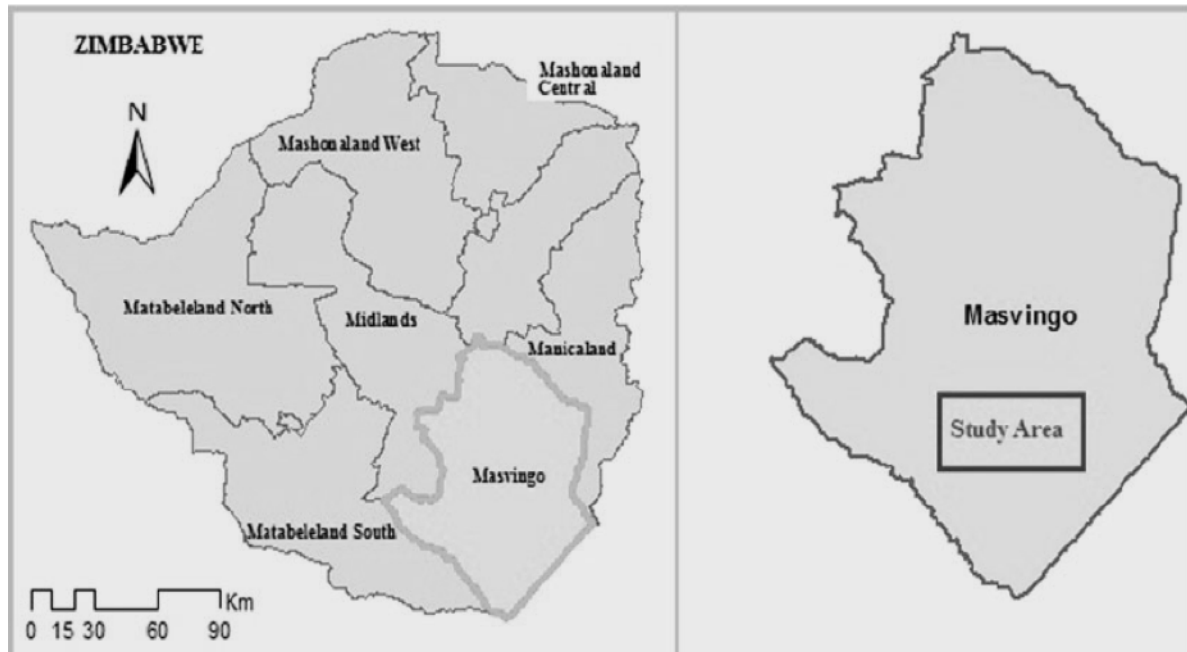
This research was carried out in Zimbabwe's Masvingo province. The community for this research was drawn from Welkom Hoek communal farmlands. The area is located in Masvingo district, 18 kilometres east of Masvingo town. I chose this particular area due to my knowledge of the area and more so because of the areas dire need for transformation of relationships. The area was hard hit by the country's previous election-related violent acts and as purported by this study, calls for intervention strategies aimed at transforming these post-conflict relationships with the thrust of achieving durable peace and development in the area and the country as a whole.

5.21 Welkom Hoek Communal farmlands geographical Information

The information below gives some vital information with regards to the location and geography of the area where I carried out this research. This will also include the map of Zimbabwe showing Masvingo and Welkom Hoek communal farmlands where I carried out my research.

Latitude:	19.9953400
Longitude of Welkom Hoek:	31.0090300
Time settings zone:	Africa/Harare.
Place name:	Welkom Hoek
Country:	Zimbabwe
Province:	Masvingo

Adapted from: (Google maps 2017)



Map 1 The location of Welkom Hoek communal farmlands (Google maps 2017)

5.22 The importance of validity and reliability/trustworthiness and how it was ensured

Qualitative researchers are concerned with issues of validity, reliability and whether their results can be replicated (Hall and Hall 1996: 44). Greenstein and Davis (2013: 64) contend that legitimacy alludes to whether we are truly measuring the idea that we expected to gauge. According to Davies and Hughes (2014), reliability has the assumption that another researcher would produce the same results from the previous research while Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012) stated that it measures the consistency of the measurement.

The trustworthiness of the findings from this study was enhanced and enriched through the use of three data collection instruments, referred to in the field of research as triangulation (Hesse-Biber 2010: 3). According to De Vos *et al.* (2011: 436), the term triangulation in research is used to refer to the convergence of facts from the various research instruments to provide confidence in the information which will be researched on. Yeasmin and Rahman (2012: 156) defined triangulation as the procedure of confirmation to increase validity and completeness by fusing some points of view. Patton (2002) argued that triangulation assists the researcher not only to collect more extensive significant data yet, in addition, to cross-check its consistency in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. It is vital therefore to note that triangulation was not only employed for validation, but also for deepening one's understanding of a topic, and is characterised as the blending of

information and additional techniques with the goal that assorted perspectives or points of view can light upon a theme (Olsen 2004).

Member checking also serves as another way of ensuring validity in this research. It involved taking back the findings of the participants to check whether their contributions during the interviews and FGDs were captured well (Davies and Hughes 2014). Remaining in the field for a fairly long period of time collecting data was also another way which I used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected (Davies and Hughes 2014). The FGDs and interview guides were pilot tested with a sample of 8 participants before the real research exercise so that another researcher who will undertake the same research would produce the same rating and results (Davies and Hughes 2014).

5.23 The importance of anonymity and confidentiality and how it was ensured

Research experience should not cause physical or psychological harm to participants or expose them to embarrassment, unusual stress, demeaning treatment or damage to one's reputation (Muchengetwa and Chakuchichi 2010: 63). I was ethically obliged to ensure that data collected from participants were kept in a secure place and that identities of participants remained a secret. In this research exercise, I did not take photographs of people or videotape them where consent was not granted. The collected data was handled in a professional manner and the use of pseudonyms or codes was preferred in the report writing so as to protect participants' identity. The information was kept locked in a secure room at home or in the office until it was ready for destroying.

Data obtained from the FGDs, interviews, and observations were also to be stored in lockable cabinets with restricted access while soft copies were kept on my laptop that was constantly secured with passwords. The data on my flash disk and backup files will be erased completely after the expiry of the five-year period as per the DUT ethical obligations. Anonymity helped in ensuring participant confidentiality (De Vos *et al.* 2011: 121) and this was done in the interview sessions and the evaluation process. The peace garden participants were not confidential since everyone knew who they were and as they were seen participating in the peace garden, but the data generated from them, however, remained a secret.

5.24 How DUT ethical requirements were addressed

The guiding principles for any research include respect for societies, generosity, and fairness. Reverence for societies means research experience should recognize the rights of

participants, including the right to be informed about the study, the right to make the participation decision, and the right to pull out of the research at any point without prior notification (Patton and Cochran 2002). This study is therefore guided by the principles discussed above.

Gatekeeper's letters were dispatched to the ZANU-PF and MDC leadership seeking permission to work with their support base and the owner of the portion of land where the garden was established, see Appendices A, B and C respectively. Permission letters for doing my investigation were granted before the commencement of my inquiry. I managed to adhere to the important research ethical principles which revolve around voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and the well-being of participants. Participants were given room to decline or participate in the research and were also informed that they were free to withdraw from the research; either on temporary or permanent basis without prior explanations to me.

Free and informed consent served as a prerequisite for this study and I avoided deception by all means since fabrication of data to support conclusions is unethical (Leedy and Ormrod 2005). This study embraced beneficence, implying doing good for others and not causing physical or psychological harm to participants or exposing them to embarrassment, unusual stress, and demeaning treatment or damage one's reputation (Patton and Cochran 2002). In conclusion, therefore, this research adhered to the important research ethical principles which include voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and beneficence. Participants were given room to decline or participate in the research and were also be free to withdraw from the research; either on temporary or permanent basis without explanations (see appendices D). I upheld DUT ethical procedures throughout the research exercise.

5.25 How voluntary participation was ensured.

The research participants were given information and consent letters which explained the concept of voluntary participation (see appendix G & H). These letters were translated into local languages to cater for those who were non-English speaking participants. Participants were given room to decline or participate in the research and were also free to withdraw from the research; either on temporary or permanent basis without prior explanations to me.

5.26 Summary

In this chapter, I address the research design, methodologies and the instruments which I employed in carrying out this study with the thrust of achieving its objectives. This chapter

also discuss issues surrounding; sampling procedures, action research, population, pretesting, anonymity, how voluntary participation was ensured, research context, data analysis, and ethical issues. The chapter also discussed the concept of action research design, the uniqueness of AR and its importance, a brief historical background and some challenges associated with the use of AR. The next chapter examines how the peace gardening intervention strategy was carried out in the Welkom Hoek community.

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND THE DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION STRATEGY (PEACE GARDENING)

‘Pain that is not transformed is transferred’ Fr Richard Rohr

6.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the profile of the Welkom Hoek communal farmlands, the community in which this research took place. It also provides a full narrative on how the peace gardening initiative and the action research was conducted. The chapter also discusses some political and national programmes that derailed our scheduled peace gardening meetings and measures which were put in place to mitigate against such derailing events. It also discusses the research process, selection of the participants and a series of sessions which were held by the AT. This chapter justifies the importance of action research as an opportunity for both change and learning to take place.

6.2 The research community

The study for this action research project was carried out in Welkom Hoek communal farmlands. The area is a post-conflict community located 18 km on the eastern outskirts of Masvingo urban centre and is administered by the Nemwamwa Rural District Council. The area, like many other parts of the Zimbabwean communities, is reeling under pressure from unemployment, polarisation and poverty challenges (Mlambo 2014). I chose this community in Masvingo province because of the in-depth knowledge I gained during my thirty-one year stay in the area. The fact that I stayed in this community for a reasonable duration did not compromise the outcome of this research given the qualitative nature of the study.

The cases of theft, torture, murder and rape were normally experienced in the area each time the country headed towards the general elections, when people took advantage of the political situation and broke the law, since political and leadership aspirants was concerned about getting into power through whatever means (Sachikonye 2010). The majority of the people in this community had experienced some beatings, arrests, unlawful detentions,

torture and loss of close family members through election-related conflicts since 2000 (ZCBC 2008: 03). The area is dominated by new black farmers who benefited from the Agrarian land reform which was implemented by the government in the year 2000 and who are for the most part ZANU-PF sympathisers. The opposition parties were, however, also making some inroads in the area in terms of its support base, a development which has over the years precipitated political conflicts in the area. As a result of the presence of the opposing parties and the history of political conflicts, it was expected that conflicts would arise between the political parties.

The current situation in the area also manifested unhealed wounds which can be traced back to the past years of systematic structural violence previously discussed (Chikwanda 2014: 24). The people in that community did not value education and, instead, spend most of their time fishing in the Popoteke River that passes through their community, hunting, attending political gatherings and drinking all sorts of intoxicating beverages as a result of unemployment. Due to this scenario, the people were prone to manipulation before, during and just after the elections.

The thrust of this study, therefore, was aimed at fostering solutions that do not only lead to the cessation of conflict in this community but to bring about a profound change in which peace and harmony could become realities. This study was prompted by the realisation that when conflicts remain unsolved, they lead to disunity and deep frustration which results in destructive acts as the means of resolving political differences. As the study unfolded, after identifying the need to transform relationships between political rivals, the relevant theory and the literature for this study, I formed a partnership with ten local participants who belonged to the two dominant political parties in the country which are ZANU-PF and the MDC-T. Together it was agreed to use a peace garden as an intervention strategy for transforming post-conflict relationships in this community. Data collection for this study commenced in the first week of January 2017 and continued until the last week of December 2017.

6.3 Description of the research process

This section of the study gives a detailed description of the action research process which we carried out in Welkom Hoek communal farmlands with the AT over a period of one year.

6.3.1 Preliminary consultative and logistical meetings

I carried out a series of consultative and logistical sessions of meetings before a decision was reached with my AT on what intervention strategy was to be taken. These consultative meetings were carried out between October 14th and December 23rd, 2016. These consultative meetings were with the local traditional leadership and the farm owner. I had communicated with the farm owner while still at Durban University of Technology (DUT) for the allocation of a portion of land to establish the peace garden. The meetings were meant to map out modalities in the way the research was going to be carried out.

With what I had learned from the university about action research, I was convinced that the intervention strategy was going to provide a better and more effective alternative in comparison to the usual methods which have been used traditionally in addressing the transformation of post-conflict relationships among rivalry political party supporters. I, therefore, made the call for action research very clear during the preliminary meetings so as to justify the efficacy and purpose of this study. I also made it clear that it did not serve as a stop-gap measure in its approach but one which addressed community relations and transformation in a more holistic and sustainable manner (Chikwanda 2014: 20). Mobilisation for these consultative meetings was carried out through the local headmen and the councillor and consequently the turnout was impressive.

Through the meetings, I managed to explain the objective of the research and demystify the myths and misconceptions that the research might have been a regime change project or political in nature. The meetings were also meant to guarantee my safety and that of the research participants during the data collection exercise. The pretesting sessions which were carried out provided new insights in that I noted that my focus group discussion guide and my interview guide had too many questions and I therefore reduced the questions to five before the intervention strategy. The other five questions were used to evaluate the outcomes of the intervention strategy.

6.3.2 Selection criteria for study participants

As noted above in section 6.1, ten participants who constituted my action team were chosen from Zimbabwe's two dominant political parties, the MDC and ZANU-PF. The selection criterion which I used for this study was directed by the values of purposive sampling which I discussed earlier (see section 5:13). As highlighted by Creswell and Vicki (2011: 174) there is a call for a qualitative investigator to recognise and employ a small number of people

which will offer comprehensive data about the vital matters which were cross-examined in this action research study on transforming post-conflict relationships via PGs. The fact that I was earlier introduced to the participants by local traditional and political leadership from both political parties' leadership and that I grew up in the area helped to cement my rapport with the participants. The importance of asking for consent from their leadership in their presence was verified as it reduced fear of victimization in the future.

6.3.3 Early reaction of the action team participants

When I first introduced the research concept to the rival political party supporters, there was a great deal of acrimony among these community members. The first logistical meetings were unquestionably tension-filled with the political party supporters from either side vowing never to work together on the basis of their political differences. It took me some time to really explain what I wanted to do to achieve the research objectives in order for these community members to pledge their commitment towards this peace gardening project considering that they had earlier vowed never to work together. Though this initiative was unthinkable at first considering its sensitive nature, I used the platform to explain in detail the aims and objectives of the study to the people concerned and they later on accepted the idea and agreed to participate. The majority of the members were at first sceptical of being perceived as sell-outs by other political members and were also afraid of being blamed for disclosing party secrets to rival political party supporters.

The reaction by the AT participants served as a clear indication that action team participants do not change their attitudes over a short period of time. Some were sceptical of the intervention strategy, a development which led them to remain undecided, a scenario which warranted the need for more cycles or to have individual follow ups on such AT members. The fact that I had been given the green light by all of the leadership of the two political parties to liaise with their grassroots support base also helped in convincing the supporters from either side to agree to participate in the peace gardening initiative. The participants were also persuaded to take peace gardening seriously upon the realisation that when ordinary people are banded together, they do extraordinary things such as community cohesion and grassroots peacebuilding.

6.3.4 Consent issues

Participants were asked to sign their consent forms as a fulfilment of the requirements from the DUT Ethics Committee and were written and translated in vernacular language which

they understood very well (see appendices G and H). The participants then voluntarily agreed to partake in this study, thereby fulfilling the DUT ethical requirements. We made it clear that the research exercise was not going to be easy and therefore called for individual effort in executing it and that our understanding of justice in this research was not supposed to be confused with the word revenge. We were not in any way intending to perpetuate the “hurt people hurt people” philosophy in our research but instead, wanted to promote social change which was driven through personal transformation (Barge 2016: 72).

The recruitment exercise, therefore, warranted me to purposefully select participants with experiences as either victims or perpetrators of political violence which was a key concept investigated in this study. A local church organisation called Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) which is carrying out peacebuilding initiatives and has been operating in the area for the past ten years helped me in the sampling procedure of participants in the Welkom Hoek communal farmlands. I saw the advantage of partnering with CCJP during my data collection exercise on a voluntary basis so as to get protection and easy acceptance by the people in this community. As though that was not enough, I also worked closely with both the traditional leadership in the area and the local political leadership in the selection of participants in this study.

6.4 The first session: establishment of the AT

The AT was drawn from the participants who had taken part in the FGDs. Since this was a qualitative action research exercise, the numbers of the AT members were kept very low. Too large a group can be challenging given the need to work together over time. Five members from each of the two main political parties were drafted into the AT as earlier noted in section 6.2. This first session with my AT was important in that it provided me with the platform to explain how our research activities were going to be carried out. I explained that, as either victims or perpetrators of electoral violence in one way or another, this research was also going to greatly benefit us immensely in our quest to transform post-conflict relationships. We agreed, as the newly formed AT, that there was need for a peace gardening activity to be carried out so as to create opportunity and space for talking about the people's pain. The AT members highlighted that peace gardening was essential in that they understood it to be a transformation agent in their relationships.

The AT pointed out that PGs would have the potential to build durable peace through providing platforms which encouraged dialogues in promoting concentration on the present

than spending time reminiscing about the violent acts which occurred in the past. This kind of mentality came out of the realisation that regardless of our political preferences, we still remain as one people, living in Zimbabwe and, hence, there is no justification for us to maim, combat and hate one another. Literature had also supported the AT's thrust by pointing out that pain that is not transformed is transferred, meaning that the pain that the AT members had endured was still going to be passed on to future generations, a feature which has been referred to as intergenerational conflict (Ngwenya and Harris 2015; Barge 2016: 72).

We also agreed as an AT that the thrust of our peace garden was to strengthen the existing peacebuilding efforts in local communities in order to avert violence and transform tainted relationships. This peace gardening strategy sought to transform post-conflict relationships by providing a neutral platform for people of diverse political orientation to mingle, work and plan together in ways that would promote their sustainable livelihoods and peace. Based on values of inclusiveness, integrity and diversity the peace garden intended to strengthen the abilities of local communities in conflict management and resolution initiatives with the goal of restoring the economic function of victims of election-related violence. We again agreed that each time we meet before carrying out our peace gardening activities, there was need for us to share peace stories, re-visit our painful pasts and formulate modalities on how we wanted to foster peaceful change in our community, through discussing the side effects of electoral violence, conflict in general and the importance of community cohesion.

We also agreed as a team that we had seen community gardens being used before for various reasons and noted that for our peace gardening venture to work as an effective intervention strategy, there was a need for us to vary our approach in our operational modalities such as working with small numbers to avoid situations where the peace garden would end up brewing conflicts among participants. Just like Keim's (2007) remarks in the role of sport in peacebuilding, the way in which peace gardening could play a successful role in transforming post-conflict relationships depended on its organisation. The AT generally agreed that the peace gardening project had the potential to take the society forward by transforming tainted relationships, considering that, if not properly organized, the same peace garden could be a source of conflict that would inadvertently reinforce old preconceptions and detachments. The AT also agreed that there was need for us to begin and end all our peace gardening activities by reciting part of Father Francis' prayer,

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;

Where there is hatred let me sow love;

Where there is despair; let me sow hope;

And where there is sadness, let me sow joy;

Amen

Adapted from: (ZCBC 2008: 31)

This prayer was significant for the AT in that it aided us to personify an approach to peace based on self-transcendence and profound concern for others. It also assisted in uniting the AT beyond measure. The prayer also challenged all the action members to serve as agents of positive change by sowing love, hope and joy in situations characterised by hatred, despair and sadness, considering the election-related violence that had taken place in the previous elections.

There was the need for us to agree on the modalities of the use of action research process and to develop a collective understanding with regards to the expectations of action research and the peace and power theory. This was not an easy process, considering the fact that I was avoiding a scenario where the participants would regard me as the more knowledgeable one or "Mr I know everything" kind of person in the group and thereby undermining their positions and contributions. The fact that I was putting myself at par with the AT helped to enrich their confidence and spurred their zeal to walk the journey together and that resulted in a comprehensive learning process for all of us.

We used this first session in addition to the above points to formulate the ground agreements which were going to guide us throughout the research exercise. The members' consent was secured during that meeting, and an agreement on the peace gardening establishment process and the meeting times was agreed upon. Due to other commitments, the AT agreed to meet once per fortnight for peace gardening and dialogue sessions. The AT then set aside Thursdays for these fortnightly-scheduled meetings and came up with the schedule highlighted below;

Table 6 Peace gardening schedule (own data)

Month and date	Participants	Meeting purpose
January	12	-Focus groups
February	14	-Interviews
March	4	-consultative meetings with the gatekeepers -explaining my research parameters -logistical arrangements -clearing perceived misconceptions about the research topic
April	10	Establishment of the AT
May	10	The Establishment of the peace gardening project/ Fencing.
June	10	Land preparation/ dialogue / observations Procurement of the essential gardening equipment /observations
July	10	peace gardening/ seeding /observations
August	10	peace gardening/ dialogue/ observation
September	10	peace gardening/ dialogue /observation
October	10	Gardening /Marketing/ dialogue
November	10	Gardening/ Marketing/ dialogue
December	11	Evaluative Meetings/ mapping the way forward & thesis compilation.

The AT participants also made a vow that deviations from this agreed schedule were going to be accommodated only as a result of unforeseen circumstances which would be beyond its control. Efforts were to be made to stick to this agreed schedule but as discussed in sections 5.11.1 to 5.11.6, there were national events and programmes which affected our programme but they were beyond the AT's control.

6.5 Reasons why PGs were preferred by the AT

The action team opted to engage in peace gardening as an intervention strategy for transforming post-conflict relationships at the expense of other communal projects on the basis that they viewed peace gardening in small numbers as an unexplored avenue for promoting harmony among political rivals. The idea of peace gardening had also featured well from the FGD and the interview sessions carried out by the key informants. The AT members had seen similar ventures being employed for community development involving large numbers faltering and creating more conflicts among the garden participants. The AT members thus opted for peace gardening in small numbers on the basis that PGs facilitates dialogue platforms among the AT members who were people of diverse political orientation, highlighted in the following statement:

'Taona zvakanaka kuti tiite zvemaghadheni ekuvaka runyararo tiri vashoma uye tichibva kumapato ezvematongerwe enyika akasiyana nenyaya yekuti mamwe mazano akamboshandiswa kuda kutibatanidza haana kuzobudirira zvakanaka nenyaya yekuti taiita mishandirapamwe yacho takawandisa zvaizopedzisira zvotokonzera mamwe makakava uye kufungirana zvisiri izvo.'

(We preferred participating in small numbers in the peace gardening project as people coming from diverse political parties on the basis that similar attempts to unite people had been tried but did not yield positive results. Positive results were not realized previously because too many people took part in the projects and as a result the projects ended up brewing conflicts and creating negative perceptions). [ATP, 2017]

There was consensus among the AT members that there was need to do peace gardening together in order to rebuild their relationships which had been broken by election-related skirmishes since 1980 as pointed out by one of the AT members who pointed out that:

‘Kubva pakaitwa Sarudzo dzekutanga nyika ino ichiwana rusununguko, hapana zvatakakwanisa kuita kugadzira nyaya dzemhirizhonga inokonzerwa nenyaya dzesarudzo zvinova zvakonzeresa kuti tirwadziwe nekusagarisana zvakanaka kwenguva refu, saka tarisiro yedu ndeyekuti ngadheni yerunyararo iyi ichatibatsira kuvakiridza ukama hwedu hwange hwakanganisika’.

(Since 1980, it is sad to say that we have been doing nothing to curb the ugly effects of election-related violence and that has compelled us to be harmed by the effects of political violence over and over again and this peace gardening initiative will help us to mend our broken relationships) [ATP, 2017]

PGs were also prioritized since they were perceived as having the potential to re-build community cohesion after a series of election-related episodes since the first elections in 1980. The AT finally chose peace gardening on the basis that PGs provides physical space in life where AT members were anticipating being free from political competition.

6.6 The AT’s guiding ground agreements

I suggested that the AT agree on ground-rules (or guiding ground agreements) which would guide us throughout our peace gardening exercise. These guiding ground-rules helped in making our meetings and dialogue sessions safe with the thrust of building community trust and cohesion, a feature associated with PGs and pointed out in section 3:5. The ground-rules also established a respectful environment where the participants felt free to be themselves and to share openly. The ground-rules came from the participants themselves and that helped them to have a feeling of pride in owning these agreed ground agreements and were likely bound to respect them. The following diagram shows the agreed guiding ground agreements which were set by the AT and were meant to guide us throughout our peace gardening initiative:



Figure 8 Guiding agreements which were set by the AT (own data)

These ground-rule agreements helped in minimising potential misunderstandings which could have been caused by the exchange of hate or intimidating speeches. The ground-rules, therefore, helped in levelling the playing field for all AT members and protected them from intimidation as a result of their contributions during the peace gardening exercise and what they would share during the dialogue sessions. These guiding ground agreements made the AT more united and easier to manage since they were bound by these agreements.

I observed that the participants were passively contributing during our first gathering since they were adjusting to the ideas, understanding where the intervention strategy was going to lead us and becoming accustomed to this unusual group setup. As far as I could tell, this first meeting demonstrated that the group dynamics reflected some hidden elements of political tensions, which, however disappeared slowly as people got accustomed to each other. The lack of trust and suspicion in groups, especially for the first time, tallies well with the concept that developing caring relationships with people, oppressed or otherwise, takes time for meaningful involvement in each other's lives and nurturance of the relationship (Zeiderman 2005). Similarly, it also needed an ample duration for the people in our group to develop comprehensive relationships with each other, considering the past strained relationships as a result of different political affiliations and the violence they witnessed each time they were nearing elections in their community.

6.7 The second session: peace gardening journey



Photo 1 showing me standing and leading a dialogue session with the action team participants (own data)

During this session, AT members spend considerable time telling their experiences of the past election-related violence and how they anticipated the peace gardening project would assist them in transforming their post-conflict relationships. The session also used a simple game to teach people about the importance of respecting other people's different views. In that game, number 3 would be placed in the middle of the garden with groups of people being asked to view it from the northern side, southern side, eastern side and the western side respectively. As demonstrated in the diagram below, the same letter was viewed as an E, W, M, E or a 3 respectively depending where these people were viewing it from.

The game taught the AT how important it was to accept other people's views even in the field of politics as was summed up by one of the AT members when he stated that:

'Mutambo uyu wekuisirwa 3 pakati pedu tichiiongorora kubva kumativi mana akasiyana wakatibatsira chose kuva nemaonero matsva ezvematongerwe enyika. Takadzidza kuburikidza nemutambo uyu kutambira maonero

akasiyana uye kuti hapana chikonzero chekumanikidzana kuti tive nemaonero mamwe chete kunyanya mune zvementongerwe enyika’.

*(The political broadmindedness game of putting the 3 in our midst to be viewed from different angles helped us a lot to view the political issues differently. We learned through the game to accept other people’s views and their political affiliations. There is no need to coerce others to view things in the same manner with us but to accept and respect their political choices).
[ATP, 2017]*

The concept of political broadmindedness was developed from the diagram below.

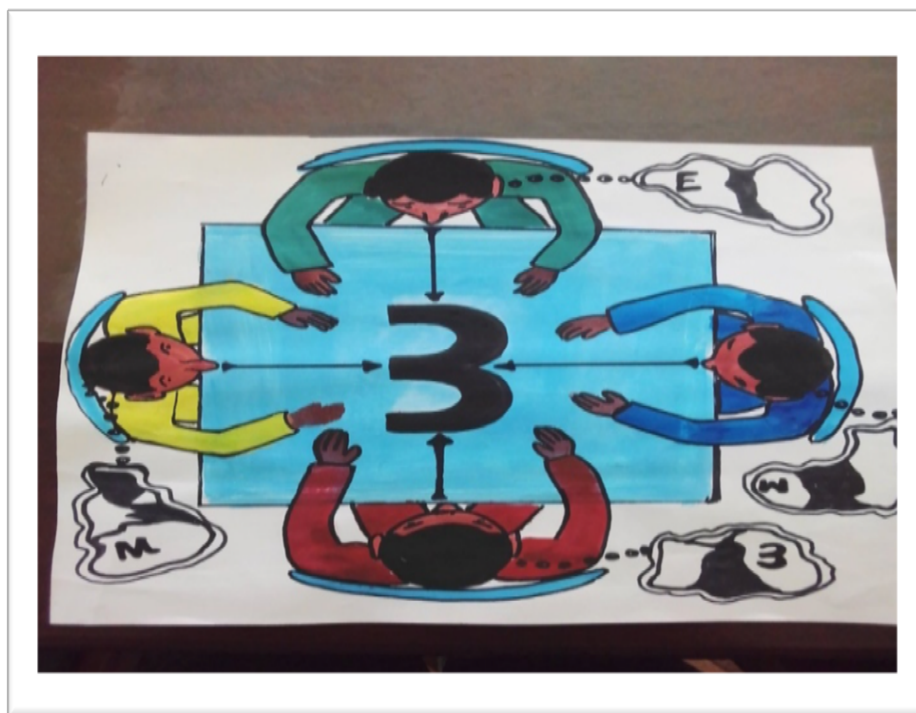


Figure 9 A game demonstrating the concept of viewing things differently in politics (own data)

The game taught the action members that even during the election time, there was no need for people to engage in election-related violence or to force other members to support their preferred political parties. As demonstrated in the diagram above, people were supposed to accept that people have the choice to belong to political organisations or social groupings of their choice.

6.8 The third session: peace gardening in progress

The third session saw the AT starting proper gardening and this third session proved different from the previous two sessions in that by then participants were actively intermingling with each other as they discussed our main topic. This session occurred after three other attempts had been derailed by the by-election which was taking place in Bikita District, where some of our AT members were compelled to attend against their wishes (see the discussion in section 7:10:1). As usual, the session kicked off with the peace prayer and then moved on with participants sharing their personal experiences with regards to the issue of election-related violence and what they had experienced during the by-elections. For some of the participants, this process was still difficult, considering that it was opening up their old wounds, indicating how raw their pain was. This session saw participants carrying out land preparation so that the first gardening crop could be planted in the next session. The diagram below shows participants posing for a photo in the developed land furrows ready for the tomato crop:



Photo 2 The AT after developing land furrows in preparation for the first peace gardening crop (own data)

The peace gardening project was, however, slowly helping the team to develop reconciliation and forgiveness, aspects which were vital in our quest towards transforming post-conflict relationships. My continuous observations on what was happening to the AT revealed that their relations were slowly bonding as you could easily see people from opposing political parties chatting freely and laughing together as they took part in the peace

gardening process. Modalities on how to start the peace gardening project and on what crops to start growing were **mooted** on this meeting.

6.8.1 The first peace gardening crop

The AT agreed to start with tomatoes in the peace garden. There were some members of the AT who had some expertise in tomato production. These meetings with the AT served as indicators on how successful our search for positively transforming post-conflict communities would be realised. I observed that the AT was slowly falling in love with the peace prayer and the dialogue sessions as they were opening up in their conversations. The turnout remained very impressive as all the active members were showing serious commitment. It was, however, easy to observe that some members were still not very free in expressing themselves, a feature which proves that people do not change their attitudes or forgive others over a short period of time.

6.8.2 Monetary expectations from the AT

I also observed that members who were in the AT were still hopeful that the researcher would give them something tangible or monetary. That was detectable from their conversations as they were carrying out their peace gardening activities. This came about regardless of the fact that I made it very clear, right from the beginning that no money was going to be given to participants (see Appendices E, F and G). However, this expectation did not cause the project to stop. Concurrently I observed the changes which were unfolding in the way these people were relating to each other as they carried out their peace gardening activities. There was some notable change in the manner the AT members were associating with others, unlike in the previous session where resentment and suspicious elements were displayed throughout the whole peace gardening session: there was openness, confidence in each other and mutual reciprocation of trust anchored past previous animosities of party affiliation induced differences.

6.9 The fourth session

This session saw the progression of peace gardening. The AT was slowly bonding in the manner they were carrying out their operations. They were taking turns in sharing their past painful experiences. Their relationships were bonding in pleasing ways as it was now common to see people from the two political parties moving side by side as they went to fetch some water for gardening and sharing some jokes together. The AT agreed that before

joining the peace gardening project, members had reflected on the impact of what they had suffered but they confessed that they had never had time to really talk about it in a safe environment. It therefore, became apparent that the AT members envisaged the peace garden as a safe space for talking about their pain.

This session also came up with a call from members that there was no need for those who had suffered as victims of the previous election-related violence to take revenge. There was fear that these victims could end up becoming offenders as well and, in the process, deviate from the ethos of our peace garden which called for a transformation in relationships. In the meantime, the first crop was slowly taking shape and the AT members were enjoying their efforts as outsiders were now beginning to admire the manner in which they were relating together and how beautiful their tomatoes were becoming. The AT was demonstrating much enthusiasm in their peace gardening project day by day and by then, they had started to applaud the effectiveness of this intervention strategy in transforming post-conflict relationships in the field of peacebuilding.

6.10 The fifth session: Workshop on Human Rights and Constitutionalism

The AT had suggested earlier that there was need for us to be trained on human rights and constitutionalism since people felt that their ignorance on such matters prompted many of them to engage in violence and conflicts unknowingly. I consulted the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace together with the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) on whether it was feasible for them to come and hold a workshop for the AT for no payment. I stressed on the issue of no payment since we did not have a budget set aside for paying facilitators. Fortunately, the two organisations agreed but suggested that it was going to benefit the entire community if all could be allowed to attend. Traditional leaders and the local political leadership consented to the idea and a successful workshop was held near the peace garden with a great deal of locals in attendance. The workshop was held on the 18th of May 2017 and the workshop coincided with the belated commemorations of the International Human Rights Day. The diagram below shows the participants following the proceedings during the workshop,



Photo 3 Showing me in khakis with AT members following proceedings during the Human Rights and Constitutionalism workshop hosted by CCJP (own data)

The AT members and the community members gave credit to the initiative and called for similar workshops to be organised often as people felt empowered and knowledgeable on issues to do with their human rights violations, constitutionalism, and peaceful conflict resolution modalities.

After the workshop, AT members took some time to brainstorm about what was discussed and recommended that while we were going ahead with our peace gardening venture, it was necessary to arrange such community workshops since they reached out to a larger audience. Such workshops also helped in augmenting the gospel of peace and transforming strained relationships that happened to be the focus of our peace garden. Some of the action members made some stunning revelations that it was out of ignorance and poverty that they were manipulated by politicians to brutalise political opponents during the past elections and also to destroy their own communities. It was very encouraging to note that after this workshop, the paradigm shift became more evident among the AT members in the way they related during their peace gardening.

Observations revealed that they were openly interacting, joking together; a new practice of hugging each other became evident. It was imperative to note that laughter among them was not only becoming a common feature but one which slowly replaced fear, suspicion and bottled up anger which were evident before the implementation of this intervention strategy. Collectively the AT made a commitment that they were going to work for peace and non-violence, a feature which marked some progress towards post-conflict transformation in their lives.

6.11 The sixth session

Our sixth session was held after a series of delays which were caused mainly by activities which were beyond our control and are fully discussed in sections 7:13-7:15. Despite those challenges, the AT managed to remain intact though my observations revealed that people's hearts were slowly being hardened by politics. The main driving force was the issue of incentives which they were getting from political parties and the aspiring candidates. The most interesting part was that, of all the people who were in the AT right from the beginning, no one pulled out of the peace gardening initiative as a result of pressure from the discussed activities which derailed our scheduled meetings (see sections 7:13-7:15).

6:12. The seventh session

This session coincided with our first tomato crop which had matured, and there was great jubilation among the participants who regarded this development as an achievement in our peacebuilding initiative where people from these rival political parties had managed to start something and had finished it together, thereby proving right the philosophy that peace is possible (Smith 2012). Modalities were put in place on how the crop was going to be marketed and sold without causing conflict. The AT agreed that there was a need to take the tomatoes to the market in Masvingo and profits were shared amongst the members who made commitments that they would put the monies to good use. Some pledged to pay fees for their children, while others promised to change their wardrobes. The picture below shows the AT participants grading their first peace gardening crop for marketing in the nearby Masvingo town and the surrounding community:



Photo 4 Showing AT participants grading their first peace gardening crop (own data)

The concept of sharing monies among the action members did not only help them in transforming their lives but reached out to the entire community which realised that, regardless of the past election-related violence which had created disharmony among people, it was still possible for them to move on with life in a peaceful manner. The AT then agreed that maize was going to be planted in the garden after the harvesting of the tomato crop. Due to our limited time, however, we agreed that for the purpose of this research, our next session was going to be used for preliminary evaluation of the peace gardening venture up to then. Since it was an action research project, there was need for us to carry out an evaluation and then re-strategise on what needed to be done next.

6:13 The eighth session

The eighth session was held for the purpose of carrying out an evaluation of the peace gardening project and the entire research project. It was, however, unfortunate that the evaluation exercises coincided with national activities and, as a result, the AT did not have adequate time to carry out a detailed evaluation as discussed herein (see sections 7.12.1, 7.12.2, 7.12.2.1, 7.12.3, 7.12.4, and 7.12.5). By the time the evaluation was carried out, there were growing elements of suspicion in our peace gardening activity where fellow political members were suspecting that their fellow members had sold out or defected to other political parties.

The time which we had for this exercise was put to good use and the following information was deduced about the study and the peace gardening. The AT pointed out that peace gardening and the entire study promoted collaboration across the political divide by transforming previously tainted relationships which had been caused by election-related violence. There was consensus that the project must continue running and that an evaluative meeting be held to look at the challenges that were faced and devise some strategies on how to address them in the next session.

6.14 Activities which derailed our peace gardening project

From January up to June, everything worked out very well but things changed slightly when by-elections were held in Bikita and Mwenezi, which are neighbouring districts, see sections 7:12:1 and 7:12:2 respectively. Bringing together political party supporters from varied political parties was no longer tolerated and viewed with a great deal of suspicion. So, I temporarily suspended my field excursions for the whole month and continued when the by-elections were over.

There were weeks when we were not able to hold our peace gardening meetings, as only a handful of the AT members who did not constitute a quorum would avail themselves, regardless of the reminders that I would have communicated to the entire AT members prior to the peace gardening assembly days. The situation, however, degenerated to fairly bad but manageable levels after the campaigning for the 2018 general elections kick started in the mid-2017 as discussed in section 7:12:5. The factional fights were in ZANU-PF between the Generation 40 (G40), led by the first lady-Grace Mugabe and the faction which was called Lacoste and was believed to be led by the former vice president of the country Emerson Munangagwa. This led to the peaceful military takeover in the country which took place between the 15th and the 19th of November 2017. These developments affected our meetings, considering that the ZANU-PF group with which I was working included people from the two factions. The current political status has since changed face. The same people who belonged to factions earlier, joined hands as their party approached the 30 July 2018 harmonised elections. ZANU-PF won the parliamentary poll resoundingly though their presidential candidate Emmerson Dambudzo Munangagwa won the contested vote with a very narrow margin of 50.6% against the main oppositions' 44.3%.

6.14.1 Bikita West by-election

In accordance with Section 129 (i) of the Constitution, which provides for the tenure of Members of the Parliament, the Bikita West legislative seat was declared vacant. This was following the sentencing and imprisonment of the Member of Parliament, Munyaradzi Kereke on allegations and charges of having raped a minor (Government of Zimbabwe 2013). The main opposition party, the MDC-T, however, boycotted these by-elections citing the need for electoral reforms. During the campaigns, people were bussed from the nearby districts and that ended up affecting our AT as members who belonged to either party felt compelled to attend the rallies.

Bikita district shares the border with Masvingo district where our main peace gardening project was being carried out. It was interesting to note that each time members came back from these campaigning rallies, they came back with the mentality of no longer continuing with the peace gardening project or regarding it as a sheer wastage of time or regarding it as a Western-oriented agenda aimed at effecting regime change in the country. These were propaganda elements which were normally pronounced at political rallies.

The members claimed that they had been labelled as traitors of the struggle and puppets of the Western countries, an allegation that was levelled by the ruling ZANU -PF party, that the members were being sympathetic to the opposition. The other members would then persuade them to remember the thrust of our goal of promoting political broadmindedness and living in harmony with others. The dust settled when the elections were held and results were announced but, unfortunately, two months later, another by-election was to be held again in Masvingo province, a situation which was bound to affect our peace gardening project once again. It was saddening to note that the team's enthusiasm in peace gardening was again lacking as a result of fear of past ordeals.

6.14.2 Mwenezi by-election

Two months after the by-elections were held in Bikita West, another one was held in Mwenezi East constituency. In accordance with Section 129 (i) of the Constitution which provides for the tenure of Members of the Parliament, Mwenezi East seat was declared vacant following the death of the incumbent ZANU-PF legislator Joshua Moyo on 22 December 2016 (Government of Zimbabwe 2013). As a follow up to that untimely death of the legislator, 8 April 2017 was proclaimed by the President of Zimbabwe as the date for the holding of the Mwenezi East by-election. This by-election just like the previous one in Bikita

West generated a tremendous interest among political actors and civil society as they were keen to see whether the new constitution was going to be respected in the election process (CCJP Masvingo diocese 2017).

The campaigning was as rigorous as it had been in Bikita West. The technique of bussing people from nearby districts was employed once more. Just like the Bikita West by-election, the legislative vote had a negative effect on our peace gardening scheduled meetings in that some of our AT members were included in the campaigning team and as such, they missed many of our peace gardening activities. Upon their return, it was possible to detect that the mentality of hatred again had been rekindled in their hearts and minds but the good thing was that they continued coming to the peace gardening project. As earlier on mentioned in section 7.8.1, there was the need again to persuade members to always remember the thrust of promoting political broadmindedness with the intention of transforming post-conflict relationships.

6.14.3 Election Campaigns in Mwenezi East and Bikita West constituency

Election campaigns in both Mwenezi East and Bikita West were regulated by a code of conduct for political parties as contained in the Fourth Schedule of the Electoral Act which guarantees that everyone has the right to freely express their political opinion, campaign, and canvass for membership and support from voters (Government of Zimbabwe 2013: 68). Despite the existence of these provisions, the electoral playing field remained skewed in favour of the ruling ZANU-PF party candidate who enjoyed the power of incumbency and the support from the Traditional Leaders who helped him in canvassing for votes, a practice which was in contravention of the Traditional Leader's act (Government of Zimbabwe 2013: 110). Interparty violence was fairly pronounced during the run-up to the elections, which saw one of the candidates withdrawing from the race (CCJP Masvingo Diocese 2017). These by-elections affected our AT members and our peace gardening activities because some of them were called to take part in supporting their candidates as well as to take part in the elections.

6.14.4 Presidential youth interface rallies

The peace gardening activities were partly derailed by the Presidential youth interface rallies which were held in all the country's ten provinces. These meetings were muted by the ZANU-PF Youth League which called for the President to visit the country's entire provinces addressing and listening to the grievances of the youth. These interface rallies were meant

to re-dress the vestiges of colonialism and also to win the support of the youth through listening to their demands for inclusion in policy provisions aimed at lobbying economic empowerment, indigenisation and sanguine political participation (Mahomva 2017). It was also a cunning way of drumming support for the ruling party ahead of the 2018 general elections and also providing the roadmap for the informed participation in the 2018 general elections. The Youth and party supporters were enforced and bussed while some attended all the provincial interface rallies voluntarily in order to boost numbers at these rallies. It was practically impossible to hold the peace gardening event concurrently with these rallies and, as a result, much of our time was wasted, especially considering the fact that they were held in all the country's ten provinces.



Photo 5 showing the former president Robert Mugabe addressing one of the "presidential Youth Interface rallies" (own data)

The element of fear played an important role in derailing our meetings. While some action members were chosen to go and attend these interface rallies, those that remained behind could not come to the garden for our scheduled meetings since they were expected to either listen to the broadcast on radio stations or watch the live broadcast on television. As that was not enough, the other component which was associated with these interface rallies was that they were linked with lots of feeding and drinking (Maphosa 2013). That element of food and drink compelled people to prioritise going to the rallies at the expense of the peace gardening sessions where we had made it clear from the start that people were not going to get any form of remuneration or incentives. These interface rallies, together with the by-elections discussed above, had a strong bearing in derailing our peace gardening activities for a while.

6.14.5 Biometric voter registration exercise

The new constitution of the country called for the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to come up with a new voters roll which was to be first used in the 2018 harmonised elections (Government of Zimbabwe 2013). Before the adoption of the new constitution which called for the establishment of the independent electoral commission, the issue of the voters' roll was carried out by the Registrar General's office which was accused of partisanship by other political players. There was a call for all Zimbabweans to register afresh so that they would take part in the 2018 general elections through what is called Biometrics (ZCBC 2017). This is a technology used to capture unique physical features such as fingerprints or facial scans for the purpose of identification (Zimbabwe Election Support Network 2018).

The Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) was launched by the President of Zimbabwe and started on the 16th of September 2017 and was to continue running until the 20th of January 2018 (Chief reporter 2017c: 01). Since the exercise involved all eligible Zimbabwean voters, the process was unquestionably bound to disrupt normal activities in the country including our peace gardening project. The picture below shows the BVR exercise in full swing with the country's biggest daily newspaper alerting the Zimbabwean population that the exercise had begun in full earnest and ZEC was targeting to register seven million people (Chief reporter 2017a: 01).



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Moyo registering to vote at Remembrance Registration Centre

Figure 10 Biometric voter registrations in full swing (Chief reporter 2017b)

With so much emphasis being placed on the exercise, it became a bit awkward for the AT not to pay heed to this national exercise which was regarded as a historic occasion in the country's electoral system (Chief reporter 2017c). However, measures were put in place by the AT to make sure that the peace gardening project was not going to be brought down to its knees by this national activity. Members suggested and agreed that there was the need for people to attend the BVR exercises in turns so that at least some would remain active in the peace garden in order to meet the research deadlines.

6.14.6 General election campaign for the 2018 polls

There is glaring evidence on the ground that political parties had started preparations for the 2018 harmonised elections with elections directorates having already been set with the thrust of coming up with winning strategies and party manifestoes (Bwititi and Towindo 2017). By the time the project was compiled, these election directorates had already started various provinces to educate their support base on the essence of voter registration. These campaigning exercises are carried out on a massive scale and as such, general community life activities were bound to be interrupted in one way or another. The election campaigns are generally characterised by rigor, intimidation, and forced day and night meetings with hate speeches being prominent during these meetings (Mlambo 2014). With this looming

challenge, our peace gardening activity was bound to be derailed since the activity discussed here left the AT members with very limited options on whether to attend or not. Just like the alternative carried out in section 6:10:4, mechanisms were put in place for the AT members to meet at the garden on days and occasions which did not clash with these campaigning days.

6.15 Ethical considerations

The study abides by the ethical code of conduct to ensure that the rights of the participants are protected and respected. The information that was collected during the peace gardening activity and the entire study were promised to be made available to the participants. I carried out the selection of my study participants through the assistance of the church organisation called CCJP, which had worked with these societies for a reasonably long period, the local political leadership and traditional leaders. The involvement of CCJP in this study helped in that it was well known in this community due to its participation in three developmental programmes in the area, namely, Reshaping Our World, Human Rights and Constitutionalism and the Civic Education and Electoral programmes. As such it was easier for the community to embrace me and this peace gardening programme in this community.

Engaging the local political leadership from the main political parties and the local traditional leadership ranks eradicated any form of fear and suspicion from the local community. That also helped in protecting the owner of Welkom Hoek farm who had volunteered a portion of land for peace gardening usage. This local arrangement eradicated the need for seeking police clearance in order to hold such gatherings. The provincial leadership of both parties had also been informed of this study earlier; see appendices A and B respectively. Confidentiality was upheld during the study as no names were used in all the data collection instruments.

6.16 Summary

This chapter highlighted the context of the community in which this research was carried out and, in addition, it also accentuated how the peace gardening project was carried out by the AT. The chapter also discussed, in considerable detail, how some political and national programmes coincided with our scheduled peace gardening activities and ended up derailing our peace gardening project. Some of the notable success stories from this chapter show the bond, the forgiving hearts and reconciliation traits exhibited by the AT during the peace gardening project. The identified emerging themes from this chapter will be discussed in a

separate chapter (see Chapter Eight). The next chapter is a discussion on the analysis and findings from the study.

PART IV

CHAPTER SEVEN: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

THE PRE-PEACE GARDENING STATE OF AFFAIRS IN WELKOM HOEK COMMUNAL FARMLANDS

'We have witnessed election-related violence in the past in this country, but what we experienced in the year 2000 and 2008 was a new wave and frightening level of political violence.' Participant (2017)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study that were obtained from the field work conducted in Welkom Hoek communal farmlands in Masvingo, Zimbabwe between January 2017 and 30 May 2018. The findings were in line with the study objectives highlighted in Chapter One (see section 1.7). The chapter discusses the research community, the selection criteria for the study participants and the background of conflict in Welkom Hoek. The chapter also explores politics and elections which were identified by both the key informants and the FGD participants as the main causes of conflict in the community. The chapter also expounds other contributory causes of conflicts highlighted by the research participants while the last part of the chapter delineates the modalities of promoting social cohesion as they came from the community members who participated in the data collection exercise.

7.2 Research community

The Welkom Hoek area is dominated by new black farmers who benefited from the agrarian land reform which was implemented by the government in the year 2000. Residents are mainly perceived as ZANU-PF sympathisers. The opposition parties are, however, also making some inroads in the area in terms of their support base, a development which has over the years precipitated political conflicts in the area. As a result of this situation, political conflicts are always manifesting themselves each time the country nears elections which pit the opposition parties and the ruling party against each other. Welkom Hoek is a semi-urban environment located 18 kilometres east of Masvingo town: there are many criminal activities associated with the area such as thefts and prostitution.

Many community members are thought to have an insatiable appetite for money, drugs and alcohol. The money is either used for buying intoxicating beverages or travelling to the nearby town to buy second-hand clothes or cell phones. The current situation in the area demonstrates unhealed wounds which can be traced back to the past years of systematic structural violence (Chikwanda 2014: 24). There was a great deal of political violence in this area, which saw the maiming of rival political party supporters, deaths and disappearances of party activists. As previously noted in this thesis, about 36% of the people in this community do not value education and, instead, spend most of their time fishing in Popoteke River which passes through their community, hunting, attending political gatherings and drinking all sorts of intoxicating stuff such as the popular '*Chibatai munhu*' (a local traditional brew) resulting in high levels of unemployment. Unemployment in the area is currently pegged at 87% and due to this scenario the people are prone to manipulation towards, during and just after the elections (Zimbabwe population census 2012). It was from this community where the participants for both the FGD and interviews were drawn. More information about the research community has been earlier discussed in Chapter Six, section 6.1.

7.3 Selection criteria for participants

I used purposive sampling in the identification of participants and I collaborated with a nongovernmental organisation called Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in the implementation of the sampling procedure. The organisation has operated in the research community for the past ten years and I tapped into their vast experience in the identification of participants. A total of 12 people: male, female and youth, drawn from the country's two political parties, the MDC and ZANU-PF, participated in the focus group discussion which was only held at the beginning of the study, before the selection of the action team and the implementation of the action research intervention strategy. The table below gives the demographic information of the people who participated in the focus group discussion;

Table 7 Focus group discussion participants' demographic data (own data)

Community	Gender	Age	Political Affiliation		Code
Welkom Hoek			MDC	ZANU PF	
	Female	45			FGD
	Male	37			FGD

					FGD
	Male	35			FGD
	Female	40			FGD
	Female	50			FGD
	Male	33			FGD
	Male	46			FGD
	Female	25			FGD
	Female	29			FGD
	Male	24			FGD
	Male	25			FGD
Total	12				

According to the table above, most of the participants who took part in the focus group discussion were aged between 30 years and below and 40 years that translates to 83.3 % of the group while the 41-50 years age group contributed only 16.7 % of the FGD participants. To curb over representation or dominance from either ZANU (PF) or MDC, an equal number of participants were drawn from either party. As noted from the table evidence there was gender balance of participants from the two political affiliations. The contributions of the focus group discussion participants are represented in this study by the use of the code (FGD).The contributions of the FGD participants were merged with the responses which came from the 10 key informants. The 10 action team members were drawn from the members who had taken part in the FGD. The table below provides the biographical data and composition of the action team participants who took part in this study;

Table 8 Action team participants' demographic data (own data)

Community	Gender	Age	Political Affiliation		Code
Welkom Hoek			MDC	ZANU PF	
	Male	46			ATP
	Female	29			ATP
	Male	33			ATP
	Female	45			ATP
	Female	40			ATP
	Male	37			ATP
	Male	24			ATP
	Female	50			ATP
	Male	25			ATP
	Female	25			ATP
Total	10				

An equal number of participants were again drawn from the two dominant political parties in Zimbabwe to participate as the action team members for this study. According to the information highlighted in the table, the largest percentage of the action team participants comprised of both young people aged 30 years and below and the older age group aged 35 to 50 years. The table information also reflects gender balance among the participants. The views of the action team participants are shown in this study through the use of the code (ATP).The demographic data presented in the above tables (see table 7 and 8) contain information freely provided by the participants in a manner that did not violate the element of confidentiality.

An interview and FGD guide were used to generate data from participants (see Appendices I and J). A set of open-ended questions highlighted in section 7.4 below were used to draw responses from the participants and the interview responses were presented in quotes so as to depict the peculiar and emotive facet of the data presented.

7.4 Questions used for generating data

The questions below were used to generate data for this study:

- 1) What are the main causes of divisions and conflicts in your community?
- 2) What is your stance with regards to political violence and conflicts in general?
- 3) How have such divisions affected the general lifestyle in this community?
- 4) How can community cohesion be promoted?

7.5 In-depth interviews

During the data collection exercise, I interviewed ten key informants who occupied influential positions in the Welkom Hoek community especially those from the security sector, political party structures and those who had first-hand information about the political environment and the causes of conflicts in the research area such as traditional leadership. I carried out interviews with all the ten key informants who were purposely selected and they elaborated their perceptions and understanding on the causes of conflicts and divisions in Welkom Hoek communal farmlands. This community has been a theatre of political violence since 2000 to date, with the community divided along partisan politics for now more than a decade.

The table below gives a summation of the category of informants and the number of participants who took part in this study:

Table 9 Interview participants (own data)

Community	Category of key informants	Number of participants	Code
Welkom Hoek Communal farmlands	Traditional leader	1	KI
	Political leaders	2 (one from each political party)	KI
	Police officer	1	KI
	Party supporters	2 (one from each party)	KI
	Village head	1	KI
	Councillor	1	KI
	Farm owner	1	KI
	NGO representatives	1	KI
Total		10	

The table shows the category of key informants and the numbers of those who participated in the interviews that generated data for this study. The key informants included one traditional leader, provincial political leaders from ZANU-PF and the MDC, one police officer, two ordinary political party supporters one from each of the identified parties, one village head, the farm owner who gave the action team the portion of land to use for peace gardening, a councillor and a representative from one non-governmental organisation (CCJP). The views and expressions of the key informants are expressed in this study through the use of the code (KI) that is shown in the table above.

As discussed in Chapter Five, section 5.11.1, qualitative data collection using in-depth interviews was done in accordance with the below set chronological plan (Adapted from Boyce and Neale 2006:06):

- setting up the in-depth interviews with the key informants and explaining the purpose of the interview, why the participant was chosen, and the expected duration of the interview;

- seeking informed consent of the participant in accordance with the recommended ethics;
- conducting the in-depth interview after obtaining consent for 20-30 minutes with each participant;
- summarising the data immediately after the interview and verifying the information.

Qualitative data was extracted manually from the transcripts of the interviews followed by the content analysis and identification and coding of the emerging themes which will be discussed in Chapter Eight. Precise quotations were used in the write-up as illustrations and in most cases the quotes were maintained in their vernacular language but translated into English so as to retain the exact meanings and to give the participants a voice in this study.

7.6 Focus group discussion

During the data collection exercise, I held one focus group discussion from which the action team participants were drawn. The idea of having the peace garden as an intervention strategy came out very strongly from this platform and was later buttressed by the information which was collected from the key informants. Due to the nature and sensitivity of this study both political parties needed equal representation, and I had to accommodate six from either side a scenario which resulted in me using the maximum number of participants in the FGD (see table 7).

I purposefully gave equal attention to both political parties by giving their members equal quotas in the FGD. I deviated from Kvale (2007) who recommended between six and ten participants for an FGD session but I fell within the recommendations of twelve participants for an FGD recommended by Rubin and Rubin (1995) and Stewart and Shamdasani (2015). I used the FGD to make use of its vast merits which outweighed the demerits in generating data as pointed out in the following table which I earlier discussed in Chapter Six section 6.13.3.

Table 10 Merits and demerits of FGDs

Merits of FGDs	Demerits of FGDs
Allows collection of suitable amounts of data in a short time	Demands thorough groundwork before conducting it
Has low cost	Data analysis is more difficult to perform
Promotes spontaneous interaction of participants	Demands well-trained moderators
Helps in construction of questionnaire when it precedes a survey	Much effort is required to assemble the groups
	Discussion needs a conducive atmosphere

Source: Adapted from Freitas *et al.* (1998: 05)

Regardless of the fact that FGDs have some demerits as shown on the table above, they still facilitated the collection of useful data for this study which created the basis for formulating a framework and coming up with the peace gardening concept which guided this study (Freitas *et al.* 1998).

7.7 The importance of interviews and focus group discussions

In this study as earlier on highlighted in sections 7.5 and 7.6, I used both interviews and focus group discussions in order to complement and enhance the data collection methods. The tables showing both my interview and focus group participants' demographic data indicate that some meaningful attempt was carried out during the sampling criteria to cater for age, gender, and equal political party representation (see table 7 and 8). This selection criterion was meant to tape information from the youths, men, women and the elderly from both the MDC and ZANU PF. As I was carrying out my focus group discussion session, I noted that the atmosphere was a bit tense since we were discussing issues on political violence that is sensitive by nature. Apart from the sensitive nature of our discussion, the lack of political tolerance among the political party supporters as earlier discussed in this study (see section 7.15.2) complimented with the fear of the unknown played a part in creating the tense environment during the focus group discussion. Some element of laxity was noted after giving the participants assurance that the information generated from the discussion was going to be used solely for the purpose of this study and that the platform

called for equality among the participants regardless of gender, age or political affiliation. My observation however still proved to me that there was a need for follow-up interviews on some of the issues raised which needed further clarity from during the focus group discussion (Kvale 2007).

Considering that data analysis is generally difficult to perform during the FGD, I decided to resort to interviews as a complementary data collection method in that they allowed the summarisation of data immediately after the interview and verified the information. The FGD played an important role in bringing about the general sentiments that all the political party supporters had with regards to the causes of political violence in their community and their personal stance with regards to political violence. Interviews went a step further by unravelling personal information and experiences that did not emerge during the FGD, a feature that demonstrates why this study needs both the interviews and the FGD as data collection methods (Davies 2014).

Victims of political violence who took part in the interviews after having participated in the FGD still had a lot of data to share which they had not expressed out during the FGD. No wonder this section is professing reasons why this study needs both the interviews and the FGD processes. My observation from the FGD process indicated that the youths who participated in the FGD were a bit reserved during the process as if they were not comfortable in challenging the elders who were also participants. As though that was not enough, men wanted to dominate the proceedings regardless of how good the moderation was, a scenario that called for the use of interview platforms that gave all participants an equal platform to express themselves without fear (Mouton 2001). It was also necessary to use both the interviews and the FGD because the later allowed me to gather a lot of data within a short period of time that could not have been necessary in in-depth interviews.

7.8 The call for collaboration and promotion of sustainable peace in Welkom Hoek community

The interviews and the FGD both revealed that political conflict was the major challenge towards the promotion of sustainable peace in the Welkom Hoek community. All the 10 key informants who participated in the interviews and all the 12 participants who took part in the FGD agreed that the existence of political and other conflicts in their community had an overarching effect in the prevailing environment characterised by fear, division; lack of trust and the lack of political permissiveness. According to 90% of the interview reports, conflict

blurred any prospect of sustainable implementation of locally owned intervention strategies such as community projects and decision-making processes by local community residents.

The key informants and the FGD participants, however, stressed the importance of collaboration between the party supporters from the MDC and ZANU-PF as the key factor for any successful peace initiative. 100% of the Welkom Hoek research participants contended that the successful resolution of the political conflict in their community had the potential to unlock durable peace and promote political broadmindedness which was a missing dimension in their operations.

All key interview informants and the FGD participants regarded conflict as a divisive issue which would curtail cooperative initiatives and weaken any anticipated intervention strategies meant to transform post-conflict relationships among the political party supporters. Indeed, the interview and the FGD reports confirmed that there was 'hot air' (meaning angry statements) and enormous bad blood between party supporters from the two political parties. Their views were buttressed by different ideologies, discussed in Chapter Two section 2.7.

7.9 The historical background of conflict in Welkom Hoek community

The historical background of the conflict in this area is traced back to the aftermath of the 2000 harmonised election which left a trail of hatred and animosity among the community members after a serious wave of political violence by the country's main dominant political parties namely the MDC and ZANU-PF. People have remained divided over party lines. The state of affairs has remained the same in this community ever since, which did justify the need for this study.

7.9.1 The formation of the MDC and the proliferation of conflict

The formation of the MDC in 1999 changed the political landscape in the country, considering that it became the strongest opposition party in the country since attainment of independence in 1980. That development unsettled the ruling party which ended up resorting to dirty violent tactics to maintain its political supremacy and dominance. Since the formation of the MDC, subsequent elections in the country and in the Welkom Hoek community in particular, the levels of political violence and lack of political broadmindedness have been on the rise. As earlier discussed in sections 2.8.3, 2.8.4 and 6.11.1, the development brought hatred, fear, disharmony, and divisions among community members considering the fact that perpetrators of political violence have not been made accountable for their actions by the law

enforcing agents, especially if they happened to be aligned to the ruling party ZANU-PF or those who had money to bribe the country's poorly remunerated law enforcing agents.

7.9.2 Community fears in discussing political violence

Discussing issues of political violence in the area was generally viewed as taboo and when I first brought the idea of bringing the political supporters from these two rival parties and worse, suggesting that they do peace gardening together, there were clear signals of resentment and scepticism from the locals. The two parties have remained divided over their ideologies and that has cascaded to the party supporters. ZANU-PF took pride in being a liberation movement which brought about the independence of this country while the MDC also views itself as the vehicle for democracy in the country and has solutions to the country's economic woes which have haunted the Zimbabwean economy for the past two decades. The main bone of contention was that ZANU-PF has always viewed the opposition movement as a project of the Western countries which was bent on reversing the gains of the liberation war. Anyone who was seen associating with the opposition party was therefore regarded as the enemy of the state, unpatriotic and a sell-out who deserved to be dealt with in any way deemed fit.

As I was conducting both the FGDs and the interviews, I observed that the topic of political violence was extremely sensitive and unsettled people each time it was mentioned. The majority were not very comfortable to discuss the issue in detail as pointed out by one participant who stated that:

'Nyaya dzemhirizhonga nedzematongerwe enyika dzamave kuda kuti titaure idzi dzakaurayisa nekukuvadzisa vakawanda. Zvinotifungisa nguva dzakaoma dzatakambosangana nadzo'

(The issue of violence and politics which you are asking us to discuss has seen a lot of people losing their lives and many getting maimed. This topic reminds us of the difficult experiences we encountered in the past). [FGD, 2017]

The remarks by this participant demonstrate how reluctant community members were to discuss this very sensitive aspect due to fear and reopening of their old wounds. My divergent views with the locals on this aspect were that the local communities failed to realise that not talking about their painful experiences from political violence was not a solution. Keeping the pain within them was going to cause traumatic episodes and also open

avenues for ailments like stress, diabetes and high blood pressure. The opposition supporters, on the other hand, had a strong notion that for democracy to be realised there was a need to take the ruling party head-on, a development which fuelled frightening levels of political intolerance and violence in the Welkom Hoek community.

The discussion on election-related violence to some participants was more like opening cans of worms since they were still trying to come to terms with some of their relatives who had died, were maimed and disappeared during election time without a trace. This background has made relations in the community in question remain strained and fear among participants was supreme, a feature which justified the attempt by this thesis to transform the post-conflict relations in the area.

7.10 The causes of divisions and conflicts in Welkom Hoek community

When asked about the main causes of divisions and conflicts in their community, all the 22 out of 22 participants from both the key informants and those who took part in the FGD highlighted politics and elections as the main causes of conflicts in their community. Apart from politics and elections, these participants also identified unemployment and economic challenges, partisan distribution of food and prophetic healing churches as other minor cause of conflicts in their community as shown in the diagram below where the number of key informants and FGD participants was 22:

Table 11 Causes of conflicts identified by community members (own data)

Causes of conflicts in Welkom Hoek community	Frequency	Percentage
Politics	22	100%
Elections	22	100%
Unemployment and economic challenges	15	68%
Partisan distribution of food	14	63%
Prophetic healing churches	13	59%
Family disputes	12	55%

The table above identified through the frequency of people's responses that politics and elections were the main causes of conflicts in the community while unemployment and economic challenges, partisan distribution of food, prophetic healing churches and family disputes are considered as other causes of conflicts as discussed in the sections below.

7.11 Politics and conflict in Welkom Hoek communal farmlands

Zimbabwean politics has been characterised by surges of violence since the post-independence era and was identified by all the 10 key informants and the 12 who participated in the FGD as one of the main causes of conflicts in the Welkom Hoek community. These participants pointed out that the level of politically motivated violence normally reach alarming levels each time the country head towards national elections and that has been the trend since the 2000 general elections. The following sentiments in the table below support the above assertion that identifies political violence as the main cause of conflicts in the research community. Participants from the FGD also pointed out in the table below that since the attainment of the country's independence in 1980, community relations have been peaceful but get tainted each time the country was holding elections. The response from the key informants concurred that politics was the main cause of conflict in their community especially the political parties' support base as pointed out in the table below:

Table 12 Participant responses in Welkom Hoek

The response from the FGD	Response from the Key informants
<i>'Kubva patakawana kuzvitonga kuzere, nharaunda yedu yanga ichigara yakayanana asi micherechedzo yemirizhonga yaionekwa poga poga patinotaura nezvematongerwe enyika.'</i>	<i>'Zvamatongerwe enyika ndohonzeri huru yekusayanana kwevanhu munharaunda ino, kunyanya vanobva kumapato akasiyana ezvematongerwe enyika'..</i>
<i>(Since independence, people in this community have been living peacefully but elements of violence are noticeable each time the country will be conducting national elections. We live happily as a community when there are no elections but the trend since 1980 has been that relations among people get tainted each time we talk about politics).[FGD, 2017]</i>	<i>(Politics is the chief cause of conflicts in our community, especially to those who belong to diverse political parties).[KI, 2017]</i>
	<i>Zvematongerwe enyika kunyanya ndohonzeri yemakakava muno munharaunda medu'.</i>
	<i>(Politics is the main cause of conflicts in our community).[KI, 2017]</i>

The manner in which the above responses were highlighted shows that there is a thin line between politics and elections. The community members, however, agreed in their statements that politics and elections have played complementary roles in fuelling conflicts in their community since the first democratic elections in 1980. The information from both the key informants and the FGD shows that their community has been very peaceful except when there were political activities. Political supporters from diverse political parties seem to have failed to accommodate each other. Political tolerance has eluded this community for a while, a situation which has made the community fragile and does not agree with the African concept of *unhu* (humanness) which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Eight section 3.

7.11.1 Lack of political broadmindedness

The other serious challenge noted from the responses given by the participants was the lack of political progressiveness. Most respondents highlighted that the political ideology since 1980 has been that of perceiving a person from the opposition political camp as an enemy. This has even been noted from the party slogans which encompass the slogan phrase which says; '*pasi nemhandu*' which means 'down with the enemy'.

The following quotes demonstrate how the lack of political broadmindedness has been a major factor in causing conflicts in the communities as highlighted in the responses from the participants who said:

'Hatibvumirwi nemusangano wedu wezvematongerwe enyika kuonekwa tichitaudzana kana kufambidzana nevanhu vanobva kumapato anopikisa musangano wedu. Kwatiri isu zvinhu zvakadaro zvinoera, uye zvazvinoreva ndezvekuti ukaonekwa uchifambidzana nevemapato anopikisa zvinorevavo kuti watove weikoko'.

(We are not allowed to be seen interacting with people from other political parties especially opposition parties. To us, that is a taboo, being seen interacting with them simply means you have crossed the floor or you have sold out). [FGD, 2017]

The above assertion was bolstered by the views from the quotes below, where participants from both the interviews and the FGD stressed that:

'Ukaonekwa nedzimwe nhengo dzemusangano uchifambidzana nevamwe vekune mamwe mapato ezvematongerwe enyika unobva watonzi wave

mutengesu uye unotosheedzwa kuti uzotongwa nevakuru vezvemutemo mubato redu’.

(If you are seen mingling with people from the other political camp, you will be accused of selling out and will be called for disciplinary action from party leaders or be excommunicated from the party). [FGD, 2017]

‘Sezvinongoitavo mvura isingasangani neoyiri kana kuti semarudzi emubhaibhere aiti Majudha nemaSamariya, isuvo munyaya dzezvematongerwe enyika hatidizani nevanhu vanobva kenemamwe mapato ezvematongerwe enyika vane maonero akasiyana needu. Tinongotendekwa chete kufambidzana navo kana vafunga kuzova pamwe nesu’.

(Just like water and oil or just like the biblical Jews and Samaritans, in politics we do not mix with people from the other political parties whose ideologies are different from us. We are only allowed to mix with them if they decide to join our political party). [ATP, 2018]

The above sentiments from the respondents demonstrated high levels of intolerance by the Welkom Hoek community members in issues of political affiliation. The quotes revealed that mixing and interacting with people from opposing political parties was actually regarded as a taboo in their community, an aspect which denoted high and fear-provoking levels of lack of political broadmindedness. This concept of lack of political broadmindedness tallies well with the call for political tolerance and harmonious coexistence by (Laasko 1999a; Scarnecchia 2008), as discussed in sections 2.3 and 2.6. My personal observations also revealed that people were not very free to express their views in politically related issues, and when they did, they exhibited clear signs of fear such as mumbling and shaking.

This section discusses how politics was viewed by the respondents from both the interviews and the FGDs as the main factor working towards the perpetuation of conflict in communities in a way which has created a culture of violence since the 1840s. The community members in Welkom Hoek and Zimbabweans in general, have been affected by countless forms of violence that have triggered elements of fear, lack of trust and broken relationships among them stemming from political violence.

The next section discusses elections and how they are portrayed as an equal source of conflict in communities after politics.

7.12 Elections as a cause of conflict in Welkom Hoek

All respondents from both the FGD and the interviews agreed that elections, just like politics, have played an equal role in fuelling conflict in their community. Though the 1980's, elections were associated with violence; the 2000 elections became the milestone of an election which was viewed as not only violent but one which was not free and fair and was associated with frightening levels of both pre and post-election violence (discussed in Chapter Two section 2.7).

The participants highlighted that elections which are not democratic are prone to fuelling post-election violence. The participants kept on referring to the 2000 and 2008 elections which served as proof that elections which are not free and fair are sure to fuel post-election violence as expressed in the following statement by one of the key informants:

'Mhirizhonga takasimboiona hedu inokonzerwa nesarudzo muno munyika asi mhirizhonga yatakaona mugore ra2000 uye gore ra2008 hatisati tambosangana nayo'.

(We have witnessed election-related violence in the past in this country, but what we experienced in the year 2000 and 2008 was a new wave and frightening level of political violence).[KI, 2017]

The following sentiments raised by respondents during the FGD session corroborate the above assertion that elections have been the major cause of conflict in their community when they pointed out that:

'Sarudzo, dzinokonzera makakava akawandisa pakati pavatsigiri nevatungamiri vezvematongerwe enyika zvakanyanyisa munharaunda medu muno. Ukama hwedu tinotombohusendeka padivi kana nguva yesarudzo yasvika'.

(Elections cause a series of conflicts among different political party supporters in our community a lot. Our relations are normally shelved aside each time we are approaching elections). [FGD, 2017]

The views expressed by the participants in the above quotation vindicate the view held by Bratton and Masunungure (2008) that the 2000 and the 2008 harmonised elections have remained as the most violent in the archives of Zimbabwe's post-independence history (see section 2.7). The point of diversion is on why community members were not learning from

their past historical mistakes of being used to fight each other, to engage in acts of violence against their fellow community members as a result of small amounts of money and intoxicating beverages. Community members had noted that elections were cyclic while their relations were permanent and that being the case, they should have learned that there was no need to ruin relations over elections which were short-lived. The participants, however, pointed out that poverty and unemployment were their worst enemies in partaking in violent acts and failing to make sound and informed judgements, a situation which is normally hijacked by the political players who use the community members to engage in acts of violence. The concept of unemployment is discussed in the next section (see sections 7.13.1 and 7.13.2)

7.12.1 The call for peace gardening

The establishment of a peace garden for local capacity building, peacebuilding and empowerment dominated suggestions by both the key informants and FGD participants. 90% of the key informants stated that if community gardens were introduced together with irrigation facilities, local community residents would grow garden produce together with their perceived political opponents in a manner which was likely to promote durable peace and community cohesions. The call by the community members to establish a peace garden augured well with my action research design (see Chapter Five section 5.2) and my theoretical framework of peace and power which is enshrined on the concept of accommodating ways of working together (see section 4.4.5).

The overriding objective for establishing the peace garden was to enhance capacity building in a way that could realize empowerment of the local community members who had less economic and political power so as to lessen their dependency on the political leaders who manipulated them for political gain by providing new technical and entrepreneurial skills, together with problem-solving skills as was suggested by the FGD participant who said:

'Dai vagari vemunharaunda tichiwanavo mishandirapamwe yakaita seyemagadheni erunyararo yatinogona kuitavo hedu, taikwanisa kurwisa hurombo uye kukwanisa kuvavo vanhu vakazvimirira toga kuitira kuti tisazoshandiswa kuita mhirizhonga nevakuru vezvematongerwe enyika'.

(If it were possible for us community members to participate in community projects like peace gardens which would help us to fight poverty and

empower us in ways that would shun being used to perpetuate violence by aspiring political candidates).[FGD, 2017]

The views expressed in the above quotation shows that community members were yearning for community projects such as peace gardening which were likely to empower them and fight poverty head on. Such projects were also likely to give them extra income in ways that would boost their confidence and also curb being used in the perpetuation of political violence by political players. The concept of peace gardening was then mooted from this call and was unanimously adopted by all the FGD participants as a suitable intervention strategy for peacebuilding in the Welkom Hoek community.

7.12.2 Elections as a cause of disharmony in communities

All the 10 key informants and the FGD participants unanimously highlighted the aspect that elections had caused high levels of disharmony and conflict among community members. The respondents pointed out that when it is not election time, community relations will be very cordial but then everything changes from good to bad and resembles the biblical tension between the Jews and the Samaritans highlighted in John 4 verse 9 and Luke 9 verse 52-53 (Gideons International 2013) as stated in the following excerpt:

‘Nyaya dzesarudzo ndidzo dzinokonzera kusawirirana kwevagari munharaunda ino zvakanyanyisa, kana isiri nguva yesarudzo tinenge takagarisana zvakanaka chose asi kana nguva yacho yasvika tinenge tava maSamaria nemaJudha uye tinenge tisisagokedzani moto’.

(Elections are the major contributors to violence in this community. When it is not election time we relate fairly well but once its election time, we soon became the biblical Jews and Samaritans who did not get along at all costs. We disrespect the cultural tradition of sharing fire in the morning when its election time). [KI, 2017]

The above discussed sentiments by the respondents show that elections were regarded as the main causes of conflicts, together with politics in the Welkom Hoek community. The remarks from the respondents demonstrated that community relations were at least superficially cordial and normal when it was not election time. One other problem which also came out of the responses was that community members are compelled to take part in politics and the election processes with no room left for those who yearned to be apolitical or otherwise.

7.12.3 The use of hate speech during election time

The FGD participants pointed out that the component of hate speech was slowly becoming a characteristic feature associated with election time by stating that:

‘Nguva yesarudzo inozivikanwa nekukandirana manzwi makukutu eketukana pamisangano, kurohwa, kukuvadzana, kuvhundusirana, kutorerana zvinhu nechisimba uye kuputsirana dzimba’.

*(Election time was characterised by the use of hate speech at rallies, torture, massacre, threats, looting of personal property and destruction of houses).
[FGD, 2017]*

I also observed that in Welkom Hoek victims of political violence still had some vivid marks which made it easier to detect the tools used during the violent acts such as machetes, steel rods, knobkerries and knives. The observational platform I had helped me in detecting that fear was still rampant among community members as some of them preferred to remain mum on issues related to political violence. I remember someone failing to narrate his ordeal as a victim of political violence during the first days of the study.

This section discusses how the elections fuelled conflicts from the data generated from the field work in Welkom Hoek community and the next section discusses the perceptions which the local communities had about political violence and conflicts in general.

7.13. Other causes of conflicts in Welkom Hoek

This section explores other causes of conflicts which were highlighted by participants as contributory factors which were not comparable to the ones they classified as the main causes (see sections 7.3 and 7.4).

7.13.1 Unemployment and economic challenges

Unemployment and economic challenges were identified by 68% of both the key informants and the FGD participants as one of the other causes of conflict in the Welkom Hoek community (see Table 7.2). While election-related violence and politics have been identified as the chief causes of conflicts in the Welkom Hoek community, there have been other causal aspects emanating from social violence fuelled by the rise of unemployment and poverty. It is important to note that the violence which has been proffered by elections since 1980 have generated substantial levels of misery amongst ordinary citizens. One respondent pointed out in the following interview that:

'Kushaya mabasa ndiko kumwe kunokonzeravo nyaya dzemhirizhonga muno munharaunda nenyaya yekuti vanhu vave kuita chero zvisingatatarisirwi kuti vawane mari yekurarama kana kumwa zvinodhaka kuti vambokanganwa nhamo'.

(Lack of employment opportunities in our community is one driver of conflicts and political violence in our community as people will end up doing antisocial acts for them to get monies for survival with their families or money for buying beer in order to forget about our misery for a while).[KI, 2017]

The responses above show how the lack of employment opportunities has been driving community members into antisocial acts including political violence, prostitution and alcoholism. The country has been experiencing economic disintegration since the implementation of the 2000 agrarian land reform, a situation that has stemmed alarming levels of economic decadence in financial institutions, industries, mining and the dwindling agricultural sector. It is not a secret that Zimbabwe is currently rising from more than two decades of a political calamity which was propagated by the maladministration of Robert Mugabe and his associates in government whose policies brought the country to its economic knees.

7.13.2 Youth and unemployment

This group of people is discussed separately due to the fact that they present security threat to the country yet at the same time are the country's future citizens. The politicians manipulate and use them as agents in perpetuating violence. The 2000 and the 2008 elections saw the use of the youth militia in fuelling violence against opposition supporters. Unemployed youth who are being churned out of universities and colleges in Zimbabwe have also become a threat to community peace and there is competition between political parties to win the favour of this group which was at the time of writing to be a deciding factor in the elections of 2018.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission has revealed that youth constituted more than 50% of the registered voters on the current new voters' role (Zimbabwe Election Support Network 2018). The fact that these youth remain unemployed makes them prone to manipulation by politicians as highlighted by the following respondents who said;

'Vakuru vezvematongerwe kubva kumapato ose enyika vanoziva kuti rutsigiro rwevechidiki rwakakosha chose nemahaka yekuti ndivo vakawanda

pavanhu vakanyoresa kuti vavhote musarudzo dziri kuitwa gore rino ra2018 saka vanoidza chose kuvimbisa vechidiki ava mabasa nekuvaudza zvinovafadza kuitira kuti vagowana rutsigiro rwavo. Nengari yekuti havana mabasa vechidiki ava vanofuririka nyore zvakare kuti vaite mhirizhonga vachishandiswa neavo vane mari dzavo'.

(Political leaders from all the political parties are aware that the youth are very important in the upcoming elections considering that they constitute a significant percentage on the current voters' roll so they try to please them in various ways by either promising them employment opportunities or telling them what they want to hear). [KI, 2017]

Due to the youth's unemployment status, the above quotes have shown that they have become prone to manipulation by would-be political contestants who buy their loyalty through buying them beer and tobacco and even drugs so as to lure them into committing acts of political violence in their favour. As a result of their desperation for money and the intoxicating drugs, the youth end up engaging in political violence in order to please their political masters from any political party which offers them a good deal. One FGD participant pointed out that they were now aware of the dirty tricks played by the politicians when he said that:

'Vanoita zvementongerwe enyika vanetsika yekupa vanhu vimbo paisiri. Kana nguva yesarudzo yasvika vanovimbisa mabasa asipo asi nengari yekuda mari kwationoita, tinopedzisira toita zvavanoda zvekuita mhirizhonga kune avo vanenge vachivapikisa',

(Politicians, in general, have a habit of giving communities hope in hopeless situations. Towards elections, they promise community members and youth some non-existent jobs. We have been promised jobs but to no avail but as a way of generating some little income, we end up taking up their instructions of perpetrating violence against those who oppose them and the parties they represented).[FDG, 2017]

The sentiments drawn from the above quote demonstrate that unemployed youth in the Welkom Hoek community are prone to be used as perpetrators of political violence due to their predicament of unemployment and their insatiable appetite for alcohol and money. Regardless of their potential to detect that their situations have not been positively changing,

they still find themselves meddling in politics and perpetrating violence in communities. The use of political manipulation confirm Moyo's (2013) remarks in the article entitled 'Survival strategies in Zimbabwe in the twenty-first century'. Unemployment proved to be a serious problem in Welkom Hoek community. Respondents pointed out that unemployment rates had continued to escalate due to political and other related conflicts as discussed in this chapter. Companies in the province including Simbi Holdings and the Cold Storage Commission shut down as a result of the economic challenges the country was experiencing, thereby leaving a large number of the population in the Welkom Hoek community unemployed.

7.13.3 Family disputes in the community

The study reveals that family discord is often a result of different political affiliation. I noted that understanding that conflict was normal and served as the first step towards an individual's ability to deal with conflict situations in nonviolent ways. Family conflicts were also being exacerbated by young couples who were not staying long in marriage due to economic challenges. The FGD respondent clarified the position by highlighting that:

'Vana vanongoroorana kwenguva duku vobva vaparadzana, umwe ave kuenda kunze kwenyika kunotsvaka cheviri. Uya anenge asiwa kuno nekuda kwezera anobva atangavo kuita gumbo mumba, gumbo panze zvinobva zvakonzeresa makakava pakati pavabereki uye mhirizhonga kana kutoti rufu panodzoka murume achinzwa kuti mukadzi anga ave kuita zvechipfambi.'

(Young children are getting married for short durations before they separate with the unemployed husbands resorting to looking for employment in greener pastures so as to fend for the family. The young woman who will have been left behind will start flirting with other men a situation which will be bound to create conflicts among the couple's parents and violence or even death when the husband returns from the foreign land and hear about the infidelity practices).[FGD,2017]

The above quote has demonstrated that economic challenges have also added woes on families by breaking up marriages and causing misunderstandings amongst the in-laws, an occurrence that has become very common in the Welkom Hoek community.

7.13.4 Prophetic healing churches and conflicts

The key informants and the FGD participants both pointed out that the church was deviating from its role of uniting people through the mushrooming of prophets. These prophets claim to have both healing and foretelling abilities. When family or community members experience some misfortunes, these prophets claim to be able to identify the causes of those misfortunes. When they identify people responsible for causing such misfortunes, they normally point out community neighbours or fellow family members, a situation which has caused serious conflicts in the Welkom Hoek community. The following extracts from the interview participants and the FGD participants sum up the scenario in Welkom Hoek.

'Kuuya kwakaita Kereke dzomweya muno munharaunda kwakakonzeresa makakava akawanda, vava kuvenganisa hama nevagarisani nenyaya yekuvadoma sevaroyi uye vaunzi veminyama'.

(The coming of these new prophetic healing churches causes a lot of conflict; they have fuelled hatred among relatives and community members by pointing them out as sources of misfortunes and being witches) [KI, 2017]

'Kereke hadzichasi kuita mabasa adzo ekuyanana vanhu, kubva pakauya zviporofita munharaunda muno makabva maita kusawirirana kwakanyanya'.

(Churches are no longer playing their unifying role, since the emanation of the prophetic healing churches the levels of conflicts in this community have been going up). [FGD, 2017]

As pointed out in the above quotes, the concept of prophetic healing churches has brought a paradigm shift from the traditional orthodox churches which were renowned for promoting peace and collective harmony. These prophetic healing churches are divisive and have been identified as one of the contributory factors associated with fuelling conflicts in the Welkom Hoek community.

7.13.5 Partisan distribution of food

The practice of political polarisation was a common feature in Welkom Hoek community that led to the politicisation of non-political aspects of their welfare such as the distribution of government and NGO provisions of food hand-outs. The community members pointed out that it was a prerequisite for individuals and communities to be politically aligned in order to benefit from the food distribution schemes carried out by the political parties. Both the MDC

and ZANU-PF distributed some food hand-outs to their supporters as a way of rewarding their allegiance as pointed out by one participant;

‘Nyaya yechikafu chekupiwa ndiyo imwe iri kushandiswa chaizvo munharaunda muno kuti vanhu tirambe tichitsigira mapato ezvematongerwe enyika. Nenyaya yekuti kuno kune nzara, vanhu vanotovenganirana chikafu ichochi zvakanyanya’.

(Food distribution is one aspect used in this community to buy political allegiance by the dominant political parties. Considering that we are in region four which is renowned for receiving low rainfall amounts and perennial droughts we are therefore compelled to continue supporting these parties for survival. The partisan distribution of food fuels hatred and bad relationships among the Welkom Hoek community members). [FGD, 2017]

There was need for an intervention strategy to address this community challenge which was blocking community peace, and the participants strongly felt that the peace garden had the potential to empower communities, promote self-sustenance in ways which curbed manipulation by political parties.

This section has discussed how politics, elections, unemployment and church related conflicts and partisan distribution of food have affected the general lifestyle in the Welkom Hoek community, as confirmed by the data generated from the field work. The next section discusses how community cohesion could be promoted in the community.

7.14 Perceptions about political violence and conflicts in general

As far as participants’ perceptions on political violence were concerned, 90% of the key informants and those who took part in the FGD concur that political violence and conflicts were generally bad. Their consensus on the issue of political violence was that it was not good for their society and the entire country of Zimbabwe as a whole. The respondents acknowledge that they were coerced into carrying out violent acts by politicians who took advantage of their poverty and needy positions as was highlighted by the FGD participant who said;

‘Ndakamiririra vamwe vagari vemunharaunda muno, regai ndinyatsobuda pachena kuti isu sevagari venharaunda ino nyaya dzemhirizhonga ezvematongerwe enyika uye mhirizhonga dzipi zvadzo hadzina kutinakira.

Zvakakosha kuti tibudise pachena kuti tinowanikwa tobatidza mukuitwa kwemhirizhonga nenyaya yekushayiwa uye kusashanda kunoita vanhu vazhinji vemunharaunda muno zvinova zvinhu zvinoita kuti vematongerwe enyika vakwanise kutishandisa nenzira dzavanoda’.

(On behalf of everyone present here, let me categorically point out that as community members, we are saying political violence of any nature and conflicts, in general, are very bad for our community and the entire Zimbabwean nation. It is important to point out that we act to the contrary mainly because of poverty and unemployment which the political leaders are taking advantage of to manipulate us). [FGD, 2017]

The above remarks by the participant demonstrate the local community's desire for peace and harmony while showing their disgust over both political violence and conflicts in general. The local political leaders use the locals' vulnerable positions to give them some food, *mabhero* (a popular term used to refer to second-hand clothes in Zimbabwe) and monetary bait so that they perpetrate violence against opposition political supporters on their behalf.

An interesting phenomenon of conflict, that of poverty and unemployment which compels them to take part in political and election-related violence and other forms of violent acts against their wishes, emerges as a major problem to which peace gardens provide an immediate remedy as the participants work in them and earn money from the garden produce.

Another key informant participant stated in an interview that political violence causes community unrest. Here they meant that political violence sets a bad precedence in the society, and it was not good news in the area since it contributed towards underdevelopment at local, national and regional levels as pointed out by the participant who stated that;

‘Nyaya dzemhirizhonga dzinounza kusagadzikana munharaunda uye hadzisi nhau dzakanaka ukatarira nguva dzatiri kurarama nemahaka yekuti dzinokonzera kushaikwa kwebudiriro munharaunda medu, munyika medu uye mudunhu rechekumabvazuva kweAfrica yose’.

(Political violence promotes unrests in our community and if you look at the time we are living in, you will discover that political violence results in lack of development at communal level, national and regional level).[KI, 2017]

The above remarks demonstrated how the community members revealed their negative perceptions towards political violence and conflicts in general. The excerpt pointed out that political violence was bound to promote community unrest, a feature which was likely to discourage development in the community and the country as a whole.

7.14.1 Political violence and community divisions

Participants further highlighted that political violence causes divisions in communities as was experienced during the by-elections held in Mwenezi and Bikita districts: when participants themselves returned, they had changed their positions. They returned from these by-elections exhibiting signs of relapsing and intolerance yet, before they left for those national programmes they had shown signs of unity and tolerance with their political rivals as peace garden members. One AT member who attended the two plebiscites pointed out that:

‘Pandakanosangana nevamwe kwatakaenda kuBikita nekuMwenezi ndakaona sekuti ndave kuregerera vamwe vangu vemusangano ndichiswera kuno ndichitamba nevavengi’.

(When I met my fellow party members during the by-elections in Bikita and Mwenezi, I felt like I was betraying the party by spending time in the garden here playing with enemies). [ATP, 2018]

The relapse shown in the above remarks agree with the research findings that peacebuilding is not an overnight event and calls for the need to have more intervention cycles or to make individual follow ups.

7.14.2 The call for imprisonment on perpetrators of violence

Study participants suggested that since political violence was bad, it should not be given room at all. They were of the opinion that those who perpetrated violence should be arrested. As earlier noted by some participants, perpetrators should be looked at as bad weeds in the garden, thus should be weeded out. Some participants further argued that political violence does not stop at creating divisions in the communities, but also promotes abuse of human rights and affects family bonds in a very negative manner as was pointed out by the participant who said;

‘Nyaya dzemhirizhongwa dzezvematongerwe enyika dzagara dzisina kunaka, saka shuviro yedu ndeyekuti dai paiswavo mutemo uye unotevedzerwa wekuti vanowanikwa vachikonzera mhirizhongwa dzezvematongerwe enyika

dai vachisungwa kuitira kuti nharaunda dzedu dzisagara dzine nharadada dzakadaro’.

(The issues of political violence are generally bad and it is our wish that there should be some legislation which should be adhered to with regards to the arrests and trials of those who will have perpetrated political violence so that our society is left without such political criminals). [KI, 2018]

One of the participants during an FGD further revealed that they have been lured into political violence by the ‘big wigs’ in politics as she was quoted saying:

‘Avo vari muzvigaro zvekutonga vanoshandisa zvinhu zvakaita sechikafu nemari kuti manikidza kuita mhirizhongwa dzezvematongerwe enyika’

(Those in power use resources like food and money to force us into taking part in election-related violence). [FGD, 2017]

It is worth noting that by nature conflicts and violence are generally bad, and participants generally recognised that too much involvement in politics (fanaticism) can cause stress, mental illness and other ailments. It was further revealed by participants that violence and conflicts also had the capability of promoting disharmony in communities, especially among members of political rivals. As earlier noted, violence and conflicts beget disharmony and disharmony begets underdevelopment and consequently a vicious circle of poverty results. Fortunately, most participants agreed in unison that people must not be divided along party lines.

7.14.3 The role of leaders in promoting peace

The onus with regards to reconciling communities is upon leaders as was done in Kenya in March 2018 when Raila Odinga (the leader of the opposition parties in Kenya) came out publicly and shook hands with President Uhuru Kenyatta, and urged his supporters to unite and stop acts of violence (Kahura 2018). This should be emulated by all other countries which have experienced political violence, including Zimbabwe. The picture below shows Raila Odinga and Uhuru Kenyatta shaking hands in what was billed as ‘shaking hands with the devil’. The heading of the handshake, however, showed the lack of political

broadmindedness an unparalleled level of polarisation among political commentators and



journalists.

Figure 11 The famous handshake between Raila Odinga and Uhuru Kenyatta (Kahura 2018)

7.14.4 The call for free campaigns and non-violence

Participants further revealed that people should be allowed to campaign freely. Intimidation during political campaigns should not be allowed in the political spectrum of the country and people who are using politics to settle personal grudges as earlier observed should be weeded out in the society. It was further noted that political violence should always be resolved peacefully and not simply create further acts of violence. There are various ways of resolving disagreements using nonviolence. This includes nonviolent boycotts as was done by Mahatma Gandhi in India against British rule in the 1930s. The same approaches should be emulated in resolving political disagreements in Zimbabwe as earlier noted, some participants intimated that perpetrators of violence should be eliminated from the society and people must not be bystanders in such circumstances as pointed out by the participant who said;

‘Vanhu vanopara mhosva kusanganisira mhirizhongwa dzezvematongerwe enyika vanofanira kusungwa’.

(Those who take part in election-related violence must be imprisoned). [FGD, 2017]

7.14.5 Separation of government and political party activities

Lastly, as far as people's stance on political violence was concerned, the study's participants argued that there should be a clear distinction between party and government activities. Politicians have a tendency of mixing both, and it is a sign of immature politics. That is why political violence has been inevitable especially during the election season. It is worse to hear that there have been incidences of partisan distribution of food. Poverty has affected all people regardless of their parties but it is very unfortunate that whenever there is an opportunity for distributing food, it is usually one-sided, favouring those who belong to the ruling party.

Participants further highlighted that there was no need for community members to fight over political leadership since politics was a dirty game. One of the participants was quoted saying:

'Unofira mahara, vanoita zvematongerwe enyika hava rwisani'.

(You do not benefit anything. You will die for nothing. For those who benefit from politics do not fight). [FGD, 2017]

This development where community members realised on their own that politics was a dirty game was and will remain a good sign in peacebuilding for the Welkom Hoek community.

This section discussed the perception of the Welkom community towards political violence and conflicts in general and the next section discusses how political divisions affected the locals' ways of doing things.

7.15 Effects of divisions on the general lifestyle in Welkom Hoek community

This section of the study explores what the participants said in relation to how their general lifestyles were affected by the divisions which were triggered by political conflict in their area.

7.15.1 Communication breakdown in the community

The key informants in the study highlighted how political divisions had affected their general social fabric of the community by stating that:

'Vanhu havachataudzani zvakanaka, kunyanya vatsigiri vezvemapato ematongerwe enyika'.

(Community members are not on good talking terms with people from diverse political parties). [KI, 2017]

FGD participants supported the above sentiments by also stressing that:

'Munharaunda mava nekusashandira pamwe kwatoknzero kuti vanhu vemunharaunda vasataudzana zvakanaka'.

(This community has been marred by divisions which have caused some communication breakdown among members). [FGD, 2017]

Key informant participants were of the opinion that divisions have affected communities negatively in ways which disagree with the concept of *Unhu* (see discussion in section 7.8.1) in the sense that:

'Hapasisina kukudzana munharaunda medu uye kuvimbana kwave kushoma zvoita kuti vanhu vararame upenyu whekungofungirana',

(There was no longer respect for others in the community and there was lack of trust over one another as we are living suspicious lives). [KI, 2017]

The above responses from both the key informants and the FGD participants show that disunity has caused animosity, hostility and apprehension which are generally considered un-African in our culture. This view is also shared by the Zimbabwe Human Rights (2007) which availed evidence on Zimbabwe's general elections have been fraught with political violence, voter intimidation which resulted in 20,000 displacements, 10,000 serious injuries and more than 186 deaths. This scenario exposed many Zimbabweans to some psychological, social and economic deprivation (Zimbabwe Human Rights 2007). It remains to be ascertained, in the long run, whether there will be a political will to convert the above comments into commitments for substantial political reform in the Zimbabwean context. This is because some political entities which thrive on violence may be unwilling to institute political reforms in the foreseeable future.

7.15.2 Community division and fear

Another issue on effects of divisions which the respondents alluded to was that of fear. It was highlighted that people were now living in fear. The key informants in the study indicated that people were very much disturbed by political violence and fear was reigning supreme among most of them;

'Vanhu vakavhundusirwa kwenguva refu saka tangova vanhu vanotya uye zvotonyanyiswa nekusawirirana kuri munharaunda medu'.

(We have been subjected to fear for a long time and as such we are now a fearful community and that has been augmented by the glaring divisions in this community). [KI, 2017]

Perceived opposition political party supporters feared beatings, unlawful arrests, and disappearances which characterised previous elections in the country. According to one of the FGD respondents:

'Vanhu vave kugara vachitya, uye vakabatira ura mumaoko.'

(People are now living in fear and uncertain of what will happen to them). [FGD, 2017]

In view of the unfortunate developments highlighted by the Welkom Hoek community members, studies on political violence, such as those carried out in Columbia, Guatemala and Burma, have revealed a change in the overall function and climate in communities through instilling a collective sense and a generalised climate of fear (Lykes 1997; Skidmore 2003). These two authors described this kind of fear as 'collective fear from all fronts' a scenario similar to what community members in Welkom Hoek are experiencing. It was out of some of these reasons that most of Zimbabwe's post-independence elections have not been regarded as free and fair by some international and regional bodies' standards (LeBas 2016: 03). The community members did not take to the streets to show their discontentment over the conduct of elections though they were not happy in the manner they have been conducted since 1980 due to the fear of the unknown, a scenario which serve as indication of the prevalence of negative peace in this community.

Both participants from the FGD and the key informants felt that when there was such fear in their community, political participation and engagement by the marginalised groups was already compromised or endangered. When people participate freely in voting, that promotes a sense of having a say or a stake in the democratic system. This political participation also encouraged Welkom Hoek community members to become more knowledgeable about politics and enabled people to channel their demands to the political system through legal and peaceful means. The deprivation of community members with the essence of coexistence threatens the concept of the rule of law, personal freedoms and

other fundamental human rights which are enshrined in the country's national constitution (Government of Zimbabwe 2013).

7.15.3 Concept of communal hatred

Hatred was highlighted as another factor which affected the general community in the study area. The participants were of the view that hatred consisted of expressions that were typically used by political leaders against their opponents. Generally, participants argued that political leaders used hate speech with the aim of achieving personal goals as pointed out by the participants who retorted that:

Vanhu vanotyisidzirwa kunyanya vava vanotsigira mapato asiri ZANU–PF.

(People' are intimidated, especially those that support opposition political parties). [KI, 2017]

(The language used by aspiring political leaders is so threatening especially when directed against those who belong to opposition parties. They are generally regarded as enemies of the state or puppets of the West). [KI, 2017]

(Political leaders intimidate us so that we can either vote for them to get into power or to maintain their political positions). [KI, 2017]

(The statements directed against political opponents are loaded with hate and intimidatory sentiments). [KI, 2017]

The results, however, demonstrated that hatred was being brewed or advanced by all political parties through their leaders and supporters during election periods. Participants highlighted that they were intimidated while at the same time hatred and intimidation in the Welkom Hoek community were used for the purposes of:

- denigrating political opponents,
- gaining more support among voters who support their views,
- gaining political power by humiliating others,
- drawing attention to the wrong doings of political opponents,
- marginalising groups on the basis that they are different;
- creating divisions among ethnic groups; and politicians moving attention away from the real social problems.

Hatred and hate speech together with intimidation unquestionably weakened the social bonds in the studied community as buttressed by an FGD participant who said:

'Vanhu vave kungoita mazvake mazvake uye vamwe vave kungoitavo madiro aGeorgina'.

'People were no longer consulting one another; each one was acting as he/she pleases as the concept of consulting others was slowly diminishing in communities.' [KI, 2017]

(We are now living in very weak communities which are compelling people not to work together). [KI, 2017]

Some actions carried out by the community members were no longer compatible with African concept of *unhu* in the way they were doing their things in communities as one participant pointed out:

'Vanhu havachatoindi panenge paita rufu pamisha yeavo vavanenge vasingawirirani navo kunyanya pane zvementongerwe enyika'.

(People no longer attend funerals at the homes of those they are not related with, especially those from opposing political parties). [KI, 2017]

(The polarisation in our community has reached alarming levels which have seen people defying our own African traditions in some cases. People opt not to attend funerals for members perceived to be aligned to opposition parties).
[KI, 2017]

The African concept of *unhu* generally believed in the concept of communal grief where community members were expected to partner those mourning regardless of whatever differences existed between community members. This strong African belief was slowly being eradicated by partisan politics and the failure by community members to work harmoniously for the common good. Due to fear, people in the community were now susceptible to a wide range of social and political problems at the community level. Another disturbing trend is that political violence has now implicated community members in many mental health outcomes such as depression and anxiety. Some studies have shown that political violence compromises necessary social and political systems and inhibits individuals from participating in social and political life (World Health Organisation 2002). It followed that the social and political contexts of people's lives may need to be adapted to offer some

protection from effects of political violence if people work towards settling their differences peacefully.

7.15.4 Political division and social order

It was also noted through one FGD participant who pointed out that:

‘Pane zvinoratidza pachena kuti munharaunda hamuna kuwirirana kunyanya pakati pavanhu vanobva kumapato akasiyana ezvematongerwe enyika’.

(There are glaring divisions between community residents especially those from different political parties). [FGD, 2017]

The outlined divisions were attributed to the general lack of trust among community members as a result of divisions caused by political violence. It was also believed to cause community unrests and members of the community were no longer free to participate in community programmes.

It was reported that there was lack of social order and respect for some of public officials due to lack of unity as pointed out by the interview participant who said:

‘Mamiriro akaita zvinhu munharaunda muno anoratidza kuti vanhu havasisina kubatana sezvavaimboita kare’.

(Generally, communities are no longer united as they used to be). [KI, 2017]

While the one FGD participant also pointed out that;

‘Nyaya dzesarudzo dzezvematongerwe enyika ndidzovo dzinokonzeresa kusawirirana pavagari vemunharaunda muno’.

(Elections are also credited for fuelling a lot of disharmony among the community members). [FGD, 2017]

The above sentiments from the participants demonstrated that both political violence and elections had caused a series of problems comprising forced displacements, abductions, torture, killings, rape of women and children and broken relationships (Chikwanda 2014: 15). As the community unity was adversely affected, the issue of political violence had affected the social community order including even family relations, where in some cases the children and the parents or wives and husbands failed to relate well as a result of their different political affiliations as earlier pointed out in section 1.5.

7.15.5 Electoral violence as a suppression tool

Election violence is implicated in oppressive tendencies and in keeping with this view, Farmer (2004) regarded election violence as social machinery for oppression meant to institute regular, systematic, and intentionally prohibit the realisation of full human potential through unequal arrangements of social, economic and political power. Zimbabwe's traditional leaders often fall in this trap of being used as government's intimidation machinery as pointed out by Rukuni *et al.* (2015) article on the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. The call for traditional leaders to be apolitical tallies well with the writings of Arnold, Garber and Wrobel (1985) which have earlier on been alluded to as highlighting the partisan role traditional leaders were playing in the country's national elections (see section 2.4).

This section has discussed how political divisions and other highlighted conflicts in this section affected the general lifestyle of the community members in Welkom Hoek and the next section discusses how community cohesion could be promoted in the same community and others in general.

7.16 Promotion of community cohesion

This section discussed ways that were suggested by the community members as essential for the promotion of communal cohesion in their society. From the responses by the key informants and the FGD participants, 96% of the respondents indicated that they wanted to curb political violence in their community through the introduction of a community project such as a peace garden or *nhimbe* (a communal village practice of working together). It was suggested by one of the participants that:

Panofanirwa kuti vagari vemunharaunda vadzidziswe nzira dzisiri dzemhirizhonga mukugadzirisa makakava.'

(There is need for community members to be taught about non-violent ways of addressing conflicts). [KI, 2017]

(We are making an appeal for more workshops and trainings to be carried out in communities where people should be taught on the dangers of political violence and the importance of nonviolent cultures) [KI, 2017]

(There is need for programmes such as sports and gardens that are aimed at making communities conscious on the need for social cohesion). [KI, 2017]

From the remarks discussed here, the study found out that the initiating of sustainable livelihoods through small scale businesses could help in absorbing the idle and unemployed youth as a mechanism for reducing the number of people who could be incited into political violence and criminal activity.

7.16.1 Social cohesion

All the ten key informants supported the need for social cohesion and its promotion in their community by making open calls that;

‘Panoda kuti nharaunda dzidziswe kuwirirana kuripo pakati perunyararo nebudiriro yemunharaunda’.

(There was need again for communities to be taught about the interconnection between peace and community development). [KI, 2017]

While other participants from the FGD also highlighted the need for the following initiatives in promoting social cohesion;

‘Kubatana kunogona kuvakwa kuburikidza nekukudzana kunoita vanhu vemunharaunda’.

(Cohesion can be achieved through respect for others). [FGD, 2017]

Both participants from the key informant interviews and those from the FGD agreed that:

‘Kuita mishandira pamwe kunyanya yemagadheni erunyararo’.

(Doing projects together especially peace gardens can do a lot in promoting social cohesion). [KI and FGD, 2017]

This call justified the implementation of the peace garden as an appropriate intervention strategy for use in this study. 50% of the participants also pointed out that social cohesion was best promoted through:

‘Nhaurirano uye musangano yekudzidziswa nzira dzokudzivirira mhirizhonga nemakakava’.

(Holding consultative dialogues in communities and having a series of workshops and seminars in violence and conflict prevention). [FGD, 2017]

These quotes demonstrate the need and the call by community members to participate in cooperative projects which helped in the promotion of social cohesion. The concept of peace gardening featured very prominently in both the interviews and the focus groups and ignoring it was definitely going to be a challenge on my part, since that would ignore the bottom up community approach and resort back to the common trickle-down community approaches. I observed during the peace gardening that the enthusiasm which was evident in the participants was all because they had fully supported the idea on their own and further had knowledge of such projects. They had been familiar with projects which were dictated to them by either the government authorities or the NGOs in a trickle-down fashion. This approach was the opposite of other experiences.

7.16.2 Participation in community programmes

Other issues raised on advancing participation in community programmes, were the various areas in which people may actively participate and desist from violent behaviour. Of note were:

- the conducting of peace campaigns in communities;
- teaching people about their constitutional rights;
- having community-based projects.

The respondents also suggested that they needed to move away from doing projects in large numbers or groups as they felt it ended up creating conflicts. This was a call which again was raised by the community members due to their past experiences. The remarks from the following participant summed up this call:

‘Tanga tichikumbirisavo kuti rwendo runo musatora dunhu rose kuti riuye rite zvegadheni yerunyararo. Takamboita mishandirapamwe yakadaro, haishandi uye inotopedzisira yava iyo honzeri yemakakava. Saka dai mamboita kuti tishande tirivashoma’.

(We are appealing with you that this time around, do not include the entire village in this peace gardening venture, we once participated in similar cooperative projects, they did not work and as a result, they ended up being sources of conflict. So, if you may kindly include small and manageable numbers in your project). [ATP, 2018]

The call by the community to have small numbers in the action team was a blessing on my part considering that I was using a qualitative action research design which also called for the use of small numbers as highlighted in section 4.5. Coincidentally, the study's theoretical framework on peace and power also called for the use of small numbers to achieve maximum results in peacebuilding and the promotion of social cohesion (Mattaini 2008). This also shows that unlike other projects which were imposed on communities in a trickle-down manner either by government or by non-governmental organisations, the peace gardening intervention strategy was a community initiative which promoted development and peacebuilding using a bottom up approach. The idea of working in the peace garden in small numbers marked some shift from the way other community projects were previously held. The old trend of doing community projects included all community members in big numbers, a scenario which ended up brewing more conflicts instead of solving them.

7.16.3 The call for community projects

One of the prominent issues the respondents from both the interviews and the FGD highlighted was centred on the need for the establishment of community projects. For example, the respondents from the FGD gave the following ideas as community cohesion promotional modalities:

'Hurongwa hwemishandirapwe yakaita seye mangadheni erunyararo, anoita kuti vanhu vagare vakabatikana zvinoita kuti vasangofambafamba zvisina chinangwa, uye zvinobatsira zvakare kuti vanhu vave nezvipoka zvinoita basa rekukurudzira runyararo pamwe nekutaudzana kunounza pundutso munyaya dzerunyararo'.

*(Community projects such as peace gardens help in keeping people busy so as to curb loitering and promoting community peace dialogue sessions).
[FGD, 2017]*

The call for the establishment of community projects tallied well with the research's intervention strategy of using peace gardens since they believed that they had the capacity to curb loitering by keeping people busy and also promote peaceful contacts among community members. PGs are a representative of initiatives that bring people together and give them a common purpose of benefit to all.

The idea of bringing people together through peace gardening agrees with Alport's contact theory whose premise stated that if suitable conditions were put in place, then relational

contact would serve as one of the greatest way of lessening bias amongst opposing parties or groups (Allport 1979). The peace gardening initiative, was believed to play an important role in fostering peace and cohesion in the study area (Prakash 2015).

Farwell and Cole (2001) supported the use of resources within the environment to harness opportunities for social and economic engagement in seeking solace from some of the adverse effects of political violence. On describing the advantages of projects, the respondents from both the interviews and the FGD concurred that:

‘Mishandirapamwe inovaka humwe chete, inobatanidza vanhu uye mishandirapamwe yakadai haifaniri kuitwa zvichitevedza kuti vanhu ndeveboka ripi rezvematongerwe enyika’.

(Projects build oneness, they promote strong bonds and projects in communities should not be done on political party affiliation basis and that community members should be kept busy all the time). [FGD and KI, 2017]

The advantages which were pointed out by the community members in their responses tallied well with Hoffman (2010) and Prakash (2015), who believed that gardens helps in building people’s relationships, Shank and Schirch (2008) who viewed gardens as agents for transforming relationships while Zeeuw (2004) was of the opinion that people needed to do gardening in order to improve their livelihoods while at the same time boosting their self-esteem.

7.16.4 Traditional leadership and peacebuilding

It was unanimously agreed that chiefs and headmen must take part in preaching peace and building cohesion among their subordinates as one participant pointed out:

‘Panoda hurongwa hwekudzidzisa madzishe kuti vazive kuti vanomirira vanhu vose vavanotungamira zvisinei nekuti munhu anotsigira bato ripi rezvematongerwe enyika’.

(There is a need for traditional leaders to be taught that they represent all community members regardless of their political affiliations). [KI, 2017]

Chiefs and political party leaders needed to address this phenomenon for the betterment of social life and interpersonal relationships in their communities. Therefore, traditional leaders

should be encouraged to assist individuals in conflict to work together in correcting their differences instead of being at the centre of fuelling conflicts in their communities.

7.17 Summary

This chapter discussed the pre-peace gardening state of the affairs in the Welkom Hoek community. The discussion was based on the findings from the field work on the causes of conflicts in the area in question with the emphasis being placed on the possible drivers and effects of the causes of conflicts. The chapter, through the participants' responses, highlighted that politics and elections were the main causes of conflicts in their community though unemployment, partisan distribution of food and prophetic healing churches were also singled out as other contributory causes of conflict in the area. The chapter also discussed the participants' perceptions towards political violence and conflict in general. The mechanisms on how to promote social cohesion were also deliberated upon in this chapter.

The next chapter is an in-depth discussion on the emerging themes drawn from this chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION OF EMERGING THEMES FROM THE INTERVENTION STRATEGY

We used to know traditional leaders as causes of conflicts in communities but we are noting some positive shift from that old tradition as leaders are now actively participating in resolving differences in their communities. Participant (2018)

8.1 Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of the emerging issues gleaned from the peace gardening intervention strategy and the dialogue sessions carried out in Welkom Hoek community. The intervention was in form of a peace gardening project which was undertaken in the Welkom Hoek community since the beginning in February 2017 until the end of May 2018. The manner in which the research was carried out was discussed with the AT before the implementation of the intervention strategy and all the participants were agreeable on the modalities which were to be followed in the implementation of the peace garden (see the discussion in Chapter Six). The emerging themes to be discussed are: the power of prayer in peacebuilding; the necessity of proper planning in peacebuilding and the concept of *Unhu* in peacebuilding, importance of process, importance of indigenous knowledge, different ways of resolving conflicts, role of traditional leaders in reconciling differences, use of bribery to entice participation, manipulation, use of force and the continuous manifestation of polarisation and suspicion. The data set is based on a series of interviews with the same group of AT participants over a period of a year.

8.2 The power of prayer in peacebuilding

The practice of beginning the peace gardening sessions with a prayer played a crucial role towards transforming the action team members (see the discussion in Chapter Six section 6.3). This was envisaged to be powerful as noted in the following statements by the action team participants who pointed out that:

‘Nenyaya yekuti tiri maKristu, uye tinotenda musimba remunamoto, takaona zvakatinakira chose kutanga mabasa edu ose emughadheni takumikidza zvose kumusiki uye chimwe chakaita kuti tibatsirikane nemunamoto uyu ndechekuti munamoto wacho une chekuita nenyaya dzerunyararo’.

(Due to the fact that we are Christians, and because we believe in the power of prayer, we saw it fit to begin our daily peace gardening programmes by reciting a communal prayer and we preferred the prayer because of its bias towards peace related issues). [ATP, 2017]

(We believe that everything that we do is directed and guided by the Supreme Being and we therefore saw it fit to get guidance before embarking in our project. There was also need for divine intervention considering that we were coming from different political backgrounds and we were suspicious of one another) [ATP, 2017]

The other participant also concurred with the above assertion by highlighting how the practice of beginning our sessions transformed his life by highlighting that:

‘Kutanga mabasa edu emughadheni nemunamato zvakatibatsira kuti tive tinovandudzika pahunhu hwedu uye maonere atainge toite vamwe vedu vaibva kune rimwe bato rezvematongerwe enyika’.

(The practice of beginning our peace gardening sessions with a communal prayer helped in transforming our lives and the way we viewed things in relation to political issues). [ATP, 2017]

The above quotes from the AT participants demonstrated that the community members acknowledged the importance and the power of prayer in that they found it not only refreshing but also hated being seen acting contrary to the divine stipulations contained in the prayer (George 2015). The people’s belief in the importance of religion concurs with the views expressed by Rukuni, Kansiime and Shanyisa (2017) which pointed out that religion plays a powerful role in influencing individual and group attitudes. The concept of prayer in this study served as an indication that the AT was contributing towards the search for measures aimed at ending general political conflicts and religiously motivated violence in a bid to create a culture of positive peace (Cooperrider 2017). Considering the religious nature of the people of Zimbabwe, it is prudent that peace teachings should be incorporated in religious events. Religious beliefs and cultures has taught people that turning to God lifts them up while turning to money and power drags them down. There is need to be worried about overreliance on religion since it can be used as a force of disunity too if misused (Tyler 2015). In this study however, the practice of prayer played a very important role in bringing the action team together which shows that religion here was not used as a force of disunity

thereby justifying the assertion that a peaceful world is not a disappearing dream (Cooperrider 2018: 07). The fact that prayer was used as an alternative way of bringing people together works hand in glove with the fundamental traditions of the peace and power theory as all these theories and methods suggest the same overarching principle: that of the need for cooperation and the sense of a common humanity in order for there to be peace. Conflict transformation and the contact theories all call for accommodating ways of working together and intergroup cooperation. Prayer brings various people together for worshipping purposes and assists in reminding people of their common humanity. As noted, this study was guided by the peace and power theory and complimented by conflict transformation and contact theories, suggesting that the same concepts of creating attitudes and spaces for working together could be used for transforming post-conflict relationships through a common project such as the peace garden. Working together is an essential component of such an intervention as having a common goal aids people in overlooking past divisions or suspicions. Contact theory determines the nature of interactions and how, by applying key principles, harmony is built rather than attitudes are worsened.

8.3 The necessity for proper planning in peacebuilding strategies

It took long during the peace gardening exercise to see signs of reconciliation and transformed relationships among the AT participants. From the fourth session onwards, the action team's relationships were bonding in pleasing ways as it was now common to see people from the two political parties moving side by side as they went to fetch some water for gardening and sharing some jokes together (see discussion in Chapter Six section 8).

After the human rights workshop had been carried out (see section 6.8), it was also very encouraging to note that there was a paradigm shift among the action team members in the way they related during their peace gardening as noted from the following AT participant's remarks:

'Workshop yezvekodzero dzedu yamakatirongera iyi yakatibatsira chose nokuti tave kunzwisisa kuti bumbiro remutemo wenyika yedu unotopa vanhu kodzero dzekusarudza vatungamiri uye mapato ezvematongerwe enyika avanoda pasina kumbunyikidzwa'.

(This workshop on human rights and constitutionalism which you organised for us has helped us to understand that the country's constitution gives the

citizens their rights and liberties to choose leaders and political parties of their choice without coercion). [ATP, 2017]

‘Kubva patakaita workshop yezvekodzero takatoona kuti zvakanaka kuremekedza vamwe vedu vanemaonero akasiyana needu panezvematongerwe enyika nengari yekuti ikodzero dzavo kutsigiri bato rezvematongerwe enyika ravanoda pasina kumanikidzirwa’.

(From the time we held the workshop on human rights and constitutionalism we have since noted the importance of respecting our fellow citizens who have diverse political views with us on the basis that it is their constitutional right to support a political party of their choice without being forced otherwise).[ATP, 2017]

(We benefited immensely from the workshop which you organised for us. We learned a lot about our human rights as they are enshrined in the national constitution). [ATP, 2017]

Observations revealed that the action team members were now openly interacting, joking together and a new practice of hugging each other had also become evident. It was important to note that laughter among them was not only becoming a common feature but one which replaced fear, suspicion and bottled anger which were evident before the implementation of the intervention strategy. Though peacebuilding does not take place within a short period of time, there is evidence in this study that if proper planning is carried out, desired peacebuilding results could be achieved. The research findings here concur with the peace and power theory which stipulates that individuals normally require spaces in life where they are moderately serene, free from rivalry and power imbalances, and where collaboration and peace prevail. Such spaces in life should then create conditions for people to interact freely, joke together and even hug each other as noted in this study (see section 4.4.2).

Earlier there was a strong belief that homes provided such serene places and served as safe havens where competition was limited. It is unfortunate that some homes failed to provide such kinds of safety so desired by many people. Conflict in Welkom Hoek has made such serene places elusive. The peace gardening venture in this study provided a missing dimension for the residents. This further validates the peace and power theory that people normally require spaces in life which are free from rivalry and power imbalances (Melgosa

2008: 95). While providing serene spaces as discussed above, the peace gardening initiative also corroborates the contact theory which called for equal status and intergroup cooperation among community members.

In addition to understanding the concurrence between the peace and power theory and the study findings, this study established that there is a vital need for proper planning in the fostering and promotion of relevant and result yielding peacebuilding initiatives such as the peace gardening project. The peace gardening initiative scored some meaningful success considering that the intervention strategy was a community driven initiative which was coupled with proper planning and implementation for a period spanning more than a year and half.

The remarks by the AT participant demonstrates the essence of proper planning in peace building by pointing out that:

‘Mushandira wedu wengadheni yerunyararo waive wakarongwa zvakanaka uye wakafamba zvakanaka nekubudirira chose mukugadzirisa ukama hwedu isu vanobva kumapato akasiyana ezvematongerwe enyika nengari yekuti tisu vanhu vemunharaunda takabuda nepfungwa yacho uye taive tisingamanyamanyi sezvatinosimboita mune zvimwe zvirongwa zvamapoka akazvimirira oga anenge achida kubata nguva yakatarwa neavo vanovapa mari’.

(Our peace gardening initiative was well planned and it worked out well and was successful in transforming our post-conflict relationships due to the fact that the initiative came from us the community members and it was not hurriedly carried out like we normally do in similar projects carried out by NGOs which will be striving to meet the deadlines set by the donors who fund them). [ATP, 2018]

(The way we carried out our peace gardening project was very interesting and provided a slightly different way of doing things. We came up with the idea which we owned throughout the exercise. We were not pushed like what normally happens when similar projects are initiated in our communities). [ATP, 2018]

8.4 Importance of process

The way in which I worked with the group was really tremendous in that action research allowed me to provide the AT participants with sufficient talking time and allowed them to tell their stories in a conducive atmosphere. The process allowed me space to understand the benefits of working together with supporters of rival political parties and appreciate the problems which came from this initiative. The partnership which I established with local authorities made the research process quite interesting and minimised envisaged challenges such as being viewed with suspicion or falling prey to sabotage such as theft and vandalism of our gardening produce. The above initiatives highlights the importance of process, which revolved around not forcing people but working with them to raise their thinking and behavior to a higher level about the dangers of political violence and conflict in general. The duration of one year that I took with my AT was long enough and that gave us enough time and resulted in me not rushing them, a component which was really important in as far as the transformation of post-conflict relationships was concerned. The peace gardening process was a measure aimed at supporting local groups and actors in transforming their post-conflict relationships. This feature concurs with the conflict transformation call for indigenous mechanisms in resolving conflicts. As pointed out earlier, the contact theory also complements the transformation call by also promoting intergroup cooperation among peace gardening participants. The findings in this study therefore relates well with the stipulations of the theories used to underpin this study thereby showing their relevance to peacebuilding.

8.5 Changing dimensions in the African concept of *Unhu* in resolving conflicts

The concept of “*Unhu*” (*humanness*) has been a major boost towards building peace in Zimbabwe past decades but is slowly losing value in resolving political conflict today. The concept of *Unhu* is based on a belief that if people can act humanely, then they can forgive, love and sympathise with each other. The African tradition required the embracing of *Unhu* by all community members and if this was done the planet earth would be a better place to inhabit. The lack of political tolerance exhibited by community members in Welkom Hoek goes against the African concept of *Unhu*. This concept encourages people to respect and tolerate one another and live in harmony. *Unhu* accepts people to hold divergent views but called for the celebration of diversity in peaceful ways.

As earlier noted (see Table 7.4), it has been possible through the African concept of *Unhu* for communities to live in harmony, but politics was portrayed by the participants from FGD, the key informants and several authors, as spoilers to community peace for a period dating

back to the country's first democratic ballot vote in 1980 (Moyo 2013; Mlambo 2014). The concept of *Unhu* is similar to the South African concept of *Ubuntu* but just as in South Africa, the concept of *Ubuntu* as a practice is no longer a reality (John 2015). Zimbabwe has also witnessed the loss of worth in *Unhu*.

Earlier the concept used to be a guiding factor in the way people behaved, interact with each other and did not allow community members to participate in political violence. As with the case of *Ubuntu* in South Africa, the concept of *Unhu* in Zimbabwe has become an empty word which is no longer practiced. Conflict resolution platforms such as “*dare*” (consultative meetings) and the council of elders (*makurukota*) are no longer effective as they used to be in the past. The consultative meetings were used as brainstorming sessions, problem solving and were also used for mentoring young children on leadership and day to day issues (Rukuni 2007: 131). If this rich cultural tradition is resuscitated, it could be the right platform also for teaching people about the dangers of political violence and the importance of accepting political diversity.

In the past, conflicts were solved using more traditional means, whereas the conflict caused by politics has brought a different dimension and proved to be different and complex. It is of note that traditional means are slowly ceasing to be effective in conflict resolution due to the breakdown of societies proffered by political violence and the borrowing of Western cultures. The overriding of *unhu* by Western cultures is also examined by Rukuni 2007: 19) who highlighted that as Africans we were not supposed to lose our brilliant traditional system by trying to follow the Western life but instead of westernising our cultural practices, there was need for us to modernise them.

Unhu could be used effectively in resolving conflict due to the fact its ethos emphasises on explaining to the conflicting parties the need to realise that we are a single extended family of brothers and sisters and that we do not live or operate in isolation (Mangena 2016). Our individual actions always affect the whole community in one way or another and as such, when there are gestures of peace everyone reaps dividends and when there are acts of violence and conflict either by individuals or groups in any given society, everyone suffers.

The concepts of hate speech which have characterised the Zimbabwean political field have created division and hatred among political party supporters. While hate speech was bound to promote divisions among communities, it is important to point out that the use of hate speech is contrary with the *Unhu* way of doing things.

The concept of *Unhu*'s attempts to resolve conflict among rivals through denouncing hate speech, call for harmonious relationships and the promotion of indigenous traditions in resolving conflicts blend well with the Lederach's conflict transformation theory (2003) which also calls for indigenous mechanisms in resolving conflicts. This corroboration between *Unhu* and conflict transformation proffers the claim from this study that *Unhu* can play an important role in promoting the transformation of post conflict relationships and bringing community cohesion in peacebuilding. The concept of *Unhu* and conflict transformation all call for gradual transformation processes in peacebuilding and concur that change happens in small increments, starting with individual attempts.

8.6 The importance of indigenous knowledge

The AT participants understood well the cultural implications of gardening and of the disunity that had arisen in their community and were in agreement with what (Muyambo 2017) regards as indigenous knowledge systems, a haven for sustainable economic growth in Zimbabwe. That 100% of the participants were unhappy with political violence (see table 12) means that the conflict is in fact against their cultural beliefs (David and Andrew 2011). There was a great deal of self-awareness expressed by the respondents and; they had good a understanding of the situation in their community. The participants were aware that political violence, broken relationships and the intimidation and hatred that was taking place in their community and the whole country was not was not good in any way. The understanding of the prevailing circumstances led to their cooperation and demonstration of this existing knowledge. One of the important findings is that people's cultural and individual knowledge was used, a feature that strengthened ownership and support of the peace gardening initiative.

8.7 The different ways in which people saw the best way to resolve conflicts

In all societies, people know what affects them and generally know how to overcome the challenges they face (Church and Civil Society Forum 2012). When it comes to resolving conflicts, the indigenous people have solutions which are sustainable in resolving conflicts. The factor that must be emphasised is that the local community members must own the whole process. For any peacebuilding process to be sustainable, it must be pro-people, using bottom-up approaches as opposed to the trickle-down theories which are being frequently used by donor agencies.

During the study, participants revealed that there are better ways of resolving the conflicts and one of them was the practice of carrying out dialogues. It was revealed that when

different conflicting people agree to sit together and talk about what went wrong in their hitherto good relationship, a consensus can be reached. It is believed that when people participate in dialogue, chances are very high that there will be some healing process taking place as highlighted by participants who said:

‘Chinhu chakakosha chandinoona seimwe nzira yekugadzirisa makakava ndeyekuva nenhaurirano. Kupa vanhu mukana wokutaurirana zvakaipa zvavakaitirana kunobatsira kutounza kamwe kakuregererana munguva yenhaurirano’.

(One important different way of solving conflicts which I suggest is that of promoting dialogue among the affected people. Giving people some dialogue platforms facilitate some process of healing). [ATP, 2017]

(Providing people and communities with dialogue platforms is key in resolving conflicts). [ATP, 2017]

(The other way of creating conflict resolution modalities is enhanced by promoting communal projects where people will work together and share ideas). [ATP. 2017]

The call for local solutions by those on the ground is imperative especially in communities that have been ravaged by ethnic tensions, such as seen in the case of the Shona and the Ndebele, disunity further instigated and provoked by political spectrum in Zimbabwe. The facilitation of such intra and intercultural dialogue meetings targeting both ethnic groups is worthwhile and better than imposing solutions coming from the outsiders who usually know very little about the root causes of such complex conflicts. The Welkom Hoek community strongly believed that the use and promotion of dialogue were effective in solving problems.

Another way that people saw as the best way to resolve conflicts was that of instilling the spirit of peace in children. The ‘catch them young’ phenomenon was identified as another way of resolving conflicts considering that generation after generation have inherited conflicts started by their great-grandparents. Intergenerational conflict as Ngwenya (2014) called it, can best be resolved or minimised by equipping young children with conflict resolution mechanisms in homes and schools at a very tender age. This can be achieved in form of re-designing the school curricula and also putting much emphasis in peace clubs in schools and communities.

Another way of resolving conflicts as reported by the respondents is through sensitisation of people through the use of mass media, promoting tolerance and peaceful co-existence. The media has been associated with the transmission of conflict promotional material and hate speech especially towards elections. There is need therefore to promote a culture of peace by making it compulsory for all media houses in the country to have some time, say one hour or even just fifteen minutes per day talking about the advantages of peaceful co-existence and tolerance. Inviting leaders of communities or groups conflicting with each other in the studios would help to resolve conflicts that have entrenched their communities. As highlighted by the Welkom Hoek community participants, such initiatives are bound to restore and transform broken relationships within communities or nations.

The respondents further suggested non-violent techniques in addressing conflicts, particularly in disputes between the state and its citizens. While people might have contrary views, instead of resolving differences through violent means, community members are encouraged to resort to non-violent means (Sharp 2012). This can be through measures such as demonstrations, sit-ins or strikes.

8.8 The role of traditional leaders in reconciling differences

The role of traditional leaders emerged as an important theme during the study. It is worth noting that leaders' character and influence contribute a great deal towards the well-being of any given community. In communities where leaders are timid, incite violence and are corrupt and selfish, conflicts have been a common feature. On the contrary, in communities like Welkom Hoek where leaders showed visionary, charismatic and archetypal leadership, such communities have not had conflict spirals since leaders have been able to reconcile differences amongst individuals or groups.

The modern era has seen these traditional leaders being co-opted by the state into politics, thereby violating their apolitical standards (Rukuni *et al.* 2015). This development affected their leadership prowess and reputations. The Zimbabwean scenario has witnessed traditional leaders in other communities becoming political agents and even perpetuating violence against their subjects as pointed out by the participant who said:

*'Madzishe kune mamwe matunhu ave kutoitavo zvinoitwa
nevezvematongerwe enyika kushandisa zvinhu zvakaita sechikafu kana mari
kumanikidza vagari vemudzinharanda mavo kuti vatsigire mapato*

ezvematongerwe enyika avanoda ivo. Kana ukaratidza kusaita zvinodiwa unotokwanisa kudzingwa kubva munharaunda maunogara’.

(Traditional leaders in other communities have joined the fray of using resources like food and money to force us into supporting their preferred political parties. In some cases, we are threatened with violence in our community for acting contrary to their instructions). [ATP, 2017]

While the above discussion has explored the trend and the current scenario in other communities, findings from this study, revealed that traditional leaders have demonstrated a paradigm shift in their way of doing things. This new development might appear contrary in the sense, that as highlighted earlier in this discussion, chiefs have been portrayed as causes of conflict. The situation in Welkom Hoek, however, illustrated that this new role by the leaders in resolving differences did not devalue or interfere with the role of individuals in solving conflicts, but served as a complementary mechanism which was greatly appreciated by the community members. The following remarks by the participants summed up community perspective on the development:

‘Taiziva madzishe ariiwo aikonzera nyaya dzemhirizhonga asi muno munharaunda zvinhu zvati sandukei nekuti madzishe ari kutobetseredza kuyenzanisa makakava asi zvisingarevi kuti isu vanhu hatichashandisivo dzimwe nzira dzedu dzokugadzirisa makakava’.

(We used to know traditional leaders as causes of conflicts in communities but we are noting some positive shift from that old tradition as leaders are now actively participating in resolving differences. This new development does not mean that individual attempts towards conflict resolution have been devalued but instead have been complemented). [ATP, 2017]

(The traditional leaders have since demonstrated positive elements in communities, traditionally they were viewed as causes of conflicts but what we are observing in their operations is very interesting. They are playing key roles in resolving conflicts in our community. We are impressed with this key development in our community). [ATP, 2017]

8.9 The use of bribery to entice participation

The use of bribery to woo people to participate has become a common phenomenon in today's elections. It has become a common trend in African countries where politicians pay hefty sums of money to lure electorates to vote for them. During election season, it has become a business whereby people expect to be given money, sugar, salt, maize flour in order to vote. Whoever dishes out money to the people usually wins the election as people have become desperate and thus willing to trade their electoral rights for some basic commodities and insignificant amounts of money. The money and the basic commodities are given to community members in partisan manners. The following remarks show the proliferation of this bribery practice:

'Yatova garoziva mukoma kuti kana nguva dzesarusdzo dzosvika tinobaiwa nemapasuro kubva kune vanoita zvementongerwe enyika. Asi unozviwana chete kana uri webato rinenge riri kupa mapasuro acho'.

(It has become a common feature my brother to the community members that each time when approaching elections, we get a lot of goodies from those who will be aspiring for political posts and the political parties which will also be bribing us for votes. You have to be politically aligned in order to benefit from the partisan distribution of these goodies). [ATP, 2017]

(Each time when we are nearing elections, we benefit a lot from the people who will be campaigning for political positions. You only benefit meaningfully from the politicians when they know you are correctly aligned to their political parties). [ATP, 2107]

It is important to observe that this kind of arrangement usually leaves communities divided and has adversely affected the social fabric in the communities. Consequently, this has in one way or the other affected democracy because winners of the elections are not genuine winners because they bribed their way into leadership positions and they leave voters divided: in the case of Zimbabwe, the division is between the Shona and Ndebele and other ethnic groups and other people who either support ZANU PF or the opposition parties.

8.10 Manipulation

The concept of manipulation features prominently in this study. Both the KI and the ATP highlighted that the practice was rampant in their communities and was a tactic employed mainly by politicians and other prominent persons. Generally manipulation is a common

feature the world over and is a dual phenomenon that can either be constructive or destructive (Llyicheva 2013). The local communities pointed out that they were coerced into participating in acts of political violence due to some rewards that they received in the form of cash or food from the political heavyweights who wanted to be voted into power. The other aspect that promoted manipulation was the issue of poverty and unemployment. People were compelled to act against their wishes and beliefs since they needed to feed their families (Mlambo 2014). In this study manipulation was carried out in a positive manner considering how constructive working together in the peace gardening venture generated good outcomes such as the elimination of hatred among political party supporters, rebuilding broken relationships and the transformation of post-conflict relationships. So in a sense it was a kind of manipulation, but for the good, whereas the political manipulation was for power and greed and resulted in broken relationships and hatred among rival political party supporters.

8.11 The use of force in making people act against their own wishes and beliefs

Force and manipulation have been prevalent in many African countries because people are manipulated to act against their wishes. One of the reasons why people fall prey to this manipulative challenge is due to abject poverty. It is important to note that this is usually perpetuated by politicians who take advantage of the vulnerable people in the society as pointed out by the following participants:

‘Tinongoshandiswa uye kumanikidzwa kuita zvatisingawirrani nazvo nenyaya yehurombo. Zvinhu zvakatiomera chose saka tinoshandisa chero mukana wakadii unenge wauya uchiita kuti tiwane mari kana chokudya’.

(We are used by these politicians to act contrary to our wishes due to poverty; we therefore end up taking advantage of whatever opportunity regardless of the political consequences). [ATP, 2017]

(We are facing serious challenges in communities. Those challenges tend to lead us to act against our beliefs. Political players also take advantage of our situations to advance their political careers). [ATP, 2017]

(Money and poverty are the roots of all evil. We are compelled to do anything to please those who either give us some money or food. So that is why we are manipulated by these politicians). [ATP, 2017]

The fourth session occurred after three other previous attempts had been derailed by the by-election which was taking place in Bikita district where some of our action team members were compelled to attend against their wish; (see the discussion in section 7.10.1). The fact that AT members had received some basic training on the aspect of tolerance and accepting political diversity and decided to ignore the call to attend a political meeting which coincided with the peace gardening activity. Unfortunately, the members were ultimately compelled to attend the political gatherings against their wish, something which was contrary with the aspects enshrined in the national constitution which gave people the right and freedom to either attend or not any political gathering (Government of Zimbabwe 2013). Similar acts of forcing participants to act against their wishes have occurred many other times on the African continent and globally. The issue of the holocaust and the genocide in Rwanda serves as examples to justify the prevalence of this bad practice.

8.12 The continuous manifestation of polarisation and suspicion

By the time the evaluation was carried out, there were growing elements of suspicion in our peace gardening activity where fellow members were suspecting that their fellows in the action team had sold out or defected to their rival political parties. It was interesting to note that each time members came back from these campaigning rallies, they came back with the mentality of no longer continuing with the peace gardening project as highlighted in the following statements from the AT participants who said:

‘Patakaenda uko tange tave kutorwa sevategesi uye taikurudzirwa kusiwana nezvemaghdheni erunyararo aya’.

(When we went to attend the by-elections, we were being perceived as sell-outs and we were being persuaded to pull out of the peace gardening venture). [ATP, 2017]

The other participants also concurred that some fellow political members no longer trusted them when she pointed out that:

‘Waingoona kuti vamwe vedu vemusangano vanga vasingachavimbi nesu sezvavaimboita nenyaya yekuti tainge tave kuita zvema ngadheni erunyararo nevanhu vataisimbatora sevavengi’.

(It was easy to detect that people from our political parties did no longer trust us since we were now associating with our political rivals whom we earlier viewed as enemies.) [ATP, 2017]

(There was glaring evidence of mistrust from some of our members who were not in the peace gardening project. They were not very sure of the discussions we were carrying out during the peace gardening). [ATP, 22017]

The above quotes demonstrated that political polarisation was still very rife in the country as noted from the lack of trust which was now being exhibited by the other political members from the main stream political party structures on their fellow members who were taking part in the peace gardening venture. Interesting though, the AT members were now bold enough to encourage others not to be distracted by the comments which were coming from their fellow political members, an element which showed that the concept of peacebuilding and political broadmindedness which was the core business in the peace garden had made some positive bearing in their lives. This is stated in the following quotes.

‘Tava kutorwa sevatenyesi nevamwe vedu vasiri muchirongwa chemaghadheni ichi nenyaya yekuti havasi mukati macho uye havanyatsonzwisisa kuti tinenge tichiita nezvei zvokuti dai vasiri vamwe vatinavo muchirongwa muno vakatondisimbisa Ndanga ndatofunga kubuda muchirongwa chemaghadheni ichi’.

(We are now being viewed as sell outs by our fellow party members and the general public who are not participating in the peace garden because of their lack of knowledge on how we carry out our peace gardening activities. Had it not been for the support I got from other peace gardening members, I had initially decided to quit the peace gardening project). [ATP, 2017]

(We are now viewed with a lot of suspicion by our fellow party members who are not in this peace gardening project. We are exhibiting resilience by not pulling out of the project). It is tough out here my brother [ATP, 2017]

Had it not been for the resilience and encouragement that members gained from fellow ATPs, a number of members could have yielded to the pressure that they were experiencing from those who were viewing them as sellouts and with suspicion.

8.13 Peace theories and the research results

This section discusses the linkages between the peace theories which underpin this study and the findings of this study. The discussion theorises the findings of the study with the peace and power theory, conflict transformation theory and the contact theory. It was discovered that theories selected to underpin this study speak well to the obtained results.

8.13.1 Peace and Power theory

This section discusses the linkage between the findings of the study and the theories anchoring the study. It is intended to show how the key concepts of the peace and power theory concur with the findings from this study. The guiding concepts of the peace and power theory include the challenges of moderating a more aggressive masculine power and exercising one's will in the world with accommodating the desire for serene spaces. conflict pervades all human relationships, accommodating ways of working together and the use of power by dominant individuals or groups which are shown in the diagram below;

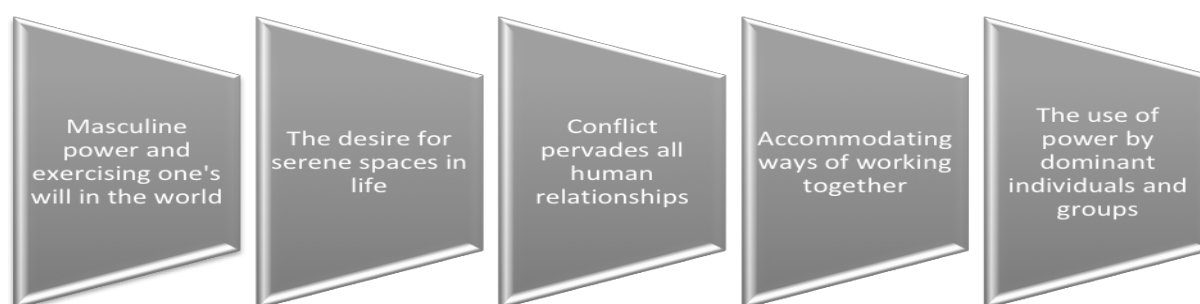


Figure 12 Concepts of peace and power (own data)

The study findings revealed that there was the use of bribery to entice participants, the issue of manipulation and the use of force in making people act against their wishes and beliefs (sections 8.9, 8.10 and 8.11 respectively), which concurs with the use of power by dominant individuals and groups as highlighted in one of the five concepts of the peace and power theory in the above diagram. The study results show that the supporters of the ruling party were exercising the concept of the use of power by dominant individuals and groups over their opposition counterparts. The usage of power by the dominant individuals and groups is presented as one of the main causes of conflicts in Welkom Hoek community. The manipulation of power has a bearing on people's lives considering that such decisions have the potential to fuel conflicts in communities (Hooker and Czajkowski 2016: 7).

As discussed earlier (see Chapter Four), every human relationship includes the utilisation of power that can be used in ways that either promote harmony or create conflicts. The study

findings show the usage of power in ways that created disharmony among political party supporters. The study findings here corroborate the peace and power theory on the usage of power. There is evidence in the study that a few people utilised power over others in ways that served the interests of those with significant influence and not the interests of the majority, a scenario which links well with the theory underpinning this study (Tesoriero 2006: 71). The study findings and the peace and power theory concur that normally there is one individual, or a group, who have relative power in any group structure. Such individuals and groups have a tendency and the capacity to impose their will, or their qualities, on those with less power (Hlatywayo *et al.* 2010). The perceived dominance of the Shona people over the Ndebele tribe and the dominance of ZANU-PF over other opposition parties like the MDC formations in Zimbabwe come to mind. The proposed intervention of using peace gardens for transforming post-conflict relationships could be one mechanism meant to address the issue of individual or group dominance in communities in ways which eradicates conflicts.

The desire for serene spaces in life is another concept where the study findings and the theory underpinning the study speak very well. The research findings and the peace and power theory agree that individuals generally look for spaces in life where they are moderately serene, free from rivalry and power imbalances, and where collaboration and peace prevail. Previous literature demonstrated that since it is impossible to avoid all sources of stress, noting that it would not be to our advantage to do so, there is need for humanity to look for places of peace and quiet where they can regularly visit for relaxation (Melgosa 2008: 95). This study promotes the use of PGs as alternative places for providing such peaceful and calm spaces which are free from rivalry and power imbalances. The peace gardens therefore could serve as an extension of this mentality of having a quiet place which helps people to be free from conflicting environments. This call for serene spaces in life has also demonstrated the nexus between this study and the peace and power theory.

The continuous manifestation of polarisation and suspicion noted from the research findings resonate well with the peace and power theoretical concepts which stipulate that conflicts pervade all human relationships. The peace and power theory and the study findings agree that constructive ways of dealing with conflict might not ensure positive results for the involved parties, however, they do accommodate individual and collective attempts that promote positive change. The concept which is enshrined in the peace and power theory on accommodating ways of working together summarises the linkage between the study findings and the theory underpinning this study. The proposed usage of the peace gardens

to transform post conflict relationships could be an effective measure in promoting community cohesion in Welkom Hoek community

The call for accommodating ways of working together is yet another point of agreement between the peace theory and the research findings. The peace gardening intervention strategy served as another platform for accommodating ways of working together among political rivals in the Welkom Hoek community. The establishment of PGs in Zimbabwe used in this study as an attempt aimed at transforming post-conflict relationships among political party supporters who had experienced waves of violence during the previous election campaigns. This intervention strategy was purporting to promote methods of working together in ways that would transform the previously tainted relationships among the communities which were earlier negatively affected by different political affiliation.

8.13.2 Conflict transformation

The second theory complementing the peace and power in underpinning this study is Lederach's conflict transformation theory. This theory posits that in every day settings, people often experience conflict as a disruption in the natural flow of their own individual or community relationships (Lederach 2003b). This theory suggests change processes, with the central approach being to see conflict moving from being destructive towards being constructive. This is the same concept that is being pushed in this study where post-conflict relationships are transformed through peace gardening.

The conflict transformation theory also concurs with the peace gardening initiative in that it focuses on relationship building since conflict is a normal and dynamic phenomenon within human relationships (Lederach 1997: 19). Since the invasion of Mashonaland in the 1840s by the Ndebele people, the main conflict experienced in this country has remained political in nature (Mlambo 2014). This study resonates well with the conflict transformation model which also recognises that conflicts are transformed gradually, through sequences of smaller or larger changes as well as definite steps carried out by various acts (Wani, Suwirta and Payaye 2013). The conflict transformation theory concurs with the peace gardening initiative in that it focuses on relationship building considering that conflict is a normal and dynamic phenomenon within human relationships (Lederach 1997: 19).

It is important to note that conflict transformation trails the development of change processes that explicitly focus on creating positives from the negative and improving relationships, a concept which is encouraged by this study. The conflict transformation drive that is aimed at

ending undesirable conflict elements by creating positive desired ones just like the peace and power theoretical framework also relate well with this study. In conclusion therefore, conflict transformation theory speaks well to this study in that it provides a theoretical background into understanding conflict in communities and how destructive tendencies of conflict be transformed into constructive ones as purported by this study.

8.13.3 Contact theory

The importance of Allport's contact theory and others are premised on the basis that they encourage conditions that promote equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support of authorities, law or custom as was the case with the AT during the peace gardening endeavour (Allport 1954; Hewstone and Swart 2011; Everett 2013: 01). As alluded to earlier, this theory augurs well with the Zimbabwean situation being discussed in this study where political party supporters from the MDC and ZANU-PF have remained divided over partisan lines for the past nineteen years with almost every aspect of their daily life being determined by which political party one supports or they are perceived to support (Peace Direct 2017: 06).

This study concurs with the contact theory in that through the peace gardening initiative it promotes equal status among political party supporters, establishes common goals at community level and achieves intergroup cooperation which is the cornerstone of this study. The contact theory is hailed as one of the most successful ideas in social psychology in promoting positive interaction between members of different groups in ways that reduce intergroup prejudice and conflict in general relates very well to this study and strives to promote positive interaction and cooperation among the MDC and ZANU-PF supporters. Though there are some scholars who say intergroup contact does not work (see Section 4.10.1) this study proffers that the peace gardening initiative managed to promote intergroup cooperation in a manner which concurs with Allport's contact theory (Pettigrew and Tropp 2013).

The core practices of promoting nonviolence also speak very well with the study findings. The thrust by the peace gardening intervention strategy to transform post conflict relationships among political rivals link very well with the call for peace, acting with respect, recognising contributions and success and making peace by the core practices on promoting nonviolent cultures. The study findings and this tradition concur that skills to resolve conflicts and heal relationships are very critical in peacebuilding and transforming post-conflict relationships. The research findings and this tradition agree that working in small groups, as

pointed out by Mattaini (2008), builds cohesion and helps people desist from looking down upon one another. This is the main call by the study on transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens. As demonstrated by the study participants, peace gardening contributed significantly towards bringing supporters from diverse political parties together in post-conflict conditions. The discussions in Sections 8.13.1, 8.13.2 and 8.13.3 show that the peace and power theory call for values and goals which relate well with the conflict transformation theory, the promotion of nonviolent cultures and the contact theory. The compatibility of these discussed theories and traditions justifies why the complementary approach was used in underpinning this study.

8. 14 Summary

This chapter discusses issues which I did not expect to come out of this study. These emerging issues were drawn from the peace gardening and the analysis and presentation chapters. The chapter explores the emerging themes in thematic formats. The chapter also discusses the linkage and applicability of the theories used in underpinning this study and the research findings. The next chapter discusses the preliminary evaluation carried out at the end of the study.

CHAPTER NINE

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THE POST PEACE GARDENING ENVIRONMENT IN WELKOM HOEK COMMUNITY

'It is no longer a choice between violence and non-violence. In this world it is non-violence or non-existence'. Martin Luther King.

9.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the preliminary evaluation on the impact of the peace gardening initiative on the AT members and how it transformed post-conflict relationships among the diverse political supporters in Welkom Hoek community. PGs were conceptualised in this study as portions of land owned either by individual kinfolks or by the whole public for engaging in vegetable gardening collectively with the main purpose of transforming post-conflict relationships tainted by political violence in Welkom Hoek community in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. The PGs were mooted from the contributions made by the key informants and the FGD participants as a responsive instrument for people to take responsibility in achieving their own peace (see the discussion in Chapter Seven).

9.2 Life in Welkom Hoek Community before the introduction of peace garden

This section discusses the general life style which characterised the Welkom Hoek community before the establishment of the peace gardening initiative. The data used in this section was mainly derived from the AT participants during the preliminary evaluation exercise I carried out at the end of the peace gardening initiative which spanned from January 2017 to May 2018.

9.2.1 Lack of trust and suspicion among community members

The first meeting I had with the AT demonstrated group dynamics that reflected hidden elements of political tensions among the participants as discussed in Chapter Six, section 6.3. AT participants summed up the prevailing situation in their community by pointing out that;

‘Hativimbani zvachose munharaunda matinogara umu uye kufungirana hakuperi nenyaya yemirizhonga yayitika pakati pedu ichikonzerwa nenyaya dzesarudzo uye dzezvematongerwe enyika’.

(We do not trust each other at all in our community and there is a lot of unending suspicion among community members which was fuelled by election-related or politically motivated violence). [ATP, 2017]

The lack of trust and suspicion in groups, especially for the first time, validates the concept that developing caring relationships with people oppressed or otherwise, takes time. Similarly, there is also need for an ample duration for the people in the peace gardening group to develop comprehensive relationships with each other, considering their past strained relationships. Strained relationships had come as a result of different political affiliations and the violence they witnessed each time they were approaching elections in their community.

The situation in Welkom Hoek communal farmlands before the peace gardening initiative was generally described as tense and bad. There was open hatred among people from different political parties and a lack of trust among perpetrators and victims of political violence as highlighted by AT participants who said:

‘Vanhu vaivengana zviri pachena munharaunda muno kunyanya avo vanenge vakarohwa kana kuroverwa hama dzavo mumhirizhonga dzezvematongerwe enyika’.

(People openly exhibited hatred in this community especially those who had been victims of political violence). [ATP, 2018]

(Relations among people from opposing political parties were generally tense in this area). [ATP, 2018]

(People generally did not trust one another, especially those from the dominant political parties). [ATP, 2018]

These remarks provided an overview of the situation which prevailed in Welkom Hoek.

9.2. 2 Unemployment and poverty in Welkom Hoek

The AT participants acknowledged that unemployment, hunger and poverty levels were generally high in their community, a situation which made them vulnerable to political

manipulation. This background resulted in some antisocial practices by the youth who ended up engaging in drug abuse while young girls resorted to prostitution as was pointed out by the AT participants who said:

‘Nyaya dzekushaikwa kwemabasa, nzara uye hurombo hwakati kwirirei chose munharaunda medu muno zvinova zvinoita kuti zvive nyore kushandiswa neavo vanoita zvevatongerwe enyika uye zvakonzeresa mabasa ekushandisa zvinodhaka pamwe nechipfambi nevana vadiki’.

(Unemployment, hunger and poverty levels are very high in our community; a situation which makes the community a hunting ground for politicians and this situation have also promoted drug abuse and prostitution among the local youth). [ATP, 2017]

(The situation which is in our country at the moment makes life very difficult for everyone. Young girls end up resorting to easy ways of getting some money to buy food and clothes. Even those who complete professional courses end up resorting to acts of prostitution since they cannot get formal employment easily). [ATP, 2017]

The AT members also highlighted that the unfortunate scenario existent in their community compelled them to be used as agents of violence in election campaigns for money which was used for paying school fees for children or food for feeding the families. It was unanimously agreed by the AT members that their Welkom Hoek community was a theatre of election-related violence which brewed the wave of disharmony and the lack of political tolerance that characterised the community. While the peace gardening initiative’s main thrust sought to transform post-conflict relationships among this community, it also ended up addressing the community concerns of poverty, hunger and enhancing sustainable livelihoods.

9.2.3 Lack of political broadmindedness

The Welkom Hoek community was characterised by lack of political tolerance; one AT participants explained that:

‘Dzidziso yatakapiwa kubva tichipinda munharaunda ino kana kutoti kubva patakawana rusununguko muna 1980 ndeyekuti hatifaniri kufambidzana

nevanhu vasiri vemusangano wedu wezvematongerwe enyika uye tinofanira kuvaona sevavengi’.

(The political ideology which we were taught since 1980 has been that of perceiving persons from the opposition political camps as enemies and as such there was no room for associating with them).[ATP, 2017]

The above sentiments expressed by the participants demonstrated high levels of political intolerance in the Welkom Hoek community and mixing or interacting with people from opposing political parties was actually regarded as a taboo. The frightening aspect was that this level of political intolerance was impinging on the concept of *unhu* which is revered very highly in the African culture (see the discussion of *unhu* in Chapter Eight section 8.5).

9.3 How the peace garden affected community lives

This section of the study discusses the preliminary impact of the peace gardening initiative among the AT participants and the Welkom Hoek community in general.

9.3.1 Meeting platform for community members

During an interview session with peace garden participants, I asked them to narrate how peace garden had impacted on their lives. Their responses revealed that the peace garden project had encouraged them to meet with other fellow citizens:

‘Mangadheni akaita kuti vanhu vasangane vachiita hurukuro kunyanya avo vanobva kumapato akasiyana ezvematongerwe enyika’.

(Peace gardens created some meeting and dialogue platforms for community members especially those from diverse political parties). [ATP, 2018]

[The garden provided us with a conducive environment for dialoguing with others]. [ATP, 2018]

This was an important aspect for it enabled them to converge and harmonise their differences, a development which was very rare before the peace gardening initiative. It is usually argued that for the people to iron out differences, the first step is to agree to meet and talk. The peace garden successfully achieved this by bringing together political opponents. This was an important step towards reconciliation and building peace within the Welkom Hoek community. The peace garden therefore presented the community members with a meeting platform to speak meaningfully about reconciliation.

9.3.2 Promotion of dialogue among political rivals

AT participants further revealed that the peace garden promoted and provided them with dialogue platforms which were limited in the past as highlighted in the remarks by the AT who said:

‘Ngadheni yerunyararo yakatibatsira chose nekutipa mukana wekuti tiwane kukurukura apo taita basa redu pamwe chete unova mukana wanga usina kujairika munguva dzapfuura idzo’.

(The peace garden helped us a lot by promoting dialogue among political rivals as we carried out our peace gardening routines, a feature which was not envisaged as possible in the past). [ATP, 2018]

This served as an important aspect towards building peace since through these dialogues, the local community members managed to make deliberations in their local language on how to transform their post-conflict relationships in positive and nonviolent ways. These dialogues provided a natural environment for the participants to express their views and it encouraged people from different political parties to engage and talk to each other. As earlier noted, the peace garden venture provided a timely platform for the participants to interact with each other, hear the narratives from both parties, a feature envisioned as key towards reconciliation and peace building in general.

9.3.3 An agent of social change

It was further appreciated by the community members that peace gardening further enlightened them on the issue of social change. One of the participants was quoted saying:

‘Mangadheni erunyararo akandidzidzisa kuti sanduko haiiuyi kana iwe munhu pachako usati wasanduka uye takakuridzirwa kutsvaka shanduko muupenyu hwedu hwese’.

(Peace gardening taught me that there can be no social change without personal change and we were challenged to fight every day to achieve that change). [ATP, 2018]

One of the participants was also quoted as saying:

'Ini ngadheni yerunyararo yakasandura upenyu hwangu sezvo ndakatokwanisa kugadzirisa ukama hwangu neavo vandaiona sevavengi nguva dzose'.

(The garden changed my life in that I was able to reconcile with those people whom I earlier on perceived as enemies). [ATP, 2018]

It is worth noting that the peace garden participants have done good work towards developing mechanisms in forgiving others as noted from the following remarks:

'Ngadheni yerunyararo yakatibatsira kuti tikwanise kuregererana chero zvaisave nyore asi takaona pataishanda tose kuti zvinobvira kushanda tose kunyange takambokonana nenyaya dzezvematongerwe enyika kana sarudzo'.

(The peace garden helped us a lot in teaching us the possibilities of forgiving those who had maimed us during the political violence fuelled by politics or election-related violence). [ATP, 2018]

[The gardening project taught us to forgive one another after acts of political violence or election-related conflicts]. [ATP, 2018]

The above proclamations by the AT members serve as proof that the peace garden acted as an agent of change among community members and also helped them develop forgiveness mechanisms against those whom they perceived as enemies or rivals before the peace gardening initiative.

9.3.4 Poverty eradication tool

As alluded to earlier, the level of extreme poverty in Welkom Hoek community was a major part of the problem which fueled conflict as it allowed the political parties to manipulate people and that led people to turn away from their real values of coexistence (Ngara 2013). Participants pointed out that the peace garden managed to eradicate elements of poverty as people were now able to pay school fees for their children and remain with some additional money in their pockets. The produce sold from the peace garden helped participants to have something to put on the table. While the peace garden fulfilled its anticipated mandate of transforming post-conflict relationships, they also promoted the concept of interaction and working together for a common cause by people who earlier on perceived each other as enemies and ultimately helped in empowering the local community.

The remarks by the participant in the following excerpt sums up how peace gardens served as a poverty eradication tool:

‘Tinofara chose kutaura kuti ngadheni yakatibatsira chose, patakatengesa matomatisi atakawana, takatokwanisa kubvisira vana vedu mari dzechikoro tikatosaravo neimwe muhomwe chinova chinhu chakatibatsira kugara tisingangopemhi kana kushandiswa nevane mari kunyanya vezvematongerwe enyika’.

(We are so excited to say the peace garden helped us a lot, when we sold our first tomato crop as an AT, we managed to raise some school fees for our children and also remained with some extra cash. That situation empowered us and helped us from being manipulated by those who have money, especially the politicians). [ATP, 2018]

As noted above, the peace garden empowered the community members as they managed to pay school fees for their children and remain with extra cash, a scenario which prevented them from being manipulated by politicians. The peace garden played a crucial role in uniting community members and also taught them non-violent ways of solving conflicts.

9.3.5 Debating platform for peace related issues

The peace garden created a platform to debate peace-related issues in a conducive environment without any fear of being victimised. It was also revealed that the peace garden initiative provided an avenue in which peace related issues were discussed. Some participants appreciated it by asserting that peace gardening served as a meeting and interaction place and it taught them about the possibility of living in peace. This peace garden model did not only bring people together politically but also socially linked different parties together.

The peace garden brought positive change in our lives as pointed out by the AT members who said:

‘Ngadheni yerunyararo yakaunza maitiro matsva, nemushandira pamwe unosanganisira vanhu vanotsigira mapato ezvematongerwe enyika akasiyana munharaunda medu, chinova chinhu chakatinakira chose’.

(This peace garden brought a new dimension of doing things among community members; cooperative project which included people from diverse

political parties was a very good peacebuilding initiative for us community members). [ATP, 2018]

[We have enjoyed working with people whom we earlier perceived as rivals or enemies in a beneficial manner. This initiative has helped in cementing our fragile relations]. [ATP, 2018]

The remarks by the participants show that the peace gardening initiative had some positive bearing in their lives as individuals and as a community.

9.3.6 Cooperation and the rebuilding of community relationships

Participants further revealed that peace gardens helped them to learn about the importance of cooperation others regardless of their different political affiliations. The community participation in the peace gardening initiative also increased their confidence levels and eliminated fear and suspicion towards others. Another attribute of peace gardening is that it fostered respect of one another which never used to be the case.

Through trainings that were availed to the participants, it was possible to inculcate the spirit of self-respect and respect for others (see the discussion on the training in Chapter Six, section 6.9). The remarks by the following participants demonstrate the importance placed on the workshop by the participants:

‘Takabetserekana chose pamafungiro edu nemusangano wamakatirongera uya. Wakatibatsira kubvisa kutya kwanga kwagara kuri matiri uye kamweya kekufungirana’.

(We benefited immensely from the workshop which you organised for us in terms of our thinking, the fear and suspicion which have characterised our lives in the past have positively been transformed).[ATP, 2018]

[We kindly appeal to you to occasionally organise such workshops for us. They shape our thinking and help in eradicating fear among participants. These workshops are very important for they have also helped to eliminate suspicion amongst us]. [ATP, 2018]

9.3.7 Communal help for bereaved families

The peace gardening initiative positively transformed a bad culture of not attending or assisting at funerals at the homesteads of rival political party members which had become a

characteristic feature in this community. This feature was not African and did not augur well with the tenets of *unhu*. Peace gardening resulted in the promotion of assisting and attending funerals even at homes of those perceived as political rivals. The AT members donated garden produce for free, a development which was envied by those who were not in the action team.

The remarks by the following observer concur with the above discussion:

‘Tafara chose kuona kuti mushandira pamwe wengadheni yerunyararo waunza maitiro matsva munharaunda muno, kamweya kekusaenda pandufu dzeavo vaionana sevavengi kanenge kagadziriswa uye kubatsira nezvekudya kwavari kuita kwaita kuti vakawanda vayemure chironzwa ichi’.

(We are so pleased to realise that the peace gardening initiative has brought a new dimension in the way people are relating in this community, the old practice of shunning and not assisting at the funerals of the so-called enemies has been addressed and the donation of garden produce by the action team for free at such functions has been yearned by many observers). [Observer, 2018]

In addition to alleviating the burdens for the grieving families, peace gardens served as demonstrations to other people how it was possible to work together with people from opposing political parties for the common good.

9.3.8 Removal of barriers of hatred

Another aspect of peace gardening which was applauded by participants is that it made meaningful strides in removing barriers of hatred among people from different political parties. Members from ZANU-PF and the MDC never used to see eye to eye during election times. However, when the peace garden was launched and implemented by the action team, trust, togetherness and tolerance was realised and is still practised. One hopes the situation will remain intact during the coming elections.

Some participants narrated how it helped them in controlling their emotions and mind during public conversations and debates while others expressed gratitude over peace gardening which they say taught them ways of dealing with community conflicts. One of the participants during an FGD narrated how the peace garden taught him to be resilient (the ability to bend without breaking) by openly acknowledging that:

‘Mangadheni erunyararo aya akatibatsira kukwanisa kutauravo nevamwe tichizvidzora uye nzira dzakasiyana dzokugadzirisa makakava uye kukwanisa kutirira munyaya dzezvemakakava’.

(Peace gardens helped me to be able to debate well with others, how to control my temper, how to resolve conflicts and being resilient in conflict management and mitigation). [FGD, 2018]

9.3.9 Improvement of gardening skills

Some action team members revealed how the peace gardening initiative had helped in improving their gardening skills. On two occasions, I liaised with colleagues who had experience in gardening to come and share their knowledge with the action team at zero cost. Such trainings did not only improve the people’s gardening skills but also empowered them with skills which can last for a lifetime. This arrangement resulted in **two** AT participants pointing out that:

‘Chirongwa ichi chakatibatsira chaizvo nekunyatsoita zvekurima mangadheni zvine hunyanzvi. Tave kukwanisa kundoshandisavo ruzivo urwu kumisha yedu kana kudzidzisavo vamwe’.

(Peace gardening helped us by improving our gardening skills. We are now able to take the skills which we learned to our homes or even to teach our neighbours) [ATP, 2018]

[These trainings are so beneficial to us in that we are taught lifelong skills which we will use for the rest of our lives and also impart to our children and relatives]. [ATP. 2018]

While the peace gardening initiative imparted improved gardening skills to the community, it also fulfilled its overall purpose to transform post-conflict relationships and cemented cohesion among the ZANU-PF and MDC supporters. The strength of this peacebuilding initiative was that it worked with both the victims and the perpetrators of past election-related violence episodes in ways which increased the levels of trust and collaboration across the political divide.

This section discussed the positive preliminary impact which the peace gardening had on the Welkom Hoek community while the next section discusses challenges encountered during the peace gardening initiative.

9.4 The challenges experienced in peace gardening

This section discusses the challenges that were experienced during the peace gardening initiative and also explores some political activities, at local and national levels, that disrupted the participants' scheduled peace gardening meetings. Regardless of the positive impact which the peace gardening had as an intervention strategy for transforming post-conflict relationships among political party supporters in Welkom Hoek; it also had its own challenges as discussed in this section. These challenges include economic challenges, water challenges, inputs, climate change, and lack of patience, disagreements, thefts, vandalism and unstable political environment. In addition to the above highlighted challenges, there were political and national programmes which coincided with the peace gardening activities which ended up disrupting the project.

9.4.1 Economic challenges

The effects of the economic meltdown that affected the ordinary people on the streets of Zimbabwe also affected those taking part in the peace gardening initiative. The economic challenges caused the AT members to experience difficulties in accessing vital gardening inputs and seed varieties appropriate to climatic conditions of their agricultural region five: drought resistant varieties were suitable. This was noted by some participants who said:

'Chirongwa chedu chakanaka chose asi nenyaya yekuti zvinhu zvakatiomera munyika, zvaida kuti dai pakava nemari yekutenga zvinodikanwa pakufambisa zvinodiwa'.

(This peace gardening initiative is very good but due to the economic challenges bedevilling the country, there was need to have a strong fund for meeting the gardening requirements). [ATP, 2018]

[While we applaud this noble initiative on a voluntary basis we however believe that there is need for us to have some funding in order to sustain this project. We are crippled financially to be able to buy the necessary inputs].[ATP, 2018]

Since the project relied on the funds I was getting from the university research grant, it became difficult to meet all the needs such as buying pesticides, drilling boreholes, installing water pipes and tanks. Lack of money resulted in us failing to buy the necessary inputs such as chemicals for keeping pests away, validating Chitongo and Magaya's (2013) findings that highlight limited funding as one of the major challenges that inhibit the success of community

gardening. Gardening in the study area was a fairly expensive venture to set up and required a robust budget to address modern gardening requirements. The economic meltdown in Zimbabwe made it practically impossible for some people to set up standard and secure gardens without some grant advancements.

9.4.2 Marketing challenges

There were instances during which the participants failed to realise good sales from their produce. For example, when the AT harvested their tomato crop, the market was sometimes flooded and they ended up reaping no meaningful monetary rewards. The other issue that emerged on marketing was that there was need for establishing and developing a partnership with local boarding schools and supermarkets to buy the produce.

There were very corrupt tendencies associated with the awarding of tenders where the representatives of these institutions needed a 10% kickback on the total sale and the AT lost out since we did not agree with those illegal enticements. Selling the gardening produce to schools and supermarkets could have helped the AT to sell their produce in large quantities. Three participants who encountered the challenge of corruption highlighted that:

‘Patakazama kutengesa zvirimwa zvedu muzvikoro zvakatitenderedza pamwe nezvitoro zvikuru takasangana nedambudziko reuori sezvo vataikurukura navo vaiti taifanira kuvavimbisa kuzovapa chikamu chemari yataizowana pakutengesa mbeu dzedu, isu ndokubva taramba nyaya yavo saka takabva tatotadza kutengerwa’.

(When we tried to sell our garden produce to the nearby supermarkets and high schools we encountered some corrupt tendencies where those who were negotiated with us wanted to be given a 10% token of appreciation fee for facilitating the deal. When we objected to their call, we lost out just like that). [ATP, 2018]

[We fell victim to corrupt people who wanted to be given some bribery in form of a 10% token of appreciation before taking in our product]. [ATP, 2018]

[The Zimbabwean situation is now very awkward, were almost tricked by some corrupt dealers who wanted to get some 10% from our sale for facilitating the deal to have our product prioritised by the buyers]. [ATP, 2018]

Due to the economic challenges it became difficult for the participants to fence their garden with mesh wire so as to protect it from vandalism as well as being destroyed by stray animals. There was need for treated poles around their garden but that was again hampered by the lack of financial resources.

9.4.3 Climatic change

Climate change had a negative effect on the peace gardening project. This environmental phenomenon brought about longer warm periods in the study area which meant an adverse effect on the gardening crop. The shortage of rainfall and irrigation services in the study area exacerbated the situation for those taking part in peace gardening.

The situation was made worse because Masvingo province falls under region five, which is associated with minimum rainfall and that proved to be a serious challenge experienced by the AT participants in peace gardening. The remarks by the participants who said:

‘Nyaya dzemamiriro ekunze nekusanduka kwawo ndechimwe chigozhero chatakasangana nacho muhurongwa hwedu, ino nzvimbo yagara inowana mvura shoma saka panguva dzekupisa hova dzakapera mvura tikashaya zvekuita sevanhu vange vasina zvibhorani’.

(The issue of climate change was one challenge which haunted us in our peace gardening initiative, generally our area receives low amounts of rainfall so when approaching summer, our water sources dried up and left us with no option since we did not have back up bore holes). [ATP, 2018]

[We faced water challenges during the peace gardening initiative considering that our water sources are not perennial and that have been intensified by the new phenomenon of climate change]. [ATP, 2018]

The climate change phenomenon seriously affected this country as a whole and as a result the area has been receiving erratic rainfall for the past two decades. The lack of irrigation facilities especially in the month of September up to December 2017 turned the gardening project into a complete nightmare as the streams which we used for gardening were drying up. Sinking boreholes could have been a wiser solution to the above-mentioned challenge but the initiative was very expensive as those who offer such services charged large amounts of money.

9.5 National events which derailed peace gardening activities

There were some national events such as the BVR exercise, the Presidential youth interface rallies and the 2018 general election campaign which fell within the peace gardening timeframe and slowly affected the initiative as discussed in this section.

9.5.1 Presidential youth interface rallies

Other activities, such as the presidential youth interface rallies partly disrupted peace gardening as earlier discussed (see Chapter Six, section 6.11.4). These meetings were mooted by the ZANU-PF Youth League and were meant to redress the vestiges of colonialism and also to win the support of the youth through listening to their demands for inclusion in policy provisions. It was also a cunning way of drumming support for the ruling party ahead of the 2018 general elections and also in providing the roadmap for the informed participation in the 2018 general elections. The youth and party supporters were bussed to the venues of the interface rallies even against their wishes. As a security measure for me and the AT, it became practically impossible to hold the peace gardening event concurrently with these rallies and, as a result, the peace gardening initiative was affected.

While some action members were chosen to go and attend these interface rallies, those that remained behind could not come to the garden for our scheduled meetings since they were expected to either listen to the broadcast on radio stations or watch the live broadcast on television. If that was not enough, the other component which was associated with these interface rallies was that they were linked with plentiful food and drink. That element of free food and drink compelled people to prioritise, going to the rallies at the expense of the peace gardening sessions. It had been made clear from the start that people were not going to get any form of remuneration or incentives in the peace garden project. These interface rallies, together with the by-elections discussed above, had a strong bearing in derailing our peace gardening activities for a while.

9.5.2 Biometric voter registration exercise

Another development which stood in the way of the peace gardening initiative was the Biometric Voter Registration exercise. The new constitution of the country called for the ZEC to come up with a new voter's roll which was to be first used in the 2018 harmonized elections. The BVR was launched by the president of Zimbabwe and started on the 16th of September 2017 and continued running until the 20th of January 2018. Since the exercise

involved all eligible Zimbabwean voters, the process was unquestionably bound to disrupt normal activities in the country including the peace gardening project.

With so much emphasis being placed on the exercise, it became a bit awkward for me and the AT participants not to pay heed to this national exercise regarded as a historic occasion in the country's electoral system. Interestingly, the BVR exercise did not bring the project to a complete halt as measures were put in place to cover up for the lost time through meetings on unscheduled days in order to meet the research deadlines.

9.5.3 The 2018 general election campaign

The general election campaign activities for the 2018 polls had a toll on the peace gardening initiative. The country was holding the national elections in July 2018 and there was glaring evidence on the ground that political parties had started preparations for those elections. By the time the project was compiled, the election directorate had already started various provincial tours to educate their support base on the essence of voter registration.

These campaigning exercises were carried out on a massive scale and as such, general community life activities were interrupted in one way or another and so was our peace garden. These election campaigns were generally peaceful, following the call by the new dispensation for free, fair and credible elections. On the ground however, the campaigning remained characterised by rigor, intimidation, and forced day and night meetings with hate speeches being prominent during these meetings. This development prompted some disruption in our peace gardening since the activity discussed here did not give the AT members options on whether to attend or not. One participant summed up the prevailing situation by saying:

'Nyaya dzesarudzo dzatanga idzi dzinotisiyazve tine mukana mushoma wekusarudza kuti tinotenda here kana kuti kwete kwatinenge tasheedzwa'.

(These election campaign meetings which have started leave us with no options on whether to attend the campaigning meetings or not). [ATP, 2018]

As an alternative, mechanisms were put in place by the AT members to meet for our peace gardening routines on days and occasions which did not clash with these campaigning days. The continuous desire by the participants to still report for peace gardening under such tense conditions show how positively it had transformed their lives.

9.6 Political environment towards the 2018 general elections

The political environment towards elections was proving to be no longer conducive for the peace gardening activity since we were now viewed with a great deal of suspicion. There was general fear of being labelled as opposition sympathisers. There were growing elements of suspicion in our peace gardening activity where fellow political members were suspecting that their members had defected to opposition political parties. The AT pointed out that the peace gardening and the entire study promoted collaboration across the political divide in terms of transforming previously tainted relationships. In spite of challenges, there was consensus that the participants wanted to continue with the peace garden beyond this study. That is why I decided to establish an NGO which specialises in peacebuilding conflict management through peace gardens (see Annexure 2).

The current political environment in the country presents proper opportunities for identifying the impact of the peace gardening project among the participants. Since the peace gardening had taught people about political broadmindedness towards, during and after elections, the current political environment leading up to the July 2018 general election served as a litmus test to the intervention strategy. The campaigning period was now associated with the bussing of people to attend political gatherings and that ended up affecting our AT as members as they were compelled to attend these political rallies.

My observations confirmed that the team's enthusiasm in peace gardening was again lessening as a result of fear of the unknown. As people who had been exposed to frightening past electoral violence but had been taught through the peace garden on how to live harmoniously and tolerate others from opposition political parties, they were now torn on which path to follow.

The campaigning was rigorous and saw some members from the gardening team being drafted into the campaigning teams and that resulted in them missing out on a series of the peace gardening activities. Upon the return of the AT members, I observed that their mentality of hatred had been rekindled in their hearts and minds but the good thing was that they continued coming to the peace gardening project.

9.7 Achieving of study objectives

Regardless of the challenges encountered during the peace gardening venture, the ten-member AT participants highlighted that the research objective of transforming post-conflict

relationships via peace gardens was achieved. Two participants concurred with the other nine by pointing out that:

‘Hwaro hwechidzidzo chakazoita kuti tibude nepfungwa yengadheni yerunyararo iyi inoratidza kuti yakabudirira chose. Takakwanisa kuvaka ngadheni yange isipo, tikashandamo zvakanaka kwenguva inotopfuura gore tiri vamapato ezvematongerwe enyika akasiyana. Chiitiko ichi chakava chitsva munharaunda muno uye chakatibatsira chose pakuva nemaonero matsva munyaya dzezvematongerwe enyika uye kuva nedzimwe nzira dzisina mhirizhonga mukugadzirisa makakava’.

(The objectives of this study were fully achieved considering that it served as the basis for coming up with this successful peace gardening intervention strategy. We managed as an AT to establish a peace garden from scratch and were carried our peace gardening initiative very well for a period spanning more than a year as people from opposing political parties. This development served as a new feature in our community which helped us to develop new ways of interpreting political issues and taught us about various alternatives of resolving conflicts). [ATP, 2018]

(While we are contented that we achieved our objectives by starting this project from scratch, we realise our success story from what we are gathering from our fellow community members who are unceasingly showering us with praises. We also managed to do our peace gardening initiative for a fairly long period without any serious challenges. We learned a lot of ways to address our differences in nonviolent ways). [ATP, 2018]

The peace gardening initiative tallied well with the research’s objectives centred on the establishment of a peace garden where people from the political divide would come and work together in ways meant to promote political broadmindedness. The establishment of the peace garden in Welkom Hoek and the successful peace gardening activity which brought together ten people from the country’s dominant political parties for a period spanning more than a year signified a huge achievement. The people’s call for active participation in projects in small numbers was also achieved as only ten participants took part in the peace gardening initiative. Five participants, as highlighted, were drawn from ZANU-PF while the remaining party came from the opposition MDC party. The concept of

participation in numbers therefore complements the basic characteristic features of the action research design that guides this study (see discussion in Chapter Five, section 5.2).

9.8 Ethical Considerations

The preliminary evaluation for this study was carried out in a manner which met the expectations of the DUT ethical code of conduct to safeguard the rights of the participants. All the information pertaining to this study and its evaluation objectives were explained to the action team at the beginning of the peace gardening initiative and also before the evaluation to ensure informed consent. The participants were asked to fill in the consent form (see Appendices G & H). Participation in the preliminary evaluation exercise, as in the peace gardening initiative was also voluntary and respondents had the right to withdraw at any time if they so wished. Confidentiality was upheld as no names were used during the data narration exercise. This preliminary evaluation also embraced beneficence, implying doing good for others and not causing physical or psychological harm to participants or exposing them to embarrassment, unusual stress, and demeaning treatment or damage one's reputation (Patton and Cochran 2002).

9.9 Limitations of the preliminary evaluation exercise

The preliminary evaluation exercise was carried out at the end of the month of May into the first days of June 2018. It was unfortunate that the evaluation exercise coincided with the campaigns for the July 2018 general elections in the country but the timing however provided a good platform for evaluating the success or weakness of the intervention strategy. The levels of suspicion and uncertainty during this period were very high and some AT participants were no longer at ease to have open contributions in fear of being misjudged by other party members who were not in the peace gardening group. That mentality agreed with the earlier assertion that peacebuilding does not take place over a short period of time. The concept of fear features predominantly in this study but the evaluation exercise deduced that though the intervention strategy like this one can be very effective in overcoming fear among participants. There was need in some cases for partnership with organisations that offered psychosocial and counseling services especially to traumatised victims of political violence (Collier and Vicente 2012).

Despite the success stories highlighted in sections 9.2.1 to 9.2.8 the thorny issue of political violence remains a sensitive issue which participants had reservations in discussing openly. The other limitation of this evaluation exercise was that it was carried out after only one implementation cycle due to time limitations. It could have worked out well to have another

long-term evaluation especially after the elections to see whether the action team had transformed in their levels of political tolerance.

9.10 Income generated from the first peace gardening cycle

This section discusses the income that was generated from the first cycle by the peace gardening participants. The section also discusses how costs for inputs were catered for.

Table 13 Income generated from the first cycle

Crop	Buyer	Number of crates	Price per crate	Total income per sale	Sale Sessions
Tomatoes	Open Market	25	US\$25.00	US\$625.00	1
	High School	28	US\$27.00	US\$756.00	2
	Supermarket	25	US\$27.00	US\$675.00	3
	Open market	26	US\$25.00	US\$650.00	4
	Hospital	24	US\$26.00	US\$624.00	5
	High school	27	US\$28.00	US\$756.00	6
	Open market	25	US\$15.00	US\$375.00	7
	Open market	16	US\$ 14.00	US\$224.00	8
Fixed transportation fee to the selling venue				US\$45.00 for 8 sales = US\$360.00	
			Grand Total generated	US\$4,685.00 (inclusive of transport costs)	
			Grand profit	US\$4,325.00 (excluding transport costs)	

Though the main objective of this peace gardening project was to transform post-conflict relationships among former political rivals, it ended up improving the livelihoods of the community members, providing them with fresh gardening produce considering that most of the AT members come from vulnerable groups in society. The peace garden, in concurrence with Sithole, Nkala and Dube (2012) and Chitongo and Magaya (2013) also generated household income for the participants. The peace garden had green vegetables, onions and some carrots but the main crop was tomatoes. The sale of the tomato crop during the first cycle was carried out during the month of October and November 2017 and this was done once every week (refer to the guiding schedule in Table 6).The table above does not

therefore take into account the sale of other products which were sold on daily basis to individuals on a very small scale. The generated income was only calculated from the main crop which was sold in crates and in large quantities. The AT concluded a deal with a local transporter who reasonably agreed to transport the tomatoes to the selling point at a fixed fee of US\$45,00 which was US\$25.00 less than what other transporters were charging. The transporter also agreed to be given his dues after the payments from the buyers. Marketing was not a big issue especially in the local boarding schools considering that I had served as a teacher for the past eighteen years.

The other AT participants faced some minor challenges from the middle men who wanted to benefit from the sale by asking for a 10% bribe for brokering bulk sales from the local supermarkets (see discussion in Section 9.4.2). The AT participants gave the priority to the open market in town, the local high schools and the referral hospitals which bought their tomatoes in bulk. The table above summarises the estimated income earned from the two month selling cycle for the month of August and September 2017.

The generated amount was shared among the ten AT participants and that saw each participant pocketing around US\$446,10. The generated income helped the participants in various ways as highlighted in Section 6.12 ranging from fees payment and personal upkeep. The participants were very happy with the income generated from the project considering that their income was tax free with very minimum overheads. The peace gardening project proved to have multiple benefits ranging from transforming post-conflict relationships, positive livelihood outcomes, improving livelihood diet, poverty alleviation mechanism, food production and crime prevention among other benefits (see section 3.5.2). The money used in acquiring inputs during the first cycle was contributed by members and the team also benefited from the R2000,00 donation by a DUT staff member who requested anonymity. That donation was used to purchase, watering canes, hose pipes, garden forks, harvesting crates and other essential gardening tools. The summation of the generated income in this section agrees with the assertion that gardens are celebrated in Zimbabwe, Africa and world over for their contributions in improving food and nutrition security, income generation and more recently as a source of gainful employment along the entire value chain including input suppliers, open market vendors and transporters (Chazovachii, Mutami and Boora 2011).

9.11 Summary

This chapter discussed the preliminary evaluation which was carried out in Welkom Hoek. The evaluation was carried out through interview sessions and some observations which I carried out. The chapter also deliberated how some political and national programmes coincided with the preliminary evaluation exercise. While the study managed to promote collaboration across the political divide in terms of transforming the previously tainted relationships, there was evidence in this chapter that the process of peacebuilding needs sufficient time and participants do not change their attitudes overnight. The next chapter explores the summary of the entire study, conclusion and the recommendations.

PART V

CHAPTER TEN: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents an overview of the whole research study, the procedures followed and the findings generated from this study based on the thesis' aims and objectives. The chapter ends by using the research findings to suggest general conclusions, which becomes the basis for formulating recommendations. The chapter ends by suggesting directions for future research. The data collection methodology in this study comprises focus group discussions, observations, interview sessions and the action research component which involved the participants in peace gardening.

10.2 The study objectives

The overall aim of this research was to transform post-conflict relationships via peace gardens in Masvingo; Zimbabwe with the specific objectives of this research being to;

- explore the causes and effects of election-related violence in Masvingo, Zimbabwe
- examine the use, effectiveness and challenges of using PGs in transforming post-conflict relationships
- design and implement an intervention strategy together with the AT, aimed at transforming post-conflict relationships
- undertake preliminary evaluation of the outcomes of the initiated intervention strategy together with the AT

10.3 Summary of study findings

This section of the study gives the summary of the whole study and discusses the study findings in relationship to the study aims and objectives. The study on the transformation of post-conflict relationships via peace gardens was carried out in Welkom Hoek community, situated in Masvingo rural district in Zimbabwe. This study is supported by the peace and power theory which is grounded in the emancipatory standards created by Paulo Freire and

calls for working together with others fairly and cooperatively in ways which promotes peace, reinforcing team work and challenging competitive and divisive ways as promoted by both Mattaini (2008: 1) and (Allport 1979). This theory is complemented by the conflict transformation theory and the contact theory.

The underlying assumption of the peace and power theory is that every single human relationship includes the utilisation of force yet there is typically one individual or a gathering of individuals who have relative power in that gathering structure. However, individuals look for space in life where they are moderately free from rivalry and power over another, where participation and peace wins (Chinn 2001; Chinn and Falk-Rafael 2014). The other assumption points out that conflict is inevitable in all human relationships but people recognise the value of cooperative ways of working together (Chinn and Falk-Rafael 2014: 63-64).

The research was also guided by the peace and power theory's pillars whose thrust was associated with constructing non-violent cultures which includes:

- recognising contributions and success of others,
- acting with respect,
- sharing power to build the community,
- and making peace (Mattaini 2008: 2).

All the theoretical assumptions and pillars became the guiding principles for the study and the AT during the entire peace gardening venture.

I also explored the concept of gardening, the definition, the use, effectiveness and challenges in their use of gardens worldwide and then moved closer home by specifically focusing on the Zimbabwean context. The study revealed that there are numerous studies that have been carried out globally on the use of gardens for various reasons, while some reasonable studies have been carried out on gardening in Zimbabwe for nutritional enhancement, community building and improving sustainable livelihoods. Very little studies are available specifically on the use of peace gardens while no scholarly studies have provided in-depth reflections on the use of peace gardens for transforming post-conflict relationships among political rivals.

Generally the reviewed literature reveals that the use of the action research design and the use of action research in the field of peace building and conflict resolution was unpopular among Zimbabwean scholars and even on the African continent as a whole. The few published studies which were available for cross referencing during the research journey include Ngwenya (2014), Muchemwa (2015), Makwerere (2017) and Shonhiwa (2016) who all happen to be DUT graduates.

10.3.1 Objective number one: Explore the causes and effects of election-related violence in Masvingo; Zimbabwe

The requirements for objective number one were addressed and presented in Chapter Seven of this study which explored the causes and effects of political violence in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. The study sought to find out the main causes of conflicts in Welkom Hoek community among political party supporters from the political divide. The study findings revealed that elections and politics were the main causes of conflict in Welkom Hoek community with hate speech, creating divisions, partisan distribution of food as tools by which the conflict was enforced. The study also found out that apart from elections and politics, the formation of new political parties (mainly the MDC in the post independent Zimbabwe), economic and unemployment challenges, family disputes and prophetic healing churches served as other contributory factors towards the proliferation of conflict in Masvingo and Zimbabwe in general.

10.3.2 Objective number two: examine the use, effectiveness and challenges of using PGs in transforming post-conflict relationships

The second objective of this study was addressed in Chapters Six and Nine where the use, effectiveness and challenges associated with gardening were discussed. The peace gardening initiative provided me with the platform to observe and participate in the use, effectiveness and challenges of using peace gardens in transforming post-conflict relationships. The findings from the study revealed that it is possible and effective to use peace gardening for transforming post-conflict relationships among political party supporters from diverse organisations.

The study findings revealed that peace gardening was effective in serving as an agent for social change, an eradication tool for poverty and a debating platform for peace related issues which all played a role in the realisation of the study thrust which was centred on transforming post-conflict relationships. The study findings also revealed that the peace

gardening initiative made meaningful strides towards the dismantling of hatred barriers, promotion of supporting bereaved families by the AT and also sharpening their gardening skills. The study findings, however, revealed that notwithstanding the positive elements noted earlier the intervention strategy was adversely affected by climatic change, economic and marketing challenges and the national events such as the Presidential Youth Interface allies, the Biometric Voter Registration exercise and general election campaigns which all derailed its smooth progression (see Chapter 9, sections 9.6.1, 9.6.2 and 9.6.3). The personal observations I made and the remarks from the AT participants on the effectiveness of peace gardening demonstrated that even though the intervention strategy was tainted with some challenges, it still remained an effective strategy in peacebuilding and the transformation of post-conflict relations in particular.

10.3.3 Objective number three: design and implement an intervention strategy together with the AT, aimed at transforming post-conflict relationships

Chapters Five and Six addressed the requirements for objective number three which called for the designing and implementation of an intervention strategy, aimed at transforming post-conflict relationships. The designing of the intervention strategy which constituted the first part of the objective, was described in Chapter Five (see section 5.2) while the second part of the objective was presented in Chapter Six, which described how the AT we managed to implement the intervention strategy established in form of a peace garden in Welkom Hoek community aimed at transforming post-conflict relationships (see the discussion in Chapter Six, sections 6.3 and 6.4).

10.3.4 Objective number four: undertake preliminary evaluation of the outcomes of the initiated intervention strategy

The fourth objective of this study was addressed in Chapter Nine where a preliminary evaluation was undertaken to assess the impact which the intervention had upon the Welkom Hoek community. The preliminary evaluation findings indicated that the pre-peace gardening environment in the community was characterised by lack of trust among community members, high unemployment and poverty levels and glaring acts of lack of political broadmindedness (see Chapter Nine, sections 9.2.1, 9.2.2 and 9.2.3). The post gardening environment revealed that the intervention strategy positively provided them with a community meeting platform which they never had before and that the peace garden promoted dialogue among political rivals in the AT in an amazing way.

The peace garden also acted within the short period of time, as an agent for social change, an eradication tool for poverty and a debating tool for peace related issues. The peace gardening initiative was also reported to have made meaningful strides towards the eradication of hatred barriers, promoted the provision of support to bereaved families by the AT and also sharpened their gardening skills. Regardless of these positive elements noted, the preliminary evaluation also revealed that the AT was also negatively affected by climatic change, economic and marketing constraints. The peace gardening initiative was also deleteriously affected by national events such as the Presidential Youth Interface rallies, the Biometric Voter Registration exercise and general election campaigns which all derailed its smooth progression (see Chapter Nine, sections 9.6.1, 9.6.2 and 9.6.3). The observations and the comments which were reported by the participants showed that the peace gardening initiative was a successful tool in transforming post-conflict relationships.

10.4 Conclusion

Overall, this research gave me the opportunity to deduce the efficacy of AR as an appropriate tool in peacebuilding. The research also provided me the opportunity to experience the amazing role concealed in gardening and its power in transforming post-conflict relationships among people from diverse political divide. Those who took part in the peace gardening project enjoyed realising that they had become potential peace mechanisms in their families and communities even though they belonged to different political parties.

Their success story in working together in the peace garden, despite their diverse political backgrounds and the fact that they could not see eye to eye earlier, proved beyond doubt that sustainable peace is possible when local communities make peacebuilding their own mission. It is important to note that numbers do not matter much in action research and peace building. The study helped in making me realise that not all participants in AR change their attitudes and perceptions overnight, a feature which calls for a number of intervention cycles or individual follow ups to the AT members in order to realize proper action research results.

10.5 Knowledge generation and implications of this study in peacebuilding

Proper implementation of this intervention strategy at grassroots level as suggested in this study has the potential to transform post-conflict relationships and the way community members from diverse political divide perceive each other. This intervention strategy also

has the potential to remove political stereotypes which have been a dominant feature in the rural communities. The knowledge generated from this study can help policy-makers in coming up with laws to curb violence through designing peace intervention strategies meant to promote peaceful coexistence, diversity and social cohesion among community members. The other vital component added in peacebuilding by this study is that, while gardens have been mainly used for community building, nutritional purposes and for leisure in some cases, this study proffered that the same gardens can be used in transforming post relationships among political party supporters in ways which promote social cohesion and political permissiveness. The study makes contribution to scholarship in a neglected area of conflict transformation through the use of peace gardens for transforming post-conflict relationships towards broader peacebuilding. This study makes contribution in the peacebuilding field through identifying the causes and effects of conflict in Welkom Hoek and also in terms of designing, implementing and evaluating a peacebuilding intervention in response to the identified challenges. Considering the scarcity of published studies in the use of action research in Zimbabwe, the study therefore provides a foundation for further studies in the use of action research in the transformation of post-conflict relationships among people from diverse political backgrounds or similar challenges.

10.6 Preliminary evaluation

The preliminary evaluation exercise revealed that the peace gardening initiative provided the Welkom Hoek community with a community meeting platform which they never had before and that the peace garden promoted dialogue among political rivals in a very constructive way. The peace garden also acted as an agent for social change, a tool for eradicating poverty and a debating tool for peace related issues. The peace gardening initiative was also reported to have made meaningful strides towards the minimisation of hatred barriers, promoted the provision of support to bereaved families by the AT and also sharpened their gardening skills. The preliminary evaluation exercise demonstrates the success story of a community based project whose measure of success is that the project expanded and generated new ideas, whereas those which are not really supported by people tend to fade away once the NGO departs. The failure by peace players to involve local communities in designing intervention strategies prompted Fisher and Zimina (2008) to ask whether peacebuilding was still relevant and worthwhile or whether people were merely wasting their time.

Regardless of the positive elements noted, the preliminary evaluation also revealed that the AT was also negatively affected by climatic change, economic conditions and marketing challenges. Lastly the preliminary evaluation exercise also revealed that the peace gardening initiative was also negatively affected by national events such as the Presidential Youth Interface Rallies, the Biometric Voter Registration exercise and general election campaigns which all derailed its smooth progression (see discussion in Chapter Nine, sections 9.6.1, 9.6.2 and 9.6.3).

10.7 Ending the peace gardening cycle

The peace gardening action cycle was guided by the objectives set out in the study (see Section 1.8). As a result, the cycle ended with the carrying out of a preliminary evaluation exercise (see Chapter Nine). While this cycle ended, the AT made a commitment that they were going to continue with the peace gardening initiative. The participants realised that there was vital necessity to continue with yet another similar home-grown and context specific inquiry in the second cycle with the trust of linking peace building efforts with psychosocial and coping skills in post conflict situations. This perception was largely informed by the nature of conflict under discussion in this study and its effect in the Welkom Hoek community. Considering the violent nature of conflicts in Welkom Hoek which in some circumstances led to the deaths and disappearances of community members the issue of psychosocial and coping skills became very topical. The second cycle wanted to address the cyclic nature of conflict in the area as it tends to be more pronounced after every five year intervals when elections will be held in Zimbabwe. Considering that some villagers formed the action research team, those who did not take part also indicated their desire to participate in the second cycle and take an equally active role in post-election transformation mechanisms since the post-conflict situation affected them. The peace gardening participants gave me the assurance that they were going to continue with the project even after the completion of the research. They promised to invite me to witness the sale of their second cycle produce but also made an appeal for me not to abandon them.

10.8 Research excursion reflections

One of the essential elements associated with AR is that, at the end of the research journey, there is need to carry out a self-introspection exercise which is discussed in this section. Carrying out this investigation served as a learning curve for me, considering the fact that my master's degree was module based with a minor research component and the use of AR

further complicated my experiences but that, however did not take away the glamour and adventure which characterised this research exercise. The AR exercise was thrilling enough in that it encouraged me to integrate both theory and practice while not losing the empirical component of the study. Working in the peace garden with rival political party supporters, bringing them together, seeing them going to the market to sell their garden produce and sharing profits in a peaceful manner for almost a year served as a worthwhile experience to me.

The peace gardening escapade has a strong bearing in the manner in which political party supporters relate to each other. I enjoyed the peace gardening outdoor adventures considering the fact that I was used to spending much time confined in classrooms as a teacher for the past eighteen years (1999-2016). This collaborative act was not only interesting but served as an eye opener in demonstrating that through the peace gardening intervention strategy, peace is possible among people of diverse political backgrounds. The end of the study provided me with a heartwarming and encouraging experience when I observed participants from the country's two main political parties; ZANU-PF and MDC-T interacting, singing, selling garden produce together, eating, joking, hugging and laughing together, a clear indication that group relations between party supporters improved significantly. These developments concurred well with the main concepts of peace and power, conflict transformation and the contact theories which underpinned this study (see chapter four)

Peace gardening proved to be an effective intervention strategy in the advancement of sustainable peace and promoted beneficial ways of managing conflicts among people from diverse political divide in Welkom Hoek communal farmlands in Masvingo province. As a result of this study, I also developed keen interest in continuing with peace gardening beyond this study after noting its positive effects in fostering durable peace and as such, I have since finished the logistical arrangements in establishing a peace gardening trust called Zimbabwe Peace Gardening Trust (ZPGT) and the High court of Zimbabwe has already registered the proposed trust (see attached Annexure 2) which will also strive to transform post-conflict relationships among people with diverse political divided. This research experience made me realise the impact of participatory action research as compared to desk research.

10.9 Study Limitations

Since this study used a qualitative action research design, it ended up costing more in time and resources. As a way of countering the effects of limited time and resources on the quality of the results, the research was only confined to Welkom Hoek communal farmlands in Masvingo province. As such, the results of this study are not generalisable to other situations beyond the Welkom Hoek community to which the research sample relates.

10.10 Recommendations

Based on the key findings from this study, I proffer the following recommendations to individual players and organisations that are participating in peacebuilding and conflict resolution processes:

- Due to the lessons drawn from this study, I encourage peacebuilding players in Zimbabwe to promote home-grown and context specific intervention strategies in resolving conflicts in order to enhance effectiveness in the realisation of durable peace and the transformation of post-conflict relationships.
- There is need for the de-politicisation of peacebuilding initiatives by involved actors. There is a serious call for peace players to allow the local participants to initiate projects that will directly benefit them. Such acts result in communal empowerment and ownership of the intervention strategy.
- Peacebuilding initiatives must be a bottom-up approach and not a trickle-down practice for the attainment of durable and sustainable peace. Communities need to be involved in the formulation of intervention strategies that benefit them as that enhances the concept of ownership of the peacebuilding intervention strategy. Peace building players must not design peace building programmes for the communities without consulting them since such unsupported programmes tend to fade away.

10.11 Areas for further study

Based on the key findings from this study the following thematic areas are recommended for further research:

- Linking peacebuilding with psychosocial and coping skills

- Paradigm shift in traditional leadership roles in conflict resolution
- Reorientation of Zimbabwe's institutions

10.12 Summary

In this chapter I presented the summary of the whole study and also discussed the summary of findings based on each study objective (see Chapter Nine, sections 9.3.1, 9.3.2, 9.3.3 and 9.3.4). I also gave an overview of the preliminary evaluation exercise in this chapter and discussed how this study generated new knowledge in peacebuilding. I then carried out the research excursion reflections before drawing my conclusions from the findings and also coming up with recommendations which were guided by the study findings. I ended by identifying areas which I felt needed to be further researched on.

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Appendix A: Gate keepers letter 1



The Provincial Chairperson

ZANU PF Provincial Directorate

Masvingo

Date-----

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: Permission to undertake research in Masvingo rural district, Welkom Hoek rural farmlands with your supporters: With effect from 2017-2018.

I am a Doctoral candidate in Management Sciences (Peacebuilding) at Durban University of Technology. I am carrying out a research project in peacebuilding as partial fulfilment towards the Doctoral degree requirements. My topic is entitled 'Transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens in Masvingo; Zimbabwe.' I am seeking for permission to undertake my study in the province with some of your support base as research participants.

The research is aimed at examining the nature and causes of election-related political violence in Masvingo rural district and to analyse the extent to which violence has affected community relationships. The research will attempt to get answers for the following questions;

(i) How can peace gardens be used as alternative tools in transforming post-conflict relationships in Masvingo; Zimbabwe?

(ii) What are the effects of political violence in Masvingo rural district and how has it affected relations among community members?

(iii) To what extent can the peace and power theory be utilized in addressing differences arising from political violence?

The data collection will be done in the following manner and design:

(i) Focus group discussions will be held involving participants from both ZANU PF and the MDC and 12 participants will take part

(i) 10 key informants from and around the area in question will be interviewed.

(iii) Participants from both parties will establish a peace garden where they will be working together to promote community cohesion

Your consent to undertake the research will be greatly appreciated.

For further discussions relating to this study please feel free to contact me or my supervisor.

Yours faithfully

Tinashe Rukuni

Doctoral candidate in Management Sciences (Peacebuilding)

Email: rukunit@gmail.com

Contact numbers: +263 772244080/+263 714203335/ +27 635253791

Supervisor: Dr Sylvia Blanche Kaye. Email: SlyviaK@dut.ac.za Contact number +27 31 260 3126

Co-supervisor: Prof Geoffrey Harris. Email: geoffreyh@dut.ac.za Contact number +27 31 373 560

Appendix B: Gate keepers letter 2



The Provincial Chairperson

MDC Provincial Directorate

Masvingo

Date-----

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: Permission to undertake research in Masvingo rural district, Welkom Hoek rural farmlands with your supporters: with effect from January 2017-2018.

I am a Doctoral candidate in Management Sciences (Peacebuilding) at Durban University of Technology. I am carrying out a research project in peacebuilding as a partial fulfilment towards the Doctoral degree requirements. My topic is entitled '**Transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens in Masvingo; Zimbabwe.**' I am seeking for permission to undertake my study in the province with some of your support base as research participants.

The research is aimed at examining the nature and causes of election-related political violence in Masvingo rural district and to analyse the extent to which violence has affected community relationships. The research will attempt to get answers for the following questions;

- (i) How can peace gardens be used as alternative tools in transforming post-conflict relationships in Masvingo; Zimbabwe?
- (ii) What are the effects of political violence in Masvingo rural district and how has it affected relations among community members?
- (iii) To what extent can the peace and power theory be utilized in addressing differences arising from political violence?

The data collection will be done in the following manner and design:

- (i) Focus group discussions will be held involving participants from both ZANU PF and the MDC and 12 participants will take part
- (i) 10 key informants from the area in question will be interviewed.
- (iii) Participants from both parties will establish a peace garden where they will be working together to promote community cohesion

Your consent to undertake the research will be greatly appreciated.

For further discussions relating to this study please feel free to contact me or my supervisor.

Yours faithfully

Tinashe Rukuni

Doctoral candidate in Management Sciences (Peacebuilding).

Email: rukunit@gmail.com

Contact numbers: +263 772244080/+263 714203335/ +27 635253791

Supervisor: **Dr Sylvia Blanche Kaye**. Email: SylviaK@dut.ac.za Contact number +27 31 260 3126

Co-supervisor: **Prof Geoffrey Harris**. Email: geoffreyh@dut.ac.za Contact number +27 31 373 5609

Appendix C: Gate keepers letter 3



The Property Owner

Welkom Hoek Farm

P. O. Box 837

Masvingo

Date -----

Cell: +263 772244080

Dear Sir

My name is Tinashe Rukuni and I am Doctoral student in Management Sciences (Peacebuilding) at Durban University of Technology. My research topic is entitled "Transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens in Masvingo; Zimbabwe.

I am kindly requesting for permission to use a small portion of land on your farm to establish a peace garden for my research. I intend to be working with a group of twenty people on permanent basis for the next two and half years on the garden site. I will also be expecting some visitors often who will be coming to conduct some workshops, my supervisors who will be coming to assess the research project and fellow students who will be coming exchange notes.

We are going to have some focus group discussions and some interviews around proposed garden premises involving participants from both ZANU PF and the MDC with the aim of promoting community peacebuilding. You are free to reverse your offer at any time without prior notice.

I would really appreciate if you grant me permission to establish this peace garden on your property.

Yours faithfully

Tinashe Rukuni

Contact numbers: +263 772244080/+263 714203335/ +27 635253791

I, Mr **Dumisani Mafa** (Designation) (Welkom Hoek Farm Owner) give permission to **Tinashe Rukuni** to use a portion of land on my legally owned farm to establish a garden for research purposes.

Signature/ Thumb

Appendix D: Gate keepers letter (Shona translation)



Muzvinapurazi

Welkom Hoek Farm

P. O. Box 837

Masvingo

Zuva -----

Vanodikanwa Muzvinapurazi

RE: KUTSVAKA MVUMO YEKUPIWA BINDU REKUITIRA NGADHENI YERUNYARARO

Zita rangu ndinonzi Tinashe Rukuni. Ndiri mudzidzi wezvidzidzo zverunyararo zvepamusoro pachikoro cheDurban chioona nezvidzidzo zvapamusoro neumhizha. Ndirikukumbiravo mvumo yekupiwa kabindu kokushandisa kuita ngadheni mupurazi renyu. Musoro wetsvakurudzo yangu unoti “Kuvakurudza nharaunda dzakavhiringidzwa nezvematongerwe enyika tichishandisa mangadheni munharaunda yeMasvingo muZimbabwe”.Chikamu ichochi chinotarisiwa kuzadzikiswa kuti ndigowana kupedza zvidzidzo zvangu.

Ndinotarisiwa kunge ndichishanda nevatsigiri vezvematongerwe enyika vangangoita makumi maviri kwemakore maviri nechidimbu anotevera. Ndinevaenzi, vakuru vangu vezvidzidzo neshamwari vandinotarisiwa kuti vachapota vachitishanyira pangadheni apa nguva dzakasiyasyana. Tsvakurudzo ino, inotarisiwa kuoongorora kuti nharaunda dzambosangana nezvemhirizhonga yezvematongerwe enyika dzingavakiridzwa sei tichishandisa mangadheni tichitarira zvinoitika munharaunda yeMasvingo.Chirongwa

Mukutsvakurudza umu ndichashandisa nzira yokubvunzurudza kuti ndiwane ruzivo pamwe chete nekuita zvimisangano zvidiki apo vanhu vanenge vachiita nhaurirano yezvinenge zvabvunzwa pamwe chete.Kubatidza mutsvakurudzo ino hakumanikidzirwi uye munotenderwa kubuda muchirongwa chino chero pamadarira chisati chapera makasununguka.

Ndichafara chose mukandibvumira kuisa ngadheni yerunyararo iyi mupurazi menyu.

Ndini wenyu anodikanwa

Tinashe Rukuni

Ini, **Dumisani Mafa** semuridzi wepurazi reWelkom Hoek ndichapa **Tinashe Rukuni** bindu rekushandisa kuita mangadheni anechekuita nezvidzidzo zvake zverunyararo.

Ruoko/ Chimunwe

Appendix E: Letter of information



Dear Participant

My name is **Tinashe Rukuni**. I am a registered PhD student in Management Sciences (Peacebuilding) at Durban University of Technology. I will be carrying a research in your area (Welkom communal farmlands) on **“Transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens in Masvingo; Zimbabwe.”** The research is part of the requirements for the completion of my studies.

The purpose of this study to explore the potential use of peace gardens as peacebuilding tools in transforming post-conflict relations in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. The specific objectives of the study being, to examine the nature, causes and effects of electoral violence in Masvingo and to analyse the effects of political violence on community relationships. The main thrust of the research is to work with the community in coming up with possible intervention strategies and recommendations for curbing recurrence of political violence in future elections in your community.

The research will employ interviews, observations and focus group discussions as its main data collection instruments. Participation in this exercise is voluntary and you will be working with other fourteen participants. There will be very minimal risks or discomforts to the participants during the research exercise. Please note that you are free to withdraw from the research anytime during the course of the research without prior notice. The results of the study will benefit the community, the nation as a whole in promoting political tolerance and transforming post-conflict relationships and will contribute new body of knowledge in peacebuilding on the use of peace gardens in resolving political violence.

The research is funded by the university and as such there will be no remunerations during the research exercise but no costs of the study will be expected to be covered by you. There are no injuries envisaged during and after your participation in the research.

In the event of any problems or queries kindly conduct:

The researcher: Tinashe Rukuni: +27 635253791/+263 714203335/+263772244080, my supervisor: Dr. Sylvia Blanche Kaye: +27-373-6860/ +27 720703603 or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

Thank you for your cooperation

Sincerely

Tinashe Rukuni

Signature

Appendix F: Tsamba yekuzivisa nezvetsvakurudzo



Anodikanwa Mubatidzi mutsvakurudzo

Zita rangu ndinonzi **Tinashe Rukuni**. Ndiri mudzidzi wezvidzidzo zvepamusoro zvinoona zverunyararo pachikoro cheDurban University of Technology. Ndirikutarisira kuita zvidzidzo zvetzvavakurudzo munharaunda yenyu yeWelkom Hoek ndichitarisa musoro unoti “Kuvakurudza nharaunda dzakavhiringidzwa nezvematongerwe enyika tichishandisa mangadheni munharaunda yeMasvingo muZimbabwe”.Chikamu ichochi chinotarisirwa kuzadzikiswa kuti ndigwana kupedza zvidzidzo zvangu.

Tsvakurudzo ino, inotarisa kuoongorora kuti nharaunda dzambosangana nezvemhirizhonga yezvematongerwe enyika dzingavakiridzwa sei tichishandisa mangadheni tichitarira zvinoitika munharaunda yeMasvingo.Chirongwa chino chinotarisirwa kubuda nehurongwa hwekudzivirira mhirizhonga munguva inotevera tichishandisa mangadheni.

Mukutsvakurudza umu, ndichashandisa nzira yokubvunzurudza kuti ndiwane ruzivo pamwe chete nekuita zvimisangano zvidiki apo vanhu vanenge vachiita nhaurirano yezvinenge zvabvunzwa pamwe chete.Kubatidza mutsvakurudzo ino hakumanikidzirwi uye munotenderwa kubuda muchirongwa chino chero pamadarira chisati chapera makasununguka.Zviwanikwa mutsvakurudzo ino zvichachandiswa kubatsira nharaunda mukuunza runyararo, zvimwe zvichachandiswa muzvidzidzo zvepamusoro zvinechekuita nekushandisa mangadheni kuunza runyararo munzvimbo dzinenge dzamboita mhirizhonga dzezvematongerwe enyika.

Zvidzidzo izvi zvinobhadharwa nechikoro chino asi havana chikamu chemari yekupa vanhu vanopinda muchidzidzo chino kana kuvatengera zvidyiwa. Asivo vanouya kuzobatsira muzvidzidzo izvi havanavo mari dzavanotarirwa kubvisa. Hapana zvinotarisirwa kuti zvingakukuvadzai mutsvakurudzo iyi.

Kana pane zvanetsa kana zvinoda kuvhunzwa batai vanhu ava:

Mutsvakurudzo: Tinashe Rukuni: +27 635253791/+263 714203335/+263772244080, mukuru wangu pachidzidzo ichi: Dr Sylvia Blanche Kaye: +27-373-6860/ +27 720703603. Mahofisi anoona nezvehurongwa hwetsvakurudzo: Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Nyunyuto ngadziindiswe kuhofisi iyi: DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

Ndatenda nekushandizana kwakanaka kwatichaita.

Ndini wenyu

Tinashe Rukuni

Runyoro

Appendix G: Consent letter



Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, **Rukuni Tinashe** about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number:

- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Participant Thumbprint	Date	Time	Signature / Right

I, Rukuni Tinashe herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Witness (If applicable)	Date	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)	Date	Signature

Appendix H: Mvumo yekubatidza mutsvakurudzo



Mashoko okubvuma kupinda muchirongwa Chechidzidzwa.

- Ndinobvuma kuti mudzidzi uyu, **Tinashe Rukuni** akanditsanangurira mamiriro akaita tsvakurudzo yake, zvachichandibatsira kana ndikabatidza pachidzidzwa ichi - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____,
- Ndakagamuchira nokuverenga tsamba yaitsanangura nezvechidzidzwa ichi ndikainzvisisa (tsamba yekubvuma kupinda mutsvakurudzo iyi).
- Ndinonzvisisa kuti zvichabuda mutsvakurudzo ino zvinoenderana neni sedungamunhu, zera rangu, zuva rokuzvarwa, zita rangu kana kuti ndiri mukadzi /murume hazvizotaridzwi muchinyorwa chomudzidzi pachinopera
- Ndinotendera nekubvumira kuti zvichabuda mutsvakurudzo ino zviiswe mumichina yemazuva ano zviherengedzwe nemunyori wetsvakurudzo ino.
- Ndinokwanisa kubuda mutsvakurudzo ino chero pandadira ndisina kuzivisa.
- Ndakabvunza mibvunzo yandaida yose ndisati ndabvuma kupinda mutsvakurudzo iyi, ndikazozvibvumira pachangu kupinda mutsvakurudzo iyi.
- Ndinonzvisisa kuti tsvakurudzo ichabuda muzvinzverwa izvi ndichayizivisa.

Zita rako Zuva Nguva Ruoko/ Chimunwe chekurudyi

Ini **Tinashe Rukuni** ndinobvuma kuti munhu akanyorwa pamusoro apo abvuma kupinda muchirongwa chetsvakurudzo changu chepamusoro zvizere, uye kuti anonzvisisa zviga zvacho zvinodiwa kutevedzerwa.

Zita remunyori Zuva Ruoko

Mufakazi (kana achidiwa) Zuva Ruoko

Zita romutariri (kana richidiwa) Zuva Ruoko

Kana pane zvanetsa kana zvinoda kuvhunzwa batai vanhu ava:

Mutsvakurudzo: Tinashe Rukuni: +27 635253791/+263 714203335/+263772244080, mukuru wangu pachidzidzo ichi: Dr Sylvia Blanche Kaye: +27-373-6860/ +27 720703603. Mahofisi anoona nezvehurongwa hwetsvakurudzo: Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Nyunyuto ngadziindiswe kuhofisi iyi: DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

Appendix I: Interview guide



Topic: Transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens in Masvingo; Zimbabwe.

Procedures to be followed before the commencement of the interview session

- ❖ The researcher will introduce himself to the participants and clarify the purpose of the interview session
- ❖ Welcome remarks and appreciating their presence
- ❖ A brief but synthesised outline of ethical considerations will be given putting emphasis on confidentiality and anonymity.
- ❖ The researcher to bring up the issue of recording or videotaping the session, sharing with them the reasons for such an exercise
- ❖ The researcher to give assurance to the participants on the safekeeping of the collected data.

Biographical-data of participant

1. Age -----
2. Gender -----
3. Marital status -----
4. Nationality -----
5. Occupation -----
6. Duration of stay in Welkom Hoek communal lands -----
7. Number of household members -----
8. Source of income -----

Interview Questions asked before the establishment of the peace garden

1. What are the main causes of divisions/conflicts in your community?
2. What is your personal stance with regards to violence or conflicts?
3. How have such divisions affected the general life style in this community?
4. How can community cohesion be promoted?

Questions to be asked after the establishment of the peace garden

5. What has been the general way of life in this community before the establishment of this peace garden?
6. How did the peace garden enhance your approaches towards conflict resolution and relating with other people from opposing political parties?
7. What were the challenges you encountered during peace gardening?
8. How effective have peace gardens been in transforming post-conflict relationships?

In the event of any problems or queries kindly conduct:

The researcher: Tinashe Rukuni: +27 635253791/+263 714203335/+263772244080, my supervisor: Dr. Sylvia Blanche Kaye: +27-373-6860/ +27 720703603 or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix j: Focus group discussion guide



Topic: Transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens in Masvingo; Zimbabwe.

Procedures to be followed before the commencement of the interview session

- ❖ The researcher will introduce himself to the participants and clarify the purpose of the interview session
- ❖ Welcome remarks and appreciating their presence
- ❖ A brief but synthesised outline of ethical considerations will be given putting emphasis on confidentiality and anonymity.
- ❖ The researcher to bring up the issue of recording or videotaping the session, sharing with them the reasons for such an exercise
- ❖ The researcher to give assurance to the participants on the safekeeping of the collected data.
- ❖ The de-rolling exercise by the participants

Biographical-data of participant

1. Age -----
2. Gender -----
3. Marital status -----
4. Nationality-----
5. Occupation -----
- 6 Duration spent in Welkom Hoek communal lands -----
- 7 Number of household members -----
- 8 Source of income -----

Focus group discussion questions



Questions to be asked before the establishment of the peace garden

9. What is the nature of conflicts in your community?
10. What are the main causes of division in this community?
11. How have such divisions affected the general life style in this community?
12. How can community cohesion be promoted?

Questions to be asked after the establishment of the peace garden

13. What has been the general way of life in this community before the establishment of this peace garden?
14. How did the peace garden enhance your approaches towards conflict resolution and relating with other people from opposing political parties?
15. What were some of the challenges you encountered in using peace gardens?
16. How effective have peace gardens been in transforming post-conflict relationships?

In the event of any problems or queries kindly conduct:

The researcher: Tinashe Rukuni: +27 635253791/+263 714203335/+263772244080, my supervisor: Dr. Sylvia Blanche Kaye: +27-373-6860/ +27 720703603 or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation!!!

Appendix K: Participants attendance list



PARTICIPANTS ATTENDANCE LIST -----

VENUE ----- **DATE** -----

Name	Gender	Political affiliation

Thank you for your participation.

In the event of any problems or queries kindly conduct:

The researcher: Tinashe Rukuni: +27 635253791/+263 714203335/+263772244080, my supervisor: Dr. Sylvia Blanche Kaye: +27-373-6860/ +27 720703603 or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

Appendix L: Participant observation guide



Topic: Transforming post-conflict relationships via peace gardens in Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

Biographical-data of participants

1. Age -----
2. Gender -----
3. Marital status -----
4. Nationality-----
5. Occupation -----
6. Duration spent in Welkom Hoek communal lands -----
7. Number of household members -----
8. Source of income -----

Feelings and attitudes towards others	Communication with members of the opposition political parties	Community bonding elements noted

In the event of any problems or queries kindly conduct:

The researcher: Tinashe Rukuni: +27 635253791/+263 714203335/+263772244080, my supervisor: Dr. Sylvia Blanche Kaye: +27-373-6860/ +27 720703603 or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

Thank you for your cooperation!!!!

Annexures

Annexure 1: Peacebuilding studies carried out by DUT graduates

Author	Research Problem	Target Group	Key Findings
(Ngwenya 2014)	To help survivors of Gukurahundi to overcome their psychosocial challenges	Survivors of Gukurahundi In Matabeleland North	The study was a participatory AR aimed at healing the wounds of Gukurahundi among survivors in Matabeleland North. The Gukurahundi is used to refer to the civil unrest that characterized areas in Matabeleland and some parts of Midlands in the early 1980s to the mid-1980s. As a result of the unrest, government used heavy-handed tactics to decent on the perceived perpetrators leading to the death of an estimated 20 000 civilians most of whom were of the Ndebele Ethnic group. The study found out that by creating safer spaces that would allow for truth-telling through an array of activities including story-telling, drama, group-based healing workshops and psychosocial approaches, people, and communities can heal themselves even in the absence of official government apology.
(Adebayo	The aim of the study was to build capacity for conflict	The study was carried out in Nigeria	The study focused on the training of Nigerian journalists in peace journalism. A total of 36 journalists took part in the study. The

2014)	sensitive journalism among journalists in Nigeria		participants were taken through training in peace journalism. The researcher concluded that the study was highly successful as reflected in the workshop evaluation report as well as the evidence the as shown by the manner in which the journalists had embraced the notion of peace journalism in their reportage
(Muchemwa 2015)	Building Friendship between the Ndebele and Shona Ethnic Groups	University Students at Solusi University in Matabeleland South Province	<p>In the study, Muchemwa focused on efforts towards building friendship between the Ndebele and Shona ethnic groups. The AR study was done with a control group of 24 University Students. The study employed mainly interviews for the preliminary stages and then dialogue sessions. After the intervention, the participants also initiated a tree planting exercise as symbolism that it was possible for people with diverse ethnic backgrounds to work together in harmony and in peace. Using the conflict transformation theory by</p> <p>Lederach and the transcend dialogue as propounded by Johan Galtung, the study concluded that dialogue is an effective tool for relational transformation. According to the findings of the study, there are deep-seated animosities between</p>

			<p>the two ethnic groups and the differences have a long historical dynamic. The study also found out that the younger generations were victims of misinformation and misconceptions regarding the relationship between the two groups and that through friendship building it were still possible to help the groups to find each other through dialogue. The study concluded that there is an opportunity to build sustainable relationships between the Shona and the Ndebele and that what was needed was to create the necessary spaces for such initiatives to happen.</p>
<p>(Lockett, Ngubane and Memela 2001)</p>	<p>Developing a management system for a rural community development organization</p>	<p>Study carried out in KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa</p>	<p>This participatory AR project was carried out in a rural setting in KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa. The aim of the study to help improve the organizational effectiveness. The methodology involved a series of focus group discussions, workshops, feedback sessions as well as working with a core group responsible for decision making. Although the initiative was successfully achieved, the researchers indicated that there was a need for a more comprehensive appraisal of the initiative after a period of time to determine the</p>

			<p>effectiveness of the new changes. The study also concluded by acknowledging the significance of systemic AR as it helps participants to develop home grown solutions that suit the local context. The study also noted that systemic AR provides a window of reflection to everyday practice.</p>
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Source: (Makwerere 2017: 91)

Annexure 2: The Zimbabwe Peace Gardening Trust document

Protocol No.

ZIMBABWE PEACE GARDENING TRUST (ZPGT)

NOTARIAL DEED OF DONATION AND TRUST

KNOW ALL MEN WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: THAT;

On the 12TH Day of ...April.... In the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Eighteen (2018) before me, **PHILLIP TANAKA SHUMBA**, Legal Practitioner; Notary Public, by Lawful Authority duly sworn and admitted residing and practicing in Masvingo, personally came and appeared:

TINASHE RUKUNI

(Born on the 21st of December 1971)

I. D. No. 04-053756F-04

(Hereinafter called “the Founder and Trustee”)

AND THE APPEARERS DECLARED THAT WHEREAS:

- A.** The Founders are desirous of creating a non – profit making Trust for the purpose of carrying out the objectives hereinafter described.
- B.** The Founders have agreed to irrevocably donate certain funds to the Trust subject to the conditions set out hereinafter.
- C.** The Founders and other Trustees have agreed to accept their appointment as Trustees subject to the said conditions.

NOW THEREFORE these present witness that:

1. **FORMATION OF TRUST**

- (i) The Trust with the purpose and objects herein set out is hereby founded and established.
- (ii) Now therefore the Founder declared to donate to the Trustees the sum of US\$50-00 (Fifty United States Dollars) being gift and *pius causas* donated absolutely; which said sum is now in the hands of the Trustees subject to the following terms and conditions that shall be the constitution of the said Trust.
- (iii) The Founders shall be entitled to donate the Trustees such further sums of money, shares, securities, investments and any such further donations by the Founder to the trustees shall be noted in an addendum to this Deed and in records to be kept by the Trustees.

2. **NAME OF TRUST**

The Trust hereby established shall be known as the **ZIMBABWE PEACE GARDENING TRUST (ZPGT)** (hereinafter in this Deed called the “Trust”)

3. **BENEFICIARIES**

The beneficiaries of this Trust shall primarily be the people directly or indirectly affected by any forms of political or gender based violence and any other interested groups as determined by the Trustees in their sole discretion.

4. **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Trust shall be:-

- (i) To promote peaceful co-existence and community cohesion that celebrates diversity for children, vulnerable men and women in Zimbabwe.
- (ii) Improved political and gender broadmindedness for young people and vulnerable women in 2 (two) districts of Masvingo province through peace gardens
- (iii) To improve the livelihoods, conflict resolution and mitigation skills of target beneficiaries in 2 (two) districts of Masvingo.

- (iv) To provide psychotherapeutic support to victims of any forms of political, gender based or any other forms of violence so as;
- (v) To increase public awareness on the efficacy of using non-violent ways of resolving conflicts;
- (vi) To provide forums for the exchange of information on the use of peace gardens in Zimbabwe as a conflict management, peacebuilding or conflict resolution intervention strategy;
- (vii) To work together with other government and non-governmental organizations involved in peacebuilding awareness and services to the betterment of conflict ravished communities;
- (viii) To organize and manage fundraising activities for the financing of activities related to peace gardening and peacebuilding activities

5. **LEGAL STATUS**

The Trust shall be a corporate body and as such:-

- 5.1 Its rights and obligations shall rest in it independently of its Trustees, and
- 5.2 It shall not distribute any profit or gain to any person entity and shall use the Trust's funds solely for objects which the Trust has been established; and
- 5.3 The liabilities of the Trust shall be limited to its assets; and
- 5.4 It shall enjoy perpetual succession and be capable in Law of acquiring property and rights assuming and incurring obligations apart and distinct from the Trustees.
- 5.5 It shall engage a Firm of Lawyers (Mutendi Mudisi and Shumba Legal Practitioners) to assist it to carry out its Legal obligations in line with the Trust's objectives.
- 5.6 The Trust shall be a body corporate and shall be capable of suing and be sued in its own corporate name.
- 5.7 The Trust is hereby created and founded for promoting peaceful co-existence and community cohesion for the victims of any form of violence.
- 5.8 No member of the Trust shall have the rights in or to the Trust's property by reason of his/her membership.

6. **TRUST FUND**

- 6.1 There will be established a Trust fund into which donations from established donors, well-wishers and any other income generating project will be deposited including accretions thereto as hereinafter provided. The fund is to be held in Trust and utilized in furtherance of the objects of the Trust subject to further the conditions hereinafter set forth.

7. **APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES**

There shall be a board of Trustees which shall have a minimum of four and a maximum of ten members.

8.1 **FIRST TRUSTEES**

The names of the First Trustees are:-

- (i) **TINASHE RUKUNI**

(Born on the 21st of December 1971)

I. D. No. 04-053756F-04

9. **POWERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Trustees shall have full power and authority to do all things and to take any steps as may appear to them to be necessary or desirable in order to give effect to the objects of the Trust or may be incidental to the administration and control of the Trust without any prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the Trustees shall have the power to:-

- 10.1 To open and operate accounts with banks, building societies and other financial institutions and to draw, make, accept, endorse, discount, extent, execute, and issue for the purpose of construction, establishment, operation and maintenance of the Trust and any of its activities related to the aforementioned objects, bills of exchange, promissory notes, cheques, securities and other negotiable and transferable instruments.

- 10.2 To invest any monies of the Trust which are not immediately required for the aforementioned objects in such a manner as the Trustees may think desirable in the interest of the Trust.
- 10.3 Cause a proper set of books and accounts to be kept, relative to the affairs of the Trust, which books of accounts shall be audited annually by an auditor to be appointed by the Trustees, and the Trustees have the power to vary such appointment from time to time.
- 10.4 Be entitled and hereby empowered to invest the assets of the Trust in so far as the same are not required for the immediate purpose of carrying out the objects of the Trust.
- 10.5 To call, recover, collect and if necessary to sue for all loans or other moneys including rent and the like belonging to the Trust at any time whether invested by them or otherwise and to foreclose bonds and if necessary to buy in securities.
- 10.6 To purchase or otherwise acquire and hold shares in any trading company, whether commercial, manufacturing or otherwise or in any company which has among its main objectives the acquisition of income producing movable or immovable property.
- 10.7 To borrow money for the purpose of this Trust and at their discretion to mortgage, pledge or hypothecate any movable, immovable or other property or rights belonging to the trust.
- 10.8 To sign and execute all transfer of any immovable or other property or rights, all cessions and or consent to cancellation of bonds, securities, leases, servitudes, or other Deeds and all Powers of Attorney relating thereto, and generally all documents on any nature or kind whatsoever requisite and necessary from time to time in connection with the acquisition or realization of the Trust assets and or carrying out terms of this Deed of Trust.
- 10.9 To allow any time for the payment of any debt due to the Trust as they may deem fit and to comprise compound or submit to arbitration all claims, debts and things whatsoever belonging or relating thereto.

- 10.10 To employ and pay out of the Trust any other persons to do any act or acts including the receipts of moneys, although they or any of them could have done that act or these acts.
- 10.11 From time to time expend such portion of the capital or income of the Trust, as they deem necessary for the preservation, maintenance and up keep of any property belonging to the Trust and to demolish any buildings, which in their opinion should be dealt with, and to erect new buildings on land belonging to the Trust.
- 10.12 To lend money or to leave moneys on deposit with any company.
- 10.13 To apply the capital and income for the Trust to the furtherance of the objects in such a manner as the Trustees in their discretion may from time to time determine.
- 10.14 To frame rules, standing orders and regulations for the administration of the Trust in conduct of its affairs and to alter, vary or rescind the same from time to time.
- 10.15 Should it become necessary in terms of any law of Zimbabwe, the Trustees should have the power to procure the registration of the Trust in such a manner and upon such terms as may be required by such law, and to this end shall be entitled to alter, vary or amend the terms of the Trust.

11. **MEMBERSHIP**

- 11.1 Members of the Trust are current Trustees and any other person elected or appointed in terms of this Deed and any other member in addition thereto elected in terms of the amendment of this Deed as provided herein who are individual persons, but shall exclude groups of persona, corporate or non-corporate.
- 11.2 Members of the Trust will be divided in the following categories
- 11.2.1 Founding members who shall be Founders as described herein before.
- 11.2.2 Full members shall be those members who have been described as Trustees herein above and who are not the Founders. Notwithstanding the foregoing, full membership shall be granted only at the discretion and approval of the Founders.
- 11.3 Founders in consultation with the Trustees shall have full power and authority to appoint Trustees if a Trustee resigns office.

12. **MEETINGS**

- 12.1 The Trustees shall, as they may determine from time to time meet to consider and administer the day to day affairs of the Trust including the manner in which the Funds of the Trust should be applied in furtherance of its objectives and the amount to be expected by the Trust from time to time.
- 12.2 The trustees shall be entitled to nominate one or more of them or delegate their authority to any person or persons selected by them for the purpose

of management of the Trust and the execution of all documents of any nature relating to the carrying out of the purposes of the Trust, which realization shall be in whatever manner they may deem fit.
- 12.3 Should any difference arise among the Trustees in regard to the affairs of the Trust, the same shall be determined by a majority vote of the Trustees convened on of less than forty-eight (48) hours notices.
- 12.4 With the approval of the remaining Trustees, a Trustee may appoint an alternate to represent him during a period of temporary absence.
- 12.5 Appearer shall have no power to revoke or amend any provisions of this Deed of Trust and any new provisions maybe introduced by a resolution of the Trustees supported by 75% of the Trustees then in office, if such Trustees are of the opinion that such revocation, amendment or addition will benefit the Trust, or is necessary to enable them to achieve any object consistent with the purposes of the Trust as set up in the preamble hereto.

13. **VACATION OF OFFICE**

The office of the Trust shall be vacated:-

- 13.1 If a Trustee dies
- 13.2 If the executive Committee terminates a member's membership
- 13.3 If the member is convicted of an indictable offence, or does not comply with any of the provisions of these rules or associates party politics with Trust business or

conducts him/herself in a way that shall be considered to be detrimental, injurious or prejudicial to the character or interest of the Trust.

- 13.4 Immediately if a vacancy in the office of the Trustees occurs, and if thereby the number of Trustees is reduced below the prescribed minimum, the Founders in consultation with the Trustees shall forthwith appoint a Trustee to fill such a vacancy.

14. **PERPETUAL EXISTENCE**

The Trust shall have perpetual existence but may

- 14.1 At any time be wound up and dissolved on the resolution supported by 75% of the Trustees then in the office.
- 14.2 In the event of dissolution, the Trustees shall dispose of the surplus assets of the Trust remaining after all obligations of the Trust have been met, to any other or direct similar to the objects of the Trust in a manner which in the opinion of the Trustees would further the interests of the Trust. The approval of the Commissioner of Taxes shall be obtained in respect of the disposal of the Trusts Funds or assets on dissolution.

15. **RESOURCES OF THE TRUST**

- 15.1 The Trust Fund referred to in Clause 7 and all other money and property of whatsoever kind whether the same shall be movable or immovable corporeal or incorporeal and wheresoever situate, which may from time to time be received by the Trustees for the general purposes and objects of the Trust, whether received by way of subscriptions, donations, bequests, interests, rents, dividends or any other source shall be held by the Trustees in their absolute discretions where they deem fit and necessary for furtherance of the objects of the Trust. Notwithstanding the provision of this clause no distribution of profits may be made to members of the Trust.

16. **COSTS**

- 16.1 All costs incurred by the Trustees as well as other charges, expenses and disbursements incurred by them in or arising out of their administration of the Trust shall be a 1st charge on the Fund and income thereto.

17. **INDEMNITY OF TRUSTEES**

The Trustees shall not be personally liable for any loss which may be suffered or sustained by the Trust, nor shall they be responsible for the actions of any Accountants, Agents or Attorneys appointed by them.

18. **TERMINATION OF THE TRUST**

- 18.1 The Trust may at any time be terminated by an affirmative vote but of not less than two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the members and the Trustees for the time being in office in which event the officers of the Trust shall be wound up and any surplus fund shall be distributed to a charitable organization approved by the Minister of Finance there then in the office.

The Trustees hereby accept appointment to such office subject to all the terms and conditions herein before set out.

**THUS DONE AND EXECUTED ON THE DAY, MONTH AND YEAR AFOREWRITTEN
HEREIN, IN THE PRESENCE OF THE UNDERSIGNED WITNESSES AND OF ME THE
NOTARY PUBLIC.**

DATED AT MASVINGO ON THIS 28TH DAY OF JUNE 2016.

As witness

1.....

2.....

TINASHE RUKUNI

FOUNDER

BEFORE ME

.....

NOTARY PUBLIC