



**BUILDING CAPACITY FOR RECONCILIATION THROUGH A
RESTORATIVE-BASED INTERVENTION IN ZIMBABWE**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Public Administration – Peace Studies

by

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Abstract

Policy makers and scholarship on peacebuilding are increasingly attracted to the notion of reconciliation. In recent years, this interest has expanded. This is especially visible in the aftermath of the South African experience following the activities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). In fact, peacebuilding efforts after violent experiences are usually accompanied by powerful calls to go the reconciliation route. Reconciliation as a process can be seen as involving transformation in attitudes and perspectives toward others. As an outcome, it can be regarded as mutual acceptance of the other in a peaceful relationship and the sustainability of that acceptance; accompanied by a commitment to bind relationships on future interest than being stuck with the past. Yet reconciliation remains a profound challenge in societies that experience political violence. Equally, Zimbabwe is facing a similar situation despite a series of state-centred efforts at reconciliation. From the 1980 policy of national reconciliation to the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC), a constant pattern of inefficacy is observed.

This study was born out of the need to find out why reconciliation in Zimbabwe has become elusive which has negatively affected people's relationships. The aim of the study was to devise a restorative-based intervention to build capacity for reconciliation among a small sample of adults in Harare. The primary question was: How can people affected by political violence but continuing to live together participate in building their own capacity to promote reconciliation in the absence of effective state interventions? I conceptualised reconciliation based on the theory of restoration as an approach that can transform relationships toward peaceful interaction. This yielded a theoretical framework that combined elements of reconciliation, restorative justice and conflict transformation theories, which was the basis for designing and analysing findings. A qualitative methodology combining interviews and focus group discussions was utilised. Within this paradigm, action research was the main design, in which one cycle was utilized by the action group to implement an intervention. Action group participants' responses offer evidence of how building capacity for reconciliation needs to be conceptualised through interventions that are participatory, collaborative and centred on the locals. The study further reveals that restorative-focused dialogical conversations followed by symbolic gestures of reconciliation are useful in restoring broken relationships. This was found to be a viable alternative to promoting reconciliation in the absence of effective state responses.

This study is significant in that it integrates academic and practical knowledge while contributing to peacebuilding practice.

Thesis declaration

I, Lawrence Mhandara, declare that the work and arguments presented in this study are original, except as acknowledged in the text. Where other sources have been used, they have been either paraphrased or placed in direct quotes and fully referenced. I further state that the work has not been previously submitted at any other university, including Durban University of Technology as part of academic assessment for the award of a degree.

Signed

date

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my lovely late mother, Matirasa Mashongera.

Acknowledgements

I thank the Almighty God for his grace that has taken me this far.

I am also profoundly indebted to many people for their encouragement, support and assistance, all of whom I am unable to mention by name.

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Abbreviations

AFRC	-	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AP	-	Assembly Points
AVP	-	Alternatives to Violence Project
CCJP	-	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CDF	-	Civil Defence Forces
CIBD	-	Coercion, Intimidation, Beatings and Disappearance
CRTR	-	Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation
CRP	-	Community Reconciliation Process
FGD	-	Focus Group Discussion
GPA	-	Global Political Agreement
HZT	-	Heal Zimbabwe Trust
IDEA	-	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
JOC	-	Joint Operations Committee
LRF	-	Legal Resources Foundation
MDC	-	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-N	-	Movement for Democratic Change – Ncube Formation
MDC-T	-	Movement for Democratic Change –Tsvangirai Formation
MP	-	Member of Parliament
NCA	-	National Constitutional Assembly
NDP	-	National Democratic Party
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPRC	-	National Peace and Reconciliation Commission
ONHRI	-	Organ on National Healing Reconciliation and Integration
PTSD	-	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RF	-	Rhodesia Front
RPA	-	Rwandese Patriotic Army
RUF	-	Revolutionary United Front
TRC	-	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDI	-	Unilateral Declaration Independence
UNTAET	-	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor
ZHRC	-	The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission
ZIMPF	-	Zimbabwe People First
ZANU	-	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-Ndonga	-	Zimbabwe African National Union - Ndonga

ZANU-PF	-	Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front
ZANLA	-	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZAPU	-	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZESN	-	Zimbabwe Election Support Network
ZIPRA	-	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZUM	-	Zimbabwe Unity Movement
ZPP	-	Zimbabwe Peace Project

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and context of the study

In the aftermath of violent conflict, efforts are required to explore new opportunities to nurture or build peace. Peacebuilding involves strategies, efforts and interventions that are designed to promote sustainable peace (Lambourne 2004; Spencer 2001). The interventions strive to promote the goals of both negative and positive peace. Reconciliation is one intervention that can attain the goals of peacebuilding. Reconciliation can be thought of as the restoration of peace in a relationship, where parties are not harming each other, and can begin to be trusted not to do so in future, meaning reconciliation is about coming together and living harmoniously (Kriesberg 2001; Lederach 1997). Efforts to promote reconciliation have been undertaken in different societies with mixed results depending on the model implemented. The experiences of Sierra Leon (Park 2010; Keen 2005; Schocken 2002), East Timor (McAuliffe 2008; Burke 2006) and Rwanda (Retting 2008; Staub, Pearlman, Gubin, and Hagengimana 2005) among others show that localised reconciliation interventions can claim a special place in peacebuilding.

In Zimbabwe, there have been recurring violence since well before independence. Violence was established and institutionalised by colonial rule, culminating in the protracted war of independence against the settler government. Acts of violence committed by both the colonial government and the liberation movements affected ordinary people the most. More than 81 000 people died, were tortured or made to disappear during the liberation struggle (Chemhuru-Hapanyengwi 2013; Moorcrof and McLaughlin 2008). The leading perpetrator was the repressive colonial system which forced African to take up arms. After independence in 1980, various episodes of political violence have occurred. The dissident-cleansing operation *Gukurahundi* carried out in the 1980s in the Southern parts of the country ended with at least 20 000 deaths (CCJP 2007). The figure is however a subject of much controversy given that most of the accounts available for public consumption are anti-government. The fast track land reform programme, necessary as it was, saw alleged Zimbabwe African National Party (ZANU-PF) aligned groups and supporters targeting sympathisers and supporters of the nascent opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The campaign affected more than 200 000 people (Zimbabwe Human Rights 2006). In 2005, *Operation Murambatsvina* affected more than 700 000 people in a campaign by government to clean the cities. But other regarded the Operation as designed to 'fix' urban voters for their support of MDC (Bratton and Masunungure 2007). Most importantly, every national election since the 2000s has been marked by intra and inter-party political violence (Masunungure 2011; Sachikonye 2011; Staunton 2009) but the widespread exposure of ordinary people to violence is thought to have occurred during the presidential campaign of 27 June 2008 (Bratton 2012;

Masunungure 2009; Impunity Watch 2008). Recently, the birth of internecine succession politics within political parties –ZANU-PF, MDC and Zimbabwe People First Party (ZIMPF) - has added a new dimension to political violence across the entire nation as rival factions clash.

On its part, the government characteristically reacted to the violations through a series of interventions meant to promote reconciliation. The question has been whether such efforts have been effective. Evidence points to a lack of efficacy in state-centred reconciliation (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru 2013; Bhebhe 2013; Bratton 2011), as people remain deeply divided and polarised along race, politics and ethnic divides. The involvement of the state is not treated as immoral in any way but it has not been carefully viewed and weighed. Government, its agents and institutions appear to support hegemonic control of the locals through generating exclusionary policies and interventions. The heavy involvement of the state has undermined conditions that promote the influence or the central role of locals in reconciliation. The thesis emphasizes on ‘the local’ (MacGinty 2015; Paffenholz 2015; MacGinty and Richmond 2013) in reconciliation, making a case for its assertiveness and central agency against a background of waning confidence in state-centred initiatives that have yielded less resounding results. Throughout the study, the emphasis is on recourse to localism to build capacity for reconciliation.

For many years, the government has assumed leading roles in reconciliation with the result that local dynamics and factors have often been relegated to the sidelines. The approach in this thesis underscores a rediscovery of the local factor as the shortcomings of top-down interventions have become prominent. Building on their work on Track II diplomacy concepts such as citizen peacebuilding, Hemmer et al (2006) make a strong case that peace initiatives should involve not just political leaders but also local people whose preferences must be reflected in outcomes. Using negotiation as site for peacebuilding, the authors note how people involved in local initiatives realize each other’s needs and interests in a manner that lead them toward collective decisions about their relations and new attitudes. Such agency can ultimately be exercised or expressed through what the authors refer to as ‘peacebuilding organism’ – networked specialized organizations engaging not only private citizens but media, local and national political leaders and other influential target.” (Hemmer et al 2006: 133). The notion of bottom-up peacebuilding gained traction through the works of Lederach (1997) who strongly argued that long-term grassroots peacebuilding is not only necessary for sustainable peace but may be the starting point when official leaders are stuck in intransigent conflict stances (cited in Hemmer et al 2006: 136-7). The notion of grassroots peacebuilding emphasizes the empowerment of locals and their community leadership to overcome violent dispositions and its destructive outcomes through transforming their relations and developing capacity for better management of conflict. This can also create a feasible environment for national leaders to realize the importance of peace and reduce their choice of violence.

Inasmuch as the local is advocated, such peacebuilding initiatives face increased difficulties with engaging political issues and leaders in less democratic societies. In addition, political leaders may

spurn the role of the local by ignoring their activities or become suspicious of them as desiring power or being a tool of the opposition political parties. Peacebuilders must respect constraints of their capacity to induce large scale change. Attempting too big change toward peace can fail and backfire, so change must be conducted in judicious steps. The space for peace must be incrementally pursued. Small steps can build confidence and trust which can build the framework for bigger steps as skills, legitimacy, resources and partnerships expand (Hemmer et al 2006: 145-7). Local peacebuilding can sometimes attract political repression but it is not as threatening to existing powers as overt political activities. The local activities can start quietly building into bigger actions that are distinct from political mobilization.

This study was motivated by the need to build capacity for reconciliation through a restorative-based intervention that target a small sample of adult Zimbabweans. The research was carried out in Ward 30, Glenview North, Harare. Incidences of political violence in Zimbabwe are well documented, so are the dimensions of the violence (Research and Advocacy Unit 2016). In recent years, inter-party violence has become intensified in urban areas. Harare's high density suburbs are sometimes turned into 'war zones', with houses destroyed, properties vandalised, people abducted or tortured (Voice of America 2011; Kaulem 2011: 79). Such occurrences are characteristic of election periods (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum 2013). The violence has occurred primarily because of the rivalry between the ruling party and the main opposition party, led at the time of writing this thesis, Tsvangirai. The ruling party has been seeking to regain the Glen View North parliamentary seat which has been held by the opposition since the 2000 general elections. This desire has been the major source of violent clashes leading to polarisation that has left the community shattered and in need to recover the broken relationships.

Ward 30 is one of the two wards (together with Ward 29) that form the Glen View North Constituency, located in the South Western parts of Harare metropolitan Province and shares boundaries with wards 31 and 32 which fall under Glen View South Constituency. The population of the Ward is approximately 98 299 people, of which females have the largest population percentage estimated at 53 % while males account for 47% (Zimstats 2016). The Ward has held a MDC-Tsvangirai seat on the metropolitan Council since the party began to contest local government elections in 2000. However, ZANU-PF has always maintained a significant level of support in the area. Political violence has been a constant cause for concern in the area. Violence has been used to coerce or intimidate supporters of political rivals in a manner that it has become a signature of the Ward. The violence is both intra and inter-party characterizing all political relations in the Ward. The costs of violence are mostly borne by the inhabitants of the Ward and rarely affect the politicians who reside in the peaceful, affluent Northern suburbs of Harare. During the time of the study, cases of escalating political violence were noted around the Ward. The frequency and intensity of the violence increases whenever there are political events in the Ward, indicating a worrisome culture of intolerance and distaste for open political completion. Violent conduct, intimidation by political agents and hate expressions are frequent.

One would expect that in a constitutional democracy like Zimbabwe, political contests in the Ward should be conducted with the democratic framework. This has not been the case in the Ward. The factional struggles in the major political parties, MDC-T and ZANU-PF, also generate reprisal violence although the major source of vicious violence remains the immortal antagonism along inter-party lines. The MDC-T, just like ZANU-PF, has been implicated in intra-party violence in the Ward. The seating Councilor's supporters have been accused of disrupting meetings organized by rivals to mobilize support to market their alternative visions in preparation for the 2018 Harmonised elections. The fury and retaliation within and across political rivals has generated cycles of violence rendering the Ward less peaceful.

The economic situation has compounded the problem of violence as most people are unemployed. Young people contribute to the majority of the population and constitute 80% of the unemployed urban population (Mude 2014). The Ward is one of the poverty-stricken locations in the Harare metropolitan province. The majority of people very poor and their common source of livelihood is vending, engagements such as the sale of prohibited substances and outright begging. The government does not have a robust social policy to contain the increasing poverty in the face of growing economic malaise in the country. The politicians take advantage of the economic situation to manipulate the unemployed majority into agents of violence. Indeed, increased population combined with weak economic and social progress provide a foundation for violent conflicts (Fuller 2016). Political violence has manifested as the major socio-political consequence of urban unemployment.

In addition, state institutions, especially the Police, have been involved in disrupting political meetings organized by opposition parties. This normally results in violent clashes that affect the entire Ward. The violence has been condemned by the political leadership in the area but with no meaningful guarantees against recurrence. The need for interventions that can build capacity for reconciliation using a small group of people from different political parties was considered essential in this context.

The choice of a small sample arose from the conviction that peacebuilding must respect constraints of the capacity to induce large scale change. Attempting too big change toward peace can fail and backfire, so change must be conducted in judicious steps. The space for peace must be incrementally pursued. Small steps can build confidence and trust which can build the framework for bigger steps as skills, legitimacy, resources and partnerships expand (Hemmer et al 2006: 145-7). While studies around the issues of reconciliation in Zimbabwe are numerous, this study is significant in two senses: it seeks to contribute to the existing peacebuilding literature and practice; and methodologically, it uses action research design to achieve its aim.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Peacebuilding is an integral component of recovery in societies emerging from or experiencing conflict. After violent conflicts, there is need for peacebuilding efforts that target the socio-political and economic levers of the society. Reconciliation is one of the mechanisms available among many others within the peacebuilding toolkit. It is an essential mechanism in repairing damaged relationships if sincerely executed. In Zimbabwe, recurring violence presents a challenge to peacebuilding. Where the state has attempted to address the effects of violence through reconciliation, the approaches have lacked efficacy because of its hegemonic control over the locals. Existing scholarly accounts concur that past and on-going attempts have been mainly elite-driven and state-centred (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru 2013; Bhebhe 2013; Machakanja 2012; Bratton 2011). The less resounding impact of the policies of encouraging forgetting and forgiveness and the various Commissions set up by government such as the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) and National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) strengthens this observation. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012: 526) observes that the government might have succeeded in building the state but it has failed to build the nation as divisions persist along race, ethnicity, regions and politics. That Zimbabwe needs alternative models of approaching peacebuilding is incontrovertible. This is especially relevant when such interventions are localised and community-centred.

The conceptual difficulties of defining ‘the local’ are acknowledged in literature (Paffenholz 2015: 862), partly because of its elasticity (MacGinty and Richmond 2013), but the application of the concept in this thesis is on lower level communities, whose people can be mobilized on a small-scale to undertake peace initiatives that benefit the individuals involved and their environment. The local thus relates to local agencies in a conflict, aimed at identifying and creating the necessary processes for peace. The outcome reflects localized reconciliation processes in which individuals in the affected communities develop peaceful relations. Indeed, in situations of politically motivated violence, the effects are best addressed in the family or community contexts (Zelizer 2008). This study aims to contribute to the alternatives discourse by implementing a restorative based intervention to build capacity for reconciliation among a small sample of adult Zimbabweans at a local level. The central question that motivates the study is: *How can people affected by political violence but continuing to live together participate in building their own capacity to promote reconciliation in the absence of effective state interventions?*

1.3 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to explore the extent of the problem of reconciliation in Zimbabwe and devise a restorative-based intervention to build capacity for reconciliation among a small sample of adults in Ward 30, Glen View North Constituency, Harare, Zimbabwe. To achieve this aim, the specific objectives of the study were to:

- Establish the causes, extent and consequences of political violence in Zimbabwe;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of state-centred efforts at reconciliation in Zimbabwe;
- Ascertain the effectiveness of local-based (community) interventions to promote reconciliation in other countries comparable to Zimbabwe;
- Explore experiences, attitudes and perceptions regarding reconciliation in Zimbabwe;
- Develop and implement an intervention programme that will build capacity for reconciliation among a small sample of participants affected by political violence at local (community) level; and
- Undertake a short-term outcome evaluation of the intervention.

1.4 Rationale of the study

Literature on state-centered interventions to promote reconciliation in Zimbabwe is abundant (Benyera 2014; Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru 2013; Muchemwa, Ngwerume and Hove 2013; Mbire 2011; Machakanja 2010; Mashingaidze 2010; Raftopoulos and Savage 2004; Eppel 2014; Mandaza 1999; among others) yet scanty on local/community-centred interventions. Existing literature sources on alternatives to state-based interventions are dominated by reports and manuals produced by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as Heal Zimbabwe Trust (HTZ) targeting practitioners. Such reports and manuals, while they make a significant guide to practice, lack the rigours of academic conventions making them unfit for academic consumption. This study attempts to produce findings that promote practice while also taking care of the academic cause. But there are exceptions. A gradual outcrop of studies and theses focusing on bottom-up interventions in Zimbabwe has been added to the body of literature in the past two years. The case for local agency in peacebuilding has been articulated in Ngwenya (2015), *Healing the wounds of Gukurahundi: a participatory action research project*, Shoniwa's (2016) *Facilitating reconciliation in divided communities in Mashonaland, Zimbabwe* and Machinga and Friedman (2013) *Developing transpersonal resiliency: an approach to healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe* among others. These latest attempts incorporated action research as the major design, just like this study does, to promote healing and reconciliation at grassroots levels but in different contexts. Findings of my study may be useful for peacebuilding practitioners who seek change among people affected by violent conflicts at community level. Researchers on peace and conflict

studies may also make use of the arguments advanced to test transferability of findings with cohorts of similar characteristics in their own contexts or launching further studies.

1.5 Thesis structure overview

Chapter 2 is the first chapter in the literature review part of the study. The chapter attempts an examination of the dimensions of the challenge of political violence in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 3 focuses on the typical responses by the government of Zimbabwe to the episodes of political violence highlighted in chapter 2. The approaches preferred by the state are identified and assessed to determine their efficacy in promoting reconciliation.

Chapter 4 examines how reconciliation can be tackled from a local/community-centred perspective that minimises the involvement of the state and empowers the locals to assume central agency to promote peace. This is accomplished through case examination in three developing countries namely, Community Reconciliation Process (CRP) in East Timor, *Gacaca* community courts in Rwanda and the *Fambul tok* in Sierra Leone. Reference is also made to the impact of the community-centred initiatives undertaken elsewhere to generate lessons that can be useful in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 5 provides the theoretical framework which was the basis for designing the study and discussion of findings.

Chapter 6 focuses on the research design, methodology and data collection methods. It also details the thematic approach used to analyse the primary data sets.

Chapter 7 is the first of the findings and discussion chapters. It focuses on the pre-intervention outlook by presenting findings and discussion of baseline data.

Chapter 8 is the second chapter on findings. The chapter provides a descriptive account of the intervention undertaken by the action research team to meet the aim of the study. It also presents and discusses themes that emerged during the activities of the group.

Chapter 9 is the third and final chapter on findings. The chapter presents and discusses results of the short-term outcome intervention undertaken in chapter 8

Chapter 10 provides the summary and conclusion of the study. It also highlights what was achieved through the study and what remains to be achieved in future studies.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has set the foundation for the subsequent chapters by providing the background and context of the study, the problem investigated, aim, objectives and significance of the study. Chapter 2 is the first chapter on literature review part of the study. The chapter attempts an examination of the dimensions of political violence in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 2

POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND THE PAUCITY OF PEACE IN ZIMBABWE

2.1 Introduction

Zimbabwe's internal situation has been a subject of intense national and international debate over the years. Such debates have tended to focus on the more fashionable issues related to government policies on the economy, politics and foreign policy without sufficient direct focus on peacebuilding. However, in recent years, there has been an outpouring of literature that attempts to relate government policy to peace and security issues in the country. This chapter wrestles with the question of why and how Zimbabwe has experienced a peace deficit since independence. In answering this question, the chapter examines the problem of violence, and its dynamics in post-independent Zimbabwe, with emphasis on the cause, extent, and consequences. However, the chapter will leap back to the colonial period to demonstrate continuity of violence as an instrument of resolving political conflict. The purpose of the chapter is to make an attempt to demonstrate that contemporary Zimbabwe provides a relevant setting for peacebuilding.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section is a brief understanding of the concept of violence before exploring the reasons for using violence to resolve conflict. The second section provides an understanding of the history of violence as an instrument of politics. The third section scrutinizes political violence in independent Zimbabwe. Section four exposes the consequences of all the episodes of political violence paying particular attention to the physical and psychological effects before a conclusion is reached.

2.2 The motivation for political violence

Violence is behaviour associated with extreme inhumanity. From a maximalist point of view, violence, as an approach to conflict, is behaviour by an individual or a group of people bound by a common goal, that is, deliberately targeted at, directly or indirectly, inflicting physical or psychological harm on the wellbeing of others. Its impact normally affects social relationships. Violence can be casual and perpetrated by individuals or can be highly structured and politically organised. The latter type of violence is a concern for it has the most destructive and extensive damage to peaceful social relations. While violence has been often hyped by its perpetrators, there is little doubt that it “is usually unjustified. It is a breach of peace, which is a condition for a society based on mutual respect. Violence tends to dehumanise the other, especially in political violence where the victim is defined as the enemy (Suttner 2010: 73 cited in Sachikonye 2011: 8). As day follows night, political violence, indeed all forms of violence, is morally wrong. Yet the approach to contemporary conflicts, especially of a political nature, is still tainted by violence. What could possibly explain the proclivity toward violence in dealing with conflict, especially in the Zimbabwe context?

The motivation for political violence is to secure citizens submission to the will of politicians (Herrerros 2006: 671). Political violence is a phenomenon often associated with actors who despise political competition (Tilly 2003). There are other variables that account for prevalence of political violence by political actors. These include ideologies of violence such as Fascism, Nazism and Stalinism (Rummel 2004), political culture (Masunungure 2011; Sachikonye 2011, Bratton and Masunungure 2008), experience of a brutal civil war by political parties (Krain 1997), and structural weaknesses of the state (Miangwa et al 2012; Brubaker and Laitin, D. 1998). The use of violence by political actors instils fear into the people targeted for control and maximise power among loyal followers (Wintrobe 1998: 58-59). The objective is to prevent a shift in popular support from the actors concerned to rivals. Commenting on the Soviet Great Terror of 1937-8, which was sponsored and organised by Stalin, Conquest (1990: 67) observes that “the arbitrariness of the repression had the effect of terrorising potential political opponents of the regime.” Violent repression is thus a means of terrorising the people and ultimately subjugating them (Figs 1998). Unfortunately this is detrimental to peace.

The politics of Zimbabwe have also been steeped in violence even before independence (Bratton 2011). Prior to examining the trends, forms and extent of political violence in Zimbabwe, it is critical to explain the prominence of violence as the ultimate instrument of choice for managing political conflict by political actors in the country. A number of scholars tend to agree that the tendency of violence is caused by political competition (Sachikonye 2011; Kriger 2005; Chan 2003). Sachikonye (2011: 28) poignantly observes that violence is not “a behavioural or psychological tendency but a compulsive scramble for resources of political power and economic benefit, and by extension, defence of these resources and privileges once they have been appropriated.” Violence is used by political as an

expression of competition for political office or to remain in office. This has been clear in divisive factional power struggles emanating from the succession battles in the major political parties. For political actors, access to political power is the ultimate means for defending privileges, accumulation and unfettered access to self-enrichment. Political violence is thus used for a specific objective to access or retain the much needed political power through inducing fear, humiliation and intimidation of political opponents. Violence is necessary for the 'swim or sink' game of politics. The perception of politics as a zero-sum game is the tragedy of Zimbabwean politics and the source of violence.

2.3 The genesis of political violence in Zimbabwe

Violence as a method of seeking and maintaining power in Zimbabwe has deep roots in colonial politics (Sachikonye 2011: 1). Violence was a culture among the institutions created by the colonial state, which successfully established a template of state coercion through the harsh conquest and rule (Bratton 2011). It became the natural method of choice for successive minority white supremacist governments of Edgar Whitehead, Winston Field and Ian Smith. Later on, it became the objective reason why nationalists organised an armed struggle to subvert minority rule. State-organised violence was comprehensive and brutal with the sole objective being to contain nationalism. The minority government used massive violence against the nationalist leaders, guerrillas and their collaborators and the civilians for their moral and material support to the liberation movements. Detentions, arbitrary arrests, severe flogging, curfews, killings, abductions, disappearances and torture of nationalist leaders and their sympathisers and deployment of military personnel in townships and countryside (Sachikonye 2011: 7) were decisive instruments in the colonial state 'tool box' of repression to intimidate, demoralise, humiliate and traumatize the African.

In similar fashion, although inferior in organisation and coordination, the instrument of violence also became an automatic choice for nationalist movements such as the National Democratic Party (NDP), Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) in their resistance to the white supremacist policy. Nationalist leaders openly ordered their members to mount resistance against provocative colonial state operations and the response was solid (Bhebhe 1989: 74), but the resistance often came in the form of riots which spiralled out of the control of nationalists and degenerated into widespread lawlessness and intensely violent (Sachikonye 2011: 2). One prominent characteristic of the liberation movement was not just its confrontation of the white minority government through violence. There was also a great deal of violence within the nationalist movements themselves because of the antagonism and mistrust between ZAPU and ZANU (Meredith 2008), so much that there were as much clashes between the main liberation movements' military wings as they were against the minority government forces (Abrams 2006; Alexander et al 2000). One such incident

is the bitter violent contest for the political high ground between ZAPU and ZANU between 1963 and 1964 as either side sought to position itself for power in negotiations with the minority government or the British imperial power (Sachikonye 2011: 3). The inter-party violence was conducted with sheer ferocity in both townships and rural areas by both parties. The hunger for power justified the destructive violence within the nationalist movement instead of directing it to the colonial state. Political violence became an important tool for nationalists to control their followers. The cases in point being the internal violence within ZAPU between 1970 to 1971 and the violence and subsequent executions of the participants of the Nhari and Badza rebellion in 1975 within ZANU (Sachikonye 2011: 10-12). This “became an integral part of nationalist strategy in the 1960s as large sums of international financial support were resting on the claims of competing groups to greater grassroots support. Violence became the most efficient short-term means of creating support even if its long-term effects were disastrous” (Scarnechia 2008: 2). The establishment of the OAU in 1963 entrenched the principle of self-determination and majority rule in the Organisation’s Charter. The pledge was to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa with success coming through negotiations in most countries except for most of the former Portuguese colonies and self-governing, white-ruled colonies like Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. The solution to the problem came in the change of strategy from engagement to armed resistance (Fleshman 2010). This was executed through the active support from the OAU’s Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa which became the incubator for violent resistance to colonialism. The Committee became the bona fide conduit for arms and training for armed resistance against colonial authority. The culture of violence is therefore partly to blame on the OAU.

In addition, to intra-liberation movement violence, other forms of violence perpetrated by the movement as a collective included violence aimed at the colonial state which ranged from acts of sabotage, murder and killings. There was also guerrilla coercion and violence, especially through the *pungwes*,¹ directed at the indigenous people who were derailing the majority cause by collaborating with the racist minority government forces. Indeed, the liberation war was vicious, brutal and destructive (Sachikonye 2011: 7), and many combatants from both sides including thousands of civilians were killed, injured, murdered and tortured by the regime (Nyadzonia and Chimoio massacres by Rhodesian forces). The major responsibility for the politically motivated abuses which largely affected civilians rested on the minority government (Bratton 2011; Moorcroft and McLaughlin 2008). Consider these facts: Between 1972 and 1976, the war had claimed 2 408 lives (CCJP and CIIR 1975 cited in Sachikonye 2011: 7), and between 1977 and 1980, 6 311 mostly Africans were killed by Rhodesian forces, less the victims of air raids in

¹*Pungwe* is a Shona word which refers to all-night meetings which were organised by guerrillas, and at which attendance was compulsory. The meetings served dual purpose of mobilising support for the war against the Smith government and raising morale. However, the meetings were often violent as innocent civilians in rural areas accused of ‘selling-out’ to regime forces were summarily tried, severely beaten or even killed (Sachikonye 2011: 9). These coercive methods of mobilising support and enhancing morale caused fear and trauma amongst civilians who were unfortunately caught between the brutalities of the warring parties.

refugee camps in neighbouring Zambia and Mozambique (Caute 1983: 386 in Sachikonye 2011: 83). As a whole, the war claimed at least 30 000 lives, 100 000 injuries and 750 000 were internally displaced (CSV 2009).

The experiences of this period of deliberate violence and trauma have not been adequately addressed but what is certain is that it left a permanent scar on the society. The culture of equating political opponents with enemies who deserve annihilation than engagement was clearly driven by selfish political considerations on the part of the colonial state, and factional leaders in the nationalist movement. Dialogue and purposeful debate was never accorded adequate opportunity to resolve issues between the minority government and the liberation movements. Indeed, the liberation movements themselves fell in the same vicious trap of violence when faced with their minute ideological discrepancies. What is unsettling about the extensive use of violence during this war is that its effects have reverberated further afield beyond its point of origin. The inter-racial tensions in independent Zimbabwe are related to occurrences of the liberation struggle.

2.4 Political violence in independent Zimbabwe

At independence, the new government was averse to rehabilitate the inherited institutions that abused Africans from the habits of violence (Kaulem 2004: 81; Sachikonye 2011; Masunungure 2009; Chan 2003). The reasons for continuity were largely to do with political stability and nation-building goals. The security sector and legal frameworks that sustained the colonial conquest were not reconstructed to be compatible with the new political order (Masunungure 2011: 50). Since independence, there have been episodes of violence implicating the state. The episodes are examined in the subsequent sections.

2.4.1 The *Gukurahundi* violence

The first signs of violence in post-independent Zimbabwe were recorded as early as 1980 in the assembly points dotted around the country that hosted guerrilla fighters from ZIPRA and ZANLA (Sachikonye 2011: 14; Nkomo 2001: 189; Kriger 2005). Fierce fighting between the two forces, triggered by inflammatory and insulting remarks by some politicians (Nkomo 2001; Alexander et al 2000), first occurred in Bulawayo, Entumbane, in 1980 and spread to Gweru and Harare by 1981. The clashes were a preface to Operation *Gukurahundi* (Meredith 2008; White 2007). This demonstrated that ZANU and ZAPU remained distinct political entities despite the formation of the Patriotic Front (PF) in 1976. The casualties resulting from the clashes was so significant that one academic account heralds that: the Bulawayo clash left 550 people injured, 50 dead and 2 000 homes destroyed, while the 1981 clashes left about 197 killed and 1 600 homes damaged (Krieger 2003: 79). It was unfortunate that the failure to manage the conflict precipitated tensions and clashes which fuelled alienation, disaffection

and desertions that ultimately opened a torrent of dissident activities in Southern parts of the country. That Zimbabwe was heading for a violent clash became evident as the government of national unity collapsed in 1982 when ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo and his colleagues were dismissed from government on allegations of plotting a coup against the Robert Mugabe's authority (Todd 2008; Meredith 2008; Alexander et al 2000). This followed the discovery of vast quantities of arms on ZAPU properties and ZIPRA assembly points. The discovery of the arms cache was the 'Sarajevo incident' for the subsequent inter-party violence. The result was an extended period of violence in Matebeleland and some parts of Midlands spanning from 1982 to 1987 in which the government forces battled dissident violence. The operation was spearheaded by the 5th Brigade, which was answerable to Mugabe directly and fell outside the formal military command structure (Todd 2008: 37). This raised reasonable suspicion that the Brigade was Mugabe's tool for achieving his political objectives. In this case, destroying Nkomo, ZAPU and force his supporters into submission (Meredith 2008: 66; CCJP 2007: 74; Alexander et al 2000: 191-2). From the loose translation of *Gukurahundi*², it implied that dissidents were the 'chaff' to be washed away. Many insightful accounts on the Gukurahundi violence exist, all of which controversially conclude that the state accounted for most of the violence given that it was fighting an ill-equipped and loosely organised dissident force which numbered a maximum of 500³ at the height of the conflict (CCJP and Legal Resources Foundation 1997; Ranger et al 2000; Webner 1995; Sachikonye 2011: 15; Alexander et al 2000: 186). The destabilising role of imperial forces is never given full attention in these accounts. The conflict resulted in ruthless brutality and terror of immense proportion, to which the civilians were the most exposed. The death toll was high among civilians accused of propping or harbouring dissidents (Ranger 2000; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003; CCJP and Legal resources Foundation 1997; Webner 1995). In typical guerrilla style conflict, both government forces and the dissidents were involved in dehumanising acts that ranged from beatings, extra-judicial killings and rape (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003: 79; Blair 2002: 32; Alexander et al 2000). All in all conservative estimates indicate that between 10 000 and 20 000 people were killed during this violence (Sachikonye 2011; CCJPZ 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003).

Although the consequences of *Gukurahundi* are well documented, there has not been formal contrition from the state nor the dissidents to date. The people of Matebeleland and Midlands have been affected by the fear, trauma and depression arising from the memories of the conflict. The perpetrators have not been held to account and government efforts to heal the wounds have been less resounding. No formal programme of reconciliation among the people has been formulated to remedy the situation. On its part, the government appears to be content with the Unity Accord signed in 1987, and the subsequent power

²*Gukurahundi*, is a Shona word that refers to the early rain that washes away chaff before the spring rains, relates to the brutal suppression of civilians who mostly supported Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU in the predominantly Ndebele-speaking regions of Zimbabwe.

³ The exact number of the dissidents remains a subject of guess. For instance, Alexander et al 2000 estimate that the dissidents were not more than 400.

sharing arrangement that ended the Operation. Yet as Alexander et al (2000: 322-23) observe, the people of Matebeleland are still grappling with the wounds, fear and suspicion decades after the Unity Accord.

2.4.2 Election violence

Over and above the political violence endured during the *Gukurahundi* period, the first decade of independence was also associated with election violence. The 1980 campaign was spearheaded by the yet to be de-militarised guerrillas especially in rural areas on behalf of ZANU (Sachikonye 2011: 18). The coercive methods used by the party ranged from brutal acts of intimidation (Nkomo 2001), disciplining murders as examples awaiting those who failed to conform and threats of continuing of the war if ZANU were to lose the election (BOG 1980 cited in Kriger 2005). Some individuals in institutions were involved in pre-election intimidation and violence to prop certain candidates. The party was also involved in post-election witch-hunting to harass, destroy property as retribution for voters and candidates who opposed its rule (Kriger 2005; Moyo 1992; Sithole 1986).

The violence experienced in the 1980 election campaign set the tone for the conduct of successive elections in post-independent Zimbabwe which have been accompanied by violence. Indeed this confirms that, “Rulers who gain office through violence are prone to resort to repression; they are especially likely to do so . if they risk losing elections” (Bratton and Masunungure 2007: 21). The violence has been largely inter-party, but most of it has been blamed on the ruling party, accused of taking advantage of its control of state machinery (Sachikonye 2011: 17). Election violence is a strategic tool for politicians who can use it to reverse potential defeats by compelling voters to vote for them. No wonder politicians are so enamoured to this strategy (Kriger 2005; Makumbe and Compagnon 2000; Moyo 1992), and actors with weaker capacity for violence have suffered at the hands of the powerful (Bratton 2011; Staunton 2009; Kriger 2005; McGregor 2002). Thus major political parties such as Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), ZANU, ZAPU and ZANU-Ndonga and MDC who have participated in elections since independence incorporated violence in their election strategies (Sachikonye 2011; Masunungure 2011, Muzondidya 2009), to hound, beat, torture and kill opponents (Sachikonye 2011).

The qualitative leap in political violence during elections demonstrate that there is a coalition of politicians across the political spectrum who are willing to resort to violence against opponents to gain political opponents, this explains the resilience of authoritarianism in the major political groups (Masunungure 2011: 47). The situation during election periods resembles one of intolerance because of the primitive and uncivilised methods and tactics employed by political actors (Ranger 2008), that depicted a war situation (Masunungure 2011; 2009; Alexander and Tendi 2008). Most elections, including primary election within individual parties, are centred on the strategy of CIBD, an acronym for Coercion, Intimidation, Beating and Displacement (Sachikonye 2011: 49), and often include arson

and murder (Masunungure 2009), in pursuit of the pre-emptive aggression to win power (Kriger 2005: 6). Electoral contests at whatever level typify “Hobbesian state of nature in which life became ‘solitary, nasty, brutish and short’” (Masunungure 2009: 87-88).

Some scholars poignantly observe that with the exception of the *Gukurahundi* era, the period 2000 to 2008 witnessed the most comprehensive and intense political violence since independence (Sachikonye (2012; 2011; Masunungure 2011; 2009; Muzondidya 2009). One report noted that elections “.leave a trail of destruction, houses burnt, many people displaced and homeless, many children orphaned and community relations torn asunder” (Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) cited in Masunungure 2011: 56). For instance, conservative figures indicate that more than 200 people died and more than 200 000 were displaced during the 2008 run-off election campaign (Impunity Watch 2008). The extent of election violence demonstrates how vituperative political actors can be so desperate to reverse potential defeats. As observed earlier, the instrument of violence has been consistently employed to send a strong message to the people that certain political actors were prepared to use violence to resolve political conflicts. While most of the violence is blamed on the ruling party, the neo-imperial and neo-colonial argument that the violence has also been sponsored by outside forces bent on discrediting the ZANU-PF government and therefore undermine its legitimacy are also finding voice in literature (Mungwari 2017; Mamdani 2014).

The violence during election windows in post-colonial Zimbabwe, has resulted on the low level social capital in the society. The low level of trust, suspicion and polarisation among Zimbabweans is one indication of the paucity of peace. The high levels of mistrust undermine the base on which peace can be built, developed and sustained. The scarcity of peace in Zimbabwe cannot be fully explained without adequate attention to the role of political violence at election time. More important is the conclusion that among the factors that are intrinsic to the problem of violence is the long-standing desire by Mugabe to rule forever his self-perceived entitlement to power. This thinking is what Masunungure (2009: 92) characterise as the ‘end of history’ paradigm. The essence of the paradigm is that since Mugabe led the country to independence, he is entitled to rule forever, and political rivals (even within his own party) are accused of attempting to reverse the gains of the revolution. Thus, although Zimbabwe is a constitutional democracy, Mugabe has for long aspired for life presidency (Kriger 2005; Sachikonye 2004; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003; Makumbe and Compagnon 2000; Moyo 1992) and this is reflected in the manner in which he has used the weapon of massive violence against rivals. Mugabe openly endorsed this philosophy in the midst of the reign of terror when he alluded that “We are not going to give up our country because of a mere X. How can a ballpoint fight with a gun?” (Mugabe cited in Masunungure 2009: 84). Indeed, the mastery of the strategy of violence is consistent with Mugabe’s declaration in January 1982 that “. as clear as day follows night. [I] will rule . Zimbabwe forever” (Prime Minister

Mugabe, January 1982 cited in Kriger 2005: 1). Categorically, elections under Mugabe's rule became "more a barometer of people's fears than of people's choice" (Masunungure 2009: 97).

2.4.3 The land reform violence

The land invasions which occurred in 2000 to 2003 were not only accompanied by lawlessness as wayward elements disregarded or took advantage of weak direction at the national level. The programme was associated with acts of violence hence the use of *jambanja*⁴ in the local vernacular to refer to this era. The violence on farms was precipitated by the inter-party hostility triggered by the outcome of the Constitutional Referendum held in February 2000 and the impending elections scheduled for June that year, as well as the 2002 presidential elections (Sachikonye 2011; Willems 2004; Chan 2003). The result of the referendum was construed as repulsion of land reform provisions in the draft constitution. The white farmers and their workforce were immediately identified as the major 'culprits' in sponsoring and supporting counter-revolutionary parties, and their anti-land reform policies (Willems 2004). This set the stage for a fast-track land reform programme. The result was a bruising battle pitting the ruling party versus the MDC and their supporters, mainly white farmers and their workers who were resisting the programme despite its legitimacy and legality. Unfortunately, the tensions produced inter-party violence that also involved the landless majority. According to scholarly accounts, the land invasions was conducted through an implementation vehicle code named *Operation Tsuru* which began in 2000 (Sachikonye 2002; Chitiyo 2003). Operation *tsuro* was therefore the vehicle which is accused of perpetrating violence. Sachikonye notes that the operation had three dimensions, all of which were violent by their nature. The first element consisted of *command and control* of the invasions which was spearheaded and coordinated by security forces, Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) and the Ministry of Information and Publicity. The second dimension was *operational zones* established to identify loyal and opposition zones so as to convert the opposition zones into ZANU-PF zones. The conversion process in the opposition zones was made possible through violence. The third dimension included *boots on the ground* which consisted of armed landless peasants under the direction of war veterans and state agents.

The timing and execution of the land the land reform can also be explained in terms of Mugabe's post-election retribution (Meredith 2002; Sachikonye 2002; 2011). The results of the inter-party violence were severe beatings, killings and thousands of injuries, property looting and destruction (Chitiyo 2003; Sachikonye 2004: 15). For some, the land invasions effectively marked the death of racial reconciliation in Zimbabwe (Sachikonye 2004; Meredith 2002). However, the fact that there sound ideological and historical justification for the programme can never be understated. All the same what is important for

⁴*Jambanja* is a Shona word used, at the peak of the fast track land reform programme, to refer to the radical and thoroughly violent land 'take-overs'

this study is not whether the land reform programme was necessary or not. What is of concern is the method of choice which was employed and the long-term effects of the violence experienced during this period which have left the people in deep depression and have contributed to community violence and disharmony. The interest here is to highlight the trauma, fear and insecurity that is yet to be fully explored among the people who experienced this violence.

2.4.4 Operation restore order/*Murambatsvina* violence

In 2005, the government implemented an operation in urban areas and growth points to clean them of dirt, crime and subversion (Sachikonye 2011: 25-26; Bratton and Masunungure 2007). Not less than 700 000 people were directly affected and no less than 2. 5 million were indirectly affected by the operation through destruction of a home or dwelling, eviction from places of residence, destruction or closure of business, arrest for engaging in illegal trade or loss of a job (Sachikonye 2011: 26; Bratton and Masunungure 2007: 27). Whereas the government defended the Operation on the basis that it wanted to re-organise urban settlements, crime, squalor and small and medium business (Government of Zimbabwe 2005: 15), a number of scholars are convinced that the operation was an example of the Mugabe's pre-emptive strike against political unrest and also part of its evolving post-election retribution targeting its political opponents, whose support was strong in the targeted locations (Sachikonye 2011: 26, Bratton and Masunungure 2007). The extent of the damage left long-term economic, social and psychological depression and deep trauma on the society (Bratton and Masunungure 2007; Tibaijuka 2005). In sum, the operation was a gross violation of human rights because it disregarded national and international laws relating to evictions and undermined livelihoods of a greater number of the population (Bratton and Masunungure 2007: 22).

2.5 The consequences of violence in Zimbabwe

In the preceding sections, it has been observed that violence has been used to pursue and retain power by political actors, mainly political parties. The violence of the colonial era was used by the colonial governments to defend their minority privileges. Similarly, liberation movements used violence as a mode of competition for political power as they positioned their respective factions to supplant the minority government. It was also noticed that the colonial culture of violence was not dismantled at independence by the embryonic nationalist government. This is why when faced with internal political disagreement and minor ideological disagreements, the nationalist failed to engage, opting to resort to the 'tried and tested' instrument of violence. The *Gukurahundi* violence, the election violence, the land invasions and operation restore order are all episodes which express the agile commitment of politicians to use violence for political purpose.

The use of political violence since independence has bequeathed painful legacies of trauma, fear and withdrawal by the people directly affected by the violence and also the society in which the violence occurred. Witnesses to the brutality are affected as much as the brutalised (Edkins 2003), it leaves the survivors' psychological stature, identity and their relationship with the outside clawed (Staub et al 2005). Such experience normally leaves victims with deep trauma symptoms with a feeling of insecurity, victimisation, desire for vengeance and expressions of hatred (Zorbas 2004; Staub and Pearlman 2001).

The *Gukurahundi* violence killed, tortured and humiliated a substantial number left with deep rooted fear, anger and distrust at grassroots of society. This is why the subject is still topical in current political debates in the country. The masses were also subjected to psychological torture by merely witnessing the skirmishes, and the knowledge of loss of beloved family members. The Unity Accord was a power sharing pact that left these innermost emotions unaddressed (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003; CCJP and LRF 1997: 209). The trauma and fear remain widespread in the affected areas because of the scale of violence. The Ndebele ethnic group hold the perception that the Shona group sought their extermination during the violence. The extent of the damage caused by the Operation also created fear and hatred, anger and the Ndebele people continue to feel vulnerable and leery of the government. A person imbued in such intense emotions has the capacity to clog the possibility of re-establishing normal relationship with the perpetrator (Zorbas 2004: 30). The war was seen more as a political fight against the Ndebele than against dissidents. "the attack struck at the root of people's most cherished social and political identity" (Alexander et al 2000: 223). The people of the region have a negative perception of the security forces because of its role in the reign of terror (CCJP 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003).

The war left psychological and emotional injury on the people. The violence was fearful, destructive and unforgettable (CCJP 2007). Victims of extra-judicial killings suffered permanent disabilities such as deafness, impotence, infertility, kidney damage, partial lameness and infertility, while communities were left with the trauma of witnessing their relatives being subjected to severe flogging, humiliation and killings (CCJP 2007: 143). There were also economic costs associated with the violence as people lost their jobs and property, children stopped attending school and general development of the region came to a standstill. Several people were left physically disabled to sustain their families (CCJP 2007: 142-3). Despite all the disturbing effects of the violence, what has been done by the state to address the issues has been limited.

The violence associated with elections dates back to the 1980 election but what is chilling beyond 2000 is the extent of inter-party violence. The size of the population affected by the trauma is colossal. The victims of intra-and inter-party violence have been physically and psychologically perturbed, with a greater number suffering from severe pain, broken bones and unhealed wounds as a result of the beatings they endured. Masunungure (2009: 92) was troubled by the effects one election campaign:

“The consequent human suffering was comprehensive and unprecedented; it was a scorched-earth policy .” Physical and psychological scars such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, sadness, nervousness and recurring memories of trauma are still evident among a greater number of the population. Worse still, they continue to live with the knowledge of some of the people who committed the abuses but because of fear the natural processes of healing have not taken place through sharing and speaking out (Sachikonye 2011: 90). The impact of political violence is similar to armed conflict in causing severe psychological, emotional and spiritual dislocation (Staub et al; Zorbas 2004; Edkins 2003). The disruptions, along with those of interpersonal relationships, and the ability to regulate internal emotional states co-exist with and give rise to intense trauma symptoms (Staub et al 2005: 299). Trauma victims may also be consumed by anger and hatred which may be expressed in the desire for vengeance aimed at the perpetrator, and in some instances vented on those around the victims (Finch 2006: 30). This study seeks to contribute to peacebuilding through reconciliation to minimise the possibility of victims of political violence engaging in acts of vengeance.

Equally devastating was the *Operation restore order*. Just like the violence associated with the land reform, the operation was accompanied by intense trauma, coercion and violence. A report by a civil society organisation note in glowing terms the impact of the operation: Operation *Murambatsvina* has had devastating consequences on the mental health of those affected, not because of the operation alone but because of its violent execution. It resulted in a complex emergency where more than 750 000 were directly affected and were resultantly imbued in psychological disorders that require attention of mental health professionals and that are unlikely to heal without such attention (ActionAid, and ZPP 2005: 39 cited in Sachikonye 2011: 62). The Operation also contributed to distress and trauma which is yet to be healed to date. Disruptions to a person’s social wellbeing normally results in trauma and in some cases post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Trauma is the “systematic shock that disrupts the balance of the affective, cognitive and spiritual inner function” (Farwell and Cole 2004: 25). It is a normal response to exposure to intense life threatening experience or witnessing such an event. However, an identical event does not necessarily yield similar effects in different people (Ehrenreich 2003: 20). Trauma can be experienced at the individual level or community level where bonds that hold people in good relations are destroyed.

A far greater number of the population has been affected by violence perpetrated for political purpose. Political violence has been clearly employed to dominate political opponents through a four-pronged strategy: direct repression involving CIBD plus arson and murder; indirect repression that include denial of needs based on political grounds; social marginalisation; and individual marginalisation, which targets the isolation of individuals from fellow beings as a result of violent political repression (Agger and Jensen 1996: 68). The government under the tutelage of Mugabe spurned any suggestion for grassroots initiatives that can unravel the scars. The result is that the Zimbabwean society has not known

genuine peace as the cycle of violence is yet to be broken. But the dangers of future conflicts of retribution loom large if initiatives to address this cancer are not seriously contemplated.

This study seeks to find out how people affected by violence perpetrated in the name of politics, who are carrying emotional and psychological wounds against their perpetrators, can be helped to move towards reconciliation, in the absence of people-centred official processes. The motivation for this perspective is the philosophy that failure to address the past through reconciliation almost guarantees failure for the future. Politicians' agreements and compromises are bound by their collective self-interests. More often, they express no care for people's relationships except at the rhetorical level. The broken relationships among the people of Zimbabwe have been left to fester and the cause for peace is clearly subservient to the benefits of political power. This is the pragmatic reason why, in the absence of genuine commitment by politicians to foster community reconciliation, transformative peacebuilding becomes handy. There is need therefore for long-term peacebuilding initiatives with a thrust on 'the local' or grassroots to re-orient the society toward a culture of embracing diversity, tolerance and peace. This research regards community-based reconciliation as an opportunity to create an environment conducive to self-sustaining and durable peace in Zimbabwe. This design is informed by the understanding that in situations of politically motivated violence, the effects are best addressed in the family or community contexts (Zelizer 2008). Peacebuilding initiatives must therefore address the effects of the violence targeting the grassroots in order to re-construct the shredded relationships.

2.6 Conclusion

The chapter has attempted to examine the history of political violence that have affected Zimbabwe since the colonial era. The overall picture emerging from the evidence presented is one of a severely scarred, traumatised and decimated society from the successive waves of political violence that evolved from the colonial state to the present. Indeed, politics in Zimbabwe are largely wrought by violence. It emerged that the major cause of violence in Zimbabwe is the competition for political power among key political actors, mainly political parties. This provides sufficient context to the episodes of violence in the country beginning with *Gukurahundi*, the conduct of elections, Operation restore order and the land reform. The chapter has also noted the broad consequences of violence as they relate to physical and psychological injuries expressed in widespread mistrust, fear, depression, nervousness and uncertainty. As a collective, the legacy of political violence in Zimbabwe is a festering wound not only for the victims but for the society as a whole. Therefore, the chapter attempted to demonstrate the link between political violence and the paucity of peace in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 3 will examine the state-centred efforts at reconciliation in Zimbabwe to attend to the incidences of violence scanned in this chapter. This is essential to understand how elite-centred

approaches to reconciliation have been insufficient for durable peace. This is imperative in justify the formulation of peacebuilding initiatives that are outside the direction of the state. On the assumption that ordinary people are the main victims of political violence, reconciliation should be fostered from a people-centred perspective. This has resonance with the philosophy of the study that grassroots peacebuilding is the ‘missing link’ in current efforts at fostering peace in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 3

STATE REACTION TO POLITICAL VIOLENCE

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter observed that violence has been used to determine power relations. Despite the immense political dividends that to political actors, the use of violence since independence has bequeathed painful experiences which have left victims with deep trauma symptoms, a sense of insecurity and victimhood and a desire for vengeance and expressions of hatred. Yet it is common practice that when humans are violated, some responses to address the mishaps must emerge. This chapter examines the efficacy of the state-centred approaches to reconciliation since independence in 1980 to display the need for alternative interventions.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section examines what has become the thriving approach to address political violence in Zimbabwe: state-induced amnesia. The second part discusses commissions of inquiry. Four commissions are examined, namely, Chihambakwe, Dumbutshena, Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission. A common pattern detected among these has been their inefficacy. No wonder their effect on reconciliation was hardly noticeable. The third section discusses another failed attempt at reconciliation through the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration. The argument of the section is that the project failed in the same manner as previous attempts due to political expediency. The insurmountable institutional obstacles led to less convincing results. The fourth section examines the latest attempt through the NPRC established under the Chapter 12 of the new constitution. It is argued that while the terms of reference of the Commission are impressive on paper, genuine questions abound on the effectiveness of the institution given the precedence of political interference in the work of such commissions in the past. Given the political atmosphere in the country, it is doubtful if the NPRC will be any different from previous efforts. This is why the need for local-centred approaches to reconciliation still exists in Zimbabwe. The last section concludes the chapter by clearly demonstrating that the efficacy of the statist approach in Zimbabwe is questionable.

3.2 Amnesia

This option attempts to address the past by simply smoothening over the abuses without any meaningful steps to address the transgressions. Amnesia is an officially imposed form of forgetting (Huyse 2003: 36). It is usually paired with amnesty and pardons. Amnesia suppresses the past in the hope that a new peaceful dispensation will emerge. Addressing past abuses is seen as unnecessary because of its potential to incite anger and hostility thereby disrupting the new dispensation (Bull 2007: 167; Rotberg and Thompson 2010: 113). The inherent shortcoming of this approach is that it does not acknowledge the past, which continues to burden the society (Stovel 2008: 305-324). Perpetrators will continue to feel insecure whenever they meet their victims in the absence of reconciliation because there was no closure to the past violations. In addition, amnesia leads to loss of memory and misinterpretation of history. However, in other situations, amnesia can lead to democratisation. The case of Spain is evidence of how amnesia can be beneficial to a country's reconciliation. Spain adopted this option after the brutal civil war which occurred between 1936 and 1939 in which more than 190 000 died (Laybourn 2011: 70-76). The democratic dispensation that followed was propelled by forgetting the past (Amstutz 2005: 20), making Spain one of the success stories of democratic transition from human rights abuses (Stern 2010: 494).

In the case of Zimbabwe, the pattern of amnesia was established in 1979 during the transition from white minority rule to black majority rule when the Rhodesian Front was not held to account for the abuses committed in the context of institutionalised racism during its reign (Elster 2004: 71). Human rights abuses of all forms were rampant to either punish guerrillas or intimidate and deter the African population from supporting the liberation movements. Similarly, the liberation movements were also indemnified from the crimes perpetrated during the war (Human Rights Watch 2011). During the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) period, almost everything done in the name of the government was defensible. The Smith government used the Indemnity and Compensation Act of 1975 to protect its security forces who committed gross violations (Mashingaidze 2011: 21; Huyse 2003: 36). At independence nothing was done to deal with the violations of the liberation struggle. The Lancaster House Agreement extended unconditional amnesty to all groups involved in the liberation struggle. The agreement categorically stated: "Nobody would be held accountable for anything done in the past, including atrocities, torture and human rights crimes, whether committed by those who had fought to attain black majority rule" (Amani Trust 1998: 18). This set precedence for immunity for impunity.

After independence, human rights abuses fell dramatically, temporarily though, as the bitter war of independence ended. The history of reconciliation has been characterised by blanket amnesties, clemencies and pardons to the perpetrators (Benyera 2014; Hodzi 2012: 11; Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum 2006: 11; Eppel 2004: 51; Huyse 2003: 34-36; Amani Trust 1998). Nothing was done to address the past or to hold perpetrators to account. The consequence of the policy of inducing forgetfulness was

that the abuses committed by the Rhodesian Forces (RF) were replicated in the supposedly ‘new order’ as the RF members were retained in the new government in key security appointments (CCJP 2008: 26). Their actions were imbued by the granting of two amnesties by the Governor, Lord Soames, on behalf of the imperial power, in the form of Ordinance 3/1979 and Ordinance 12/1980, later changed to Amnesty Act [Chapter 9: 02] and the Amnesty (General Pardon) Act [Chapter 9: 03] respectively (Huyse 2003: 36). Following that, and on the eve of independence, Prime Minister, R. G. Mugabe announced a policy of reconciliation towards the whites and black rivals, anchored on the need to forget the past and face the future:

Surely this is now the time to beat our swords into ploughshares. I urge you, whether you are black or white, to join me in a new pledge to forget our grim past, forgive others and forget, join hands in a new amity, and together, as Zimbabweans, trample upon racialism, tribalism and regionalism and work hard to reconstruct and rehabilitate our society as we reinvigorate our economic machinery (Mugabe 1980 cited in De Waal 1990: 45).

Mugabe further pronounced:

As we become a new people we are called to be constructive, progressive and forward looking, for we cannot afford to be men of yesterday, backward-looking, retrogressive and destructive. Our new nation requires of every one of us to be a new man, with a new mind, a new heart and new spirit. Our new mind must have a vision and our hearts a new love that spurns hate, and new spirit that must unite and not divide. This to me is the human essence that must form the core of our political change and national independence. If yesterday, I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interest, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. Is it not folly, therefore, that in the circumstances anybody should seek to revive the wounds and grievances of the past? The wrongs of the past now stand forgiven and forgotten. (Mugabe cited in De Waal 1990: 48).

The explanation for the ‘forgive and forget’ mantra underpinning Mugabe’s reconciliation tone was informed by pragmatism. It was part of the compromises that underpinned the Lancaster House Agreement. Looming large in the transitional document was the provision for racial accommodation in the post-colonial dispensation for at least the first seven years of independence. Related to the preservation of white minority privileges was also the poignant land question which was to be redistributed on a willing- buyer, willing-seller principle. These were more than mere gestures to the former oppressors (De Wall 1990: 48). The speech was a ‘miracle’ to both blacks and whites. The reconciliation statement was hailed with great relief among the white community (De Waal 1990: 48), and was meant to operationalise that reconciliation in practice bearing in mind the compromises achieved in the independence constitution, between the settlers, the former colonial power and the liberation movement within a set of international pressures (Raftopoulos and Savage 2004: ix). The policy was more about nation-building and regime stability in an environment replete with intense suspicion and hostility by the defeated settlers and externally the destabilisation from South Africa and the potential economic and political blackmail by imperial powers (Mandaza 1986: 42 cited in

Raftopoulos and Savage 2004: ix). Indeed, it was unexpected for a leader of a movement that was characterised as terrorists to announce a policy of reconciliation with the RF.

Further gestures of reconciliation also saw the inheritance of colonial institutions into the new state. Major political forces were also enjoined in government of national unity comprising of Mugabe's ZANU, Nkomo's ZAPU and former members of the Rhodesian Front government. Far from applauding the move, others think that the reconciliation statement and the government of national unity were two early signs of intolerance of political diversity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2003). While others regard the 1980 reconciliation statement as driven by the conspiracy of class interests between the black and white bourgeoisies that worked together to clog justice, amidst incomplete decolonisation (Mandaza (1999: 79). It was a typical elite-centred arrangement to forgive each other without the participation of victims in the process. Acknowledging the past was deemed irrelevant by both the old and new government (Huyse 2003: 36).

By mid-1980s, the narrowly conceived reconciliation policy focusing on white-black accommodation (Mashingaidze 2011: 22-23), but one which was widely regarded in Southern Africa (Herbest 1988-89: 43), was showing signs of fragility among the black community. This was so because the policy of reconciliation had not taken into account intra-black reconciliation which was supposed to be a categorical imperative given the interrelated divisions based on ethnicity, regions and political divergence (Huyse 2003: 34). The worsening political conflict due to the long-standing strains in the uneasy coalition of the two parties in the patriotic front soon surfaced again (De Waal 1990: 89). In addition, the aftermath of the 1985 election in which there was much violence in the townships undermined the policy of reconciliation. The policy was more of a victor's declaration, elitist, top-down and was never discussed before and it was imposed (Muponde 2004: 176), and did not comprehensively address past abuses (Machakanja 2010: 6).

More critical, the hardliners among the whites remained arrogant and saw no need to reciprocate and the division on racial grounds continued. In the 1985 General election, Mugabe bitterly complained that the white constituency had retained 15 out of 20 'unrepentant' ex-Rhodesian Front legislators (De Waal 1990: 121). From the onset, the whites detected in the reconciliation policy a desperate attempt by the new nationalist government to keep whites in the country at all cost (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru 2013: 90), or were suspicious of the reconciliation call (De Waal 1990: 122). A sense of arrogance and indispensability developed among whites (Siziba 2000 in Hapanyenwi-Chemhuru 2013: 90), and they were struck with a sense of contentment in their colonial lifestyles (Huyse 2003: 37). The whites symbolised a defensive posture because they did not experience reverse racial discrimination. Mawondo (2009 cited in Chemhuru-Hapanyengwi 2013: 89) regards the 1980 reconciliation in Zimbabwe as lacking justice because relations that characterised colonialism persisted. The inequalities in land

ownership and economy across races remained intact. The chances of reconciliation succeeding were compromised from the beginning.

The failure of amnesia in the 1980 policy of reconciliation is legendary. Silence about the past is what was needed and to search for the truth would open wounds and destroy racial reconciliation. Forgiveness was not embraced and the imposition of the process exacerbated the unresolved past (Bloomfield and Huyse 2003: 37) between blacks and whites and among blacks themselves. Huyse (2003: 36)'s observation that pragmatism is never a sufficient foundation for a policy of reconciliation is valid. For Huyse, reconciliation demands more than just a combination of pragmatism and rhetoric – it demands a public acknowledgement of past violations, redress and justice. All of these factors were not considered in the 1980 policy. The failure of the policy was a result of the following [Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) 2003: 34-39; Huyse 2003: 34-36]:

- The process was conceived and implemented from an elitist point of view;
- Stakeholder involvement including ordinary people was conspicuously absent;
- Victims and perpetrators were not part of the project;
- Political and economic imperatives were given priority than addressing the past; and
- It was weakened by the triple culture of amnesia, impunity and contentment

The elitist approach reproduced itself when ZANU and ZAPU signed the Unity Accord in 1987. This followed the black-black antagonism which escalated following allegations of ZAPU plot to overthrow ZANU-PF government. What followed was *Gukurahundi* violence. On its own, the Accord was enough evidence that within the black community, reconciliation was narrowly confined to political accommodation (Huyse 2003: 34). Earlier on, had exonerate the state institutions from any acts committed during *Gukurahundi* Operation through the Emergency Powers (Security Forces Indemnity) Regulations 1982 (Statutory Instrument 487/1982) (Amani Trust 1998). The regulations were in effect until 1990. The 1987 peace agreement then absolved the dissidents, through General Notice 257A of 1988, and security forces, through General Notice 424A of 1990, by granting unconditional amnesties for perpetrating *Gukurahundi* violence (Compagnon 2010: 290; Human Rights Watch 2011: 25; Eppel 2004: 45-46). National security reasons have been constantly used by the state to argue for non-disclosure on past conflicts which has the potential to divide the people if truth be told. Unsurprisingly, Mugabe articulated this approach in 1988:

if we dig up history, then we wreck the nation, we tear our people apart into factions, into tribes, villagism will prevail over our nationalism and over the spirit of our sacrifices . We have sworn not to go by the past except as a record or register. The record . will remind us what never to do. If it was wrong if that went against the sacred tenets of humanity, we must never repeat (cited in Mashingaidze 2011: 23).

Yet as Bloomfield (2003: 15) argues “reflection on the past is as necessary as it is painful because a divided society can only build its shared future on its divided past. It is not possible to forget the past and start completely afresh as if nothing happened.” The past needs to be confronted and truth needs to be exposed and justice has to be done. Forgiveness cannot be imposed. It can only happen when the person asked to forgive accepts the apology from the perpetrators. It is something the politicians cannot force upon people. Worse still, the state has repudiated its official role in the abuses. The only official statement from the government came from President Mugabe, who grudgingly conceded that excesses occurred were “regrettable” and referred the Operation as a “moment of madness” (Eppel 2004: 46-47).

Other notable cases of pardons used for state security reasons include:

- Election amnesty, General Notice 424A of 1990, invoked to provide indemnity to perpetrators of both pre- and post-election violence.
- Presidential Amnesty, Clemency Order No. 1 of 1995, which like the 1990 instrument, pardoned the politically motivated violations in the 1995 General elections.
- Clemency Order No. 1 of 2000.
- Clemency Order No. 1 of 2008 which protected perpetrators of politically motivated violence between March 29 and June 16 2008.

Amnesia, as expressed in immunity, indemnities, clemencies, pardons and amnesty lie at the heart of the country’s failure to deal with gross violations and have been thriving as approaches to reconciliation but the result has been increased impunity (Hodzi 2012: 1; Sachikonye 2011: 67; Huyse 2003: 36), and muzzling the truth of atrocities (Eppel 2004: 51). Ironically, Zimbabwe is a member of the international community with full rights and obligations that it is supposed to uphold with utmost respect. States are obligated under international law frameworks to end impunity through investigation and timely prosecution of allegations of violation and ensure that punishment is meted on offenders or that adequate redress is provided to the victims (UN Commission on Human Rights 2005). Zimbabwe has suffered from both *de facto* and *de jure* impunity. “*De facto* immunity is the failure of the state to hold perpetrators to account, either due to lack of political will or capacity to do so. *De jure* impunity relates to a situation where regulations providing immunity or amnesty limit or preclude a perpetrator from being held responsible for abuses committed” (Human Rights Watch 2011). Huyse (2003: 30) views amnesia as an obstacle to reconciliation because it:

- Denies victims of conflict the public acknowledgement of their grief;
- Encourages offenders to follow the route of denial of responsibility; and
- Robs future generations of the opportunity to draw lessons from the past that would enable them in reconstructing lasting reconciliation.

The biggest beneficiaries of amnesia were largely individuals in political parties who have been constantly shielded from prosecution or publicly acknowledging responsibility. The use of pardons, clemencies and amnesties has been politicised and perpetrators enjoy *de facto* immunity by virtue of their political worth to politicians. The message has been that accountability is irrelevant and such a culture has been entrenched, as perpetrators are quick to learn that violence is not always punished (Reeler 2004: 236).

3.3 Commissions of inquiry

Commissions of inquiry have been a preferred mechanism for addressing past violations of human rights since attainment of independence. A commission of inquiry can be defined as a body established in terms of the laws of a given state to examine the factual causes and circumstances of a specific issue (Brassil 2004: 125). The commission of inquiry's terms of reference normally leads to a report which contains findings and recommendations, which the convenor must act upon to rectify the situation. Commissions of inquiry are valued because of the expert opinions offered by the perceived unbiased and balanced commissioners. Commissions of inquiry have been established over the years to investigate human rights abuses but it appears these reflected power relations in Zimbabwe. Dainion (2000) calls these commissions as state-crafted pseudo-commissions of inquiry, which were part of the cover up of the state's role in the violations. The most notable commissions in Zimbabwe are the Dumbutshena, Chihambakwe and Human Rights Commission.

3.3. 1 The Dumbutshena Commission

The Dumbutshena Commission (1982) was mandated to investigate circumstances surrounding the clashes between ZANLA and ZIPRA combatants in the Assembly Points (AP) around Bulawayo. Open hostility led to clashes during the process of integration of the three forces, namely, Rhodesia, ZIPRA and ZANLA. It was the first commission of inquiry established to investigate human rights violations (Raftopoulos and Savage 2004: 59; Compagnon 2011: 283). The Commission was chaired by prominent judge, Justice Enoch Dumbutshena, who had no known political connection to the ruling party (Vivian 2005: 5; Meredith 2009: 122). The terms of reference for the Commission were to "inquire into the mutinous disturbances which took place during February 1981 at Glenville military camp, Ntabazintuna military camp and Entumbane ZANLA and ZIPRA camps for the purpose of determining causes underlining, or which led to, the mutinous behaviour and of identifying, if the disturbances; and to make recommendations for the resolution of the problems identified" (Benyera 2014: 181). However, the existence of a clause which empowered the convenor, the Prime Minister, primarily for state security reasons, to withhold the findings and recommendations of such commissions in the Commissions of Inquiry Act [Chapter 10: 07] resulted in the concealment of the Commission's recommendations

(Compagnon 2011: 283). This deprived the society of a promising opportunity to address the past and to reconcile the feuding parties.

3.3. 2 The Chihambakwe Commission

The Chihambakwe Commission (1983) was mandated to inquire into the Matebeleland disturbances (Eppel and Raftopoulos 2009: 16). It was chaired by a prominent lawyer, Justice Julius Rugege Chihambakwe, who was politically connected to the ruling party (Nyarota 2006: 142). The Commission heard substantial testimonies and evidence of atrocities implicating the state (CCJP and LRF 2008: 97). The Commission's effectiveness came under spotlight on account that while the Commissioners were recording evidence in Bulawayo in February 1984, further violence was being perpetrated (Eppel 2004: 13). Just like the Dumbutshena report, the Chihambakwe Commission report was never promulgated for public consumption (CCJP and LRF 2008: 98). The reasons may be defensible for state security reasons. The government formally announced that the report could not be released (Nyarota 2006: 142). Even in the presence of a court order compelling government to release the findings and recommendations, the report has remained a secret to the present day as government refused to comply (Eppel and Raftopoulos 2008: 18). Besides the responsibility to investigate crime, the state has an obligation to provide victims with information about the investigation into the violations (UN Commission on Human Rights 1997). The government argued that the publication of the reports could have sparked violence over past memories. National security reasons become an exception to access all information about what the government officials do (Stephanie 2015; Owen 2010; Brysk and Shafir 2007). This means that the national security reasons and the public's right to know pull in opposite directions. In so far as there are tensions between the government's desire to keep information secret on national security grounds and the generality of actions citizens' right to know what the national authorities know, democratic practice suggests that legitimate national interest are best safeguarded when the public has full information regarding the activities classified to protect national interest (Harutyunyan 2014; Greenberg 2006). The invocation of national security interests can seriously erode the institutional safeguards meant to protect human rights.

3.3.3 The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC)

The Commission was established in 2009 under the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission Act. It was one of the many institutions established after the inauguration of the coalition government among MDC-T, ZANU-PF and MDC-N. Its mandate was to investigate all violations committed after 13 February 2008, implying that all human rights abuses committed earlier are excluded from the mandate of the Commission. In addition, the impartiality and objectivity of the Commission has always been moot. The Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (2006: 2) are perturbed by this: "a Commission crafted in an environment of state-perpetrated authoritarianism aided by repressive laws is a mockery of the

populace seeking protection from the constitution.” The Commission is a classical example of how state-centred initiatives cannot fully address human rights abuses. The composition, appointment of commissioners, the mandate, its relationship with the executive, budgetary constraints, its questionable independence, among other concerns, compromised the Commission (Nyaira 2006: 6). The Commission has continued to be invisible even under the new constitution adopted in 2013. Violations have been happening with the full knowledge of the Commission and no action was taken to ensure that those responsible for the violations account for their acts.

3.4 The Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI)

The political dispensation brought by the coalition government culminated in the formation of the ONHRI. The mandate of the Organ was derived from Article VII of the GPA which stated that;

The parties hereby agree that the new government shall give consideration to the setting up of a mechanism to properly advise on what measures might be necessary and practicable to achieve national healing, cohesion and unity in respect of victims of pre- and post-independence political conflicts.

The use of the word ‘considering’ reflected weak reference and lack of commitment to the objectives of national healing, integration and reconciliation by the state (Eppel and Raftopoulos 2008: 14). In addition, Article VII was also shrouded in ambiguity and vagueness in addressing rights issues, national healing and unity as there was no time frame for the mechanism (Machakanja 2010: 3). The composition of the Organ represented the political dynamics in the country at that particular time. Dominant political groups who constituted the GPA were the only ones represented in the Organ. Sekai Holland represented MDC-T, the late John Nkomo represented ZANU-PF and Moses Mzila Ndlovu, replaced the late Gibson Sibanda in representing MDC-N. This contradicts the Paris Principles (1993: 4) Article 2 (2) which states that “the composition of the national institutions and the appointment of its members. shall. ensure the pluralist representative of the social forces.” This fact exposed the institution to political interference and the representatives of the parties used the Organ to agitate for their party positions and interests. The politicians leading the Organ could not separate their political party agendas from the national project (Machakanja 2011: 8).

The mandate of the Organ was:

To study the physical, including emotional social and mental trauma afflicting most Zimbabweans with the view to addressing it and to promote programmes to compassionately address the economic and social needs of victims of political violence

and related maladies. by identifying the sources of conflicts, identifying a relevant national healing framework, restoration of Zimbabwe's Africanness, *hunhu/ubuntu* (ONHRI 2009).

The ONHRI was anchored on an ill-defined policy framework which did not spell out how the ONHRI was to be constituted and its functions. This constrained the institution to promote healing and reconciliation. According to the Paris Principles, human rights institutions must be founded on clear legal instruments to enhance effectiveness (Murray 2007: 194-195). In the words of one of the ministers responsible for the Organ, the mandate of the institution was not clear from the beginning, even the principals were also said to be ambivalent about the purpose of the Organ (Zhangazha 2010). Other shortcomings of the Organ are well documented. Benyera (2014: 184) for instance observes that "Whilst it is important . to establish causality, it should not be allowed to overshadow the prime issue of redressing past wrongs. No mention was made of the need to document past atrocities." Its preamble recognised that the future of Zimbabwe should be founded on justice, fairness, openness, transparency, respect, dignity and equality. This view was important because it acknowledged the centrality of justice in peacebuilding and hence its deficiency in Zimbabwe was telling. The Organ also recognised the role of violence in the governance of the country by the successive governments which provided objective grounds for according survivors the opportunity to survive in peace (Benyera 2014: 184). The Organ was clearly a political project. Noble as the objectives were, the commitment did not transform to meaningful action as people were largely excluded from the conception and implementation of the vision (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru 2013: 96; Mbire 2011: 22). There was no attempt to engage the communities to solicit for their views on how best to achieve this otherwise noble vision. However, reconciliation has higher chances of success if both victims and perpetrators of violence are at the centre of the process. The ONHRI was averse to this requirement. To be sure, all prior state-centred approaches were lacking in this respect. ONHRI wanted to embark on reconciliation without truth-telling and justice, which are integral to the success of reconciliation. Amadiume and An-Naim (2006) affirm that truth-telling and justice are critical to reconciliation and healing process although they are not in themselves sufficient. The ineffectiveness of the ONHRI was also exposed by the continued cases of violence while the officials were conducting outreach activities. This was despite the fact that Article 18 (5) (b) of the GPA exhorted political parties to "renounce and desist from the promotion and use of violence. as a means of attaining political ends." Despite the involvement of all the three parties in the ONHRI outreach activities, violence persisted (Mbire 2011: 26), and nothing materialised from the consultative meetings (Muchemwa, Ngwerume and Hove 2013: 153).

The state also initiated, as opposed to facilitating memorialisations. One of these was the Presidential Proclamation published in the Extraordinary Government Gazette of 15 July 2009, General Notice 92 of 2009 in which the President proclaimed that 25 to 26 July of that year were dedicated to the cause of national healing, reconciliation and integration to inspire the future of the nation. Whilst this was an important proclamation, there was supposed to be engagement of citizens rather than imposing upon

them on what to do. People were merely forced to reconcile with their abusers without being given the opportunity to express their views. More so, the statist approach was dealt a heavy blow on account that the work of the institution was relatively unknown by the people as its visibility and relevancy was limited (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum 2011: 13; Mbire 2011: 24). By and large, the Organ lacked local legitimacy and local participation. People were not considered as key players in the planning, designing and implementation of the effort. Issues of justice, accountability of past abuses, impunity and redress of victims were not clearly articulated and this weakened the state's ability to end the cycle of violence and impunity (Mashingaidze 2011: 24; Human Rights Watch 2011: 37).

This justifies community-based initiatives. Nonetheless, some scholars still insists that given sufficient political will to end impunity, the necessary legal reforms, greater civil society engagement and funding among other key requirements, the statist approach can work (Machakanja 2010: 12-15). Others propose processes that will recognize the principles of victim-centred, inclusive, comprehensive, participation, establishment of truth, acknowledgement, justice and transparency (Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum 2006). These proposals are feeble given that the central agency of the locals is shunned. It is unlikely that the state will implement the proposals because a dominant force in charge of the country cannot allow the truth to be told or exposed because of national security considerations. It is also morally wrong and outright suspicious for a vituperative set of politicians to lead the nation in the process of reconciliation. The insurmountable institutional obstacles in the way of the Organ meant that the institution was a face-saving but meaningless effort. It was a mere political gimmick to mislead a traumatized people. The ONHRI mandate ended in 2013 when the life of the coalition government was terminated but little impact was made in realising its objectives.

3.5 The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC)

Acknowledgement that reconciliation is needed in Zimbabwe is expressed in Chapter 12 of the new constitution adopted in 2013. Section 251 (1) of the constitution states: "For a period of ten years after the effective date, there is a commission to be known as the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission." While this acknowledgement is a positive development, it reflects the dominant forces who crafted the constitution. The fact that the Commission will only come into effect 10 years after its adoption, that is, by 2023 indicates the lack of immediate commitment by the government to address the past. There are fears that if the Commission was to start its work immediately it may expose the role of key figures surrounding President Mugabe.

In terms of Section 252 of the Constitution, the NPRC has the following functions:

- To ensure post-conflict justice, healing and reconciliation

- To develop and implement programmes to promote national healing, unity and cohesion in Zimbabwe and the peaceful resolution of disputes
- To bring about national reconciliation by encouraging people to tell the truth about the past and facilitating the making of amends and the provision of justice
- To develop procedures and institutions at a national level to facilitate dialogue among political parties, communities, organisations and other groups, in order to prevent conflicts and disputes arising in the future
- To develop programmes to ensure that persons subjected to persecution, torture and other forms of abuse receive rehabilitative treatment and support
- To receive and consider complaints from the public and take such action in regard to the complaints as it considers appropriate
- To develop mechanisms for early detection of areas of potential conflicts and disputes, and to take appropriate preventive measures
- To do anything incidental to the prevention of conflict and the promotion of peace
- To conciliate and mediate disputes among communities, organisations, groups and individuals
- To recommend legislation to ensure that assistance, including documentation, is rendered to persons affected by conflicts, pandemics or other circumstances.

The terms of reference of the Commission are impressive on paper. However, questions remain on the effectiveness of the institution given the precedence of political interference in the work of such commissions in the past; it is doubtful if the NPRC will be any different from previous efforts. Perhaps the prospects for the Commission can change in the fullness of time when political transition occurs and led by a committed reformist within the ruling party itself. Equally important is that the country has a bad record on commissions of inquiry into allegations of human rights abuses under Mugabe's leadership. The NPRC is thus yet another statist approach which is lacking urgency to address reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

In sum, the state in Zimbabwe decided to engage in elite pacts, amnesia and barren commissions that ignored the unresolved past while attempting to restore cordial relations among political rivals as part of its reconciliation efforts. The Lancaster House Agreement and the Unity Accord and the Global Political Agreement (GPA) are referent cases. The failure to deal with the past is costly because it precludes closure (Amstutz 2005: viii). Reconciliation in Zimbabwe has been largely approached from the statist perspective whereby the state assumes a leading role in initiating such processes. In greater part, reconciliation efforts in the country have been ceremonial, deliberately designed to silence claims that the government is unwilling to confront the past. Reconciliation does not come through a policy of forgive and forget. In fact, such an approach results in pseudo peace (Wood 2005: 258). The statist

approach entail that the truth of the past remains unacknowledged or hidden. The truth remains untold. Whatever is available for public consumption remains self-serving for public office holders.

Largely missing therefore from the efforts, but with few exceptions (Machinga and Friedman 2013), are explanations of local-centred, bottom-up interventions to promote reconciliation in Zimbabwe. It is fair to point out that state security considerations have outweighed the importance of people-centred reconciliation (Mashingaidze 2011: 20). But failure to address the past perpetuates the cycle of violence and impunity. The social and political relations of the people are tainted by this culture. With this in mind, it is worth exploring other initiatives to facilitate reconstruction of relationships among the people themselves.

3.6 Conclusion

The chapter has attempted to examine the statist approach to reconciliation in Zimbabwe since independence. It has noted that the statist responses were triggered by Zimbabwe's history of violence. Four statist approaches were discussed: amnesia, commissions of inquiry, ONHRI and NPRC. The chapter noted that Zimbabwe chose to ignore the past and attempted instead to induce national amnesia in their people. The intention was to exhort people to achieve reconciliation through forgiving and forgetting the past. The result is that genuine reconciliation has failed to take root, and the possibility and potential for recurrence of violations and violence will remain. It can be argued that state-centred efforts in Zimbabwe have failed to address central issues of reconciliation.

Within the context of decades of political violence accompanied by the ineffective state-centred approaches to redress those ills, the next chapter reflects on the theoretical framework used to design the intervention and analyse research findings.

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the theoretical perspectives that can be utilised in designing a community-based intervention in Harare. Peacebuilding was the overarching paradigm that motivated this study. Three questions were used to formulate a relevant framework for designing the study. The questions were: what intervention is needed in Zimbabwe to address the problems of recurring violence? How best can the said intervention address the problem at grassroots level? What would be the purpose of the intervention? These questions led me to conceptualise reconciliation as having a transformative effect on broken relationships if implemented based on principles espoused by the restorative justice theory. This conceptualisation yielded three theories each corresponding to the questions raised in their respective order, namely reconciliation, restorative justice and conflict transformation.

4.2 Reconciliation

Relationship between parties in conflict is normally intimate and complex. In most cases parties share the same community and there is usually strong interdependence between them, sometimes underpinned by social ties among each other including intermarriages. In such circumstances, it is prudent that people need to move toward reconciliation. Conflict theorists' approaches to questions of reconciliation have been preoccupied with two problems: how does reconciliation work; and why has reconciliation emerged as such an important issue for societies affected by violence? These questions are important for this research because they speak directly to how the past shapes present attempts to build peace. This section attempts to understand reconciliation theory on the basis of these two questions.

Reconciliation is a popular concept yet scholarship has not yielded a common understanding (Androff 2012a; Brouneus 2008). It is a contested and complex concept. Bloomfield contends that the complexity emanates partly from its being "both a goal – something to achieve, - and a process – a means to achieve that goal (Bloomfield 2003: 12). Despite this conceptual problem, reconciliation is thought as relevant

in rectifying social dislocation (Hayner 2002), and repairing damage caused by physical violence (Gibson 2004). Reconciliation's etymology is Latin word *conciliatus* meaning coming together (Kumar 1999) and its meaning involves communication and mutual tolerance between opposing groups (Minnow 1998). Reconciliation can be defined as the mutually conciliatory accommodation between and among conflicting parties or formerly conflicting parties who recognise each other's right to co-exist (Kriesberg 2007; Kumar 1999). The theory of reconciliation proceeds from the premise that human beings are social animals who are highly dependent on one another for their social good. Peaceful co-existence of both victims and perpetrators of violence is the goal of reconciliation. This is achieved through normalising relations that involve both restoring dignity to victims and dealing respectively with those who assisted or were complicit with the violence (Minnow 1998). Others have described it as seeking to restore safety, repair social relations, reject wrong-doing and rebuild communities after violence (Stover and Weinstein 2004; Santa-Barbara 2007). The willingness to accommodate people or groups that were previously hostile toward each other is an ingredient of reconciliation (Stover and Weinstein 2004). Reconciliation can be thought of as the restoration of peace in a relationship, where parties are not harming each other, and can begin to be trusted not to do so in future, which means that revenge is foregone as an option (Santa-Barbara 2007: 174). Reconciliation is driven by the same rationale that influences intergroup relations which assumes that the more people interact, the more likely they are to tolerate and accept each other (Androff 2012b). Yet reconciliation does not necessarily entail forgiveness, which is often criticised as an unrealistic and impolitic goal when the effects of violence and brutality are visible (Brouneus 2008; Kumar 1999; Minnow 1998) but it remains a pragmatic process in which relations are rebuilt in a way that balances truth and justice (Brouneus 2008), to enable co-existence, mutual trust and sustainable peace (Bloomfield 2006; Kumar 1999).

Reconciliation as both process and goal is a remedy for destructive behaviour. Intentional human violence causes trauma and traumatized individuals and societies may experience psychosocial changes going through shame, victimization, guilt, rage, entitlement to vengeance and a loss of trust or faith (Volkan 2008). Trauma is a term that defines a response to an extraordinary event. Trauma generates social polarisation and the erosion of social ties between individuals, groups and communities (Hamber 2009; Staub 2006). When the impact of trauma is denied or repressed, it will manifest itself in various ways in new generations (Hamber 2009; Volkan 2008; Minnow 1998). Unresolved trauma has dire consequences at the individual, community and national levels. TRCs can be effective for trauma healing at national level. At the community level, there are many initiatives that include rituals or ceremonies. Since trauma goes beyond the individual, healing must take place in a collective context without isolating the individual (Hamber 2009). This is why reconciliation is important to unravel trauma among communities exposed to acts of violence.

Distilled from the above conceptions of reconciliation is that it involves two features. First, it is a process undertaken to reverse trauma experienced after normal interpersonal relationships have been disrupted by violence. Second, it involves change in destructive attitudes, norms, perceptions and beliefs paving the way for re-orientation of the society toward mutual respect, co-existence and sustainable peace. Yet, in Zimbabwe politicians have narrowly interpreted reconciliation both as a means to achieve political harmony among politicians and a goal for retaining political power. No wonder the people remain divided and the damage caused by the violence has not been repaired. The state interventions since 1980 have not succeeded in bringing the people together neither have they promoted tolerance among opposing groups as violence continues to recur. The message that has been consistently clear in the statist approaches is that instead of fostering interdependence among the people, the reconciliation that has been promoted perceives the politicians as interdependent. There have been weak attempts to normalise relations among the people by restoring the dignity of the victims. The 1987 Unity Accord and the amnesty extended to perpetrators of the *Gukurahundi* violence are testimony to this fact. The result has been that dignity has not been restored and communities have not been rebuilt after the successive episodes of violence. The perpetrators of violence have not been held to account implying victims still feel unsafe and hold grudges toward the perpetrators who have enjoyed state protection. The initiatives have failed to restore peace among the people, and no guarantees were put in place to ensure that people will not harm each other in the future. Instead, the state has actively encouraged people to forget, which tends to suppress the past in the hope that a new peaceful dispensation will emerge. In short, the state-led efforts in Zimbabwe have not laid a sturdy foundation for remedying destructive political behaviour and the trauma that was supposed to be addressed by the interventions persists.

4.2.1 The pillars of reconciliation

Lederach (1997: 26-32) argues that the theory of reconciliation rests on three pillars. First, is the notion of relationship, which is the basis of both the conflict and its long-term solution. Relationship (the way in which people communicate and interact as interdependent beings) becomes the focal point for sustained dialogue in conflict settings. Reconciliation is built on mechanisms that engage the sides of a conflict with each other as humans-in-relationship. Second, engagement of the parties assumes an encounter, not only of people but also of several different and highly independent streams of activity. The Community Reconciliation Process in East Timor facilitated an encounter between the victims and perpetrators in the context of a community in which the latter acknowledged wrong-doing and expressed apology to the victims. Similarly, victims also had the opportunity to express their grief. People need opportunity and space to express to, and with, one another the trauma of loss and their grief at that loss, and the anger that accompanies the pain and the memory of injustices experienced. Acknowledgement through hearing one another's stories validates experience and feelings and represents the first step

toward restoration of the person and the relationship. Third, is the idea that reconciliation represents a social space. It represents a place which allows people to come together by satisfying the processes of truth-telling, forgiveness, justice, and healing.

Experience in Zimbabwe demonstrates the opposite. The relationship among people as humans-in-representation has been trivialised in favour of political relationships. Responses have been clearly driven by political interests of the elite, placing premium on negative peace and political stability, with tangential focus on the ordinary people. The process has never offered the victims and perpetrators the opportunity for an encounter as would be expected of a meaningful reconciliation process. People were not accorded the opportunity to tell their stories or share their memories of injustices experienced. Where such an opportunity was accorded, the reports of the inquiries were never published. This was the fate suffered by the 1983 Chihambakwe Commission report on the *Gukurahundi* violence. In the end, the reconciliation efforts were half-hearted attempts by the government to delude the people that it was committed to address past violations when the actual intent was to conceal the truth about the past.

a. Truth

Truth is cardinal to successful reconciliation. However, there are others who are agnostic of truth-telling (McGrew 2006; Mendeloff 2004; Laplante and Theidon 2007) among others. Implicit in their argument is that formal public testimonies are sometimes short-lived and can cause the story-tellers to regress into trauma. “However, a full fixation with the truth is problematic because ‘the idea of an ascertainable past has to negotiate with the notion that full truth of the past cannot be grasped. Memories and histories will always conflict; maybe neither of them has the capacity to know everything in the first place.’” (Mashingaidze 2010: 20). Mechanisms for truth telling such as TRCs have limitations in exposing the truth. Truth-telling however incomplete is a critical component because part of the process requires recounting the suffering before a supportive and non-judgemental audience. Truth represents a situation in which victims are able to move toward the future only after they have found answers for why acts of violence happened and who is responsible (Huyse 2003; Gobodo-Madikizela 2003; Bloomfield 2006). Most importantly, they want to have assurances that the same thing will not occur again. When victims are given the opportunity to tell their stories in a safe and affirming environment, the process can be restorative for them and a certain amount of justice and freedom is achieved by the truth-teller (Shriver 2003: 31). Rebuilding trust depends on open recognition of guilt and acceptance of responsibility for physical and psychological injury. The truth about the past and the present will never be revealed without open and shared recognition of the pains suffered and the losses experienced by the victims (Jeong 2005: 155). When the truth of what happened to victims is spoken about publicly and accurately, it acknowledges the pain and suffering of those affected and can provide a basis for healing and reconciliation (Staub & Pearlman 2001: 207). In the Community Reconciliation Process in East Timor,

offenders were given the opportunity to expose the truth and apologise before they were accepted into the community. The same process was also central to the *Gacaca* initiative which also allowed for truth-telling in public as a way of acknowledging the pain and suffering of the victims. In the *Fambul tok* process initiated in Sierra Leon, truth-telling on the basis of traditional practice was a pre-condition of reconciliation.

Where truth is cardinal to genuine reconciliation, the state in Zimbabwe decided to conceal the truth about past. The policy of amnesia and the different commissions of inquiry have not provided people with answers on why abuses were committed and who was responsible for the abuses. Opportunity for victims to officially tell their stories or share their memories of injustices experienced has been consistently blocked. Yet this is important in the healing and mourning processes.

b. Forgiveness

Closely related to truth is forgiveness. In fact truth precedes forgiveness. In the voyage of reconciliation, acknowledgement of past wrongdoing is important in exchange for forgiveness offered by the victims (Green 2009). As a first step, guilt needs to be recognised with the acceptance of responsibility for atrocities or other events symbolizing inter-communal and inter-personal relations. Since reconciliation invites actions of both victims and offenders, the process of apology and forgiveness comes as all sides are better able to humanise each other (Minnow 1998; Herman 1997). Apology from aggressors is a vital condition for victims to forgive and move on to the promise of a more peaceful future. Moreover, offenders of violence can recover their own humanity through apology proceeding from an admission of misdeeds in the past. The Community Reconciliation Process in East Timor accorded offenders the opportunity to admit wrong-doing, apologise and restored as members of the community. Therefore, real reconciliation comes through a process of forgiveness following apology. In the *Gacaca* intervention in Rwanda, forgiveness was preceded by confession and apology. Forgiveness is the willingness to forego one's right to resentment, revenge, negative judgement, and indifferent behaviour toward one who caused harm and promoting compassion, generosity and even love toward the perpetrator (Enright, Freedman and Rique 1998; Staub et al 2005). The burden to forgive primarily rests with the victim only and should never be forced upon them (Rigby 2001; Minnow 1998), and forgiving does not entail forgetting and encouragement of forgetfulness (Elshtain 2003; Minnow 1998). Forgiveness is a milestone in the voyage toward reconciliation for it can heal memories and make the once aggrieved and bitter people happier and better members of a peaceful society (Worthington 2006; Elshtain 2003; North 1998; Muller-Fahrenheit 1997). The *Fambul tok* community reconciliation process, undertaken in Sierra Leon in the aftermath of the dreadful civil war, was preceded by acknowledgement and remorse, and people were never encouraged to forget the past.

In Zimbabwe, the state responses were designed in such a way that the government evaded responsibility and accountability for atrocities it committed and sponsored. Victims have not forgiven the perpetrators because they have not publicly expressed contrition over their past deeds. Assuming the perpetrators wanted to do so, the state has blocked that process through blanket amnesties, clemency and pardon orders. One cannot be forgiven in the absence of acknowledgement of wrong-doing and apology to the victims. Every person has potential to forgive but can only do so if the truth is told. Zimbabweans have failed to reconcile because the state has actively encourage people to ‘forgive and forget’ without truth and justice. It remains a fact that memories of the past are yet to be healed. Yet truth and healing precedes forgiveness.

c. Justice

Justice is an integral component in the reconciliation process and without justice, the processes of reconciliation cannot be attained (Chapman 2001; Theissen 2004). Since justice is a normative concept, it is contested and problematic because its applicability and meaning is reliant on particular context, individual or group dynamics (Volf 2001: 38-39). But beyond the conceptual contest on meaning, there is general agreement in literature that justice remains central to reconciliation (Lederach 1997; Bloomfield 2006; Brouneus 2008; Kumar 1999; Minnow 1998). Through improved group relations based on justice, reconciliation helps stop a cycle of violence, victimization and revenge. “The search for peaceful coexistence, trust,[and] empathy . demands that justice be done.” (Huysse 2003: 97). Mutual accommodation is possible with changes in social consciousness and prevention of further victimisation and dehumanisation. A commitment to this process derives from a minimum agreement on co-existence (Minnow 1999). Through a broad concept of the self and self-interest, people can acknowledge interdependence and accommodate each other. To achieve harmony and cooperation, reconciliation approaches can focus on group processes of healing to satisfy the demands for justice at that level. The overriding goal of reconciliation is to build a just order in which all humans are accorded dignity and respect. At the same time, the repair of broken relationships throughout a society results from moral reconstruction. A logical longer-term outcome of reconciliation is the elimination of the social conditions that made the violence and interpersonal distance and alienation possible or acceptable in the first place. Initiatives in Zimbabwe have not promoted justice yet it is an important process in reconciliation. Where justice is ignored, victimization and the cycle of violence cannot be stopped. Zimbabwean efforts have not promoted a just order in which all human beings are accorded respect and dignity. The conditions that have perpetuated violence have not been eliminated. Perpetrators of violations have not been punished and a culture of impunity has been strengthened. The absence of justice has strengthened the resolve to commit more abuses at predictable intervals such as election time as violations have never been punished but rewarded. The pardons and clemency orders issued by the

president after election-related violence have sought to reward political activist who perpetrated violence on behalf of the ruling party.

d. Healing

Healing is a complex and non-linear process. It cannot represent an absolute process (Charbonneau and Parent 2012). The path toward healing differs from individual to individual, from group to group, from community to community, and there seems to be no clear formula for healing (Green 2009). However, Herman (1997: 290-6)'s work outlines the three important conditions that are replicated in literature: healing of one's safety; remembrance and mourning; and reconnection with ordinary life. Healing trauma is closely associated with efforts to build peace and sustainable development in societies affected by political violence (Charbonneau and Parent 2012; Clancy and Hamber 2008). Healing can be accomplished through uncovering the truth of what happened, acknowledgement by the offender of the harm done, remorse expressed in apology to the victims or forgiveness (Jeong 2005; Kriesberg 2001; Lederach 1997). The *Gacaca* process in Rwanda relied on testimonies which were heard publicly to facilitate mourning and healing to take place as preconditions for durable Tutsi and Hutu reconciliation. However, the preconditions that need to be satisfied to achieve healing were virtually disregarded in Zimbabwe's reconciliation experiments. The truth about past abuses was concealed, acknowledgement by the perpetrators of harm caused was not done and apology to the victims has been spurned.

Based on the three pillars enunciated by Lederach and the attendant variables (truth-telling, forgiveness, justice and healing) underpinning the theory, reconciliation can therefore be understood as a perspective built on and oriented toward relational aspects of a conflict. Reconciliation that I seek through this study will create an encounter where people can focus on their relationship and change their perceptions, feelings and experiences toward one another, with the goal of creating peace. This study is pitched at the individual and group levels where the main focus is on helping victims, offenders and the community to overcome mutual feelings of alienation and marginalisation so as to create conditions for communal bonds. I seek to foster new relationships among the people by encouraging voluntary initiative among offenders of political violence to acknowledge their responsibility and guilt. The interaction of the victims with the perpetrators of violence will offer a platform to victims to communicate their grievances against the actions of the perpetrators. The interaction of the parties will encourage engagement in self-reflection about one's own role and behaviour in the dynamics of the conflict. This process of mutual recognition seeks agreed ways to redress the damage that has been caused, to refrain from destructive behaviour in future, and to construct new positive relationships based on mutual respect and human dignity. So when relations are broken and the need for reconciliation is acknowledged, the question that arises is how best to repair the harm. With regard to confronting past abuses and violent crimes, the approach that best serves the process of reconciliation remains contested. Existing approaches that attempt to settle the dilemma vary from retributive justice (Stover and

Weinstein 2004), restorative justice (Umbreit and Armour 2011), social justice (Androff 2012a & b), political justice (Gibson 2004) and ecological justice (Androff 2012; Stover and Weinstein 2004).

4.3 Restorative justice

Justice is necessary to address wrong-doing and at the same time promote peace. But the question of defining justice and its relationship with healing is problematic. In particular, the question that arises is whether justice and reconciliation are compatible or mutually exclusive. The nature of justice a society chooses has enormous consequences for the society (Zehr 2001: 330-2). The first form of common justice is centred on the Western legal tradition- retributive justice. The system has many strengths such as the encouragement of human rights but its major weaknesses are inherent in that criminal justice tends to be punitive, conflictual, impersonal and state-centred (Stover and Weinstein 2004; Zehr 2001). It encourages the denial of responsibility and empathy on the part of offenders. It encourages pain and suffering on the offender. It excludes victims and their needs by focusing on the active role of the state, perceiving itself as the victim, dealing with a passive offender (Androff 2012a & b; Umbreit and Armour 2011). It exacerbates rather than heal wounds. In fact, retributive justice often assumes that justice and reconciliation are separate issues, perhaps even incompatible (Zehr 2001: 339), because the problem is defined narrowly and abstractly as a legal infraction making the victim and the context irrelevant. The process is highly adversarial, authoritarian and technical, and focuses on guilt or blame. The outcome of this process is to ensure that the harm by offender is balanced by harm to offender (Umbreit and Armour 2011; Braithwaite 2003; Zehr 2001). More important, is that it is focused on the past.

A diametrically opposed alternative to justice is reparative-centred and futuristic – privileging the dignity of the human being. It puts the victim and the offender as primary actors, and victim needs and rights are central not peripheral (Braithwaite 2003; Huyse 2003). Offenders are encouraged to understand the harm they caused and to take responsibility for it. Dialogue is encouraged and communities play important roles. Clothier (2008: 18) notes in glowing terms that restorative justice recognises that violence hurts everyone hence the voices of the victims are important - what do they need to move toward wholeness? The voices of the community are also important - how were they harmed and how can they invest in the success of all parties? The voices of the offenders are also important - why did they choose violence and what will make their behaviour change in the future? Unlike retributive justice, restorative justice holds that justice can and should promote healing at both individual and societal levels. The problem is defined in relational terms as violation of people and their context. Therefore the three hallmarks of restorative justice are encounters between victims and offenders; the obligation to repair harm; and the expectation that transformation will take place (Huyse 2003). Encounters between victims and offenders entail that offenders and victims may agree to meet

together with the aid of facilitator to talk about what happened, the harm that resulted and what it will take to make things right. Repair means that the primary responsibility of offenders should be to do what they can to make things right. This may involve apology, changed behaviour, acts of generosity and restitution. Transformation means that offenders can become contributing members of the society and victims become thriving survivors, communities become more powerful where public safety does not depend on law enforcement alone. During the Community Reconciliation Process in East Timor, the aspect of restoration was expressed in the emphasis on survivor justice as opposed to the usual binary of victim versus perpetrator. The process was therefore restorative-based with an emphasis on repairing relationships through shaming of wrong-doers. In the same way, the *Gacaca* initiative after the genocide in Rwanda was a participatory process which relied on traditional mechanisms for addressing conflict. It was restorative in the sense that it promoted re-integrative shaming among genocide perpetrators within a community context.

This form of justice is older in the African customary context than the retributive form and it is participatory and focused on needs and obligations generated from responsibility and empathy. The whole process strives to make things right by identifying needs and obligations. It is entirely futuristic. But there is no denying, however, that retributive justice may have some role to play within the peacebuilding framework (Huysse 2003: 97-102), or that restorative justice also has its limitations. As Braithwaite (2003) has pointed out, restorative justice cannot deal with the issues of structural injustices that advantage some communities and disadvantage others but insists that restorative justice offers better value than retributive justice. This restoration is targeted not only at victims, but at perpetrators and the community at large, and the restoration of moral worth and equal dignity for all persons, at the same time working to create a society where the various sectors in it have some measure of equality (Assefa 2001: 336; Villa-Vicencio 2000; Kiss 2000).

The initiatives in Zimbabwe have not focused on restoring the dignity of the people. The people's needs and rights were not placed at the centre of the processes. Offenders were never encouraged to take responsibility for the harm they caused as politicians sought to smoothen over past abuses rather than genuinely confront them. The voices of the community, the victims and the offenders were not accorded the opportunity for an encounter so that commitment to repair harm could be expressed. To address the challenges that are associated with the statist approach, the problem of violence in Harare needs to be approached through the restorative lens so that the victims, offenders and the community approach the problem as a collective. The aim of the study is to search for an intervention that meets the needs of the community as a whole. A restorative justice intervention will be futuristic and individual-centred with an emphasis on interpersonal transformation. That is, the study is not seeking to satisfy the legal requirements of the law to achieve justice, but rather to right the relationships of individuals within Harare and set them on a sustainable trajectory. Since the objective of undertaking reconciliation in

Harare using the restorative justice framework is to transform existing relations, understanding conflict transformation theory is important.

4.4 Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation theory has not been a core construct of the field until the 1990s decade. The newly minted idea of transforming conflict is now integral to the lexicon used in peace and conflict studies (Botes 2001; Lederach 1995a). Building on pioneering works by Kriesberg (1989) and Curle (1990), Lederach (2003; 1995b: 17) explains that the theory emerged to fill the void left by traditional concepts of peacebuilding. For instance, the theory of ‘resolution’ suggests a bias toward ‘ending’ a given conflict with little concern with the deeper structural, cultural, and long-term relational aspects of conflict” (Lederach 1995a: 201). From a reading of the state approaches in Zimbabwe, it is noticeable that there was an attempt to get rid of conflict when people had legitimate and important issues emerging from the past. The efforts from the 1980 policy of amnesia to the commissions were more of an attempt to cover up fundamental changes that are needed to foster reconciliation. The process of seeking constructive change must acknowledge that conflict is a permanent feature of human relationships and it is something that cannot be wished away as the government in Zimbabwe sought to do in its interventions. “Conflict is normal in human relationships and conflict is a motor for change,” (Lederach 2003: 4), seeking constructive change without eliminating conflict is the goal of conflict transformation. Transformation views conflict as caused by relational aspects that cannot be resolved but can be transformed (Galtung 1995; Lederach 1995a, 1995b; 1997; 2005). Important from this view is that transformation theory and practice is an antidote of the limitations of the resolution theory and practice. Resolution trends to focus on top-down official interventions and decision making whereas transformation allows for intervention at all levels through both official and unofficial contacts. ‘Resolution’ insinuates that conflict can be eradicated in human relationships, with its emphasis on short-term solutions to conflicts. On the contrary, transformation transcends the short-term perspective with a clear emphasis to address long-term interventions that can mitigate destructive relationships bearing in mind that conflict is a permanent feature of humans-in-relationship.

Conceptually, the answer to the question of ‘what’ is being transformed is complicated by the fact that conflicts are inherently dynamic phenomena (Mitchell 2002; Vayrynen 1991). However, transformation can occur at various levels. Vayrynen (1991: 163) delineates four ways in which transformations happen:

- *Actor Transformation* refers to the actors changing their goals and altering their approach to the conflict.

- *Issue Transformation* alters the political agenda of the conflict, in essence, altering what the conflict is about.
- *Rule Transformation* redefines the norms that the actors follow in their interactions with each other, and demarcates the boundaries of their relationship.
- *Structural Transformation* alludes to changes that may transpire in the system or structure within which the conflict occurs, which is more than just the limited changes among actors, issues and roles.

In his analysis of international and national conflict, Miall (2004: 10) proposes a model which builds on Varynen's view in almost similar way but adds context transformation. According to him, context transformation refers to changes in the context of conflict that may radically alter each party's perception of the conflict situation as well as their motives.

In yet another view, Lederach (2000a) answers the 'what' question of conflict transformation slightly different, though it leans heavily on Väyrynen description. The four dimensions necessary to transform systems are:

- *Personal* , or individual changes in the emotional, perceptual, and spiritual aspects of conflict;
- *Relational* , or changes in communication, interaction, and interdependence of parties in conflict;
- *Structural* , or changes in the underlying structural patterns and decision making in conflict; and
- *Cultural* , or group or societal changes in the cultural patterns in understanding and responding to conflict.

Augsburger (1992) claims that conflict transformation occurs when there is a metamorphosis or at least considerable change in three elements: the process of transformation first transforms attitudes by changing and redirecting negative perceptions; Secondly, it transforms behaviour, and lastly, transforms the conflict itself by seeking to discover, define, and remove incompatibilities between the parties. Lederach (1998: 242-243) advocates for a peacebuilding system that is not driven by a hierarchical (top down) focus, but by an organic political process, which "envisions peace-building as a web of interdependent activities and people." The CRP set up after the political violence in East Timor focused on interest of the community, victims and perpetrators as opposed to the interest of the elite. Before the process commenced, people were consulted, from where people recommended customary practices as the basis for fostering reconciliation as opposed to the top-down approach.

Dialogue is another way of transforming conflict (Rothman 1998; Saunders 1999; Yankelovich 1999). Negotiations between disputing parties often take the form of polarized debates but facilitated dialogues

can create moments of transition or become vehicles for transformative insights and actions by the participants. Such endeavours have the potential of being catalysts for change by unlocking polarized positions. Whether they occur in private or in public, the major goal of dialogue processes is to change conflictual relationships. Inherent in the above models is providing space for parties to be involved in the negotiation of new relationships, reformulation of interests and discourses (Lederach 2000).

In summation, conflict transformation theory retains its uniqueness from the traditional approaches to conflict intervention. The political conflict in Zimbabwe was certainly not transformed by the state-centred approaches because the focus of the commissions of inquiry, blanket amnesties, clemencies and pardons has been either managing or resolving political disagreements at the elite level without sustained attempts to address the root causes. No wonder the incompatibilities among the people still exist. Conflict transformation is relevant to the study because what I seek through reconciliation is not to 'resolve' or 'manage' conflict but to 'transform' existing relational aspects, that is, how people communicate and interact because of their interdependence. Transformation has resonance with the overarching goal of peacebuilding in Zimbabwe which are security, tolerance, empathy, unity, interdependence and trust.

The transformation of relationships championed by the locals is what is known as the 'local turn' in peacebuilding literature. The concept of 'local turn' is an argument that began in the 1990s with the works of Lederach and gained prominence in the post-2000 (Paffenholz 2015), emphasizing on recourse to localism in peacebuilding as an alternative to state or other international actors (MacGinty and Richmond 2013: 763). It represents a challenge to the traditional liberal view of universality of approaches, with the core proposition being that there are different ways of approaching the problem of peacebuilding. The genesis of the 'local turn' is situated in the critical peace research, and alternative sociological, ethnographic and action research methods as well as post-colonial scholarship from the global South. The practice of national and international political actors to impose solutions on conflict without significant involvement of the locals needs to abate. Although the literature on 'local turn' emerged in relation to the position of the local in the context of international politics and the international approaches to peacebuilding, the conceptual and theoretical propositions constitute the core motivation of the thesis. The approach departs from the premise that society is plural and at there are various people who exercise their agency for peace or against it in the face of governmentalism and structural power (MacGinty and Richmond 2013: 764). Consequently, there are contradictions in society in how people at various levels define and achieve peace. The contradictions also account for the disparities in the cultural values, practices and norms of the locales.

It is however argued, from a liberal perspective, that the approach is an affront to democracy, development because of its obsession with localized rights, needs and identities (Paris 2010; Lederach 1995). This perspective assumes that the local is an extension of the international and national models

and interests. Further pessimism on the 'local' concept emanates from the postulate that the 'local turn' is yet to represent critical agenda for peace research primarily because of the conceptual difficulties underlying the literature on the subject (Paffenholz 2015: 862-868). In addition, arguments that the world is globalised and models of peacebuilding are universal undermine the utility of the approach. Equally, at the national level, the argument has been that the nation is one, and the state must prescribe initiatives for the locals. This illuminates on the problem of power relations in peacebuilding. But for many, such arguments fundamentally flawed (MacGinty 2015; Paffenholz 2015; MacGinty and Richmond 2013; Paris 2010); the 'local turn' exposes the lack of understanding of local rights, needs and identity in diverse contexts and plural societies. Imposing the will of the national leadership on the local has limitations hence the state is not the primary referent in peace initiatives (Smoker 1981: 148). This thesis embraces this critical approach by questioning the fundamental problems of reconciliation in Zimbabwe and proposes to understand them in alternative ways that open space for other understandings and approaches. "Engaging with local highlights the need for space to be created by concerted and well targeted activities for peace to form locally" (MacGinty and Richmond 2013), without imposing external interests, biases or ideology that undermine local consent and legitimacy. In this way, localism is better suited for conflict transformation because of its emphasis on relationship building at the individual and community levels. When the goal is to transform conflict, elite-level peace engagements may lack the penetrative effect to address the drivers of conflict at the local level. Indeed, the local turn has become ubiquitous that actors are becoming aware of the sustainability and legitimacy advantages gained out of the locals (MacGinty 2015).

The prominence of 'the local' is attributed to a range of factors (MacGinty 2015; MacGinty and Richmond 2013; Paris 2010):

- The crisis of the liberal peace approach evident in the failures or the less resounding outcomes of the orthodox, top-down and securitized approaches in both international and state-led initiatives. This has diminished confidence and interest in such approaches and opened doors for alternatives, and freed the space in which the local is more visible.
- The sophisticated understanding of conflict is developing, exposing the linkage between development, identity and conflict. This has revealed the merits of the strategies that effectively operate with more local consent rather than resistance. The study of conflict has become more diffuse to encompass non-strategic elements such as emotions. Hence, it has become widely accepted that state-centric and institutionalist lenses can address peace challenges in a limited way.
- The approach is consistent with the evolving development discourse, and the attendant terms such as 'participation', 'ownership', 'partnership' etc. This acknowledges that efforts led by

national elites are less sustainable. Localism is seen as a way to embed an intervention within local communities, tailoring it to local needs, cultural expectations and enhancing its success.

- The rise of practitioners from the global South, and the resultant influence in conflict affected societies increase the assertiveness of locals and amplifies their voices on peacebuilding.

Therefore, ‘the local’ represents an important opportunity in the design of interventions targeted at promoting reconciliation. It provides a basis for reassessment of frameworks that have been used to understand and justify state-centred reconciliation. It encourages rethink of established modes of thinking that assume that rationality and superiority resides in the national elite. Certainly, “The sheer heterogeneity of the sources of localized thinking and expression means that there is no neat framework of ideas and that any genealogy of a universal norm or institution will tend to uncover hidden injustices that need to be rectified. The local turn has the capacity to be vibrant and relevant to the communities from which it emerges

4.5 Conclusion

The chapter has attempted to answer three questions: what intervention is needed in Zimbabwe to address the problems of recurring violence? How best can the said intervention address the problem at grassroots level? What would be the purpose of the intervention? Within the scope of peacebuilding, three theories were used to answer these questions in their respective order, namely, reconciliation, restorative justice and conflict transformation. The chapter has noted that although reconciliation is contested and complex, there is agreement in literature that it remains a relevant antidote to social disharmony arising from acts of violence. The theory of reconciliation proceeds from the premise that human beings are social animals who are interdependent on each other for their mutual existence. Reconciliation is thus defined as mutually conciliatory accommodation among people who were once in conflict who come to recognise each other’s right to coexist. In the process, reconciliation becomes important to restore peace in a relationship. It was further noted that the theory is underpinned by three pillars: First, the notion of relationship, that is, mechanisms for reconciliation must promote engagement of people as humans-in-relationship. Second, mechanisms for reconciliation must facilitate encounter between the offenders and victims within their particular context. Third, reconciliation represents a social space where people come together to repair their relations through the processes of truth-telling, forgiveness, justice and healing, which are pre-conditions for successful reconciliation. Each of these processes determine the success or otherwise of reconciliation. This is despite the debates surrounding the meaning of each of these normative terms to different people and contexts.

Once the need for reconciliation is ascertained, the question that arises is how best to approach the process of reconciliation? In the process of answering this question, the chapter noted the contestations. However, of the various approaches, restorative justice theory provides a relevant framework since the focus of the study is the grassroots. Restorative justice is reparative-centred, with emphasis on the dignity of the society as a collective since acts of violence are indiscriminate. The voices of the victims are as important as the voices of the offenders and the society if sustainable peace is to be attained. Thus according to this theory, peacebuilding interventions must bring together all affected parties with the collective obligation to repair harm and restore relations so as to achieve the purpose of reconciliation. The limitations of the approach were also noted but it was insisted that its value is better compared to other theories of justice.

Finally, in answering why reconciliation undertaken through restorative justice lens is important, conflict transformation theory was used. It was noted that the ‘newly’ minted theory is designed to fill the void left by traditional peacebuilding approaches. Thus contrary to theories of ‘resolution’ and ‘management’, ‘transformation’ is deeper, concerned with long-term relational aspects and is not always bound by formal processes of decision making and politics.

Drawing on this theoretical literature, the next chapter reflects on the challenges and successes of local or community-based reconciliation in other countries and Zimbabwe. Cases that conceptualised reconciliation as a locally-based phenomenon, informed by the people’s perceptions of the process are examined.

CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITY-BASED RECONCILIATION IN PRACTICE: EXPERIENCES FROM EAST TIMOR, RWANDA AND SIERRA LEON

5.1 Introduction

In situations of violations, the manner in which a society decides to deal with its past determines the extent to which long-term peace and stability will be achieved. Such an approach must seek to prevent the recurrence of human rights violations and repairing the damage caused. The approach should strike a balance among the expectations of victims, perpetrators and the entire society at large to allow for healing and reconciliation to take place. With the history of political violence in Zimbabwe so unmistakably clear, the state-centred approaches preferred have achieved less resounding results.

This chapter examines restorative-based reconciliation efforts undertaken at the local or community level as a response to past transgressions. Community-based initiatives being “practices that take place in the community and that involve the participation of the community as a whole, notwithstanding external assistance, cooperation or collaboration” (Park 2010: 95). Three cases are examined because of their valuable lessons for the thesis. The chapter is divided into five parts. The first section examines a community-based intervention in East Timor, the Community Reconciliation Process (CRP). The second part focuses on the *Gacaca* community courts in Rwanda established after the 1994 politically motivated genocide. The section observes that the initiative was based on participatory traditional justice mechanisms that were undertaken at the local level. Although the system had its own challenges, the significance of *Gacaca* is that it was a healthy alternative to retributive justice because of its restorative value. The third section investigates the *Fambul tok* project in Sierra Leone following the bitter civil war that ended in 2002. The project operated, and was controlled, at the village level to help communities organise traditional ceremonies for truth-telling and cleansing. Because of its community-based approach, it will be demonstrated that the project managed to facilitate reconciliation where the

state-centred initiatives had failed. The fourth section draws lessons from the three cases before summarising the chapter.

5.2 Case 1: Community Reconciliation Process (CRP) in East Timor

East Timor was a Portuguese colony until the decolonisation achieved in 1974. From then until 1999, the country was occupied by Indonesia. The struggle for independence and resistance to Indonesia occupation among the Timorese resulted in a backlash from the Indonesian administration that resulted in more than 100 000 deaths (Burke 2009: 652). However, the most acute eruption of state sponsored-violence occurred between August and November 1999, in which 60 000 homes were destroyed, more than 250 000 were displaced and 1 400 having been killed (McAuliffe 2008: 36). The legacy of mistrust and hostility within the population spearheaded by a combination of Portuguese and Indonesian divide and rule nurtured a myriad of disputes and fault-lines which yielded a highly polarised society. The occupation of Indonesia was ended by a UN-sponsored referendum that asked the Timorese whether they preferred to be independent or integrated with Indonesia. This was to be known as the Popular Consultation. Since Indonesia preferred amalgamation, it co-opted local Timorese into Indonesia's formal security forces and proxy militias who perpetrated much of the violence and repression working on behalf of indigenous politicians who wanted unification with Indonesia. The violence and displacement that characterised the Popular Consultations created fissures among Timorese who were divided into distinctly pro-independence supporters and anti-independence supporters. Many involved or associated with the violence who had sought refuge in West Timor returned to their homes and communities after the results of the referendum in which more than 80% voted in favour of independence (Babo-Soares 2004: 15-16).

Another wave of political violence began in 2006 and climaxed during the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2007 to which international actors including the UN responded mostly to ameliorate the humanitarian situation. The political crisis was sparked by infighting among senior politicians which escalated tension over long-term grievances over land ownership, regional divisions based on stereotype and mythology, widespread disenfranchisement of young people and the legacy of colonial violence, impunity and injustice (Burke 2009: 647). In general, East Timorese were found in a situation of a nation emerging from a period of conflict and systemic repression. The political violence had affected people's relationships from the individual, community to national levels.

Once the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) assumed control, it worked closely with a Timorese government-in waiting to give attention to issues of justice and accountability as an integral component of establishing governance through rule of law. Justice was therefore viewed as a pre-condition for reconciliation and essential to peace and security of the newly

independent state. A South African style Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CRTR) was then established which had similar objectives as other conventional TRCs but represented a marked departure in as far as it sought to support “the reception and reintegration of individuals who have caused harm to their communities through the commission of minor criminal offenses and other harmful acts through the facilitation of community-based mechanisms for reconciliation.” (Burke 2009: 657). The CRT represented a statist approach or official reconciliation whose emphasis was on bridging political differences among political leaders. It was believed that this would facilitate the reconciliation of their supporters. The elite-driven emphasis meant that little attention was given to healing the wounds of the past. Little involvement of the people at the grassroots makes it more partial not comprehensive. With this in mind, the Community Reconciliation Process (CRP) was conceptualised.

5.2.1 Mandate and *modus operandi*

The mandate of the CRP was challenging in as far as it also involved upholding the dignity and interests of both victims and perpetrators in a manner consistent with universal human rights but remaining locally relevant and meaningful. Before the commencement of CRP’s work, community consultations were made from which the desirability of the involvement of customary justice procedures known as *adat* or *lisa*. This indicated that traditional justice approaches retained strong influences among the Timorese despite the fact that it disadvantaged or ignored women rights (McAuliffe 2008: 658). In the design of the CRP, *adat* leaders were invited to participate in the hearings. The hearings were conducted in a way that sought to mimic a common customary conflict resolution ceremony, known as *nahe biti boot* (to spread the big mate). The process essentially involved bringing the conflicting parties together in a public meeting where the conflicting parties sit facing one another separated by the community *adat* leaders. However, in the CRP process, *adat* leaders assumed ceremonial than their supposed jury roles, while mediation between the parties participating was facilitated by a panel comprising prominent community members and chaired by a senior CRP staff member.

The CRP process was voluntary and it aimed at reconciling the perpetrator and the community which was harmed through past political conflicts. Even if individual victims were involved, the priority of the CRP was the community at large. The CRP would explain its aims and principle and encourage individuals estranged from their communities by virtue of their past acts to seek community-based agreements that required them to admit wrong-doing, apologise and agree to some sort of sanction, symbolic or otherwise. However, the majority were just required to apologise and a few were sanctioned with community service and symbolic fines. At the end of the CRP hearing, the agreement reached was registered with the formal justice system. This meant that the traditional mechanisms were integrated to the formal legal system. The CRP operated for 18 months and over 15 000 cases were heard. Important to emphasise is that the CRP did not prosecute serious crimes, which remained the responsibility of the national prosecuting authority.

5.2.2 Strengths and challenges

The biggest strength of the CRP is that it emphasised what Mamdani 2004: 470-471) calls ‘survivor justice’ as opposed to the usual binary of victim versus perpetrator. Instead, the politically neutral term ‘deponent’ was used to refer to what would be called a perpetrator under similar circumstances. This sent a positive intention to the community that victims and perpetrators alike had a shared identity that were lucky as survivors to escape the violence which was perpetrated in the game of politics (Burke 2009: 559). The process was therefore restorative-based as opposed to seeking vengeance. The informal processes of shaming and reconciliation are more effective than formal legal methods in punishing offenders against social group within which they exist. Braithwaite (1989: 81) argues that “Both the specific and general deterrent effects of shame will be greater for persons who remain strongly attached in relationships of interdependency and affection because such persons accrue greater interpersonal costs of shame.” The circumstances in which CRP operated lent themselves well to the employment of shame as a means of punishment and deterrence given that most of the people who participated in the violence took part in acts against members of their own villages (Burgess 2004: 147).

The CRP has however been criticised for a number of reasons. Confessional narratives used were assumed to constitute the truth. In reality, it is difficult to gauge whether the testifying individuals were telling the whole truth and the truth can only be known by themselves. Also difficult to determine is the sincerity of the remorse and repentance felt by the deponent. This is complicated by the fact that remorse was mandatory requirement for participation set by the CRP. The sincerity of remorse is always difficult to tell. In addition, the mandate of the CRP was severely curtailed as it was left to address low-level acts leaving out the all-important serious acts in the hands of the formal justice system. The assumption that people are not able to reconcile over serious acts is not true. The CRP process was perpetrator-driven such that victims and the community were not afforded an opportunity for personal testimony. Their role was supportive, by providing additional information about what the deponents omitted or intervene by way of clarificatory questions. More important, was that the process was not gender-sensitive as women were excluded from the process either as deponents or victims. On the whole, CRP was not adequate to address the needs of victims. Instead, its focus was integrating perpetrators to the communities from which they had been distanced from due to their past acts. Moreover, the CRP assumed that all communities had similar contexts such that its methodology was uniform throughout. Yet each community has its idiosyncrasies, thus needing particular handling appropriate in the local context. Staub et al (2005: 299) note that interventions “have to be applied and adapted to particular circumstances, so that practices will vary depending on the specifics of culture, current social conditions, and the history of group relations.” The CRP was uniform across all communities because it did not consult people in the conceptualisation of the conflict (Babo-Soares 2004: 23). Nevertheless,

it played a key role in restoring social stability by addressing social fissures created by political violence at the community level.

5.3 Case 2: The *Gacaca* community courts in Rwanda

The long history of inter-ethnic rivalry and antagonism in the context of minority Tutsi domination (constituting about 14% of the population) over the majority Hutus (about 85% of the population) exploded into genocide in 1994 (Staub et al 2005: 300). Violence that occurred in Rwanda was politically motivated with a well-defined ethnic character. Hutus killed nearly 800 000 people, mostly Tutsis and moderate Hutus. In addition, other physical and psychological crimes were also committed including rape and torture. The violence was state-sponsored and state-organised and perpetrated by state institutions and their proxy militia groups (des Forges 1999; Mamdani 2001). An ideology of ‘Hutu power’ developed and was sponsored by the Hutu government and the media which evolved into what can be described as *Tutsophobia*. The genocide was planned, prepared and executed on this basis, only to be stopped by the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA) who defeated government forces (Des Forges 1999; Staub 1999). The new Tutsi government had, among its immediate objectives, the promotion of cohesion and reconciliation among the Rwandese. This was a noble objective bearing in mind the intense effects of the violence in survivors (Staub et al 2005: 300). The sense of vulnerability and the perception of the other as dangerous increase the likelihood that without corrective emergencies, former victims will become perpetrators (Staub et al 2005: 301). With this in mind, the Rwandese government initiated reconciliation which culminated in the *Gacaca* courts inaugurated in 2005. *Gacaca* translates to “justice on the grass” (Rettig 2008: 26).

The *Gacaca* community courts were participatory traditional justice mechanisms to ease the massive backlog of genocide suspects crowded in Rwandese prisons (Rettig 2008: 25; Sarkin 2000: 113 & 118). The *Gacaca* tribunals were established at the village, regional and provincial level under a department within the Supreme Court. The *Gacaca* mechanism sought to blend punitive and restorative justice (Rettig 2008), and was led by panels of elected judges known as *Inyangamugayo* (those who detest dishonesty) who presided over genocide trials in the areas where the crimes were committed. The trials were held in open spaces and members of the community were in attendance. According to Rettig (2008: 31) *Gacaca*’s objectives were to:

- Punish genocide perpetrators
- Release the innocent
- Provide reparations
- Establish the truth

- Promote reconciliation between the Hutus and Tutsis

The mechanism had a preliminary phase known as information gathering which established a basic record of what happened during the genocide. The subsequent phase involved categorisation of offences committed. This was followed by the trial stage. At this stage, the *Inyangamugayo* call the accused before the community. The process was meant to arrive at the truth through community dialogue which involved the accused giving testimony and the community doing the same and also ask questions to the accused. The *Inyangamugayo* then pronounced a verdict. The system was founded by three principles: confession, apology and forgiveness.

The *Gacaca* courts were embraced as a mechanism to ease the burden on the normal courts and apply justice. This arrangement contradicted the traditional structure and role of the *Gacaca* in Rwanda. In the traditional way, the *Gacacas* were composed of old men who were respected in their communities. The role has been to impart justice impartially, wisely, and freely without benefiting the people who served them (Sarkin 2000: 119). The political influence of these new structures diluted their traditional function. *Gacaca* was ultimately controlled by the national government, a top-down orientation, non-organic grassroots process in the maximal sense. Some of the *Gacaca* tribunals were empowered to sentence individuals to life imprisonment. This was problematic because those responsible for adjudication were not legally trained and no procedural or other rights were guaranteed (Rettig 2008; Sarkin 2000: 119). The mandate of the *Gacaca* courts was restricted to crimes committed between October 1990 and December 1994. This was problematic because the history of discrimination and brutality perpetrated against the people during the colonial period and other periods during Rwanda's history were the causes of the events of 1994. This narrow focus entailed that the courts focused on the Hutu as perpetrators and failed to take into account the long history of rights abuses in Rwanda in which both Hutus and Tutsis have been perpetrators and victims (Sarkin 2000: 120). In extreme cases, others have argued that *Gacaca* was controversial and its contribution to reconciliation was unclear (Retting 2008: 25). Nonetheless, *Gacaca* was a healthy alternative to punitive, procedural and Western-style justice. Its restorative potential lied in that it promoted reintegrative shaming among genocide perpetrators, something Western-style justice cannot do (Drumbl 2000: 1263). Involvement of the community in pursuit of justice and reconciliation in the face of mass atrocity was unprecedented. Reconciliation is greater when trials take place at the local level than when they are adjudicated in faraway courts.

5.4 Case 3: Community-based reconciliation in Sierra Leone: the *Fambul tok* project

Sierra Leon war officially began in March 1991 and ended in January 2002. The bitter civil war was fought between Liberian rebels known as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in alliance with the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) against the government and the government-aligned Civil Defence Forces (CDF). The civil war was precipitated by government mismanagement, massive injustices, and political repression within the context of a single-party system (Park 2010; Keen 2005; Richards 2002; Conteh-Morgan and Dixon-Fyle 1999). The conflict was also fuelled by diamonds (Park 2010), and was characterised by widespread atrocities against civilians through murder and sexual violence (Park 2006; Sierra Leon Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2004). Most combatants perpetrated abuses against members of their own communities and in extreme cases, child soldiers were forced to commit egregious crimes against their own family members (Sierra Leon Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2004: 258).

In order to address the transgressions, Sierra Leon adopted two principal transitional justice institutions: the Special Court for Sierra Leon and the Sierra Leon Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The Special Court which was established in 2002, with the support of the UN, was essentially a war crimes tribunal but commentary on the court pointed out a myriad of challenges and controversies, despite sentiments of broad public support (Park 2010: 100). A sustained critique of the institution is contained in other works (Park 2010; Barria and Roper 2005; Dougherty 2004; Schocken 2002; Cryer 2001). The adversarial processes of the Court presented an obstacle to unveiling the truth and trials became barriers to reconciliation. The solution then was found in a truth and reconciliation commission which was meant as a transitional justice vehicle to accomplish national reconciliation, to heal victims and to prevent a repetition of atrocities (Hayner 2002: 15-16 cited in Park 2010: 101). The TRC was established in 2000 through an Act of Parliament. The mandate of the TRC was to create an impartial historical record of violations of human rights and to address impunity, to respond to the needs of the victims, to promote healing and reconciliation and to prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered. The TRC report has been analysed in detail elsewhere (Kelsan 2005; Dougherty 2004). However, chief among its weaknesses was the perception that the TRC did not adequately focus on reconciliation although its emphasis was on restorative rather than punitive justice. Reconciliation efforts “were largely left to the localities because the TRC had neither the time nor the money to do that” (Dougherty 2004: 44). In addition, the TRC was obsessed with the truth component than reconciliation component (Park 2010: 103). Thus notwithstanding the important contributions of both

the Special Court and TRC to transitional justice in Sierra Leon, both institutions left gaps which called for community-based restorative transitional justice. No wonder five years after the submission of the TRC report, a new strategy for dealing with war abuses emerged in 2007 to continue the work of reconciliation at the community level. The initiative known as *Fambul tok* was fronted by a coalition of civil society operating as the Forum of Conscience.

Fambul tok (meaning family talk) was a programme designed to conduct community reconciliation after the completion of the TRC. On realisation that there was lack of community reconciliation in the TRC process, the civil society initiative set structures in liaison with traditional leaders to facilitate reconciliation (Park 2010: 113). The programme sought reconciliation of offenders, victims and their communities. The project was restorative-based underpinned by objectives of reconciliation, forgiveness, acknowledgement and remorse. It was about acknowledgement of wrong-doing without forgetting the past. The project facilitated gradual mending and building of relationships. The family talk initiative was based on traditional practice of discussing and resolving issues within the security of a family circle. The project operated at village level to help communities organise ceremonies that included truth-telling and traditional cleansing ceremonies. *Fambul tok* also involved public disclosures by both victims and perpetrators of their experiences and actions. *Fambul tok* events were designed and controlled by each community, based on their own traditions. The project went beyond the TRC in bringing people together. It managed to achieve what the TRC and the Special Court had failed to achieve at least at the grassroots level.

5.5 Lessons learnt

Community-based reconciliation is an important feature of peace consolidation, maximizing access to justice and facilitating reconciliation. In the context of peacebuilding, the tasks of restoring justice and rebuilding peace are complementary and overlapping. The importance of community-based initiative cannot be overstated because sustainable peacebuilding must be domestically rooted and embraced by the local population and not imported or imposed (Mani 2002: 14), but can be facilitated or supported by the government as in the case of *Gacaca* courts. If peacebuilding is to eliminate the root causes of conflict and builds new infrastructures of peace (Mani 2002: 12), then community-based initiatives which are locally meaningful and accessible could be the key to durable peace. In addition, the interventions must perceive people as inherently and profoundly interdependent hence the focus on restorative processes as opposed to punitive justice is important.

The purpose of the intervention should be to facilitate healing and interpersonal recovery and community rebuilding. Healing is achieved when the society is accorded the opportunity to when their grief is acknowledged, and interpersonal relationship recovery is concerned with restoration of human

dignity that had been destroyed by violence. For any reconciliation process to work, the affected community needs to first openly acknowledge the problem that divided them in order to effectively engage. This is important to ensure that the people see the problem as shared which fosters restoration of broken relationships. This in turn helps victims to have the courage to relieve their despair, insecurity and suspicion, while perpetrators will be able to reconnect and move away from the feeling of isolation.

Statist approaches are insulated from the aspirations of the people. They need to be complemented by local initiatives. In Sierra Leone, the two elite approaches, namely, the Special Court and the TRC were deficient in promoting reconciliation at the grassroots level. The *Fambul tok* filled the lacuna. It can be advanced that reconciliation processes work if the processes have meanings to the society affected, “including various collectivistic contents that are seen as intrinsic parts of the universal whole recognised within a cultural context” (Machinga and Friedman 2013: 54). The process must be sensitive to the culturally congruent practices of the community targeted. Traditional beliefs provide a significant source for healing and reconciliation. Such beliefs must be included in any successful intervention.

In a survey of 21 locally-based peace interventions, Dessel and Rogge (2008) concluded that there were multiple benefits in peacebuilding programmes in which the local assume central agency. Some of the benefits across the examined cases include:

- Participants increase their perspective taking, sense of commonality regarding others, understanding differences as compatible with democracy and political involvement
- Less inter-personal divisiveness
- Development of problem-solving skills
- Valuing new viewpoints
- Clarifying one’s beliefs
- Learning from others
- Honest discussions
- Willingness to cross social boundaries
- Raised awareness to respect others
- Increased understanding and empathy
- Improved communication
- Joint action on issues of common concern
- Increased civic engagement.

Following the killing of Arabs by Israeli forces, tensions and hostility worsened between the Jews and Arabs. The inter-ethnic encounter programmes were subsequently formed to address the situation, with emphasis on facilitating communication, trust and deeper understanding of the complex Arab-Jewish situation in Israel. Jewish-Arab encounter groups brought either nationalities of going age and teachers

for discussions and inter-personal contact. The programmes, sponsored by European and USA-funded non-profit organization, involved face-to-face contacts under the guidance of Jewish and Arab facilitators. In his assessment of the initiatives, Abu-Nimer (2004; 1999) makes several observations pointing out the benefits and limitations. He observes that the Arab-Jewish encounter programmes played an important role in thwarting some racist movements; the encounters also provided Arab opportunity to interact with Jews and express their views and perceptions of the conflict in direct, honest and safe environment without fear of accusation, humiliation or violence; Jews also had the opportunity to understand Arab political perceptions and culture. In addition, the following limitations were observed:

- The ability of the encounter programs to produce positive change in Israeli politics was rather limited. The common source of the limitation is the accusation that Arab participants were in a position of disadvantage because their different needs were not taken into consideration, generating more frustration and disillusionment at the end of the programmes.
- Most of the encounter programmes limited their work to attitude changes by focusing on cultural sensitivity, reducing prejudice and stereotypes with no focus on the primary instigators of hostility such as power relations and processes of identity construction. Thus, the structural aspects of the Arab-Jewish conflict in Israel were largely unaddressed. People's minds were targeted but the systems were not.
- The encounters effect was short-lived, prompting participants to return to their previous negative, stereotypical attitudes of participants or participants did not have a forum or framework to engage in meaningful activity to promote political and social change.

However, the general conclusion from Abu-Nimer's works is that while resolution of conflict may be difficult, the encounters encouraged co-existence; an important ingredient for encouraging reconciliation. Individuals who participated experienced change in perceptions of each other and the conflict and experienced increased awareness of others culturally and personally. Similarly, in an evaluation of local-based initiatives in Guatemala communities, Diez Pinto (2004) concluded that such initiatives provided a foundation for promoting trust and the long-term national agenda for peace. This was necessitated by the disappearance of stereotypes, the growth of personal relationships and trust that facilitated consensus building. Indeed, Saunders (1999) believes that resolution theories and practice have shown that even with successful elite interventions, there is no substitute for grassroots co-existence.

The case for the local agency in peacebuilding has also been explored in Zimbabwe in response to the incidents of political conflict. Machinga and Friedman (2013) evaluated an individual and community level programme known as the Lament, Welcome and Celebrate (LAWECE) which was implemented in the local communities of Mutare. The purpose of the LAWECE was to allow people to live together

by fostering personal healing, interpersonal relationship recovery, community rebuilding and capacity building. The study concluded that the initiative’s most significant benefit was its ability to avail safe space for deep personal healing in communities. This is because participants had the opportunity to listen and learn together. Participants also gained positive skills to co-exist with people who have caused wrong or hurt without disregarding their communities. The programme demonstrated that relationships are changed from disruptive tendencies to positive ones that promote peace, healing and reconciliation. It was established that participants of the LAWECE initiative developed skills for managing pain and emotions as well as finding ways to stop the cycle of violence in the local communities of Mutare.

Further support for local-centered initiatives in Zimbabwe is demonstrated in two recent works by Shonhiwa (2016) and Ngwenya (2015). The former was an intervention based on Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) implemented in Harare, Hatcliffe suburb with a small sample of youths affected by political violence. The aim of the intervention was to facilitate reconciliation among the locals. The evaluation results of the programme showed the effectiveness of community-based programmes as tools for encouraging reconciliation. Youths changed their perceptions of the other as enemies to potential and real friends. Most important is the argument that AVP enhanced the capacity of the youths to come together in order to redefine their relations based on peace. Overall, the AVP initiative transformed the knowledge and skills of the youths when faced with conflict by embracing non-violence. With respect to Ngwenya, he engaged in an action research project with victims of *Gukurahundi* aimed at healing of memories of the survivors living in Bulawayo. The action research project led to participants drawn from veterans from ZIPRA to acquire knowledge of personal healing despite the limitation that the small sample was not representative enough of the healing problem among the Ndebele.

Important to note from the community interventions reviewed in the chapter is that while grassroots-centred initiatives foster healing and reconciliation, there are different ways in which the process may occur depending on the choice of a particular locale. This strengthens the dictum that “there is no single healing and reconciliation process but what is called for is a blend of transforming activities at community level, while attending to individuals’ and community needs (Hamber 2001). The cases also affirm the differences between the statist-approach and community-based approaches as emphasised by (Babo-Soares 2004: 16). These can be summarised as shown in the table below:

Table 5.1: Differences between state and community-centred reconciliation

	State-led reconciliation	Grassroots reconciliation
Participants	Political leadership	Local leaders + people
Orientation	Political security	Community-coexistence
Operation costs	Expensive	Less expensive
Nature	Exclusive	Inclusive

Approach	High-level contact	Grassroots contact
Solution	Political solution	Open solution
Objective	Political accommodation	Stable community life
Legitimacy	Approved at the top level	Grassroots approval

Source: Babo-Soares (2004: 16)

5.6 Conclusion

The chapter examined case studies of community reconciliation in three countries. The CRP in East Timor, *Gacaca* in Rwanda and *Fambul tok* in Sierra Leone. In all cases, we noted that community initiatives were adopted after episodes of political violence and on realisation of the inefficacy of the elite-led approaches. In East Timor, challenges were abound but it was noted that the CRP employed mechanisms demonstrated that restorative-based shaming is more effective in reconciling people as opposed to vengeance and formal legal methods of punishing offenders against a community within which they exist. In the case of *Gacaca*, it was noted that despite the political infiltration, the mere involvement of the community in pursuit of justice and reconciliation in the face of mass atrocity was unprecedented. It demonstrated that reconciliation is achievable when trials take place at the local level than when they were decided in faraway tribunals. Similarly, the *Fambul tok* project demonstrated the efficacy of restorative-based reconciliation in which local people have total control over the process, and how the use of local traditions can foster reconciliation without forgetting the past. By and large, the valuable lessons derived from the three cases and other studies that evaluated local-based initiatives can be summarised as follows:

- Community-based reconciliation is an important vehicle for reconciliation and durable peace in communities affected by gross violations perpetrated for political expediency
- Community-based initiatives can only work if they have meaning among the affected communities, that is, intervention projects must be congruent with cultural practices because traditional beliefs provides a vital cog for reconciliation
- Restorative-justice processes perceive people as inherently interdependent hence initiatives must emphasise on reintegrative processes than vengeance
- Community-based interventions foster relationship recovery and restoration of human dignity without inducing amnesia

This thesis is focused on localized or community-centred reconciliation (bottom-up initiatives). The involvement of the state is thus not treated as immoral and any support rendered must be carefully

viewed and weighed. The intent is to ensure that government, its agents and institutions do not continue to support hegemonic control of the locals through generating exclusionary policies and interventions. The involvement should not promote conditions that influence or inhibit the central role of locals in reconciliation. That is why even if the state was involved in the cases examined, each community was left to decide the process according to its own local conditions. The cases reviewed in Rwanda and East Timor provide evidence of how the state can facilitate reconciliation without taking away the responsibility from the locals. In all the cases, the locals assumed central agency in encouraging reconciliation.

The next chapter explores the methodological perspectives on community-based intervention as the basis for designing such interventions in Zimbabwe. It details the research design, methodology and data collection techniques used to design, implement and evaluate an intervention that sought to build capacity for reconciliation among a sample of adult Zimbabweans based in Ward 30 of Glenview North Constituency.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore the challenge of reconciliation in politically polarised Zimbabwe and devise a local-based intervention to build capacity for reconciliation among ordinary people. *The primary question that guided my research was: How can people affected by political violence but continuing to live together participate in building their own capacity to promote reconciliation in the absence of effective state interventions?* To avail answers to the question, I sought to achieve the following specific objectives:

- Establish the causes, extent and consequences of political violence in Zimbabwe;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of state-centred efforts at reconciliation in Zimbabwe;
- Ascertain the effectiveness of local-based (community) interventions to promote reconciliation in other countries comparable to Zimbabwe;
- Explore experiences, attitudes and perceptions regarding reconciliation in Zimbabwe;
- Develop and implement an intervention programme that will build capacity for reconciliation among a small sample of participants affected by political violence at local (community) level; and
- Undertake a short-term outcome evaluation of the intervention.

At the time when action research commenced, political violence was a cause of concern and little headway had been made to address the historical problem. The violence involved intra and inter-party trends, showing a culture of political intolerance across the political spectrum. The political situation in Harare was highly polarised with incidences of violence reported in the central business district and high-density suburbs. Clashes were common among street vendors fuelled by both the MDC-T and ZANU-PF supporters. Party youth from either side were implicated in the violence that resulted in damage to property in the central business, Glenview, Mbare and Mabvuku-Tafara suburbs. For instance, the Zimbabwe Peace Project report for May 2016 recorded an increase in violence from 119

cases in April to 126 in May. Security agencies, primarily the Central Intelligence Organisation and Zimbabwe Republic Police were involved in the violence that resulted in the injury of several people and the death of a police officer in Glenview in April 2016 (Zimbabwe Peace Project Report, May 2016). The new political party, ZimPF supporters were reportedly attacked by ZANU-PF youth in Chitungwiza accused of supporting the former Vice President, Joyce Mujuru, to challenge Mugabe in the 2018 presidential elections (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum Report, May 2016). The reported violence ranged from arson, harassment and beatings. This study was carried out in Ward 30, Glenview North, Harare. This is a high density urban area prone to politically motivated violence just like other high density areas in Zimbabwe. The need for interventions that can build capacity for reconciliation local level from different political groups inspired the research. This chapter describes and justifies the research design, methodology, data collection and data analysis procedures.

6.2 Research design

A survey of research methods texts indicates that there are varied understandings and interpretations of key concepts in research vocabulary. The common result has been a scenario in which the term ‘research design’ has been synonymised with the term ‘research methodology’ or as two distinct terms. This makes it fundamental to have a clear conceptual understanding of the term ‘research design’ in order to escape the ambiguity that sometimes accompany research terminology. In this thesis, the term research design is defined as a blueprint of how one intends to conduct research (Mouton 2001: 55), as it relates to the entire process of data collection, measurement and analysis (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006: 10). The importance of a research design is two-fold: it is the basis upon which an operational plan that links the various procedures and tasks necessary to complete the research is formulated; and avails logical answers to an identified research problem and purpose (Kumar 2005: 84). In order to meet the objectives highlighted in section 6.2 above, the research design that I used was three-tier. I first explored the problem from literature and baseline interviews before I chose an area to implement the action that would contribute to the realisation of the research aim. Simply put, the design that I used was exploratory, action and case study-based. I discuss this design in the sections that follow.

6.2.1 Exploratory research

Exploratory research is concerned with discovery, and associated with exploration of an identified problem to gather as much detail (Jupp 2006; Stebbins 2001). Exploratory design was used as the entry point into the study to gather data on the nature and extent of the problem of reconciliation in Zimbabwe. Through the design, I sought to gather detailed insights into the challenges of reconciliation in Zimbabwe. To achieve this, I used a combination of secondary literature and primary data generated

from interviews and focus group discussions. The combination of methods was meant to analyse secondary sources on reconciliation in general and Zimbabwe in particular and to survey opinions of participants through primary sources of data. The secondary sources provided historical descriptions to the problem, while opinion surveys were targeting both experts on the subject and people affected by political divisions. It was necessary to gather detail on the dimensions of the problem before the intervention was developed and implemented by the action group. In this case, I used exploratory design as an initial stage in the process of achieving my aim through action research (Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 43).

6.2.2 Case study

The aim of the case study is detailed description of the case. Yin (1984: 23) defines case study research as a systematic inquiry that examines a problem in sufficient detail within its real life context. In this study, participants who constituted the action group were the subject of case analysis after problem was explored and described. In actual fact, the study employed the single-case study design. The action group, consisting of 13 participants, was particularly an instructive example of the general Zimbabwean population that is seeking reconciliation. The case study allowed me to investigate in a much deeper way the effect of the intervention on the action group, to allow judgements of transferability of findings to other groups of people affected by the problem to be made by the reader. However, while this can be possible, findings from case studies in qualitative research are limited in the extent to which they can be generalised (Flick 2014: 122), since data is gathered through experiences, opinions and perceptions that may be particular to the group under study. Equally, I find it difficult to claim that findings and conclusions drawn from the case that I studied (action group) can be relevant to other people in Zimbabwe. In qualitative research, knowledge gained in one context may not necessarily be relevant to other contexts (Guba and Lincoln 1984 in Babbie and Mouton 2005: 277). However, participants' responses were presented in detailed verbatim quotes to allow for judgements of transferability by the reader.

6.2.3 Action research

a. Origins and evolution of the action research genus

The origins of action research are attributed to Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist (Tripp, 2005; Adelman 1993; Holter and Swartz-Barcott 1993; Zuber-Skerrit 1992). However, there are strong views that the historical and philosophical origins of the research genre within literature still remain unclear (Masters 1995; McKernan 1991). This view argue that action research can be traced back to the Science in Education Movement of the late 19th to early 20th century (McKernan 1991: 8), and that the use of the term 'action research' was common with social reform scholarship prior to Lewin. Yet despite the contestations, there is consensus in literature that Lewin's work presented a coherent and logical theory

of action research (Masters 1995; Adelman 1993; McKernan 1991). Table 6.1 shows some of the movements that had historical influence on action research including Lewin's towering contributions.

Table 6.1: some movements that influenced the historical and philosophical development of action research

	Movement	Historical period	Prominent researcher (s)	Contributions
1.	The Science in education Movement	Late 19 th to early 20 th century	Bain, Boone, Buckingham	Scientific methods applied to education
2.	The Experimentalists and Progressive Educationists	1930s	John Dewey	Applied the inductive scientific method of problem-solving as a solution to problems in different fields which included physics, education, philosophy & psychology
3.	The Group Dynamics in Psychology and Human Relations Training	1940s	Kurt Lewin	Use of qualitative social inquiry to address social problems such as racial prejudice, social reconstruction and ending world war II Groups affected by the problems were part of the inquiry to find solutions to identified problems Organised action research theory emerged. It composed of analysis, fact-finding, conceptualisation, planning, implementation and evaluation of action
4.	The post-war Reconstructionist Curricula Development Activity	1950s to 1960s	Corey, Taba, Brady and Robinson	Action research was adopted as a strategy in designing new curricula to tackle

				problems of inter-group relations and racial relations
5.	The Teacher-Researcher Movement	1970s	Stenhouse	Teaching methods were developed and designed on the basis of research done by teachers themselves to improve practice and learning outcomes

Source: adapted from McKernan 1991: 8-11

Lewin developed an elaborate action research theory in his research focusing on the concepts of organisational behaviour and social psychology in the early 1940s (Adelman 1993: 7). His studies used action research to apply concepts into practical efforts to solve organisational and social problems. The aim of Lewin's research was to develop social relationships between and among social groups to sustain communication and cooperation. Action research became the means of systematic inquiry for all participants in the quest for greater effectiveness in organisations through democratic participation. In social contexts, Lewin's research targeted minorities in order to overcome the forces of exploitation, and set his ideas on action research through reflective thought, discussion and action by ordinary people participating in collective research in troubles that they had in common (Wright Mills 1959 in Adelman 1993: 7-8). By 1934, the term 'action research' was formally adopted and integrated into research methods vocabulary. Lewin described action research as a spiral of activities involving planning, action and evaluation of the consequences of action of action (Kernan 1993: 9).

Lewin regarded action research as defined by discussion of problems followed by group discussions on the way forward. Action research had to include active participation of those who have to explore the identified problems. This is followed by a collaborative process of decision making, monitoring and noting the consequences of the agreed decisions, and regular reviews of progress. The value of Lewin's pioneering works was to emphasise an important point that the researcher through embracing action research, acts as an agent of democratic change in a troubled community. According to Adelman (1993: 13) Lewin and his co-researchers classified their research activities into four discernible categories of action research:

- *Diagnostic action research*: this was designed to produce a needed plan of action. It involved an action team intervening in an already existing social problem, diagnose the problem and take remedial action.
- *Participant action research*: this involves the participation of affected people from initial inquiry to the intervention stage. Participation was valued because it enhanced local people's support of the agreed remedial measures.

- *Empirical action research*: it involved record keeping and accumulating experiences in day-to-day work.
- *Experimental action research*: this type relied on controlled study of the relative effectiveness of various techniques in nearly identical social situations. This type of action research had the greatest potential for the advancement of scientific knowledge.

Despite the variations in the types of action research employed by pioneers, the essence of action research was the emphasis on democratic participation of the subjects of research and their collaboration. Primacy was therefore accorded to *process* more than *outcomes*. The obvious conjecture being that good outcomes are only guaranteed when quality processes are adopted. Lewin died in 1947 but his pioneering works in action research “showed that through discussion, decision, action, evaluation and revision in participatory democratic research, research became meaningful and alienation was reduced.” (Adelman 1993: 15). By 1946, Kurt Lewin was swayed by the impact of action research, emphasising the organic interlink between ‘action’ and ‘research’ and vice versa. He concluded: “No action without research; no research without action” (Adelman 1993: 8). Contemporaries of the action research design are still taking a cue from his path-breaking studies to conceptualise and execute studies meant to address real problems in societies. Thus action research is being applied in a range of fields: community development, administration, organisational change, teaching, political change, empowerment and national development (Tripp 2005: 2-3).

b. Significance and justification for action research

Action research is premised on the desire to confront real life problems with interventions that yield transformative action and change. Action research does not simply seek to explore and describe an existing problem but also seeks to change (Cahill 2007: 268); it is a method of inquiry that goes beyond mere gathering of information from participants to include social change, participant empowerment (Moore 2004: 149), emancipation and participatory democracy (Grant, Nelson and Mitchell 2008: 592). Action researchers identify problems and adopt a course of action that is geared to solve the diagnosed problem. Knowledge generation is intertwined with action. Coghlan and Brannick (2010: 4) emphasise that action research “is research in action rather than research about action”. In this process, the researcher departs from the unilateral approach that defines traditional research work by collaborating with stakeholders in a series of key research activities as they collectively attempt to solve a social question. Action is taken to effect change and findings generate knowledge about the process of change and why the change was necessary (Rose, Sprinks and Canhoto 2015: 1). Thus, action research is a systematic, collaborative and democratic way of generating and adopting action in which researchers and local stakeholders combine their efforts to work out a solution to existing complex problems (Merther 2012; Reason and Bradbury 2009 in Loizou 2013; Stinger 2007; Greenwood and Levin 2007).

The aspect of collaborative research differentiates it from the traditional designs that assume that “knowledge is only discovered using specific methodologies such as scientific method, which aims to predict and control outcomes” (McNiff and Whitehead 2006: 28). The end state is to strive towards changing people’s practices and situations in which people practice as they seek positive change (Kemmis 2010: 421). Central and perhaps a fundamental distinction of action research from other designs is the underlying philosophy of doing with instead of doing for local stakeholders (Greenwood and Levin 2007: 3), who share experiences in a collaborative way (Price 2001: 44), to achieve positive social and social improvement (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison 2001: 226). The researcher assumes the responsibility of a facilitator at every stage of the research process meant to generate knowledge and participation of local stakeholders rather than dictating them enhances capacity of the researcher to contribute to resolution and action in confronting problems devouring the participants (Berg 2009: 251). In a very important way, action research represents a departure from the thinking that participants in research processes are mere sources of information to treating them as co-researchers as well. “Those typically studied are involved as decision makers and co-researchers in some or all the stages of the research” (Cahill 2007: 268), indicating that in action research everything revolves around the values of transparent and democratic participation inquiry that is collaboratively planned, designed, implemented, analysed and disseminated (Guishard 2009: 87). The collaborative approach stems from the long-standing observation that practical problems require practical solutions (Moriarty 2007: 2). In a way, collaboration also acknowledges the difficulty or in fact unsustainability of solutions from ‘without’ other than from the affected people themselves. Participation, itself a product of collaboration, then promotes shared ownership and a sense of responsibility on the adopted solution to the problem. For studies that seek peacebuilding in societies tainted by conflict, action research becomes the research design that promotes the desired action and change. Other designs appear deficient in instances where transformative change is the avowed end.

The emphasis on collaboration and participation of stakeholders makes the ontological and epistemological basis of action research self-evident. Ontologically, the research process is such that the researcher assumes a dual responsibility of being a facilitator and a catalyst or agent of change. McNiff and Whitehead (2006: 35) concur: the methodological assumptions are that action research is done by practitioners who perceive themselves as agents of improved social practice. Epistemologically, McNiff and Whitehead (2006: 35) note that knowledge production in action research is incessant and therefore not time-bound. The answers that are generated to respond to real problems are only tentative and not final. McNiff and Whitehead (2006: 36) warn that in social science inquiry, all answers should be regarded as both provisional and subject to critique and modification, and action researchers do not look for a fixed outcome that can be applied everywhere. The implication of this stern warning is that findings of this study do not provide finality to the perennial question of reconciliation among political opponents in Zimbabwe. However, the thesis attempts to develop

capacity for reconciliation by facilitating dialogue using a small sample drawn from Glenview North constituency. Originally I had planned to work with 12 participants drawn from the four focus groups that were used to generate pre-action data but I ended up having 13 due to interest in among participants. The small number of participants was ideal to enhance trust and communication among targets of change. The action group was small enough to allow for adequate participation of all members within a space of four days per month allotted to each dialogue session (the design and implementation of the action programme are detailed in Chapter 8 of the thesis which reports findings on the intervention). The importance of a small sample in action research is that “Acting on something that people have control over is exactly the kind of thing that contributes to people’s beliefs that they are creative, knowledgeable and capable of making a difference in their own lives” (McIntyre 2008: 33). This is supported by Grant, Nelson and Mitchell (2008: 596)’s warning that “In social change work, it is important to achieve ‘small wins’ rather than expecting large-scale change to occur dramatically.” However, the findings in the thesis can generate useful lessons that can be used as the basis for action research studies elsewhere.

Improving relationships is one goal of action research. Kemmis (2010: 424) makes a similar conclusion by indicating that the goal of action research is to encourage democratic dialogue and practical deliberation and therefore offer an alternative for relationship building, as opposed to traditional designs that tend to be prescriptive than realistic (Gustavsen, Hanson and Qvale 2008: 64). The choice of action research design in this thesis was inspired by McNiff (1988: 50)’s view. He notes: “Built into action research is the proviso that if I am dissatisfied with what is already going on, I will have the confidence and resolution to attempt to change it. I will not be content with the status quo.” The approach is influenced by the assumption that all stakeholders should be involved in the research process in order to inform understanding and subsequent action. Knowledge production proceeds as a collective process, actively engaging people who have previously been the subjects of research to collectively investigate and reconcile their own situation. Craig (2009: 7) identifies key features of action research: the study is undertaken in a natural setting; the researcher as the facilitator must be unbiased and professional; various methods and sources of data are utilised; findings are reported in form of thick descriptions; process not product is stressed; meaning is derived from data analysis; and findings inform action.

c. Stages in action research

If action research is being done as part of an academic assessment, as is the case with my thesis, it normally involves two concurrent research cycles (Zuber-Skerrit and Perry 2002). The first cycle (*core* action research) focuses on the practical problem to be solved and the other is the *thesis* action cycle in which the researcher goes through the stages with regard to the academic part of the project and their learning from it. Coghlan (2007: 300) characterises the thesis cycle as ‘meta-learning’ because of its value in generating theory from the core action research cycle. Unlike the core action research which is

a continuous cycle where ideas generated at the reflection stage may result in a further cycle, the thesis cycle ends at the reflection stage where the research report is compiled and submitted for assessment. The *core* and *thesis* action research cycles are depicted in Figures 6.1 and 6.2 respectively.

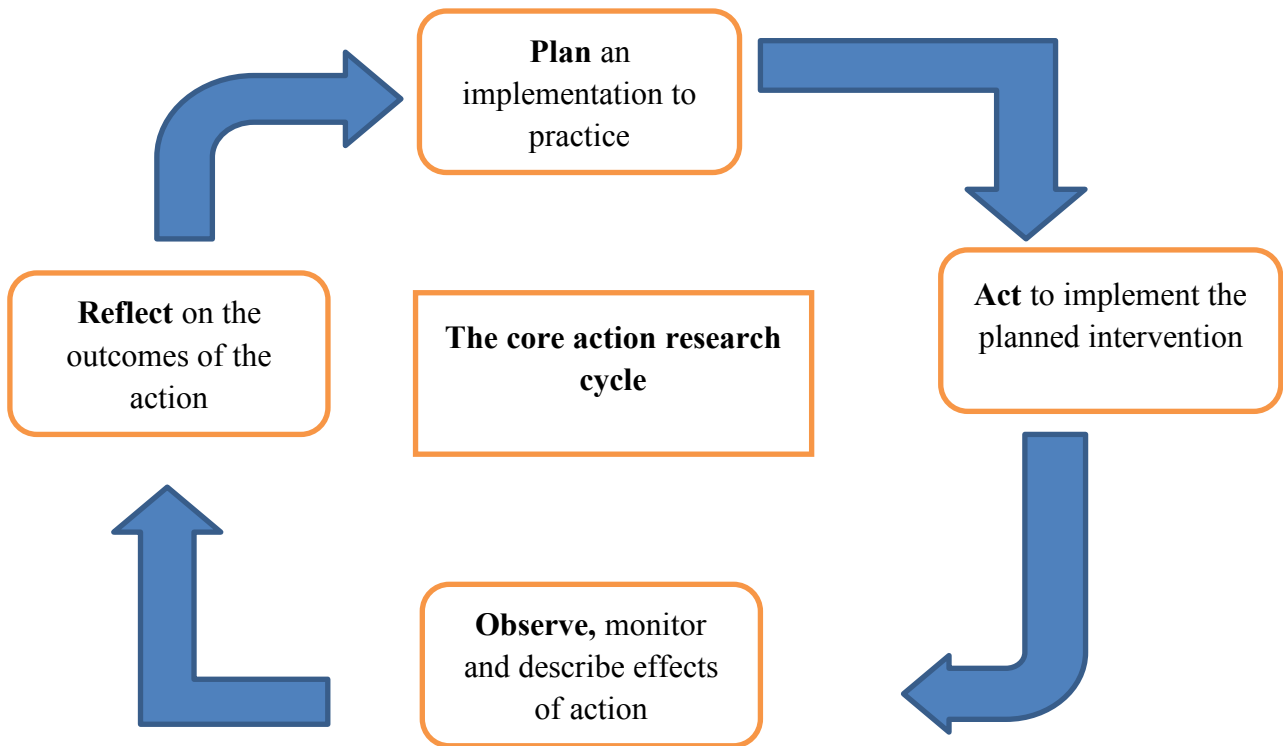


Figure 6.1: The process of core action research as a continuous, cyclical venture (Source: adapted from Rose, Sprinks and Canhoto 2015: 3)

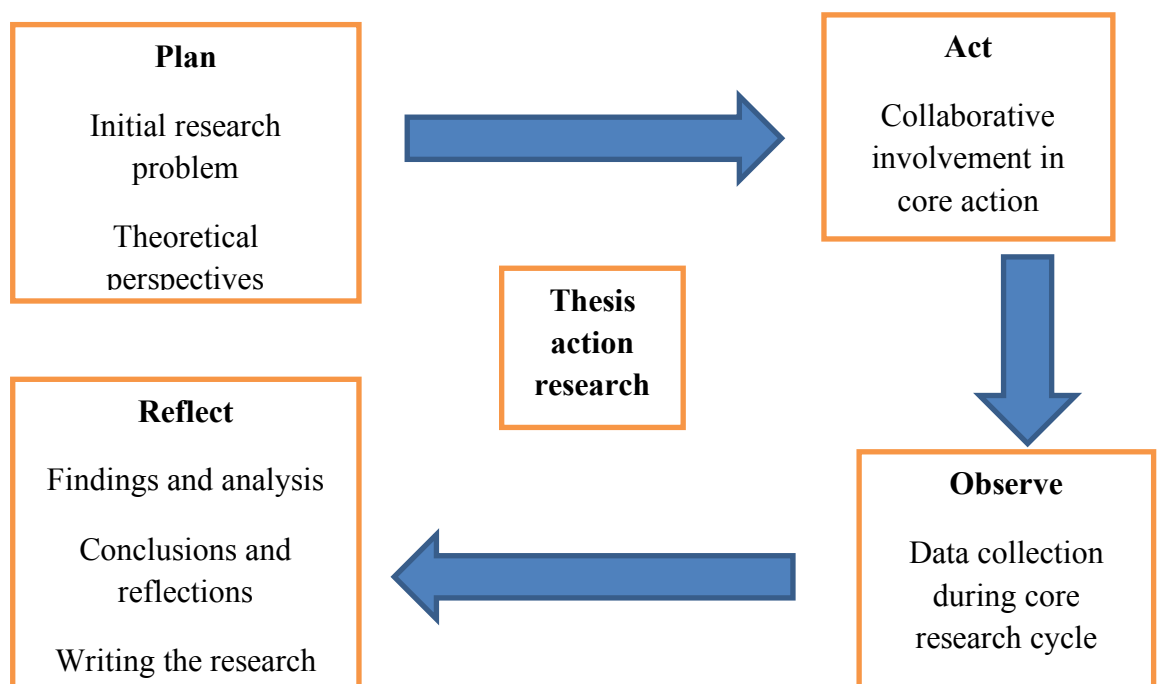


Figure 6.2 thesis action research cycle (Source: adapted from Rose, Sprinks and Canhoto 2015: 3)

In both *core* and *thesis* action research cycles (figures 6.1 and 6.2), the process is represented as involving stages that are inter-related but clear cut. This is hardly the case in reality. More often, the stages are executed back and forth as new insights, experiences and feedback emerge. This is inevitable to achieve the intended aims.

The process of action research involves five steps (Johnson 2008: 28; Druckman 2005: 315; Ferrance 2000: 2), namely:

- Identify a problem and determine the focus of your study;
- Determine the type of data to be collected and how the data is to be collected;
- Collect and analyse data;
- Create a plan of action based on the findings; and
- Report or share findings, reflect and plan for action with others.

However, it has to be stressed that action research goes further than just reporting findings and planning action to designing, implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of the action plan, with the goal of improving people's problem-solving skills and strategies for the best interest of the community (Ferrance 2000: 4). This process occurs in an iterative cyclical distinguishing it from the well demarcated linear processes usually associated with an exploratory phase where the problem is identified and conceptualised. Thus the action research routine provides a simple yet powerful cyclical framework – research, reflection and action- that enables the researcher and the affected people to commence a shared and productive process of inquiry (Bloomberg and Volpe 2012: 35). Sequentially, the exploratory phase is followed by planning and implementation of the intervention where observations are also made to allow for any necessary adjustments in the cycle to yield positive change.

My plan for this research was to design an intervention programme for a small sample of politically divided people in Ward 30 of Glenview North Constituency in Harare to enhance their capacity to develop skills for reconciliation. Afterwards, the outcome of the intervention on the participants was evaluated. The following constituted the stages undertaken in the action research component of the study.

Problem identification: Action research in this study was aimed at inducing capacity for reconciliation among a politically divided group of participants. Johnson (2002: 21) emphasises that societal problems are seldom solved unless they are first identified and defined. The problem defined in this research related to politically motivated divisions which has made reconciliation a colossal task. The disunity and animosity among people subscribing to divergent political views was evidence to validate the

identified problem. A comprehensive perspective in understanding the problem involved identifying the nature, causes, extent and consequences of political violence. Exploring the identified problem was inspired by a desire to change existing relations for the better. The identification of the problem eased the process of formulating questions for the study. The critical questions raised at this stage were:

- Why is political violence such a chronic problem in Zimbabwe?
- What are the factors that were inhibiting national reconciliation efforts?
- What can be done at the local level to transform the destructive attitudes into embracing political diversity in peace, and therefore reconciliation?

Once the problem was defined, the type of data to be gathered and the appropriate methods to gather data that would address the questions raised were determined.

Data gathering and analysis: Data gathering succeeded the problem identification and definition. Data gathering was important in that it aided the design of the intervention that sought to address the identified problem. Data gathering was done through interviews and focus group discussions to gauge the participants' perceptions and opinions in relation to questions raised in the first stage of the research. Fourteen interviews and four focus group discussions were held between February and April 2016 in order to appreciate the extent of the problem before an action group was constituted to design and implement the intervention. Data gathering was followed by analysis and interpretation of the data sets to come up with a conclusion that led to the action part of the research. The interpretation and analysis of baseline data helped me to acquire in-depth understanding of the problem of reconciliation in Zimbabwe, and became the basis for formulating an appropriate intervention together with participants in the action group.

Formulating and implementing a plan of action: Once the problem was identified, the necessary data collected and analysed, an appropriate action had to be implemented to address the situation. Thirteen participants randomly recruited from the four focus group discussions constituted the action group together with myself. On the basis of the baseline data findings, the action group and myself met on 11, 12 and 19 May 2016 for the purpose of planning for an intervention that would achieve the aim of the study. Planning was done collaboratively to achieve agreed goals (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988: 66). The result was the adoption of dialogue as the intervention to foster peaceful relations among participants. Four dialogue sessions were held from 28 May to 25 November 2016 leading to concrete action that resulted in the establishment of a garden project ('peace garden') on 28 November 2016 in the location of the study. The garden was an action adopted to symbolise a desire to maintain the spirit of friendship, trust and co-existence beyond the verbal exchanges that characterised the dialogue sessions.

Evaluation of the intervention: Since the desire for positive change motivates action research, the dialogue and the ‘peace garden’ were subjected to evaluation. Evaluation aided in determining the effect of the intervention on the participants. Evaluation was implemented as a continuous process with mini-evaluations carried out at the end of each dialogue session and the observations I made during deliberations as well as conversations on the *whatsapp* platform created by the group after the first dialogue session. However, a major short-term outcome evaluation was carried out between 25 and 30 January 2017, close to two months after the last dialogue session and the ‘peace garden’ activity were done. The outcome evaluation process was based on comparing findings between the action group (experiment group) and the control group. The participants for the experiment group and control group were drawn from four focus groups. When a call was made for action after reporting findings from baseline data, all participants volunteered to be involved in the action. But because the group would be large, the 28 participants were assigned identification codes in the form of numbers from 1 to 28. The first 13 participants with odd numbers then constituted the experiment group, while the rest constituted the control group. The random assignment removed any significant initial differences between the groups. The fact that members in both groups were equally interested in participating in the action means that all the participants were inclined to learning about peace and reconciliation. The two groups were therefore similar in all ways except that the experiment group received the intervention and the control group did not. The differences observed at post-test reflected the impact of the independent variable (dialogical conversation and the peace garden initiative). The separation of the two groups allowed for the isolation of the effects of the intervention on the experiment group. The evaluation process was guided by questions at appendices ‘E’ and ‘F’. Answers to the questions helped me to reflect on the process and judge whether what the group had done was adequate to achieve the aim of the study i.e. capacitating participants to influence positive change among participants in the manner they relate to each other despite their political differences. Such a conclusion was based on comparing the post-test results between the experiment and the control group (see section 9.4).

By and large, the characteristics of action research discussed in the greater part of this chapter represent the core strengths of the action research design relative to other traditional designs. However, this is not to suggest that the design underpinning this thesis is flawless. For instance, Rose, Sprinks and Canhoto (2015: 8) and McKernan (1991: 8) observe that action research has its own weaknesses. One of which is that action research is ‘unscientific’ from a positivist approach to research. This stems from the point that since action research is pre-occupied with problem-solving in specified contexts and settings, questions arise on the relevance of the findings beyond the immediate research setting (Rose, Spinks and Canhoto 2015: 16). This is part of the limitations of the study that are discussed in Chapter 10 of the study.

6.3 Research Methodology

Research methodology deals with the manner in which research is conducted in relation to methods, tools, techniques and procedures that are relevant to the attainment of research objectives and achievement of the study aim (Mouton 2001: 56). The purpose of the thesis was to build capacity for reconciliation among people affected by political violence in Ward 30 in Glenview North. At the centre of this enterprise was dealing with the people's attitudes, opinions, perceptions, feelings and experiences. Qualitative research was used because it is grounded in a constructivist philosophical position. This relates to the sense that it is concerned with how the world is experienced, interpreted and understood in a particular context and a particular point in time (Bloomberg and Volpe 2012; Merriam 2009; Davies 2007). The intent of qualitative research is to study a social situation by allowing the researcher to enter the world of others and attempt to achieve a holistic rather than a reductionist experience (Patton 1990; Schram 2003 in Bloomberg and Volpe 2012). Qualitative research was appropriate since the thesis sought to discover and describe in order to extract and interpret experiences of the people (Denzin and Lincoln 2008b). Core elements of the qualitative paradigm are (Bloomberg and Volpe 2012: 36-7):

- It involves the collection, analysis and interpretation of narrative and visual data to gain insight into a particular phenomenon of interest.
- The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis so that deep understanding of the issue is gained.
- The researcher strives to describe the meaning of findings from the perspective of participants. Data is therefore gathered directly from participants.
- Complex social phenomena are viewed holistically since research takes place in natural and non-manipulated settings.
- It assumes that the world is not uniform and hence there are many truths.
- Data analysis occurs concurrently with data collection.
- Findings are accompanied by thick descriptions that clearly express participants' voices.
- Research is concerned with dependability, credibility and transferability, that is, how and in what ways the findings of a particular study might apply or be useful in other similar settings.

Even if there were other two equally important paradigms, namely quantitative and mixed approaches, the choice of qualitative research was ingrained in the core elements espoused above. These stand in stark opposition to the quantitative paradigm that is obsessed with reducing data to numerical values at the expense of extrapolating social meaning and experience (Kumar 2005: 15-17), oblivious of the fact that not every experience can be expressed quantitatively (Berg 2009: 3). Table 6.2 provides a comparative overview of qualitative research and the quantitative paradigm.

Table 6.2: Comparison of research paradigms

	Qualitative research	Quantitative research
Philosophical orientation	Empiricism (knowledge is acquired through experience)	Rationalism (knowledge is acquired through reasoning)
Researcher's role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopts an emic (insider) point of view • Seeks to discover and understand meaning of experience • Adopts a flexible stance and is open to change • Acknowledges personal values and brings own experience to bear on the study • Is active and involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopts an etic (outsider) point of view • Seeks to test or verify theory • Identifies variables, makes predictions and seeks specific evidence that will support or disconfirm hypothesis • Believe that research can be value-free • Attempts to remain unbiased, objective and impartial
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inductive (research is about idea generation) • Design is proposed upfront and emergent rather than rigid and fixed to permit exploration • Small samples are selected purposefully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypothetic- deductive (research is about idea testing) • Design is determined upfront and follows systematic and rigid procedures • Large samples are selected randomly
Data collection methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher as instrument • Methods are emergent and flexible • Survey questions are open-ended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses existing instrumentation • Experimentation follows rigid rules • Questions are closed-ended
Methods of data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic and richly descriptive findings • Analysis is based on identifying themes and patterns • Phenomena are understood holistically and within particular contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data is reduced to precise numerical values • Statistical analysis • Researcher offers causal explanations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis is iterative, cyclical and on-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical process is linear and unidirectional
Issues of trustworthiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks to establish credibility and dependability by way of triangulation and other strategies • Seeks to explain transferability of findings to other similar contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks to uphold scientific standards of validity and reliability • Seeks to generalise results from research sample to the larger population
Presentation of findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thick and rich descriptions is the primary mode of presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charts, graphs and diagrams are primarily used

Sources: adapted from Bloomberg and Volpe (2012: 36-7) and Kumar (2005: 17).

6.4 Population and sample

Before the sample from which research data was gathered, there was need to specify the appropriate population (Johnson and Reynolds 2012: 223). Population refers to the total of all individuals who have certain characteristics and are of interest to the research (Babbie and Mouton 2005). The population consisted of all adult citizens (aged 18 years and above) residing in Ward 30 of Glenview North, in Harare Metropolitan Province. The total adult population in the Ward is approximately 31 000 comprising of people of varying distinguishing characteristics such as age, gender, political party affiliation and occupation, all of whom have been affected by political violence either as victims, offenders or members of a community affected by such violence. I entered into the research location through the constituency Member of Parliament (MP), Honourable Fani Munengami, and Ward 30 Councillor, Mr Muzhinyi, both of whom granted express permission in writing (see Appendices I and J).

A sample is a sub-set of the population, which is a group of subjects who represent the population under study (Bloomberg and Volpe 2012). A sample was used to make inferences about the entire population. Although researchers acknowledge that research based on a sample is frequently less accurate or more subject to error than is information collected from a population, practical limitations such as time and cost justifies the importance of sampling (Johnson and Reynolds 2012: 224). Equally, it was neither possible nor feasible to include all the people in Glenview North in the study. After all “ the smaller the sample, the more detailed, intense and sophisticated will be the process of exploring reality” (Davies 2007: 146). However, I was mindful of the warning that the sample size and how its members are selected determine the credibility of inferences about the whole population. The important thing therefore is to clarify the technique of sampling. Since the purpose of the thesis was to have a detailed

understanding of the question of reconciliation, non-probability sampling was used. A non-probability sample is a sample for which each element in the total population has an unknown probability of being selected (Johnson and Reynolds 2012: 239). Non-probability sampling was also used because it was suitable for the study since it was not a large-scale survey that sought to attain a representative sample (Babbie 2011). Non-probability sampling is further justified in the study on the basis that in qualitative studies, the concern is with quality not quantity, for as long as the researcher reaches the saturation point, that is, attainment of data that is sufficient enough to describe and explain a situation (Kumar 2005: 165).

Interview participants were purposively selected to yield a sample of 14 respondents. By using purposive sampling, I was able to exercise discretion over the choice of respondents who had the relevant and expert knowledge to provide the baseline data on reconciliation in Zimbabwe. This decision was influenced by the view that in qualitative research, samples are chosen because of their relevance to the research problem rather than their representativeness which determines the way in which people to be studied are selected (Flick 1998: 41 cited in Neuman 2011: 241). I was inspired by the desire to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore the sample selected promised the most gains. The choice of purposive sampling technique was also inspired by the need to maximise information output in view of the fact that in qualitative research, findings are context specific. Interviews were followed by focus group discussions (FGDs). The sample for the FGDs was 28 participants who were conveniently selected. I personally invited people around Ward 30 to take part in the group discussions until the sample size of 28 was reached. Of these 19 were male and nine were female; eight were in the 18-25 age range, the ages 26-30 and 31-35 had six each, five were from 36-40 and three were 41 or more. The focus group participants in turn constituted the action group (the selection criterion is explained in section 6.2.3 c above). The action group had 13 participants while the remaining fifteen constituted the control group, from which I interviewed the first 13 available participants for evaluating the short-term outcome of the intervention. The detailed activities undertaken by the action group are contained in Chapter 8. The bio-data of participants in the action group was such that eight were males and five were female. Their age range was as follows: three participants were in the 18-25 years, five were in the 26-30 range, three were from 31-35 and one apiece in the 36-40 and 41 and above groups (see tables 8.1 and 8.2). The control group participants had 11 males and four females. The 18-25 age group had five participants; one in the 26-30; three in the 36-40; and 2 in the 41 and above age range.

6.5 Data collection methods

In-depth interviews and FGDs were used to collect data. Triangulation is critical in attempting to obtain an in-depth understanding of the problem under investigation (Cresswell 2007, Denzin and Lincoln 2011). The methods are detailed in subsequent sections.

6.5.1 In-depth interviews

The interview method was selected as the primary method of data collection because it possesses the potential to elicit rich, thick descriptions and it gave the researcher the opportunity to collect data in their natural setting and clarify statements and probe for additional information (Bloomberg and Volpe 2012). Mason (2004: 63) identifies reasons which informed the choice of qualitative in the thesis:

- Ontologically, participants' knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, perceptions and interactions are meaningful ingredients of understanding social reality. This resonates with Kvale and Brinkmann (2009)'s observation that interviews enables the researcher to understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold meaning of the subjects' experiences, to uncover the lived world.
- Epistemologically, a legitimate or meaningful way to generate data on social reality is to interact with the affected people, to ask them questions, to listen to them, to gain access to their accounts and articulations.
- Arguments and explanations of respondents lay emphasis on depth, nuance and complexity in data rather than surface patterns which may be provided by structured approaches. This finds support in Cresswell (2007)'s view that the benefit of interviewing participants is that they offer the potential to capture a person's perspective of an event experience.

With guidance from the supervisor, the objectives of the study were used as the framework to develop the interview guide. An interview guide is a tool or script which structures the course of the interview in a systematic and consistent manner. The interview guide outlined the objectives of the study and underneath, a number of questions which relate directly to the objectives were constructed. This was inspired by the position that a good interview guide should contribute thematically to knowledge production and dynamically good interaction with participants (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). Thematically, the questions relate to *what* of the problem under investigation, seeking the interviewee's understanding of the problem. Dynamically, the questions pertain to *how* and *why* of an interview aiming to stimulate the participant's experiences and feelings. Two colleagues undertaking doctoral studies were asked to review and provide feedback on the quality of the questions. With the supervisor's approval two pilot interviews were conducted before the actual interviews were held to ensure that the interview questions got the relevant answers. 14 interviews - five academics, five officials from civil society organisations and four officials from community based organisations - were held with experts

in peace and conflict issues as the first step to gather baseline data. The interviews were held between 4 February and 28 March 2016 in Harare, Zimbabwe. The interviews sought data on the causes, extent and consequences of political violence and to explore the country's experiences with past and on-going efforts at reconciliation. I recorded the interviews on my laptop with the permission of the participants. By using this technique, I realised that recording interviewee responses was a highly delicate matter because they were sometimes providing wide and complex answers to some questions. I also realised that interviewees ended up opting not to answer some questions because of the amount time involved in a single interview. The interviews were meant to explore experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of participants regarding reconciliation in Zimbabwe in greater detail as shown on the interview guide (see Appendix E). Interviews were also used to evaluate the short-term outcome of the intervention using the guides at Appendices G and H.

6.5.2 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

Sequentially, interviews were followed by four focus group discussions to explore issues raised in the interviews in greater detail. The purpose was to gauge the attitudes of the people towards the question of reconciliation. FGDs are essentially focused on a single theme (Gibson and Brown 2009). The focus group is relevant when the interest lies in discovering different opinions (Hawe, Degeling and Hall 1990: 174–175). Focus groups allowed for in-depth discussion of issues while allowing for clarification and probing for further information (Morgan 1997: 10-14). 28 participants drawn from Ward 30 of Glenview North, were divided into four groups of seven people each, exploring issues for a maximum of 90 minutes using a discussion guide. The FGDs were held between 6 and 25 April 2016. I moderated the discussions in order to facilitate open and free discussion by all participants. The purpose was to ensure that no participant dominated deliberations. In addition, participants had an opportunity to raise questions and seek explanations from their fellows (Neuman 2011: 459). My experience with using this method was that participants were granted voice and allowed to express views on issues for discussion. Participants had a space to narrate their experiences and opinions on the question of reconciliation which helped me to get closer to the data I intended to gather. This was made possible by the reality that participants in the group discussions were directly affected by political violence and the resultant disunity. However, some participants in the group were sometimes being influenced by others or tended to react to what others say at the expense of what they actually thought about an issue brought for discussion. Like interviews, focus groups were meant to explore experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of participants regarding reconciliation in Zimbabwe in greater detail as shown on the discussion guide (see Appendix F).

6.6 Data analysis

Once the process of data collection was complete, the next step was to manage, organise and make sense of all the separate pieces of accumulated data. Data analysis entails the “resolution of complex whole into its parts” (Mouton 1996: 161). The idea of analysis implies some kind of transformation of data into something meaningful and making inferences from discreet pieces of information. Qualitative analysis involves non-numerical examination and interpretation of data for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships (Babbie 2008: 414). When analysing data, the goal is to process the voluminous collection of data through analytic procedures into a clear and understandable narrative (Gibbs 2013: 1). Research literature is sometimes punctuated with discord on what data analysis entails. Some focus on the *office* processes involved – sorting, retrieving, indexing and handling of qualitative data (Mouton 1996; Ritchie and Lewis 2003; Miles and Huber 1994), others associate analysis with interpretation of findings (Babbie 2008; Denzin and Lincoln 1998). However, in this thesis I considered data analysis as defined by Flick (2006, 2007) and Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) as involving the entire range of activities in data handling and interpretation of findings – a process which begins with data cleaning, displaying, meaning-making and ending with drawing conclusions. I also took data analysis as a sequence of interconnected activities, sometimes undertaken back and forth and vice versa, from transcription to drawing conclusions. I went through the steps detailed below in the process of analysing data.

Step 1: Familiarising myself with the data

Transcripts were allotted keys for ease of reference and identification codes as shown in the table below.

Table 6. 3: Transcripts identification codes

Transcript codes and key	Translation
FGA – P1	Participant number 1 in focus group ‘A’. Each participant in the four focus group discussions used to collect baseline data had his/her identification code.
IP1	Participant 1 in the interviews. 14 interviews were held to collect baseline data and each participant had his/her own identification code to report their responses.
AG-P1	Participant number 1 in the action group.
CG-P1	Participant number 1 in the control group.
R/F	The ‘R’ key was used in the baseline data transcripts while the ‘F’ key was used during the action group activities. The former stood for researcher and the latter for facilitator of group discussions.

(Inaudible)	Represented unclear words or phrases in participants' responses
(Pause)/ (Laugh)	These represented a descriptive comment to provide context or mood of the conversation

Source: Own data

Step 2: generating initial codes

The initial codes were generated from the interviews, focus group discussions and conversations in the action group by cutting and pasting together data under the specific questions that participants were responding to. While reading through the participant responses, interesting aspects of data, and only relevant to the questions asked were underlined. After re-reading the transcripts to ensure that no important data were prematurely excluded, a code manual was developed. The code manual consisted of the code number, the code, a brief description of the code and an example of the code represented by a direct quote from the transcripts (see table 6. 3). The manual used participants' own words in response to the questions raised during data collection.

Table 6.4: Coding manual

Code number	Code	Description of code	Participant response from the transcript
1	Failure to acknowledge diversity	Participants felt that what causes divisions and violence in their relations was the inability to accept that people are different and hence they perceive things differently	AG-P11: "The major problem is that people don't want to acknowledge that there are other people who don't believe in what they believe in" AG-P7: "We cannot all see things the same way (<i>pause</i>). People are different but sometimes we choose to ignore this fact of life."
2	Feeling for others	Participants noted the need to put oneself in the shoes of the person hurt by violence in order to refrain from violence	IP2: "You just need to reflect on the feelings and suffering that is endured by people who are targeted by violence. This is important for one to focus on their behaviour before they attack others."

Source: Own data

Step 3: Identifying themes

This stage involved taking the code manual and converting it into a format that allowed the data on specific questions to be examined for emerging themes. The code descriptions developed in step 2 were put together in a narrative that captured participant responses to each question. Direct quotes were used to validate each code description. The different codes were then sorted into potential themes. Figure 6.3 demonstrates the process of identifying themes.

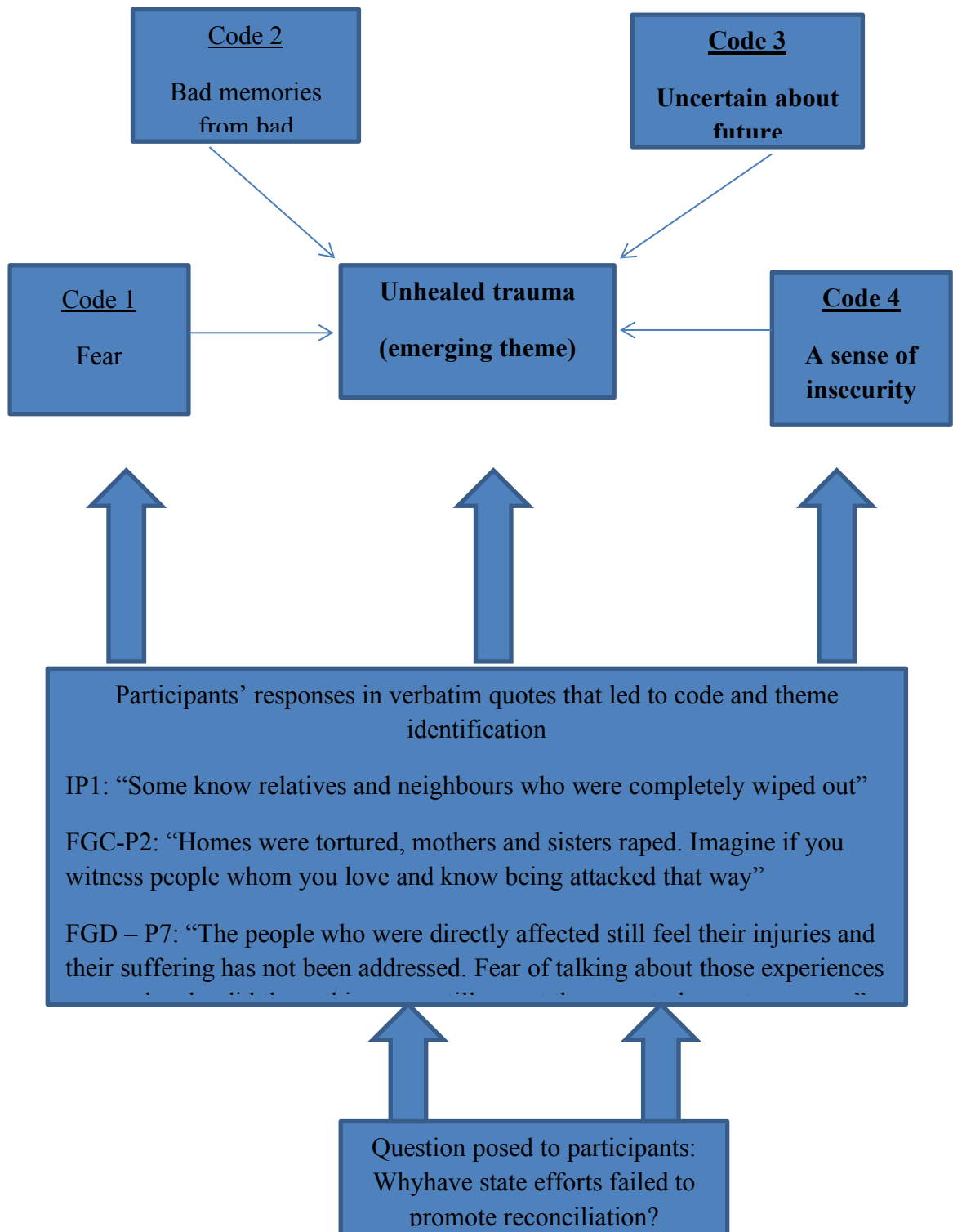


Figure 6.3: The process of identifying a theme from the code manual (Source: Own data)

Step 4: Reviewing themes

This stage involved revisiting the themes established in step three with the intention of refining the themes. The identified themes were scrutinised closely in order to ascertain whether there was enough data to support them. This examination allowed for themes to be retained, discarded or further divided into distinct themes or fused into broader themes.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

This step involved ascertaining the essence of what each theme was about and the type of data each theme captures. This process also entailed examining the relationship between the themes and questions posed to participants in order to come up with major themes for presentation of findings in the research report.

Step 6: Presenting the research report

The themes developed in step 5 identified the essence of participants' responses. Responses were presented in the form of narrative and thematic structure, which was supported by extensive samples of quotations from participants to provide thick descriptions, substantiating the story that I tried to tell. The reporting of findings was also fused with the interpretation exercise. This involved a critical scrutiny of findings to understand their meaning (guided by the *why* and *why not* questions), allowing me to express opinion and at the same time integrating the findings with literature. This process resulted in chapters 7 – 9.

6.7 Validity and reliability

Validity relates to truth interpreted as the extent to which conclusions drawn from research provide an accurate representation of what happened or correct explanation of what happens and why (Jupp 2006, Silverman 2005). In qualitative research, validity suggests truthfulness, and refers to how well an idea fits with actual reality. Indeed, it is not possible to have perfect reliability and validity but they are ideals toward which we strive. They are ideals that help to establish the trustfulness, credibility or believability of findings (Neuman 2011: 208). Jupp (2006: 312) posits that validity of conclusions can be achieved by addressing three aspects:

- Validity of measurement involves asking whether a research instrument measures what it purports to.
- Validity of explanation (Internal validity) which involves asking whether the explanations and conclusions derived from the research are the correct ones for the subjects and context studied.

- Validity of generalisation (external validity) which involves asking whether the conclusions drawn from a particular study can be generalised to similar contexts.

For Neuman (2011: 211), validity in qualitative research is concerned with achieving authenticity than realising a single version of truth. Authenticity entails offering a fair, honest and balanced account of social life from the viewpoint of the participants. Validity of measurement was enhanced by data collection instruments that contained research objectives and specific questions to ensure that the right data was gathered. Internal validity was enhanced through a combination of measures that ranged from triangulation, writing extensive field notes, respondent validation or member checks, referential adequacy and peer review (Babbie and Mouton 2005). These are briefly explained below:

- *Triangulation* is the use of multiple methods to avoid the biases of single methods. The thesis used in-depth interviews, FGD and secondary sources.
- *Respondent validation or member checks* took place when interview and FGD transcripts were taken back to participants to check with them on whether what has been constructed from the data is what they actually said. This was important to assess the intention of respondents in order to correct errors in interpretation.
- *Prolonged engagement* was used to ensure that I stayed in the field until data saturation occurred. This approach facilitated a more detailed understanding of the context, participants and matter under study.
- *Referential adequacy* was used as the first mechanism to check what respondents had said during the interviews and FGDs through constant reference to the material that I used to record responses.
- *Peer debriefing* was also used with a colleague who completed PhD studies and knowledgeable on reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

In qualitative research, knowledge gained in one context may not necessarily be relevant to other contexts or for the same context in another time, and the obligation for transferability rests with the reader who wish to apply it to a similar context (Guba and Lincoln 1984 in Babbie and Mouton 2005: 277). Equally, I am in no position to claim that the findings of the thesis are applicable to similar contexts. However, external validity was enhanced by presenting ‘thick descriptions’ of data in sufficient detail to allow judgements about transferability to be made by the reader.

Reliability refers to the degree to which one can track the processes and procedures used to collect and interpret the data (Silverman 2005: 210, Bloomberg and Volpe 2012). Reliability was important because the inquiry must provide readers with evidence that if the research process were to be repeated with the same or similar participants in the same context, the findings would be similar. Since there can be no

validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former was sufficient enough to demonstrate the existence of the latter (Guba and Lincoln 1984 in Babbie and Mouton 2005: 278). An audit trail was used to attest to the reliability of the inquiry and data were available for review by other researchers. Field notes, documents, the entire process of inquiry, the data, findings and interpretations are available for review to establish the coherence and acceptability of the findings. In addition, two associates who completed their PhD studies were asked to code a handful of transcripts to establish inter-rater reliability (Miles and Huberman 1994). This was meant to reduce potential bias. Reliability was also ensured through pilot testing of data collection tools prior to the actual research.

6.8 Ethical considerations

The research complied with DUT ethical requirements and standards. Ethics in research serve a duality of purpose: safeguarding integrity of the research; and safeguarding the interests and rights of subjects of inquiry. As a starting point, information about the research objectives, how the data would be used, who would have access to the data and how anonymity of participants would be protected was provided to participants in advance (see Appendix A). In addition, express permission was granted in writing by the Member of Parliament for Glenview North Constituency and Councillor for Ward 30, the location of the research, before I engaged participants. Transcripts were anonymised by removing any information that may identify a respondent by name and replaced with transcripts identification codes (see table 6.3). Anonymity was important because participants' identity was protected. All participants were assured that all the data collected was confidential and was solely for the study and shall be kept between them and the researcher.

Through informed consent, participants were informed of their right to refuse to take part in the study and were made to sign a written consent form (see Appendix D). In addition, the ethic of voluntary participation was observed by ensuring that no participant was forced to participate and only volunteers from the four focus groups constituted the action group. This was consistent with Tripp's (2005: 11) warning that the general guideline that must be built into any action research project from the beginning is that the researcher and participants in the action group must not disadvantage one another without their knowledge and consent.

6.9 Conclusion

The overall plan underpinning the research enterprise in the thesis is action research within a case study context. However, the first part of the study relied on an exploratory design in order to understand the

details of the problem prior to incorporating the action research component. This entailed exploring the nature of the problem, its manifestation and consequences, culminating in planning, designing, implementation and outcome evaluation of an intervention strategy to rectify a diagnosed problem. As opposed to traditional designs, action research requires joint effort by the researcher and the people affected by an existing social phenomenon in order to change the situation for the better. This is important in Zimbabwe in that there is need not only to understand the dynamics of politics of reconciliation but also to implement alternatives that can enhance capacity for reconciliation among ordinary people. I therefore undertook this challenge in Ward 30 of Glenview North Constituency. To realise this goal, I adopted a qualitative methodology since I was dealing with a social problem that involve people's experiences, feelings, perceptions and opinions. Within this paradigm, I employed purposive and convenience sampling techniques to select participants. The data gathered were analysed through a thematic analytical procedure which was the basis for constructing the findings and interpretation narrative in chapters 7-9. The next chapter is the first of the three chapters on findings and discussion. The chapter specifically focuses on findings and analysis of the pre-intervention data obtained through fourteen interviews and four focus group discussions.

CHAPTER 7

PRE-INTERVENTION OUTLOOK

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of the three chapters whose focus is on the presentation and discussion of findings from the pre-intervention interviews and focus groups that were held to generate baseline data on perceptions and opinions regarding the efforts at reconciliation undertaken by the state. This paved the way for the design and implementation of an appropriate intervention by the action group. Fourteen interviews and four focus group discussions were held from 3 February 2016 to 28 April 2016 in Harare. The interviews were held with purposively selected experts in peace and conflict studies that included academics, civil society and community organisations. The four focus group discussions were held with adults conveniently sampled within the research location (Ward 30, Glenview North constituency). The purpose of the chapter is to establish the extent of the problem of state-centred reconciliation as seen by participants. The responses from focus group and interview participants are presented in direct quotes extracted from the coded transcripts as indicated in Chapter six of the thesis (see table 6.3).

7.2 Focus group participants' bio-data

The 28 participants' bio-data in terms of sex and age are shown in the tables below.

Table 7.1: Focus group participants' bio-data (age)

Age range	Number of participants	Percentage (%)
18-25	8	28.6
26-30	6	21.4
31-35	6	21.4
36-40	5	17.9
41 and above	3	10.7
Total	28	100

Source: Own data

Table 7.2: Focus group participants' bio-data (sex)

Sex	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
Male	19	67.9
Female	9	32.1
Total	28	100

Source: Own data

7.3 Violence and peace are incompatible

During interviews and focus group discussions, I asked participants whether the macro-political environment was conducive for reconciliation as initiated by the government. An overwhelming number of participants had strong perceptions that violence was a prominent feature on the political landscape, and was an obstacle to reconciliation. Violence was seen as negatively impacting on peace.

This was noted by IP1 who highlighted that:

We have had so much talk and discussion about peace from government, church organisations, and human rights activists and so on. But have you ever asked yourself where the problem is when everyone else believes in peace? The problem is not very far. We are failing to have peace because of violence. It's just too much. We are failing ourselves because we find ourselves now and again in the habit of harming others.

FGD-P4 expressed comparable views:

We have seen no wars but there is also no peace. Acts of violence are committed at predictable intervals against fellow Zimbabweans. My understanding of reconciliation is that we should never see violence as a way to resolve issues. As long as we witness violence, whether it happened yesterday, today or tomorrow, the issue of reconciliation falls away. What peace do we get out of violence (*pause*). There is no peace in violence at all.

The view expressed by the participant suggests that violence and peace are in a competitive relationship. They are never complementary as each exists independent of the other. Where there is violence, there is no peace, and in the midst of violence, reconciliation is inconceivable. The recurrence of violence generates misery among people. Research on post-conflict peacebuilding suggests that violence damages relationships (Posner 2004), and that a person who is frequently a target of violence is unlikely to live together with the perpetrators (Bake. O'Loughlin and Ward 2009).

7.3.1 The violence is institutionalised

A sub-theme also developed that the violence that was affecting peace was entrenched within the country's institutions. IP1 had this to say:

The problem we have is that our country has nurtured the culture of violence over many decades. From the pre-colonial indigenous inter-tribal clashes, the colonial system, the nationalist violence to the post-independence period in which violence is the medium of inducing political obedience.

IP6 also added:

It's not a secret that our leaders were exposed to violence so much. They have been quick to learn the language of violence to rise to power and then protect their stay in those positions. If you mention names of people in government, you will also be mentioning people who have taken away our peace.

FGA-P1 further said:

The situation is dire. If you do a simple survey of facts you will realise one disappointing thing. All major disagreements in our national politics have not been resolved peacefully. Violent responses are common from the government.

FGB-P2 further noted that:

The persistent bloody conflicts reveal that the legacy of violence has endured and it is a knee-jerk response to political disagreement and conflict. That is why there was *Gukurahundi*, operation *Murambatsvina* and other election-related incidents. This is the same reason why there is nearly a quarter of the country's population living outside, displaced by direct and structural violence.

FGB-P7 supported FGB-P2:

He is very right. Violence has erupted many times; and the threat of it remains high especially with the army generals threatening that they will not respect the will of the people in any election.

The point highlighted by respondents is that in as far as violence poses a threat to peace, the threat gets acute because the violence has become a kneejerk response from the state when disputes arise. The culture of equating political opponents with enemies who deserve annihilation than engagement is clearly driven by selfish political considerations. Nonviolent engagement has never been accorded adequate opportunity to resolve issues between the ruling party and its political rivals. Indeed, the people enjoying power fell into the vicious trap of violence when faced with political dissent. This means that efforts toward reconciliation must address violence as the dominant factor contributing to the peace deficit in the country. Yet entrenched violent attitudes among national leaders have been identified as a long-term problem. Violence as a method of seeking and maintaining power in Zimbabwe has deep roots in colonial politics (Sachikonye 2011: 1). It was a culture among the institutions created by the colonial state, which successfully established a template of state coercion that was adopted by

successive colonial governments including and up to the post-colonial period. Bratton (2011) glowingly observes that the politics of Zimbabwe have been steeped in violence since well before independence. Unfortunately, the government remains averse to rehabilitate the state from the habits of violence; it continues to assume that violence is the ultimate tool for power retention (Kaulem 2004: 81), and longevity of its rule (Sachikonye 2011; Masunungure 2009; Chan 2003). While violence has been often glorified by its perpetrators, there is little doubt that it “is unjustified. It is a breach of peace, which is a condition for a society based on mutual respect. Violence tends to dehumanise the other, especially in political violence where the victim is defined as the enemy” (Suttner 2010: 73 cited in Sachikonye 2011: 8). The tendency toward violence is caused by fear of free political competition by the ruling party (Sachikonye 2011; Kriger 2005; Chan 2003). For instance, Sachikonye (2011: 28) vividly observes that violence is not “a behavioural or psychological tendency but a compulsive scramble for resources of political power and economic benefit, and by extension, defence of these resources and privileges once they have been appropriated.” For politicians, political power is the ultimate means for defending their privileges, accumulation and unfettered access to self-enrichment through the state. Political violence is thus used for a specific objective: to retain the much needed political power through inducing forceful submission among political opponents.

7.3.2 Effects of violence on survivors

a. Feelings of insecurity

Participants said that reconciliation was difficult to realise in view of the level of insecurity in the country. It was indicated that survivors were still insecure despite the various pronouncement about national reconciliation. The insecurity was seen as emanating from the perception that the state exists not to safeguard people’s lives but instead exposes them to abuse. IP13 noted that:

You know very well that violence at our own levels can be managed but when the government is involved it becomes difficult. Our leaders use excessive force to deal with anyone against them. The constitution is clear that the state exists to protect its people but that norm has not been respected. People are abused every now and then. You then wonder if they will happen if we say we are one people.

This was expounded by FGD-P1:

I think people are reasonable. They can give the government a chance to lead the reconciliation of the nation at some stage in the future. If other governments the world over have done it, why not in our own country? But this can only happen if state institutions realise that they need to respect the constitution and halt the abuses. As we speak, people fear to discuss openly about the crimes committed because they think they can be harmed.

FGD-P6 agreed:

A lot of people aspire to talk about the past abuses. For example, I come from Manicaland where many people have suffered during election time. I know some of the people who

were behind the abuses but fear the authorities. People keep quiet because they are terrified.

The responses show that some people have a negative perception of the state's role in providing them with security. They feel insecure and uncertain on their relationship with the government. Isserman (2009: 25) perfectly describes the level of insecurity among Zimbabwean citizens: "there is a generalised anxiety and sense of threat to society, the country as a whole and a threat to oneself or one's family." The responses also suggest that people are not entirely against state initiatives *per se* but rather insecurity caused by the state itself. Yet "traumatised people require at least a rudimentary feeling of security for reconciliation to be complete. As Staub and Pearlman (2001: 196) observe, "When there is continued threat from the other healing may be difficult or even impossible". So despite endless rhetoric from politicians insinuating that there is peace in the country, people understand very well that they can be harmed by the same government that purports to protect them once they act against the interest of the ruling party. Thus, while violence is an antithesis to true reconciliation, this has not deterred politicians from relying on it. If anything, it has become noticeable across parties. This further exacerbates insecurity. The point was made clear by a FGA-P2 who emotionally noted:

Politicians are always engaged in violent clashes. This is the language across parties. Even those who used to think they were safe have been caught in-between. You can get hurt anytime. No one is safe at all.

Violence has resulted on the low level social capital in the society as parties tear the society asunder. The low level of trust and suspicion among Zimbabweans is one indication of the paucity of peace. The high levels of insecurity undermine the base on which peace can be built, developed and sustained. People are still struggling with a pervasive sense of insecurity and it is impossible to have sustainable reconciliation under the obtaining macro-political environment. Where proper reconciliation occurs, violence and feelings of insecurity disappear. A sense of personal security or collective safety and well-being is a constitutive part of reconciliation. Security exists when parties to a conflict "have reason to believe they can look forward to living together without one side threatening the other (Kriesberg 2007: 253).

b. Unhealed trauma

Participants also highlighted the issue of unhealed trauma area which render state efforts at reconciliation cosmetic. Among the people who survived the successive violent episodes, there was a feeling that they could have been harmed or killed. This was captured by FGD-P3:

Most people are hurt because they lost members of their families or entire families through violence. Some know neighbours who were completely wiped out. Some had their homes tortured, wives and children raped. Imagine if you witness people whom you love and know being killed or attacked. You begin to wonder what would have been the situation if

you were caught. You begin to think that you could have been killed at the time of the attack. So people who escaped still have fresh wounds and nothing has been done by the government to correct those things.

Views of the participant suggest that a direct consequence attributed to violence is trauma. Survivors are pained not only by their suffering but also by the realisation that their families, relatives, communities and fellow citizens have also suffered. The stories that they know, hear and see transmit the same feelings of pain and fright in their children. One can also notice that feelings of anxiety among people are compounded by the psychological exposure to witnessing violence by the primary targets. People can suffer from trauma arising from simply witnessing horrible events in the same manner as those that were harmed. Witnesses to the brutality are affected as much as the brutalised (Edkins 2003), it leaves the survivors' psychological stature, identity and their relationship with the outside world clawed (Staub et al 2005). The impact of political violence is similar to armed conflict in causing severe psychological, emotional and spiritual dislocation (Staub et al 2005; Zorbas 2004; Edkins 2003). The disruptions, along with those of interpersonal relationships, and the ability to regulate internal emotional stress co-exist with, and give rise, to intense trauma symptoms (Staub et al 2005: 299). Such experience normally leaves victims with deep trauma symptoms with a feeling of insecurity, victimisation, desire for vengeance and expressions of hatred (Zorbas 2004; Staub and Pearlman 2001). A person imbued in intense emotions has the capacity to clog the possibility of re-establishing normal relationship with the perpetrator (Zorbas 2004: 30).

People are thoroughly haunted by bad memories of violence which they strongly think will visit them in future. IP5 noted:

During periods of election campaigns, ZANU-PF assailants would hunt political opponents daily. Old and young people were forced to spend nights hiding in mountains and bushes. Imagine people running from fellow human beings and choosing to stay in the wilderness where they risked attacks from wild animals. To me their thinking appears to be that ZANU-PF activists were more dangerous than the wild animals. Survivors of such incidents are still traumatised.

This was further supported by FGC-P1:

2008 was really bad (*pause*). Some homesteads were completely destroyed and families were left homeless. Some children were also left at deserted homes as their parents were either killed or forced to flee leaving them behind. The young ones were left scared and hopeless. As we speak, some are still to reunite with their families.

Emphasising the same point, FGC-P8 added:

Some of the people who managed to reunite with their displaced families after the violence, are still terribly traumatised. They are yet to return to their shattered homes. Some had to relocate to new villages or districts for fear of being pursued by in the future. These people do not have lives to talk of; theirs are completely in disarray.

The experiences of participants show that violence deprived them of their humanity. Being forced out of their homes and witnessing a trail of destruction all contributed to their trauma. Witnessing violence disrupts the healthy lifestyle of a person and this can last for years after the incidents have occurred. Some people still believe they will never live normal lives after encountering violence. They are consumed by fear, hopelessness and displacement which happened to themselves, families and communities because of recurring political violence at the hands of the state and political activists. The effect is more severe among children and young people. The destruction of homes and livelihoods imposes a heavy toll on the mind and body of victims which may lead to destructive behaviour and social deviance. Therefore, to talk of a national reconciliation project in the absence of genuine formal efforts to address the trauma is tantamount to building pseudo-peace.

Further commenting on the effects of unaddressed trauma, IP14 said:

My organisation is involved with the people quite a lot. Reports from a number of areas show that the effects of violence are yet to be addressed. Personally, I know of people who have resorted to using drugs as a coping mechanism. Some have been treated for psychiatric disorders, while a handful has been referred to counselling due to traumatic experiences. Honestly speaking people are still grappling with deep emotions and serious trauma.

The problem of unhealed trauma is not only immediate. It can generate undesirable styles of conduct such as drug abuse and related social deviance that undermine good morals. In addition, traumatized individuals and societies may experience psycho-social changes going through shame, victimization, guilt, rage, entitlement to vengeance and a loss of trust or faith. In that case, trauma generates social disconnection and the erosion of social ties. Unhealed trauma can also be transmitted from parents to their children and from one generation to another if not properly addressed. Weingarten (2004: 52) contends that “When one generation fails to restore social and political equality, this failure forms the next generation’s legacy.” Hamber (2003: 78) augments this view: “Repression can severely undermine and even destroy social and cultural norms and feelings of identity, belonging and trust in institutions. Such micro-effects of violence can continue to ripple through communities for decades.”

Trauma contributes to low esteem especially when authorities become indifferent to the plight of victims. IP11 had this to say:

The feelings and a perception of isolation and being neglected by Government in the storm of trauma are still evident in many people. There has not been any attempt to formally establish the victims’ needs and the extent of support they require to recover from the trauma. The authorities are not keen to listen to victims of violence and to understand how everything that happened affected the feelings of survivors.

Since trauma is a coping response to a strange event, it usually leads to a strong perception of helplessness and a feeling of being unwanted and dejected by the society and the government. Distilled from participant’s response are also two important points. First, reconciliation that has happened in the

country has failed to reverse trauma experienced after normal interpersonal relationships have been disrupted by violence. Second, there has not been noticeable effort on the part of government to listen to the victims. One consequence of this is the feeling of dejection arising from the failure to engage survivors on what they would require to heal their trauma. Victims desperately need to be listened in order to express their grief. Lederach (1997: 30) emphasises that listening facilitates an encounter between the victims and perpetrators in the context of a community in which the latter acknowledges the suffering and trauma of the former. Hamber (2009), Volkan (2008) and Minnow (1998) also note that when its impact is denied or repressed, trauma will manifest in various ways. For instance, survivors may be overwhelmed by emotions of anger and hatred.

7.4 State-imposed silence

In as far as participants expressed extensive knowledge of what the state had done to promote reconciliation; they were clear on the challenges that undermined such initiative. The views suggested that victims of political violence have not been afforded platforms to express the extent of their suffering or to tell their stories of loss within their families, communities or political parties. To them, this undermined state efforts at reconciliation. Throughout the interviews and focus group discussions, participants were very clear that ordinary people were being denied opportunities to freely tell their stories and being listened to. IP6 pointed that:

Even if talking about one's stories of suffering and losses can help people to be comforted through sharing ways of handling issues, this has not been possible. Imagine how many people are willing to share their stories of torture, harassment and beatings? They are so many government does not give them space. In my view this is deliberate.

Inability by government to listen to voices of survivors where a few stories of abuse are told is also a source of frustration among people. This was captured by IP9 who noted that:

Reconciliation brings together the communities in conflict to tell the truth about all past human rights violations and to create a society where they can live in peace with one another and it requires the coming together and listening with compassion to one another's stories. This is desperately needed in Zimbabwe today where people need to be bound together again.

This was also supported by yet another participant who said:

Every community was affected by political violence and many, including myself, are still to recover from the experience. Unfortunately, the perpetrators are not open to engagement. My hope is that one day there will be honest and open discussion around these issues so that we begin something positive as a society. Talking and discussing is always the starting point of addressing horrible things that occur in our society. But the chance has not come our way so far (FGD-P5).

The above statement highlights the importance of expressing one's experiences to others, especially those who listen to the story being told. There is some element of relief that comes from this process. Sharing painful stories with a person or a group of people sympathetic to the story teller, and who are accepting the narrative as real provides a source of comfort to the one telling the story. It helps the story teller to realise that the situation the victim is in is not unique and can enable a process of movement out of despair and trauma to a new situation of hope and happiness. This finds support in Minow's (1998: 6) observation that "Coming to know that one's suffering is not solely a private experience can permit individuals to move beyond trauma, hopelessness and preoccupation with loss and injury." There is power of consolation in sharing and engaging, which in itself lessens the burden of suffering and severity of loss incurred. This view was expressed by FGD-2 who commented that:

Most people are suffering in silence not because they want; they don't have a choice under the current political environment. Many have not been able to share their stories with anyone as there is no trust. I hope one day people will have that chance so that the heavy loads they are carrying will lessen. I know for sure that this may not be completely sufficient but there is a strong feeling of relief that comes when people share with others. More relief is realised when stories are told in the presence of other victims and perpetrators. Sharing stories is always better than to keep them to oneself. Unfortunately, this is what the government has failed to promote.

Telling the stories of one's suffering has a cathartic effect in most cases. However, in other situations it may lead to re-traumatisation of affected individuals leading to further conflict or psychological damage if not properly handled. Sceptics of story-telling such as Shaw (2005) argue that verbally remembering violence is not always beneficial to every society, citing the example of Sierra Leon where "forgetting is a cornerstone of established processes of reintegration and healing for child and adult ex-combatants. Speaking of the war in public often undermines these processes, and may believe it encourages violence." On the contrary, consensus seems to converge on that the process of genuine reconciliation is hardly sustainable if people affected by conflict are unable to tell their stories in a conducive environment. The truth about the past and the present will never be revealed without open and shared recognition of the pains suffered and the losses experienced by the victims (Jeong 2005: 155). When the truth of what happened to victims is spoken about publicly and accurately, it acknowledges the pain and suffering of those affected and can provide a basis for healing and reconciliation (Staub & Pearlman 2001: 207). This process is important in Zimbabwe because people have not suffered only violence but also denied opportunities to tell their stories of suffering and losses during the successive periods of political violence since the days of the liberation struggle. An amount of justice is attained once the victim's story becomes public; the story which the authorities desperately try to suppress will no longer belong to the victim alone (Shriver 2003). This method is powerful when stories are repetitively told (Mullet et al 2013; Cobham et al 2013), to relieve one of his/her excruciating details of the horrible experiences. This paves the way for quick

recovery from a state of disbelief, shock and deep emotions. Expression of emotions is usually associated with mourning. Mourning is in itself a cleansing agent to those who are deeply wounded as it normally results in attitude change. However, the cathartic effect of crying depends on the individual's feelings of safety and security (Bylsmal et al 2008: 1167), as well as an environment that elicits sympathy and compassion.

Other than speaking, participants also noted that writing was also a powerful tool of story-telling that had been silenced. People have been denied opportunities to write stories of abuse. This was noted by IP4:

People have not been allowed to freely document their experiences and sharing them with other people. Yet reconciliation requires people to compile documentaries on politically motivated abuses without government censure so that people can know about those events in greater detail and decide on what to do to prevent such things in future. Writing about the abuses is also important for the legacy of posterity so that the truth can come out eventually even if there is imposed silence at the moment.

Similar views were echoed by FGB-P7

People are afraid of talking, let alone writing about human rights abuses perpetrated by authorities. For example, government threatens people who talk or write about the Gukurahundi massacres arguing that it was now a closed chapter and people should not open old wounds. But many people know very well that this is not a closed chapter.

Government is also accused of imposing silence through inducing fear such that people are afraid of speaking or writing their stories. Documentation of abuses serves important purposes in reconciliation. Written records can be used as the basis for social justice, in which perpetrators can be held to account in future. In that case, recording and documentation is inextricably tied to the desire for justice. In another way, documentation provides a source of permanent public knowledge despite efforts to impose silence and cover-up. This may deter would-be offenders in future since they will be fully aware that their immoral deeds will certainly be exposed. Ironically, Mugabe had appeared to support this precept of reconciliation in 1988, following *Gukurahundi* when he said: "The record (*of past abuses*) . will remind us what never to do. If it was wrong, if that went against the sacred tenets of humanity, we must never repeat" (cited in Mashingaidze 2011: 23).

Contrary to the anticipation by government that people will forget by forcing them to be silent, people still possess vivid memories of all episodes of historical and contemporary abuses and the pressure not to talk only serve to reinforce bad memories and keeping the wounds fresh. FGA-P7 emphasised the aspect of memory even if people are forced into silence:

During the land invasions, many white farmers were flogged, maimed and some murdered. But survivors, friends and relatives of the victims still talk about those events. People have memories even if the government desperately wants them to forget.

The response shows that time is not a factor that can induce amnesia among abused people who are deprived of opportunities to talk about their experiences. Even if people are forced into silence for fear of retribution, their memories cannot erase the horrible experiences. This means that bad memories will renew the trauma suffered long back and may regenerate emotions of frustration, anger and even feelings of vengeance.

7.5 The state has failed on truth-telling

Just like state imposed silence, this theme emerged during a discussion of the impediments to successful state-led reconciliation. Participants revealed that the reconciliation fronted by government has not been able to bring former enemies together to confront the painful and ugly past and collectively devise a better future together. Much of the difficulties of reconciliation pertain to the fact that the government has been deliberately averse to openly disclose all the details of its role in abuses committed. This was aptly captured by IP13:

Zimbabweans have a responsibility to collectively revisit past violent episodes and recoup the truth to facilitate national reconciliation. For now, the policy adopted by government is defective and has failed to achieve genuine reconciliation because it avoided a deliberate truth-seeking process. The past stands forgiven and forgotten. This ignores dealing with the past, ignores rehabilitation of victims and ignores truth-telling and assumes that the past does not matter. The main problem has been that political leaders have been speaking for and on behalf of the victims, hence they dangerously assume that they can forgive and forget on behalf of the victims. In reality, there are many who are wounded by the past and are not ready forgive and forget.

IP1 further added:

Most conflicts that have happened in Zimbabwe have been ignored by authorities. The victims have been equally ignored. The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) must revisit all the past conflicts and confront them with integrity so as to expose the truths surrounding all the occurrences.

FGC-P8 concurred with this view:

The past must be confronted and survivors or victims of rights abuses must be given the platform to speak for themselves. At the same time perpetrators must also accept responsibility for their sins so as to talk of long-lasting reconciliation. Not just political reconciliation. I mean reconciliation of people who are not leaders of political parties. In this case, the truth that matters most is the truth of the victims.

The sentiments are important in bringing out the point that truth-telling has been avoided by the authorities. There also acknowledgement that unless the truth is exposed, forgiveness and forgetting are impossible. In fact truth precedes forgiveness. It is difficult to imagine a situation in which survivors of violence can extend mercy to perpetrators who hide the truth of what happened and why it happened

from them. To analogise, forgiveness without truth can be regarded in similar ways with a house that is built without a foundation. In the absence of truth, forgiveness will be unsustainable. Thus although forgiveness is an integral dimension necessary to rebuild relationships, it becomes an unrealistic and impolitic goal when the effects of violence and brutality are visible, and not fully acknowledged (Brouneus 2008; Bloomfield 2006; Kumar 1999; Minnow 1998).

Participants also expressed knowledge that truth-telling should not be selective but holistic, covering everything that disrupted social cohesion. Emphasising this point, FGA-P5 said:

Truth-telling requires that the history pertaining to a particular abuse be fully exposed. Truth-seeking is important to the victims for they will be able to liberate themselves and embark on lasting healing of the mind and the body.

The concealment of truth in the view of participants appeared to be motivated by the desire to pre-empt possible calls for retributive justice against government officials given their prominent role in sponsoring abuses. This view was represented by participants' attitudes. This was captured in IP10's view:

Truth-seeking mechanism can only be successful if there are shared views on issues to be exposed and covered. Such exposure requires the spirit of non-confrontational dialogue and tolerance. This is important because the process of truth-telling does not precede fault-finding but rather recovery of the whole truth.

From the participant's view, the intention among most victims appears to be simply to know the hidden secrets about abuses than entirely seeking retribution as feared by authorities. Bloomfield (2003: 15) supports this opinion: "reflection on the past is as necessary as it is painful because a divided society can only build its shared future on its divided past. It is not possible to forget the past and start completely afresh as if nothing happened." In the event that government explains the motives of sponsoring violence, this has the potential of assisting in the process of reconciliation. This is supported by the International Centre for Transitional Justice (2012) which states that establishing the truth about past violations will not only help determine the most appropriate remedies to be offered to victims, but it will also help identify the necessary reforms that can prevent such violations from happening again. Participants expressed strong feelings that government has the sole obligation to explain why abuses occurred, in what many and who was involved. Adequate and full disclosure by the perpetrator regarding crimes committed opens sustainable avenues for forgiveness. Forgiveness is the willingness to forego one's right to resentment, revenge, negative judgement, and indifferent behaviour toward one who caused harm and promoting compassion, generosity and even love toward the perpetrator (Enright, Freedman and Rique 1998; Staub et al 2005). But people can only forgive when they know who did what, to who, where and for what ends. When victims get answers to these questions, they "recognise their own fears, shame, and hopelessness in the perpetrators, and understand that the perpetrator's aggressions were driven by feelings and concerns as unbearable as their own" (Botcharova 2001: 289).

The inability to expose the truth among victims of violence undermines reconciliation. Participants strongly felt that the suffering endured and the losses incurred will continue to exist until authorities commit to truth-telling. By suppressing the truth, government hopes that one day people will forget the abuses as the first hand witnesses of the massacres also die. The state responses have been designed in such a way that the government has succeeded in evading responsibility and accountability for atrocities committed. Chang (1997: 85) contends that “Denial is an integral part of atrocity, and it is a natural part after a society has committed genocide. First you kill, and then the memory of killing is killed.” Similar sentiments are expressed by Adam and Adam (2000: 6) who argue that “ nations depend on forgetting: on forging myths of unity and identity that allow a society to forget its founding crimes, its hidden injuries and divisions, its unhealed wounds.” However, the right to truth is patently recognised under international law. The UN Updated Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity provides that “every person has the inalienable right to know the truth about past events concerning the perpetration of heinous crimes and about the circumstances and reasons that led, through massive or systematic violations, to the perpetration of these crimes.” The UN Commission on Human Rights resolution 66/2005 “recognises the importance of respecting and ensuring the right to the truth so as to contribute to ending impunity and promote and protect human rights.” Principle 24 of the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights and Serious Violations of Humanitarian Law also alludes to “verification of the facts and full public disclosure of the truth.” The right to truth therefore imposes an obligation on governments to provide victims and the society as a whole with factual information about the violations and abuses. The information is also supposed to be secured for public memory. Deliberate concealment of the truth on the part of government may also suggest that there is an underlying intent to continue to commit similar abuses in future.

7.6 No justice for Survivors

Participants revealed that victims perceive the state as blocking justice by guaranteeing the impunity of perpetrators. Known perpetrators of political violence were said to be heavily rewarded by authorities. As a result victims feel betrayed by the government. This was captured by IP2 who said:

People who killed civilians in Matebeleland and Midlands in the 1980s are occupying very high positions in government. You know them and this is a fact. Do you think they will expose themselves to justice or they will protect their bad deeds? The same is true of people who have been leading violent election campaigns; they are still enjoying their lives. Some even have the temerity to promise more violence in the 2018 elections. I’m not sure how people can be encouraged to reconcile if there is no justice for the victims.

This was reiterated by IP14:

The government's policy of doing nothing is unacceptable. Firstly, because of its shocking implication that the perpetrators in fact succeeded, indeed silence makes the government complicit by-standers to the perpetrators of yesterday. Secondly, inaction is unacceptable because it leaves prevalence, fears of reprisals and cultures of impunity to fester, encouraging cyclical outbursts of violence by the perpetrators of tomorrow and sadly this is an apt description of the periodic violent crisis in Zimbabwe.

The statement points to citizens who are perturbed by the downright injustice against survivors which appears to have the blessing of the government. The pain and suffering endured by the people because of impunity is preventing them from recovering from the experiences. Perpetrators of violations have not been punished and a culture of impunity has been strengthened. Surely, if people cannot get closure from the past abuses, it is difficult to foresee how state-led reconciliation can work in the absence of a perception of justice in the society. In Zimbabwe, injustice has been expressed in state-sponsored amnesia. The pattern of amnesia was established in 1979 when parties involved in human rights abuses of all forms during the war of independence were not held to account. Perpetrators, both colonial institutions and the nationalist movements, were indemnified by the Lancaster House constitution (Amani Trust 1998: 18). This set precedence for immunity characterised by blanket amnesties, clemencies and pardons (Benyera 2014; Hodzi 2012: 11; Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum 2006: 11; Eppel 2004: 51; Huyse 2003: 34-36; Amani Trust 1998). The elitist approach reproduced itself when ZANU and ZAPU signed the Unity Accord in 1987. After that, the government was quick to exonerate perpetrators during *Gukurahundi* operation through the Emergency Powers (Security Forces Indemnity) Regulations 1982 (Statutory Instrument 487/1982) (Amani Trust 1998). Justice is an integral component in the reconciliation process and without justice, the processes of reconciliation cannot be attained (Chapman 2001; Theissen 2004), albeit there are disagreements on the form of justice to be applied in post-conflict situations. However, there is general agreement in literature that justice remains central to reconciliation (Brouneus 2008; Bloomfield 2006; Huyse 2003; Kumar 1999; Minnow 1998; Lederach 1997). Huyse (2003: 97) argues that "The search for peaceful coexistence, trust,[and] empathy . demands that justice be done." A long-term outcome of reconciliation is the elimination of the social conditions that made the violence and interpersonal distance and alienation possible or acceptable in the first place. Pinta (2000) supports this view by highlighting that as long as perpetrators continue to have influence or exercise control over the victims because of the criminal acts committed, prospects of healing and reconciliation are diminished for both individuals and communities.

7.7 Lack of official acknowledgement and apology

The violence, displacement, disappearance and general suffering incurred by people at different points in history has had life-long and deeply disabling outcomes for the primary targets and for the entire

nation. But the government is yet to make a formal acknowledgement and apologise for the abuses. For many who have been forced out of their homes to areas where they are unknown, abused and unloved, it means that they have lost social connections (familial, traditional, cultural etc). The reality of Zimbabwe's victims of violence is not a distant occurrence. It is something that has recurred to the present moment. People have been inappropriately abused for long and many who have been affected directly by political violence are still surviving and live with the effects. This was expressed by FGA-P3:

It has not gone away (*the effects of abuse*). Just because people were not physically disabled after violence, doesn't mean they are not hurting. I suspect if there is no apology some people are certainly going to carry these wounds till the day they die.

In such a traumatic situation, the acknowledgement of truth and the delivery of an apology is a necessary step towards reconciliation. The government which sponsored some of the wrongful acts is supposed to acknowledge what it did and formally apologise for all the dehumanising acts which resulted in both physical and emotional harm. This view was captured by IP9:

Violence is an embarrassment to the legacy of the government. The damage, suffering and trauma caused by its policy are felt everywhere. People have lived with internalised grief, guilt and shame, inflicting further pain on themselves. It is only wise for the government to openly accept responsibility and apologize to the people, and if possible compensate those directly affected. This can help people move closer.

The lack of acknowledgement and apology from government was further bemoaned by IP12:

Acknowledgment of the wrongs committed by the perpetrator and the offering of a genuine apology is necessary. This applies to all offenses from the most heinous to the least. No matter the gravity of the harm done, victims need their suffering to be recognised and for an apology to be offered, whether that suffering occurred from the hands of an individual or the state. Unfortunately, this has been lacking in Zimbabwe.

The importance of an official apology by government to the affected people is an inexorable step towards building fresh relations based on civility. Respect is important if the country is to develop a culture of peaceful conflict handling. An official apology is likely to clear the ground for a polarised nation to work together as it strives to achieve a peaceful environment, upon which all other goals can be pursued. It will be a historic step in healing the wounds of the past; a giant step towards co-existence and tolerance. Equally, an apology is not affixed on exposing the guilty only, it also reflects the values of compassion and empathy to the victims as well as humanity to the society. This has the potential to allow victims to have a perception that their pain and suffering is being acknowledged. If the issue of apology is handled in a proper manner, there is great potential to move towards reconciliation. This was stressed by FGC-P3:

I'm unsure why it is so difficult for government officials to say sorry for the wrongs that they have committed. We may have different views on this but I think, if one official at

the top humbles himself to say sorry for all that happened, and why they did it, I have a strong feeling that this will be important for moving together as a country.

The word sorry itself has a special meaning in the Zimbabwean tradition. It is an embodiment of empathy. Other than casting connotations of guilt for the offender, sorry is restorative as the lost respect between the conflicting parties is rediscovered. It is not simply about succumbing to social and moral pressure to do so. Apologising aids the process of restoring the dignity and legitimacy of victims. Australia's former Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, once warned: "Unless the great symbolism of reconciliation is accompanied by an even greater substance, it is little more than a clanging gong." However, it is still doubtful if simply saying sorry is enough. Apology without express admission of responsibility to the victims cannot lead to genuine reconciliation. Huyse (2003: 74) opines that "while apologies can indeed add significantly to the reconciliation process, at the same time many victims can find incomplete apologies insulting, thus actually creating a further obstacle to reconciliation." Thus where there is no apology, or one that victims believe tries to justify the behaviour of perpetrators and evade responsibility, reconciliation is difficult, if not possible to achieve.

Striking a balance between what happened and the need to move forward was also seen as a necessity by participants. IP7:

The process of reconciliation in our country will encompass everything that happened. All offences must be acknowledged and apologised for in order to make our future secure and peaceful. However, striking political compromises and publicly acknowledging the wrongs inflicted on victims and other measures are all more acceptable than doing nothing.

This finds support in Shaw (2005) who argues that "We are wise not by the reconnections of the past but by the responsibility for our future."

However, participants also understood very well the link between the value of apology in reconciliation. The sentiment common in the interviews and group discussions pointed to a view that apology triggers feelings of empathy by victims. FGD-P4 said:

Empathy for perpetrators comes through the feeling that those who offended you are not evil people but are people who engage in evil behaviour at one time in their lives. Such behaviour is inexcusable yet once it is put in context we might find that if we were in the same situation we might have behaved in the same way. Until we have walked a mile in our offenders' shoes we cannot know for sure how each of us would have behaved. I understand very well that violence is encouraged and even mandated by some politicians. Even if that happened, I'm aware that most of the perpetrators were exposed to indoctrination. If that person openly apologises, it has the potential to trigger empathy on the part of the victim. After all, how many among us would have behaved differently if we had been socialised in similar ways. People are not seeking revenge against those in power but wrongs must be acknowledged and sincerely regretted. Once we have such a situation, then people can forgive.

Had there been an apology, a significant number of victims may have been relieved and ultimately forgiven the perpetrators. Tatt (2014: 1013) notes that an apology is an integral component of

reconciliation which when genuinely and officially expressed; it may induce forgiveness and reconciliation between an injured party and the offender. Tatt further warns of a possibility of an apology with impunity i.e an insincere apology while the perpetrator is unrepentant.

Repudiation of responsibility by authorities was considered as compounding trauma. FGB-P8 said:

Sadly, the persistent denial amount to yet other victimisation. We have experienced times in our lives when we confronted someone who had offended us only to have our concerns dismissed. I am sure we all know this thing of such denial. When this happens, reconciliation becomes impossible. The government has denied its horrible acts of violence each time it is confronted.

Rejection of responsibility can be based on the discourse that perpetrators are heroes and that offenders were entitled to do what they did (Huyse 2003: 72). The result is what Huyse calls the magnitude gap. This relates to the perspectives of victims and perpetrators on the importance of the violence that took place, the intensity of emotions and effects. In that case, offenders have a propensity to undervalue the significance and consequences of their acts, while victims understandably feel the full weight of the suffering. This disconnect becomes a major obstacle to reconciliation.

7.7.1 Forgiving and forgetting is difficult

Issues of forgiveness and forgetting also emerged during discussion of apology and acknowledgement of wrong. While participants acknowledged the importance of forgiving and forgetting, participants were also aware of the difficulties associated with the two in the absence of acknowledgement and apology. FGA-P7 said:

It's difficult to forget crimes that you witness being committed. Worse so when you encounter the perpetrators every day. People may forgive but forgetting is not easy. It's something that cannot just happen or forced to happen. Even forgiving itself is difficult without open and honest discussion on why certain things occurred.

FGA-P1 concurred: *"Closure is not the same as forgetting or erasing memories. As long as people are living, it is difficult to do away with good or bad experiences."*

The responses demonstrate the difficulty of forgiving and forgetting in the absence of sincere acknowledgement and apology from the perpetrator. The process of moving forward and forgetting the past has to coincide with individuals coming to terms with the suffering incurred. Politicians must not force people to move before they are prepared to do so.

A few supported the possibility of forgetting which they argued was dependent on the willingness of the wrong-doer to acknowledge the wrong and accept responsibility for the suffering incurred by the victim. It was opined that acknowledgement alone is not sufficient. It must be accompanied by heartily apologies and perpetrators must make strong guarantees not to repeat similar abuses in the future. This was expressed in IP9's sentiments:

If the people in power are honest about national reconciliation, people may forgive and forget the abuses. Unfortunately, they are arrogant. They are yet to show any signs that they want to be forgiven.

Perhaps the opinion expressed in the response was reacting to the government's policy stance enunciated by the government's chief policy articulator, President Mugabe who once said of forgiving and forgetting after *Gukurahundi*:

If we dig up history, then we wreck the nation, we tear our people apart into factions, into tribes, villagism will prevail over our nationalism and over the spirit of our sacrifices. We have sworn not to go by the past except as a record or register" (cited in Mashingaidze 2011: 23).

The debate about these emotive issues is also captured well in extant literature. Forgiveness is important for people to work together for a better future, which future is unattainable without building proper relations. Lederach (1997: 26-32) insists that the notion of relationship is the basis of both the conflict and its long-term solution. Relationship becomes the focal point for sustained dialogue in conflict settings. Reconciliation is constructed around the principle that initiatives must address relational aspects of conflict. In the process, Elshtain (2003) emphasises on 'knowing-forgetting', discouraging collective amnesia where memories of past abuses are totally disregarded. Cosgrove and Kostam (2008: 7-8) adds the need to transcend "the negative effect incurred by the hurtful incident thereby allowing the individuals to focus on the future rather than dwell on the past."

7.7.2 Feelings of vengeance

Participants thought that reconciliation was difficult in situation where survivors become motivated to seek revenge because of acknowledgement and apology. This was expressed by IP3 who said

Perspectives of revenge echo loudly among some victims insisting that the perpetrators must be punished with the full force of the law or they must inflict the same amount of pain on the perpetrators themselves.

FGD-P2 added:

Yes I agree that revenge is bad if we are to enjoy peace. But what option do people have if they feel that perpetrators don't care about their suffering. People choose revenge because they also want to send a message to the perpetrators. They want them to feel what they feel. If we have people thinking along those lines, then it means the reconciliation that we always talk about is dead.

In the above perspectives, vengeance becomes a logical consequence of trauma response or perceived injustice which may be targeted against the perpetrator but with potential to spiral across society, affecting the innocent in the process. Revenge stems from disrespectful treatment at the hands of the offender. Revengers find satisfaction and a perception of deservingness if offender suffers from his deeds. Victims may also find solace in the need to deliver a message to the offender that the revenge is meant to inflict punishment. The enduring effect of revenge is that once the perpetrator responds, there

will be an escalation of aggression, creating another cycle of violence. A perception of indifference, disinterest, arrogance and insincerity on the part of the state among victims incite sentiments of revenge among survivors and witnesses of abuses. Stuckless and Goranson (1994: 803 cited in Bloomberg 2001: 62) see revenge as “the infliction of harm in righteous response to perceived harm or injustice” In most cases, revenge is regarded as justice gone awry and takes over when formal institutions of justice fail. Bloomberg (2001: 61) cautions: “The desire for revenge is an evolved outgrowth of our human sense of unsatisfied reciprocity; human beings retaliate for perceived injustice if they continue to be treated poorly if there is no apology and if they feel morally justified in their outrage.” People who have experienced shame are likely to become angry, violent and retaliatory against the person who hurt them. Trauma shatters victims’ perceptions of justice. To Marongui and Newman (1987: 9 cited in Bloomberg 2001: 73) “all acts of vengeance arise from an elementary sense of injustice, a primitive feeling that one has been arbitrarily subjected to a tyrannical power against which one is powerless to act.” Gollwitzer, M., Meder, M., and Schimit, M. (2011: 364) note that “We feel anger and moral outrage when we witness acts of injustice. We feel contempt of the harm-doer, and we may feel the urge to see him punished we may also feel satisfaction, gratification, and relief when revenge succeeded and justice was eventually restored” There is a moral and normative dimension to vengeance in that harmful acts committed constitutes a violation of the general norm of respectful treatment (Miller 2001). The offence results in an imbalance in the victim-perpetrator relationship, which the former attempts to reduce by seeking the perpetrator to also experience similar injury or suffering. Aldna (2006: 117) posits that “Retributive feelings can be synonymous with self-respect because they demonstrate that victims take their rights seriously.” Goldwater (2004: 25) notes that sentiments of humiliation at the hands of perpetrators are potent motivators of revenge. Weingarten (2004: 52) concurs: “when groups are humiliated and must swallow their resentment, the desire for revenge builds. In as much as revenge is a possibility, it is also bad.

7.8 People are still divided

Participants also revealed that despite the state interventions there is still clear evidence of division in the society. People are divided along political, tribal and class differences with strong feelings of hatred and anger, a situation which may explode if given inadequate attention. IP8 had this view:

Ever since the violence, I have asked myself how do we live together in peace where individuals have victimised others because of ethnicity, race, religion and politics? The statement from Archbishop Tutu that *‘If you want peace you do not talk to your friends, you talk to your enemies’* is yet to be embraced in our society.

IP14 added this observation on the conflict situation in the country and the potential for genocide explosion:

Like all mass violence, genocide does not come without warning; there are always signs and warnings and we see them. People do not wake up one morning and say I am going to kill my neighbour because he/she is a different colour from me or practises a different religion from me or belongs to a different ethnic group. The first genocide begins before the first shot is fired and the first machete is swung or the first spear is thrown. It builds slowly by first categorising people; one group becomes 'us' and the other group becomes 'them'. Once that happens, the "them" are dehumanised. Before the story of victimisation is devised and distorted and then propagated through the media, the training and equipping of the death squad follow.

The responses make it clear that people are divided and suspicious of others. There is lack of trust which should not be the case if reconciliation succeeds. Where there is genuine reconciliation, people of different classes, political persuasions and tribal affiliation easily find each other through mutual tolerance and accommodation. Endreb and Pabst (2013: 90) argue that "violence captures the experience of human vulnerability and the power to violate others. Being violated affects one's capacity to encounter others and the world as well as one's self-understanding and potentially to act; experiences of violence lead to a shattering of trust." Ross (2011: 151) also highlights that victims believe that it is safer to keep a distance from others. "Mistrust makes sense where threats abound, particularly for those who feel powerless to prevent harm or cope with consequences of being victimised or exploited."

There was also indication that what has been done in the name of reconciliation is both defective and inadequate because the focus has been political expedience and accommodation at elite levels. This was emphasised by IP5:

Reconciliation cannot be achieved simply through power sharing between political parties as politicians tend to believe as we have seen this here in Zimbabwe in the Government of National Unity. The reconciliation espoused by the government, for example under the government of national unity failed because it was elitist. Where are the people in all these efforts? The people affected by violence who desperately need each other. Right now we are not going anywhere with the NPRC. It is not different from earlier projects. It will also die a natural death without achieving anything for the people. The ground is not prepared for peace. The government is guilty of double standards. It speaks of reconciliation where it actively sponsors violence. Violent people are least qualified to lead the nation to reconciliation. The people who orchestrated violence cannot be on the forefront of preaching reconciliation. The future of reconciliation lies in the involvement of people who were directly affected in their own areas so that outsiders who come to perpetrate violence are shunned by the peaceful communities established by the people themselves.

The response shows that government's reconciliation overtures have been underpinned by pragmatism than genuine peacebuilding. The policy is more about nation-building and regime stability. This is typical of elite arrangements to accommodate each other without the participation of victims in the process. The policy is consistent with a victor's declaration, elitist, top-down and reconciliation initiatives have never been discussed before imposed on the people (Muponde 2004: 176). Huysse (2003: 36)'s observation that pragmatism is never a sufficient foundation for a policy of reconciliation is instructive. For Huysse, reconciliation demands more than just a combination of pragmatism and rhetoric

– it demands a public acknowledgement of past violations, redress and justice. All of these factors have not been considered in the state initiatives. The situation was aptly noted by IP1 who concluded that:

We cannot continue to engage in endless debates about something that we know cannot work (*state initiatives*). We cannot continue along a route that is taking us nowhere while our beloved country is burning. The time to act is now or never and the choice belongs to the people not the officials in government.

The response shows that government efforts have not produced the desirable effect. As such people have lost hope in the authorities to lead them to reconciliation. There is a realisation that some alternatives have to be explored that is informal and people-centred.

7.9 Conclusion

It is natural that when human beings are violated, some measures have to be adopted to address the abuses. Likewise, the government of Zimbabwe came up with a series of initiatives to respond to cases of past abuses. Nonetheless, findings based on participants perceptions, opinions and experiences suggest that contemporary Zimbabwe still requires peacebuilding. The political environment is fraught with violence, insecurity, forced silence, deliberate concealment of truth, lack of acknowledgement, feelings of revenge and divisions, all of which weaken peace. By and large, findings demonstrate that contrary to the widely held belief that top-down approaches create conditions for successful reconciliation, Zimbabwe's experience points otherwise. Taken together, the state-centred initiatives have been limited. Therefore, the pre-intervention outlook suggests that reconciliation is still needed. The next chapter presents findings and analysis on the grassroots-based intervention that I undertook in collaboration with a small sample of participants in Ward 30 of Glenview North Constituency in Harare to develop capacity for reconciliation among a polarised people.

CHAPTER 8

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR RECONCILIATION THROUGH DIALOGUE

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of the chapter is to describe and discuss the intervention and action taken by the action group – what I did together with participants. The data presented links thematic analysis of the session themes and participants’ responses with a discussion of the literature. Participants’ responses are presented by codes as indicated in Chapter six of the thesis (see table 6.3). The chapter addresses the objective that sought to develop and implement an intervention programme aimed at building capacity for reconciliation among a small sample of participants affected by political violence. Four dialogue sessions, which culminated in the establishment of a garden project, involving 13 participants were held from 28 May to 25 November 2016 in Ward 30 of Glenview North Constituency. Participants in the action group were volunteers from the four focus groups that were held during the collection of baseline data. The action group was assumed to be a conflict transformation entity that had the potential to instil capacity among participants to change perceptions, attitudes and behaviour. The group intended to capacitate participants to constructive relationships based on respect, confidence-building and minimise mistrust among participants.

8.2 Research location and context

The research was carried out in Ward 30, Glenview North, Harare. This is a high density urban area. I chose this location because of its socio-economic conditions and its history of political violence (see section 1.1). Incidences of political violence in Zimbabwe are well documented, so are the dimensions of the violence (Research and Advocacy Unit 2016). In recent years inter-party violence has become intensified in urban areas. Harare’s high density suburbs are sometimes turned into ‘war zones’, with houses destroyed, properties vandalised, people abducted or tortured (Voice of America 2011; Kaulem 2011: 79). Such occurrences are characteristic of election periods (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum 2013). The violence has occurred primarily because of the rivalry between the ruling party and the main opposition party led by Tsvangirai. The ruling party has been seeking to regain the seat which has been held by the opposition since the 2000 general elections. This desire has been the major source of violent clashes leading to polarisation that has left the community shattered and in need to rediscover

the broken relationships. The need for interventions that can build capacity for reconciliation among people from different political groups was considered essential in this context.

8.3 Participants' bio-data

Thirteen participants took part in the action group and their bio-data in terms of age is presented in the Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Participants' bio-data (age)

Age range	Number of participants	Percentage (%)
18-25	3	23
26-30	5	38.4
31-35	3	23
36-40	1	7.6
41 and above	1	7.6
Total	13	100

Source: Own data

From the above table, participants within the 18-35 age range constituted 84.4% of participants in the group. The need for youths to embrace peaceful relationships that can promote reconciliation cannot be overemphasised given the demographic reality of Zimbabwe. Close to 60% of the population are youths (Zimstat 2015). The dominance of the youths in the action group also aided the peacebuilding objective of the research since youths are more receptive to change than old age that is likely to shun change. Values and attitudes acquired over time are difficult to substitute. Young people are important agents of change (Mitchell 2011), transforming them is like sowing the seeds of future peace (Steinberg 2013). Although unintended, it was advantageous to work with a group whose majority (11 out of 13) were young (18-35 years).

Table 8.2: Participants' bio-data (sex)

Sex	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
Male	8	61.5
Female	5	38.5
Total	13	100

Source: Own data

The recruitment of participants was guided by the principle of voluntary participation and from the above table, it is clear that the group had more male participants (61.5%) compared to females (38.5%). Having more men than women could have been an advantage for the peacebuilding goal at hand in that studies show that a much larger percentage of males, as compared with females, commit violent acts (Ellickson and McGuigan 2000). The violent disposition among men is also associated with negative masculine socialisation and norms which are linked to the pressure to engage in violence (Diaz 2010). Traits commonly identified in the cultural definitions of masculinity often include egotism, aggression and dominance (Pankhurst 2000: 11). This makes men useful participants in peacebuilding initiatives. On the other hand, while my intention was to focus on equal representation in the group, the low number of women who volunteered appeared to suggest that efforts to foreground the perspectives of women in peacebuilding remain a challenge. This difficulty is acknowledged in literature. Agbajoni (2010) and Zubashvili (2013) identify factors that undermine women participation in peacebuilding initiatives, some of which include:

- The prevalence of abuse against women which generates fear and silence.
- Women are mostly primary carers and providers in the home making their participation difficult.
- Gender stereotypes and values.

Since the problem inspiring my thesis was about violence *vis-à-vis* reconciliation, I also sought to ascertain the political affiliation of members in the group. This information was important to gather based on the assumption that reconciliation initiatives must use information on both victims and perpetrators in order to facilitate proper interaction between them. I must also emphasise that although there was no political party preference in the selection of participants, my interest in knowing the

political affiliation of participants was also influenced by the widespread perception among participants during baseline data gathering that ZANU-PF members were out-competing other parties in perpetrating violence. The table below summarises participants' political affiliation.

Table 8.3: Participants' political affiliation

Name of political party	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
ZANU-PF	7	53.8
MDC-T	4	30.8
ZimPF	1	7.7
NCA	1	7.7
Total	13	100

Source: Own data

The above table clearly shows that participants from ZANU-PF (7) out-numbered other parties followed by the opposition MDC-T (4), with the newly formed Zimbabwe People First (ZimPF) and National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) having one apiece. Participants from the two parties accounted for 84.6% of the total number of the action group members. Studies on political violence in Zimbabwe suggest that most of the violent conflicts, other than the *Gukurahundi* episode, were a result of the political contests between the two major parties in the country's political turf. This point is well illustrated by Sachikonye (2011) who sees political violence in Zimbabwe as characterised by contestation for political power primarily between ZANU-PF and MDC-T, further observing that the violence is not spontaneous but predictably heightened during election time. It was therefore important to have the two parties well represented in the action group and the dialogue process to induce positive behaviour.

8.4 Initial meeting: planning the intervention with participants

The participants and I met on 11 May 2016 to present a summary of the major findings from baseline data gathered between February and April 2016. On 12 and 19 May 2016 I met the participants to plan for an intervention to be implemented by the group. The initial meeting was attended by all the 13

participants at the Councillor's library in Ward 30. This became the venue for all our subsequent meetings. The small number of participants was meant to allow for unity and trust to develop easily among group members than would be possible in a larger group. It was also meant to allow participants to feel secure and participate more actively. The day started with brief introductions. I explained my role as the facilitator in the group and proceeded to outline the purpose of the meeting as planning for activities/action that would help to bridge existing divisions among participants that were a direct consequence of political violence. Therefore the question that inspired the initial meeting was: *How can we as people affected by political violence but still living in the same community actively participate in promoting our own capacity to promote reconciliation?* Participants were then asked to brainstorm and share ideas on how best the group could achieve the objective of capacity building. Various suggestions were made and listed on the flip chart. What was particularly encouraging during the initial meeting was that despite participants' differences, they all agreed that something had to be done to change the situation in Ward 30.

Of all the interventions proposed, what participants termed '*kukurukura nekutaurina*' (loosely translated it means dialogue) was adopted as the main intervention. I asked participants to explain what they meant by the idea of '*kukurukura nekutaurina*' or dialogue. Participants explained this as a conversation which could convey what they wanted to say in the form of statements or words. They said they wanted dialogue to create space to understand each other's perspectives and opinions to address political conflicts among them. It was also discussed that dialogue was important in opening up, exchange ideas and views in order to prepare the ground for a common future. The challenge to peacebuilding is that it has to be long-term oriented targeting sustainable and peaceful future. Like development, peacebuilding needs to be sustainable in the long-term for the process to have a transformational effect. Sustainability underpins thinking about peace (Skarlato et al 2012: 39; MacGinty 2006: 22). One dimension of sustainability is internal legitimacy which comes about through participation of affected communities through proposing initiatives to remedy their situations. Participation may come in varied forms that include consultation, cooperation in designing and carrying peacebuilding projects and providing feedback through the project life cycle. Participation of communities ensures the incorporation of a social inclusion agenda into peacebuilding. Buchanan (2008: 405) argues that "the use of decentralised and local delivery mechanisms is crucial to a grassroots-led approach to transformation so that it gives local ownership of the process and ensures progress and success." Using a facilitation style within a democratic, participatory and consensus-based process supported inclusivity in the process of designing an intervention.

The decision to adopt dialogue was also culturally understood in the Shona custom. Peacebuilding helps in exploring problems of human insecurity and provides a chance to shape collective intentionality in ways that support lasting solutions. Sensitivity to cultural aspects of peace enables members of a divided community to rediscover their own language of peacebuilding and become active agents in the

construction of a new reality (Donais 2006). In fact, efforts to transplant solutions often yield disappointing results. The choice for dialogue by participants themselves was meant to ensure that local agency and empowerment must not only be acknowledged but also to emphasise that cultural considerations are emblematic to local peacebuilding processes. The choice for dialogue as understood from a cultural perspective reflected participants' needs, values, capacities and aspirations. Localising peace through partnering local actors to tap indigenous peace resources and energize context-specific peace processes must be a goal of 21st century peacebuilding efforts (Funk 2012). This enables interventions to target root causes of conflict and puts society on the path to sustainable peace because of local empowerment, ownership and legitimacy of the process (Donais 2006). Indeed, Funk (2012: 401) concludes that “approaches must adopt humbler attitude that regards conflict resolution as a cultural activity and seeks forms of partnership emphasising the dynamic nature of local cultural resources.” This entails:

- Understanding peace as a locally constructed reality, borrowing from Lederach (1995: 10) conclusion that “understanding conflict and developing appropriate models of handling it will necessarily be rooted in, and must respect and draw from, the cultural knowledge of a people.” This recognises that there limits to the extent to which an external actor may bring peace to other people.
- The peacebuilder ia an outsider who assumes the role of a facilitator. The legitimacy of the action research project I undertook was not construed as self-evident acknowledging that the affected people possessed expertise relative to their own situation that I could not fully encompass. This is why it was important to adopt an intervention proposed by the participants themselves.
- The cultural values are resources that can facilitate practical interventions.

The etymology of dialogue is Greek word *dialogos*, split as *dia* (through) and *logos* (meaning). Dialogue entails meaning shared by people through words to form the basis of understanding one another (Horsfjord 2012; Sanders 2011). However, to clearly capture the essence of dialogue, its attributes have to be identified. In dialogue, people:

- See the whole among parts
- See the connections between parts
- Inquire into assumptions for re-evaluation
- Learn through inquiry and disclosure
- Create shared meaning and explore options through deep listening to self and others.

Thus in dialogue, people are involved in a process of sincere interaction by committing to listening to each other deeply enough and re-evaluate their positions in order to be changed by the process (Sanders 2011). The process is underpinned by active listening, self-reflection, empathy and ultimately behaviour change against a background of disagreement. From a theoretical perspective dialogue was appropriate because of the following strengths noted by Stain (2014: 1):

- It is dynamic, allowing people to create new relationships.
- It allows engagement of parties who cannot negotiate.
- It offers a powerful alternative for engaging with the feelings and needs of the people.

Dialogue, unlike other conflict resolution tools such as negotiation, does not rely on persuading another person on the accuracy of a point of view (Brown 2014: 48). Rather parties engage in constructive conversations, exchanging views and perspectives. This allows for self-evaluation in relation to others' ideas. Overall, participants were clear on why they settled for dialogue. The following were some of the participants' views on their choice for dialogue:

AG-P1:

As people who are part of the problem, we must first start to talk to each other. This is important if we are all serious in addressing political divisions. You can't just jump to some activity together before you know what others are saying.

AG-P7:

Talking and discussing issues amongst ourselves will allow us to discuss what we want. If we have control over what we say and do, we can surely start to think about the future together.

AG-P11:

Opportunities for opening our minds are likely because hearing, listening and reflecting on what others would have said will give us new ideas to resolve our differences. If I start talking to others I might also understand their feelings.

The quotes highlight important characteristics of dialogue as an approach to reconciliation. There was a feeling among participants as affected individuals that they needed to be involved and their voices heard. What participants were in fact mentioning was the notion of inclusiveness. The aspect of having control over the process mentioned by AG-P7 has a strong relationship with the idea of shared ownership, without which change can be frustrating, superficial or non-existent. Finally, the aspect of opening minds mentioned by AG-P11 indicates the importance of dialogue as a mechanism through which perceptions can be clarified and wrong assumptions corrected. This appeared to validate the

argument that dialogue facilitates people to shift their mind sets from stereotyping to genuine interest by changing the nature and process of their conversations. In dialogue we see a symbolic cultural tool that enables sharing through the medium of conversation, and out of which new understanding may emerge. In that way, “Dialogue can be a powerful force for healing communities and relationships broken by divisions” (Stain 2014: 1). Black (2008: 93) also makes a similar observation. He notes that “ through talking and responding to personal stories, group members craft their identities and take on others’ perspectives.” This opens receptivity to others’ stories, dilutes stereotypes and unites the heart and mind together. Eilberg (2014) thinks that heart-focusing can transform enemies to friends. Taken together, participants’ perspectives demonstrated a desire to use dialogue to address the problem and also to transform relationships. I summarise participants’ reasons for choosing dialogue in Figure 8.1 below.

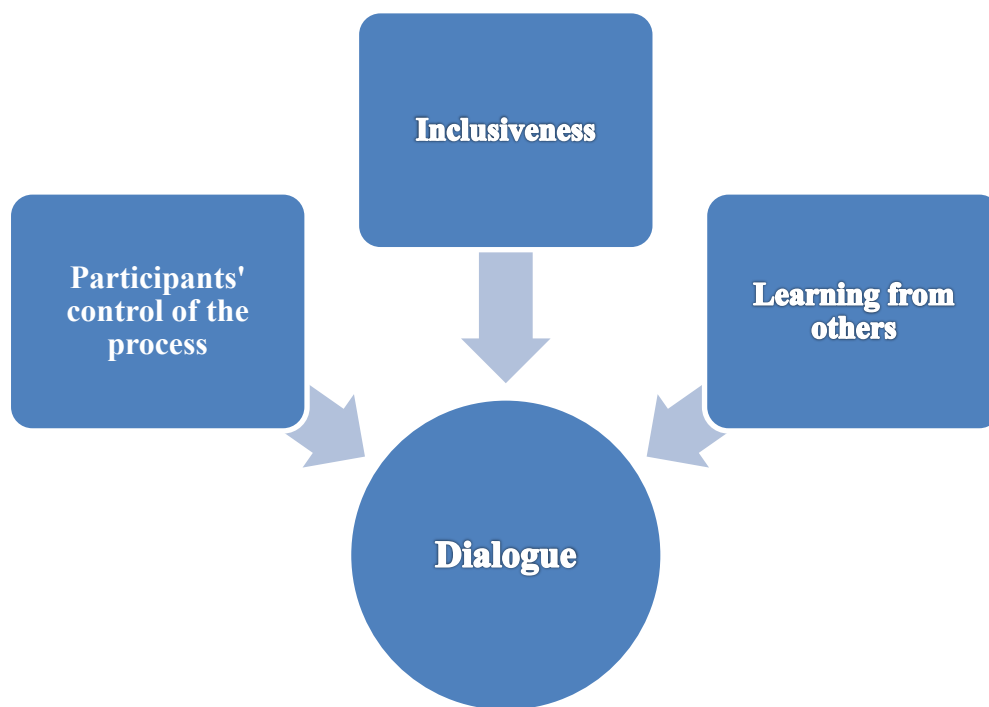


Figure 8.1: Participants’ reasons for choosing the dialogue method (Source: Own data)

The planning meeting was succeeded by a series of dialogue sessions which were focused on interrelated themes culminating in the establishment of a peace garden. Each dialogue session delved on a specific theme as shown in Table 8.4 which outlines the steps taken in the action research part of the study. I found dialogue as an intervention worthwhile since it also allowed me ‘to do with’ rather than ‘for’, something that was consistent with the major design of the study. I remained a facilitator, who assisted participants to find common ground on their own problems without dictating to them. The

initial meeting demonstrated that central in action research is the underlying philosophy of doing with instead of doing for participants to address the problem (Greenwood and Levin 2007: 3; Cohen, Mannion and Morrison 2001: 226). Giving participants the opportunity to make decisions together with myself, as the researcher/facilitator, embodied the collaborative and democratic way of generating and adopting action through combining efforts to work out a solution to the problem. The collaborative approach was guided by the necessity to approach a practical problem with a practical solution in which participants had a huge voice. In a way, collaboration also acknowledges the difficulty or in fact unsustainability of solutions from ‘without’ other than from the affected participants. The leeway I accorded participants to debate the appropriate intervention to the identified problem was not only demonstrating the democratic and participatory nature of action research but also dispelled the assumptions underpinning traditional designs that knowledge is only discovered through predetermined methods. I had to ensure that knowledge production proceeded as a collective process, actively engaging participants from the beginning.

Table 8. 4: steps taken in action research

Date (s)	Activity	Number of participants	Purpose or theme
11 May 2016	Report to participants on summary of findings from baseline data	13	Activate the action group so as to initiate the planning of an intervention
12 & 19 May 2016	Initial meeting	13	Plan and adopt intervention
28 & 29 May; 14 & 15 June 2016	1 st dialogue session	13	Ice-breaker
28 & 29 June; 20 & 21 July 2016	2 nd dialogue session	13	Problem analysis
16 & 17 August; 27 & 28, September; and 25 October 2016	3 rd dialogue session	13	Determining the direction for change
25 November 2016	4 th dialogue session	12	Determining indicators of change and planning for concrete action
28 November 2016	Action (garden project)	13	Acting together to promote change

20 – 30 January 2017	Post-intervention follow up interviews with both the experiment and control group	26 (13 action group + 13 control group)	Outcome evaluation of the intervention on participants' capacity to promote reconciliation
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Source: Own data

8.5 How I facilitated the dialogue

This section describes my facilitation approach to the dialogue sessions after a decision was made by the group to adopt the intervention. Much of the facilitation done during the dialogue sessions benefited from the 'Train the Trainer' module that I undertook during the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) training I was exposed to during the preliminary stages of my thesis proposal. Besides providing facilitation coaching (AVP 2013: 20), the AVP module was handy in providing guidance on the underlying philosophies in facilitating peacebuilding initiatives as summarised below (AVP 2013: 8):

- Affirmation, where each person's knowledge and contribution is always valued
- Cooperation, where participation of group members is important for collective and long-term outcomes
- Communication, where groups must have a chance to freely express themselves and afforded equal opportunities to be heard
- Everyone in the group is both a teacher and learner
- Learning happens through experience
- The outcome of the process is empowerment

Before the meetings I would ensure the following:

- That the venue offered by the Councillor was available two days before the scheduled meetings. This was meant to ensure that there would be no clashes at the venue. Once I ascertained the availability of the venue, I would communicate with participants via the *whatsapp* group.
- Design the strategy for facilitating the meetings and formulate the guiding questions for each session guided by the agenda agreed by the group.
- Prepare my two research assistants to take down and record minutes verbatim. The minutes were used at the end of each meeting to authenticate participants' responses.
- Assemble all the necessary materials for the meeting that included flip charts, markers and pens.

During the dialogue sessions I would:

- Welcome participants to the dialogue meeting and emphasise the agenda as agreed in the last session and ask for reactions from participants in order to secure their agreement before we could delve into the business of the day.
- Review proceedings of previous meetings and ask opening questions that linked the last meeting to the present agenda.
- Allow participants to talk to one another and respond to each other's perspectives.
- Ask questions that were pertinent to the theme or agenda when participants shifted to issues that were peripheral or when they avoided answering difficult but relevant questions.
- Recast participants' responses to elicit for detailed discussion and reflect on their experiences.
- Summarise discussions during the meeting.
- Debrief participants during the last 20 minutes of the meeting.
- Establish important issues that required further deliberation and invite suggestions on the agenda for the next meeting.
- Secure participants' agreement on the agenda, date and time for the next session.
- Close the meeting with a prayer from one of the participants who volunteered to do so.

After the meetings, and while awaiting the next, I would:

- Review and analyse the verbatim notes and determine the lessons learnt from the encounter.
- Continue to observe messages and conversations on the *whatsapp* group.
- Send the draft agenda through the *whatapp* platform in preparation for the next meeting two days before the date of the meeting.
-

8.6 The dialogue Sessions

Sessions were organised for 1-5 days depending on themes and emerging issues in each session. We met for not more than three hours for each meeting with small breaks in-between.

8.6.1 Session 1: Ice-breaker (Knowing and understanding each other)

This was the first session held on 28 and 29 May; and then 14 and 15 June 2016. It was meant to commence dialogue among participants. Being the first session, both myself and participants were unsure of what would happen.

a. Laying the foundation

This part of the session was held on 28 and 29 May 2016. The first day started with an opening prayer from one of the participants and greetings. This was the pattern followed in all subsequent meetings and sessions. This was followed by affirmation of the decision to engage in dialogue. Participants confirmed that this was what was agreed on during the initial meeting. This was followed by crafting of ground rules. Ground rules were important in that they were used to direct proceedings in the group in relation to helping create a safe space for everyone (i.e put all participants at the same level despite their positions in the community and political parties) and build a conducive environment for trust to develop among participants. In addition, they were also meant to hold each individual participant accountable for their behaviour throughout the sessions.

The rules listed included:

- Respecting each other's views.
- No discrimination on all grounds (sex, age, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation etc).
- Not interjecting when someone is talking.
- Listening to each other as all participants will benefit from the group activities.
- Speak through the facilitator.
- Use of language that each participant was comfortable with.
- No threats, harassment or violent behaviour.
- Viewpoints were immune from prosecution after the sessions.

I also asked participants to list down their expectations on the flip chart. Some of the expectations were:

AG-P2: *"I'm here to see what happens in the group"*

AG-P5: *"I want to share with others as much as possible"*

AG-P7: *"I am interested. Maybe I can learn a few things about peace"*

The idea of asking participants to indicate their expectations was guided by my perception that whatever we were doing should lead to collective action that expresses the values of participants, which usually resides in one's interest. This exercise was also important to convey a message of love and create conditions for harmony in the group (bestowing a sense of respect and honour and easing tension among participants).

Interpersonal interactions followed after the ground rules were set. This was meant to allow deeper introductions than the simple ones done in on 12 May 2016. The question that guided the deep introductions was: *Who are we as participants?* The exercise encouraged participants to expose detailed

information about themselves and uncover more about the people in the group. Participants were given an opportunity to interact with each of the members in the group as much as possible to promote openness, interaction and ease tension. The exercise lasted for 20 minutes which I thought was reasonable time for each member to talk to everyone in the group and also allow me to observe attitudes toward the other. This was important considering that although participants new each other before, some of them had never interacted before this session. The exercise encouraged an early chance to lay a foundation for participants to begin new relationships by speaking to each other in a non-threatening environment. For some, this was happening for the first time in so many years. However, I observed tensions in the room as some participants avoided others despite the plea for everyone to speak to each member in the group. It was ironic and frustrating that the intervention agreed by participants thrives on interpersonal communication yet some were not willing to open up. The attitude by some participants showed signs of resentment and anger toward some characters in the room. Even after the exercise, I could detect the tense atmosphere as the sitting arrangement suggested the extent of polarisation. ZANU-PF members were seated on one side of the room while those from the opposition were also on their own side.

I decided to introduce an ice-breaker, without which working with the group would have been difficult. Emotions had to be managed early so that they would not cloud deliberations and prevent the group from identifying solutions to the conflict. To ease tension, I played two video clips for fifteen minutes containing testimonies of participants from groups formed in other countries that had experienced similar problems and overcame their differences through peaceful engagement. The two videos played were from Rwanda and East Timor. The videos were crucial ice-breakers that I used to demonstrate to the participants that what we were trying to do was done before. It was also meant to prepare them to approach the process with positive attitudes and develop a feeling that they could do something to change the situation.

b. The need for constructive communication

Followed the video clips, I introduced the topic on communication 14 and 15 June for the same purpose of ice-breaking. We exchanged views around this topic. The need to know and understand each other through communication was emphasised as important in conflict handling. Even if some were unable to interact with some members in the group, participants had knowledge that most conflicts were caused and escalated because of lack of communication and knowledge of the other. The lack of communication among participants was acknowledged by AG-P13 who said:

I know some people in this group because they are my neighbours or we support the same party. I have talked to some but not that deep. But for most, I have never talked to them because we have serious issues.

The view point exposed by AG-P13 demonstrates that even if some people knew each other they had not established deep understanding. The absence of deep conversations was also partly a result unresolved issues. The lack of or subdued communication among participants presented a challenge to the dialogue that the group had set themselves to undertake to improve relations. The negative peace was evidence result of imposed solutions which manifest in superficial love but with deep-seated animosity persisting. This demonstrated that the absence of violence does not translate into robust and deep process of social transformation (Funk 2012: 392). If interventions “fail to address the root causes of the conflict and limits itself to the problems created by the conflict itself, the peace may very well fail to be a durable one” (Elster 2010: 14). The challenge for peacebuilding is to think of peace as more than just the presence of direct violence but something that must also facilitate an environment that promotes mutual confidence, trust, security and dispenses sources of festering resentment and dissatisfaction. This agenda favour conflict transformation over expediency-based conflict resolution. As the facilitator I had to encourage participants to actively talk and listen to each other as a first step toward the agenda. I emphasised that talking and listening to one another has the potential to clear misperceptions and negative assumptions about others which can facilitate the mending of bridges as people begin to appreciate each other. This view finds support in Krause and Morsella (2008) who underscore that when people in a relationship disagree, the antidote is communication; it is always the right thing to do and encourages parties to express their feelings which minimises violent conflict. I then I allowed participants a chance to talk to each other again to observe any improvements. After a while, I asked for participants’ views on whether they saw any value in improving communication with each other. I noticed some began to appreciate the value of communication in their relations. AG-P8 said:

I agree with you my brother (*referring to me*) I don’t think there is anyone who plans not to talk to anyone in life. We cannot avoid talking to each other, only animals can live without talking. But some people make it difficult for this to happen because of politics

AG-P12 concurred:

Communicating with one another is important. We should take advantage of technology to improve conversations among ourselves. There is no need to talk to the person directly all the time, we can use social media to communicate as a starting point.

The response from the participant was extensively deliberated and the group resolved to create a *whatsapp* group which they thought would encourage communication. The *whatsapp* platform was up by the time we held the second session which started on 28 June 2016. Participants encouraged each other to post messages and discuss anything of interest to the group without violating the ground rules. This presented me with the opportunity to observe discussions outside the dialogue sessions. The *whatsapp* group enabled improved communication among group members and also made it easier to organise group activities and encourage participants to attend scheduled meetings. I had no problems in having participants at the meeting.

The second part of the session provided some insights. I discovered that constantly talking and responding to each other through the platform was an important way of encouraging friendship and bonding. To me this demonstrated that interpersonal contact can change attitudes, improve affective reactions and produce positive behaviour. Bringing together people helped minimize prejudice among participants as they opted to open avenues to enhance their communication. Salomon and Cairns (2010:88) argue that there are two forms of prejudice, namely, affective prejudice that is associated with negative evaluation toward others and cognitive prejudice that thrives on negative beliefs and stereotypes. The contact brought by dialogue also showed me that it reduced anxiety that was evident on the first two days of the session. When anxiety is reduced, harmony can be fostered. Dialogue was opening windows for transformation by encouraging collective communication, and in communication the idea is working to suspend negative opinion and judgement of others. Participants were sending early signals that given space they could change their subjective construal and make progress toward reconciliation. Bohm (1998 cited in Banathy and Jenlink 2005) notes that the basic idea of dialogue is to communicate while suspending personal opinions, and not trying to convince the other but simply trying to understand. What the group was doing gave credence to the view that for peace to develop, interventions must centre on improving the quality of relationships that includes face-to-face interactions (Lederach 2003). The need for constructive communication acknowledged that relationships are important because they affect the entire fabric of interaction within the society in which conflict takes place (Mial 2004: 4). The session ended with a closing prayer that was preceded by planning for the second session and agreeing on the agenda. The aftermath of the session saw participants continuing the dialogical relationship on *whatsapp* even when the group had adjourned.

8.6.2 Session 2: Problem analysis (The violent context and the need for peace)

The session was on problem analysis and was guided by the following key question: '*Where do we stand as participants?*' While the first session was meant to ease participants into the dialogical mood, this session was meant to set the tone and context for the dialogue. The session was held on 28 and 29 June; 20 and 21 July 2016. The purpose for the session was to allow participants to talk about the problem affecting them before they could explore possible solutions to resolve the problem. The session focused on violent conflict, its causes and effects. The following questions helped me to get the session going:

- What do you consider as the underlying issues affecting peaceful relations amongst yourselves?
- How would you describe the overall state of relations among group members?

In response to the first question, participants focused their deliberations on violence as the major problem driving peace away. AG-P9 summarised the context:

Things are not well among us. Politics has imposed a wedge. Just go back to the first day when the group met. The seating was political; ZANU-PF that side, others the other side

(*pointing*). You see how difficult things are even in this small group and now just think of the bigger situation out there.

The tension was political and fissures in the group were caused by politics. Even if participants tried hard to tolerate each other, there were long-term differences that inhibited mutual acceptance. This made the agenda of the action group a worthy cause. They noted that violence was driving them away from each other. AG-P2 highlighted the connection between violence and socialisation as the problem. He said:

Violence is something that is seen and taught in the home. As a young person in the home, your parents tell you not to play with kids whose parents support different parties from theirs. That's how people are socialised and cultured to harm others.

The session identified the major issues that shaped the subsequent dialogue sessions. It was a crucial session as it allowed participants to express their frustration, losses and experiences with political conflicts and violence. Some sense of trust and confidence was beginning to emerge which prepared the participants to explore the issues identified in-depth. The session ended with a position that there was need for peace. This led to the adoption of reconciliation as the next agenda item for deliberation. The activities of the session took into account the point that action researchers identify problems and adopt a course of action that is geared to solve the diagnosed problem by actively involving participants. In this session, I departed from the unilateral approach by empowering stakeholders to participate in problem analysis. This took into account the point that action researchers identify problems and adopt a course of action that is geared to solve the diagnosed problem. By doing this, I was aiming to yield a transformed outcome. Berghof (2012) says transformation is long-term, seeking to change underlying conditions that contribute to violence.

8.6.3 Session 3: Determining the direction for change

The session was held on 16 and 17 August; 27 and 28 September; and 25 October 2016. The session was guided by the following key question: *'What is the direction we should take as participants?'* The purpose of the session was to encourage participants to shift the focus of the deliberations from themselves as individuals and starting to think and talk about group-focused change and solutions. The session allowed participants opportunity to exchange views on the notion of reconciliation and what needed to be done to move toward unity and mutual accommodation. The direction of change session was therefore meant to empower participants to initiate the process of directing their relationships in a positive way.

a. Meaning of reconciliation

The dialogue of reconciliation started on 16 August 2016 by exploring the meaning of reconciliation. This was based on my conviction that I could not take the participants further on this issue without gauging their perceptions on the concept. I could not assume that participants knew what reconciliation

was without probing for their views. From their responses, it was encouraging to note that participants had fairly good knowledge of what reconciliation is although they defined it in varied words. The following are some of the participants' responses when asked to define reconciliation: AG-P1 related the concept to the idea of power-sharing and political parties coming together to ensure that their supporters desist from attacking each other.

The power-sharing that we had among political parties in 2008 represented reconciliation because people were brought together because of what our leaders did. We were told not to attack each other because our leaders were in the same government.

AG-P6 thought *"reconciliation was about rediscovering relationships after they have been destroyed by conflicts."*

AG-P8 saw reconciliation as the same as justice, *"It is justice in the society."*

AG-P2 regarded reconciliation as a situation in which *"former enemies come together and commit themselves to live and work together without resorting to violence or hurtful language."*

AG-P10 saw reconciliation as meaning *"peaceful relations."*

AG-P11 perceived reconciliation as *"when people realise that attacking others is not good."*

Participants' responses show that different people attach different meanings to the concept of reconciliation, showing that it is value-laden. Put differently, participants' different views on the concept means that there is lack of a common understanding of the term. In the participants responses, some saw reconciliation as unity, while others viewed it as the same as justice. It was however encouraging to note that all responses from the participants had positive aspects which were consistent with the goal of pecebuilding. It was certain from the deliberations that participants attributed the following variables to the notion of reconciliation: 'peaceful relations', 'togetherness', 'nonviolence', 'accommodation' etc. Implying reconciliation has an element of coming together, and some involvement of communication and mutual tolerance between opposing groups. In addition, participants were also alive to the fact that in as far as reconciliation was desirable, it was something that can take a long time to achieve because it requires unquestionable commitment and trust among themselves. This fact was also taken into account by the researcher from the moment when the problem was identified hence I limited my study aim to building capacity among participants to work towards reconciliation as opposed to attaining reconciliation. Reconciliation as a term is acknowledged in literature as a context-specific concept and hence participants defined it in different ways. Reconciliation remains a preferred mechanism for peacebuilding but scholars face equally the same difficulty in finding a common understanding of the concept (Androff 2012; Brouneus 2008). Bloomfield (2003: 12) contends that the complexity of reconciliation emanates partly from it being "both a goal – something to achieve, - and a process – a means to achieve that goal. Despite this conceptual problem, reconciliation is thought as

relevant in rectifying social dislocation (Hayner 2002), and repairing damage caused by physical violence (Gibson 2004).

b. Necessary steps toward reconciliation

This part of the session was held for four days (17 August, 27 & 28 September and 25 October 2016). It began with a recap of the discussion of the concept of reconciliation to validate responses and also to establish link with the previous sessions. Participants who wished to reflect on the previous sessions were accorded the opportunity to do so. This exercise was meant to establish whether participants were connecting with issues deliberated and relating them to their experiences. The key question that guided the discussion was: *'What can we do to help ourselves to reconcile with each other?'* Participants were asked to identify the requirements or pre-conditions for reconciliation. Participants were given some few minutes to individually reflect on the question and give feedback to the group. Their responses were listed on a flip chart while my two research assistants took down verbatim minutes and recorded responses for transcription. I followed up all initial questions with probing questions to get the most out of the deliberations. The issues discussed in the session were important for the participants to embrace the change that they would want to see in their community. Various thematic issues emerged under this question.

Forgiveness is important but it depends on the nature of abuse suffered: One of the issues that was emphasised by the participants was forgiveness. I probed for further clarification on what they meant by 'forgiveness'. Participants' responses were as follows:

AG-P2 said:

“Forgiveness is a choice to lessen harmful ideas and actions toward a known perpetrator and begin to accept the reasons why the perpetrator acted that way.”

AG-P4 noted:

When you forgive you release destructive feelings toward people who wronged you. This happens without outside pressure. You feel it from inside that you want to forgive and move forward.

AG-P9 added:

Forgiveness is when the person who suffered violence will no longer hold grudges and releases feelings of hatred to whoever did wrong to them . (*inaudible*). The feeling of revenge disappears and anything negative that happened in the past can no longer affect new relations.

From participants' responses, forgiveness was understood as a state of mental and psychological being; a point at which a wronged person takes a deliberate decision to forego all that happened in the past. The feelings of revenge begin to fade - *'You feel it from inside that you want to forgive and move*

forward, and the person forgiving is ready to let go whatever happened without retaining grudges. Forgiveness was discussed as something that guarantees the disappearance of anger and hatred in the wronged person who accepts the wrong-doer as someone who is important in the new chapter of improving relationships disturbed by past disagreements and often by acts of violence. The conversations suggested that forgiveness brings a disunited people together and can de-escalate formerly tense relations. Similar views are expressed in literature. Abigail and Cahn (2011: 176) regards forgiveness as a process that involves letting go of feelings of revenge and negative reactions to past incidences of suffering. Forgiveness is regarded as the willingness to forego one's right to resentment, revenge, negative judgement, and indifferent behaviour toward one who caused harm and promoting compassion, generosity and even love toward the perpetrator (Enright, Freedman and Rique 1998; Staub et al 2005).

Participants also discussed that forgiveness involves forgetting everything hurtful including not only what was done but what was said as well. This was emphasised by AG-P3 who stated that:

The way I understand forgiveness is this. In my case, as a known opposition supporter, if I have to forgive my brother over there (*pointing at a ZANU-PF supporter*), I will need to forget both the physical attacks and the insults that these people used to direct at my colleagues in the party. This is how I think forgiveness should be.

On further discussing and teasing other participants on the theme, there were views that in as far as forgiveness was an important requirement of reconciliation it was also important to understand that those heinous acts such as rape and murder were difficult to forgive than lesser acts such as harassment and insults. This was even more difficult in circumstances under which participants personally witnessed the acts. AG-P11 emotionally stated:

The idea of forgiving is very good considering what has happened in our community but I have serious problems in some situations (*pause*). If people are insulted and just pushed, I think they can quickly forget and move on but when you see a bullet fired and people dying, knowing very well that a person in this room was among the people who were accompanying the murderers, that situation complicates this whole thing about forgiveness. It becomes extremely difficult to move on.

The idea emerging from the words of AG-P11 confirms that while forgiveness is possible. It is not always granted after the experience of violence. Serious violations may be difficult to forgive while lesser violation can be forgiven. What this means is that when participants face difficulties to forgive because of enormous trauma, there could be need for medical interventions such as specialised counselling to allow victims to restore hope and move out of trauma.

Participants also emphasised that when a victim is able to forgive, it does not automatically translates into forgetting what was done by the person being forgiven. The offender will still remain accountable for his/her actions. Forgiveness was simply seen as allowing for new synergies and relationships to

develop without obliterating the wrongs that were done in the past. What participants were emphasising was that forgiveness should not be misconstrued as doing away with a wrongful incident and it is not meant to disregard justice and truth. This point was made by AG-P10 who said:

My view is that to forgive is a personal choice which must not be misunderstood as a sign of weakness on the part of the victim. I can only forgive if facts of what happened are sincerely exposed and acknowledged. It's very difficult to forgive when the wrong-doer takes advantage of forgiveness as an excuse to justify the bad things that happened. All I'm saying is that forgiveness makes sense if the wrong-doer accepts the victim's suffering and that he caused the suffering.

The quote highlights very important points on forgiveness. Forgiveness is not meant to exonerate the wrong-doer, and may be conditional – *'I can only forgive if facts of what happened are sincerely exposed and acknowledged'*. Justice, acknowledgement and forgiveness were interlinked. Here the opinion is that forgiveness is premised on justice and acknowledgement of responsibility, making the process unsustainable if the victims lack a perception of justice and if all that happened has not been exposed. The question of whether justice is necessary for true forgiveness to occur or whether the wrong-doer needs to change for him to be forgiven is dependent on what the process of forgiveness is intended to achieve. According to Cox (2012), forgiveness is underpinned by two dominant views. The first is the psychological perspective which regards forgiveness as an individual process in which the individual let go of the negative feeling surrounding an event with possibly no communication with the offender. Forgiveness is viewed as an end in itself and reconciliation is not necessary. The second is the philosophical viewpoint which sees forgiveness as a process of healing what has been broken and re-establishing peace and harmony. Forgiveness is perceived as necessary for the well-being of the individual and the community in which he/she lives. The wronged person makes a decision to forgive the offender and change his attitude toward the offender and make efforts to mend relations. It is a peace oriented process to re-join the community. Reconciliation is woven in this process, allowing the offender to re-join the community. The first view suggests that forgiveness has no pre-condition. In other words justice is not a factor. With respect to the second view, justice and change are necessary because the purpose of such a process is to change relations in a positive sense, involving reconciliation. Justice cannot be ignored although serving justice does not always mean punishment of the offender. When reconciliation is part of a forgiveness process then it has to be revoked by repentance, which bestows a sense of justice on the victim (Inazu 2009: 14). If reconciliation is to be meaningful, a person may forgive another if he/she believes that he has openly condemning or regretting his past misdeeds, altering the wrong-doer's behaviour in a significant way. If evidence of change is not observed, then reconciliation maybe difficult as the victim would be uncertainty over the wrong-doer's future intentions.

The journey toward reconciliation therefore demands acknowledgement of past wrongs to facilitate forgiveness by victims (Green 2009). Forgiveness should not be a result of outside pressure or

compulsion but something that comes out of personal reflection and choice to move on without forgetting what happened. The wrong-doer cannot take advantage of forgiveness to conceal or justify wrongful acts. Nonetheless, in participants' view, it still remains important for the wrong-doer to ask for forgiveness for reconciliation to occur. They noted the need to for the offender to approach the victims of their conduct and ask for forgiveness. AG-12 said:

If someone who offended me is serious about opening a new page in our relations, my opinion is that he/she must approach me to initiate the whole process of forgiving each other. He must take the initial step to ask me to forgive him/her. I cannot take the first step.

From the perspective of the participant, the process of forgiveness is acknowledged as involving both the offender and the offended. Nonetheless, the offender is given the obligation to initiate the process of forgiving each other. In the event that the offender is not forthcoming, it means that the offended person is unlikely to forgive and will remain locked in the past. The idea of the offender approaching the victim was to allow for the commencement of dialogue between parties over a conflict situation that led them into a disrupted relationship. The intention was to exchange narratives, feelings and listening to each other's experiences. This process was thought to be necessary for nurturing trust before normal relationships could be restored. The session also noted that although forgiveness was important in reconciliation, the person forgiving the offender may not feel the obligation to reconcile with the offender. The point being that forgiveness may facilitate reconciliation between the offender and the victim provided both parties are ready to make peace with each other. As the dialogue around the forgiveness progressed, AG-P7 made an observation that forgiving each other from an African perspective was something that was common among people of different languages. When I further probed him, he demonstrated this point by inviting participants from different ethnic groups to write down proverbs on the flip chart that talked about forgiveness in their mother tongues. We then translated them in a language understood by all participants. He proceeded to highlight the proverbs that had identical or closer meanings. The point that he was trying to put across was that although forgiveness is difficult in practice, it can be achieved by the common values among the participants despite their differences. This reminded me that sustainable peacebuilding contributes to long-term peace. In that regard, solutions must focus on meeting the most immediate cultural needs of targeted communities. This usually contributes not just to legitimacy but effectiveness. This further enhances reliability of interventions, centred on a vision of peace that is shared and supported by participants (OSCE 2013: 8). Hence engagement of locals should follow a people-centred approach taking into account particular cultural needs, values and attitudes, respecting the principle of local ownership and facilitate sustainable, localised solutions.

We must begin to expose the truth and apologise: Another issue that emerged during this session was the issue of exposing one's role in past abuses and apologising for such acts. Participants deliberated

that reconciliation was about restoration of relationships. Participants encouraged each other as survivors and perpetrators of past abuses to open up to each other, sharing experiences and stories necessary to redeem their relationships. AG-P7 amplified this point:

We can improve our day-to-day relations if we open to each other to admit all the wrongs that we committed, whether under pressure or not. Those whom we tried to harm should also be ready to listen. Narrating one's role in the abuse must be followed up by an apology directed to the people harmed. If the wronged person accepts the apology, the wrong-doer should undertake not to repeat the abuses again. That way we can build something new in our relationships.

New relationships were seen as stemming from the need to craft a mutually agreed narrative of the truth by all participants. Truth was seen as important in order to help victims in the healing process provided there was full disclosure of all events and abuses that occurred. In actual fact, shame is created by invalidation; when the truth is not honoured or respected. The other important way of guarding against shaming others when exposing truth is to avoid the common way of shaming in the form of words, labels and phrases that under that undermine the dignity of others (de Castella 2006). Truth was seen as according the perpetrators an opportunity to confess and admit his/her role in the abuses that were suffered by the victims. Confession and honest admission of guilty was also seen as having the impact of lessening the burden of guilt on the perpetrator allowing him/her to cooperate with the victims to build a new relationship. AG-P6 noted that:

I see ourselves not achieving anything if we are not ready to change and accept each other's importance in our lives. Let us not be selfish and be open to tell each other our roles in the suffering of the other. We know each other but what we know and hear may be exaggerated (*pause*) it's important for each one of us to speak for him/herself so that we deliberate on our problems. I don't see any problem in standing up and speak from your heart and then say sorry to others in this room. We know what happened, let's go for it.

Three issues are emerging from the conversations: truth-telling, acknowledgement and apology, all of which have the potential to break the cycle of impunity. Truth, acknowledgement and apology can assist the victim to forgive and move forward. Similarly, acknowledgement presents the perpetrator an opportunity to plead for mercy. If the plea is accepted by the victim, a new chapter of relations can follow. Literature also supports the view that truth offers victims the chance to move ahead after they have found answers for why acts of violence happened and who is responsible (Huyse 2003; Gobodo-Madikizela 2003; Bloomfield 2003). Most importantly, they want to have assurances that the same thing will not occur again. When victims are given the opportunity to tell their stories in a safe and affirming environment, the process can be restorative for them (Shriver 2003: 31).

Even if a majority of participants saw value in exposing the truth, there were also problems related to hindering or ignoring one's role in past abuses. For this reason, some participants were unwilling to

accept responsibility for the violence and express apology which made it difficult for the wronged participants to accept their commitment. Some participants cited national reasons for engaging in violence while down playing their personal blameworthiness. They saw no reason in admitting guilt or expressing remorse arguing that violence was likely to occur in the future since this was a national problem. AG-P11 bemoaned the tendency:

Some people think that just because they support the ruling party they cannot divulge information that will hurt their handlers. But what they don't know is that we know so much. What we want is to hear them speak for themselves. Unfortunately they don't take opportunities to reveal the truth with the seriousness we expect. They don't want to tell us all the details because they want to protect their leaders from criticism. How do we move forward in those cases?

In responding to the question of violence being a national phenomenon, I encouraged the participants to take responsibility for their actions in their area rather than deflecting everything to the national level. One way of keeping them focused on themselves was to encourage them to constantly engage in a vision of the community they would want to construct and live in. I periodically resorted to this reminder whenever participants were lacking commitment or were avoiding tackling what they considered difficult but important questions. I also had to intervene in the deliberations where I emphasised that the purpose of truth telling is to have a full account of what happened as opposed to being selective on what to say and what to conceal. I told them that exposing everything in front of others was important in that the truth can be validated by others other than the person speaking, which would assist to build a shared memory. Shared memory opens possibilities for harmony, healing and forgiveness. In that way truth telling can be the basis for generating common identity and long-term peaceful relationships.

In addition, others expressed doubt on the importance of the telling the truth: For instance, AG-P1 said:

Excuse me, can I ask something here (*pause*). Is it necessary to talk about all the things that happened in the past? I mean everything. I'm asking this because my feeling is that exposing everything can worsen the situation because the person you attacked may also want to do the same to you (*laughs*).

At this point there was debate over the response as participants threw various opinions around. This view served to confirm that even if the majority could see the value of truth telling, not everyone is agreeable to this route. Perhaps, the fear of retribution could have gripped such participants. Such reservations exposed truth-telling as problematic in reconciliation. Literature also reflects this controversy. Thus, while truth is central to successful reconciliation, others are doubtful of its importance (Mashingaidze 2010; McGrew 2006; Mendeloff 2004). For instance, Mashingaidze (2010: 20) argues that "a full fixation with the truth is problematic because 'the idea of an ascertainable past has to negotiate with the notion that full truth of the past cannot be grasped. Memories and histories will always conflict; maybe neither of them has the capacity to know everything in the first place.'" He exposes the idea that truth is subjective and therefore may not always help people to mend relations.

Justice must be done: Participants discussed that for peace to be established among them, it was necessary that some form of justice must be done to tame the tendency of impunity. It was deliberated that holding those who committed acts of abuse and caused suffering to others accountable was necessary. Participants thought that it was unfortunate that nothing has been/was being done to known perpetrators because of political protection. AG-P13 said:

Eeh my friend (*referring to the facilitator*), we must not forget that peace and justice go together. You cannot talk of one without the other. The problem we are dealing with here is national. People have been let to do as they wish, the people who beat and harass others are known but they have not been punished. A strong message must be sent to these people (*gesturing*). What are we going to do about that as a group?

AG-P10 added:

For as long as the sponsors of violence at national level are not punished, my fear is that some in this group will continue to engage in violence. We are dealing with a bigger problem here which this small group cannot solve on its own.

The dialogue showed that justice was needed in any peace efforts. It is an integral component in the reconciliation process and without justice, the processes of reconciliation cannot be attained (Chapman 2001; Theissen 2004). While acknowledging that the aspect of justice was necessary in peacebuilding, I emphasised to the participants that what they were demanding was beyond the capacity of the group – ‘*What are we going to do about that as a group?*’ We had to consider the kind of justice that was attainable at our level and take appropriate action without bogged down by national issues. At the same time, I took the opportunity to highlight the various forms of justice, noting the advantages and disadvantages in order to open possibilities. This was necessary because what action the group will ultimately pursue had to consistent with the framework that conceptualised my approach to reconciliation. The dialogue around the topic of justice showed me that while justice is essential to address wrong-doing and at the same time promote peace, the question of what form of justice best serves the interest of people affected by conflict poses a challenge if they are not exposed to the different dimensions of the concept. Thus what form of justice was needed and its relationship with reconciliation came to the fore and was problematic for the group. That is why it is said that the nature of justice a society chooses has enormous consequences for the society (Zehr 2001: 330-2). Instead of seeking retribution, the group turned to restorative-centred and futuristic issues. Participants began to emphasise the issues of dignity as opposed to pursuing grudges. This trajectory set the conversation along the contours of restorative justice regards. In this form of justice the victim and the offender are primary actors in seeking solutions (Braithwaite 2003; Huyse 2003). Offenders are also encouraged to understand the harm they caused and to take responsibility. Huyse (2003) gives a synopsis of this form of justice as: providing encounters between victims and offenders; bestowing the obligation to repair harm between the victim and the offender; and the potential to transform relationships.

Even if we had managed to steer the discussion from retributive intentions to restorative-focused, there were still other participants like AG-P10 who were pessimistic on the capacity of the group to achieve the objectives of promoting peace among members of the group given the long-term problem of impunity at the national level. This participant was insistent and clamoured for some form of punishment against perpetrators. This showed me the challenge of persuading a traumatised people to accept non-retributive justice. The difficulty associated with restorative justice is probably the reason why Braithwaite (2003) points that restorative justice cannot deal with the issues of structural injustices. Of course, the kind of justice demanded by participants has many strengths such as the encouragement of human rights but its major weaknesses are inherent in that criminal justice tends to be punitive, conflictual, impersonal and state-centred (Stover and Weinstein 2004; Zehr 2001). It encourages the denial of responsibility and empathy on the part of offenders. It excludes victims and their needs by focusing on the active role of the state, perceiving itself as the victim, dealing with a passive offender (Androf 2012a & b; Umbreit and Armour 2011). It exacerbates rather than heal wounds. In fact, retributive justice often assumes that justice and reconciliation are separate issues, perhaps even incompatible (Zehr 2001: 339). The value of justice in society is indispensable. The knowledge that one is treated with equal concern and respect can be a source of intrinsic satisfaction and being discriminated against can be a cause of frustration (Elster 2010: 5). However, obsession with justice based on retribution can be at odds with the requirement for peace. In Yugoslavia, war criminals presented themselves as an impediment to peace, leading to policy makers to cut a deal with the criminal leaders (Bass 2000: 211 in Elster 2010). Heavy punishment for victims may be associated with a desire for vengeance not justice and this may be at odds with reconciliation. I therefore explained to the group that change does not need to start at the national level as it could be initiated by an individual or group who makes a commitment to make peace with others without even seeking punitive action against the perpetrator. I also said that if the group were to develop positive attitudes toward peace and nonviolent solutions to conflicts, it will be difficult for outsiders to incite them into violent behaviour. My intervention was mindful of the central postulate in action research that the responsibility of the researcher is largely one of a facilitator than dictating to participants. Realistically, the research process showed how I assumed a dual responsibility of being a facilitator and a catalyst or agent of change by proposing this research initiative to the people affected by political polarisation. Once issues to do with conditions for reconciliation were deliberated, the next agenda led us into the fourth session which discussed indicators of commitment to reconcile.

8.6.4 Session 4: Enumerating the indicators of change and planning for action

This was the last session after participants felt that they had exhausted what they needed to talk about on reconciliation. It was held on 25 November 2016. It was meant to deliberate on the indicators of

positive change and also plan for concrete action that was to be taken by participants to promote unity and contact with each other. The following sections report on the emerging themes.

a. Positive indicators of movement toward reconciliation

The key question for this segment was: *'What will you regard as the indicators of participants in the group moving toward reconciliation?'* Participants highlighted that there must be accommodation to maintain peace and avoid violence in the future. When there is movement toward reconciliation, participants thought that as parties they should be driven by the spirit of cooperation. Others emphasised that people should be able to resolve their differences and disputes in a non-confrontational and peaceful way AG-P2 noted that:

We need to begin to accept each other as human beings who deserve a healthy relationship. If conflict arises, we should not even think of violence; we need peace to achieve peace. We must explore all possible avenues to resolve differences amicably and violence should never be one of them.

AG-P6 highlighted that:

If we say we want to live together in peace, we should show unity in everything we do. We also need to look at each other and say, yes this is my equal who deserves to be respected and dignified in as much as I do. That tolerance will minimise mistrust amongst us. We don't need outsiders or police to force us to live together.

The quote shows that participants understood the indicators of people who are moving toward reconciliation. Embracing others as equals in a human relationship was valued by participants to eliminate violence as the mode of communication in situations of disagreement. It can be observed that participants were capable of expressing love and overcome feelings of anger and hatred. Co-existence was also emphasised, meaning a commitment to mutual understanding, confidence-building and trust to develop constructive ways of relating to one another. Trust on its own generates renewed assurance among former adversaries, and can nurture a new culture of nonviolence. The restorative and transformative aspect of the intervention came in that participants who had offended others were beginning to commit to a peaceful future and those who were victims were also beginning to realise that they were thriving survivors, with neither party depending on law enforcement to correct relationships. At this stage, I observed that the creative tensions that accompanied the conversations at some stages had moved the group into a positive direction of determination to improve their relations through concrete action. The meetings that had been held up to this stage had led the group from talking about the direction of change to focus on actual behaviour they needed to achieve peace. This was made possible by the nature and quality of interpersonal contact that was emerging. I am compelled to advance that the dialogical conversations among participants personified heart-centeredness, which I attributed to the decision to steer the group in a positive way. Not only did the group left into rarely chartered territory in terms of the subject of dialogue but participants experienced a qualitative shift in their

experience, intimacy and sympathy. Emerging from activities of session four is one of the aspects identified by Yevsyukova (1993) as constituting transformation: the coming together of participants which involved expression of appreciation of the other in their relationship.

b. Acting together to promote change: the ‘peace garden’ project

This segment involved dialogue over acting together to facilitate change on a long-term basis. The major question inspiring discussion was ‘*What can we do to improve our relationships?*’ The purpose of this discussion was to initiate dialogue on specific actions that participants would collectively undertake. It encouraged the group to shift from words to doing. Participants brainstormed action ideas. During conversations, the idea of a garden project was adopted as a reconciliation gesture. The space of the project had been identified as the unutilised land within the Councillor’s library premises. What we needed was to get clearance from the Councillor to implement the action. The group tasked two participants and myself to approach Mr Muzhinyi, the Councillor, with the idea, to which he granted permission. The Councillor donated US\$80 to the group to buy vegetable seedlings for the project. Land was prepared by participants after which a variety of vegetables were planted on 28 November 2016. The idea was to initially produce for participants’ own consumption but it turned out that the size of the land had the potential to allow for small-scale commercial production to generate income for group members.

The concrete action taken by the group confirmed the importance of working in groups in confronting social problems. Johnson and Johnson (2011)’s model of cooperative learning identifies variables that facilitate success. These are:

- Positive interdependence, where each participant in the group needs to contribute to group activities in order to have successful outcomes.
- Face-to-face interaction, where each participant’s thoughts, talk and action toward others will influence group performance.
- Individual accountability, in which individual performance/contribution is reflected in the collective outcome
- Social skill, where interpersonal skills improve by working with others.
- Group processing, where participants have to reflect on performance as a group and suggest ways to have best outcome.

In short, group theories suggest that there is value in individuals working with others and that there will be better outcomes for both the individual and the group through collaboration. Johnson and Johnson (2002: 45 in Johnson and Johnson 2011) conclude that “Social interdependence exists when individuals share common goals and the individual’s outcomes are affected by the actions of others.” This

interdependence is expressed by various means (exchanging information, challenging each other's reasoning and behaviour, engaging in skills for effective teamwork and processing group members' effectiveness for the whole group improvement).

c. Garden to enhance bonding and interaction

Participants thought that the garden will enable them to continue the contact for a long time after the conversation. This was meant to help minimise trust and improve bonding as well as sending a positive signal of peace to others. This was emphasised by participants:

AG-P3:

The garden will allow us to work, eat and share the vegetables. I think this will encourage trust and peace in this area. Working in the same garden with people of different parties will send a strong message of peace and tolerance.

AG-P13:

I don't know if anything of this sort has ever happened in Ward 30. I think it shows our commitment as a group to move forward in spite of all the bad things that happened between us. The garden will keep us together and this is what we want.

The garden offered participants a practical mechanism outside the dialogue sessions an opportunity to further understand each other and develop long-term relationships. It was also an initiative clothed with a commitment to re-establish trust and accommodation which are all important in the journey toward reconciliation. To me, it represented a rejection of violence and an embrace of nonviolence. It was an expression that given sufficient support, people have the potential to change their destructive instincts into constructive ones. I detected commitment toward group transcendence (the expressive commitment to work together to implement practical action). The action demonstrated that dialogue is a potent way of transforming conflict as contact results in concrete action (Rothman 1998; Saunders 1999; Yankelovich 1999). The facilitated dialogue created moments of transition or became vehicles for transformative action by the participants. The action taken has potential of being catalysts for change by unlocking polarized and conflictual relationships. Inherent in the garden project was the capacity to provide space for parties to continuously involve themselves in active rebuilding of relationships, reformulation of interests and discourses. The capacity to choose a path toward reconciliation over violence was demonstrated through this symbolic gesture.

The action was consistent with the aim of the thesis, which was to build capacity among participants to reduce conflict recurrence while promoting collaboration, co-existence and tolerance without resorting to punishing anyone along the process. This approach resonates with Lederach's (1998: 242-243) advice that peacebuilding should not be driven by a hierarchical (top down) focus, but by an organic process, which "envisions peace-building as a web of interdependent activities and people." Overall, the transformative power of a restorative approach to promoting reconciliation was promoted in line with

three elements identified by Augsburger (1992) namely, participants' negative attitudes and perceptions were changing and redirected toward collaborative action; participants behaviour was also changing as they chose to accept and appreciate one another for a peaceful future through choosing to work together; and issues that cause disharmony among participants were being overcome by seeking collective action that promote tolerance and minimises incompatibilities. In a way, this expressed the view that action research is premised on the desire to confront real life problems with interventions that yield transformative action and change. Action research does not simply seek to explore and describe an existing problem but also seeks to change (Cahill 2007: 268); it goes beyond mere gathering of information from participants to include social change through action (Moore 2004: 149). Participation of targets of research promotes shared ownership and a sense of responsibility on the adopted solution to the problem. This was significant in that "Acting on something that people have control over is exactly the kind of thing that contributes to people's beliefs that they are creative, knowledgeable and capable of making a difference in their own lives" (McIntyre 2008: 33). Improving relationships was central in this study and action research offered an alternative way for relationship building outside the formal institutions of the state as demonstrated by the establishment of the garden.

8.7 Conclusion

The intervention undertaken by the action group fits into a peacebuilding effort. The intervention also fits into a restorative framework in that it provided space for participation of both victims and perpetrators in a manner that emphasised the future and individual-centred transformation. The study did not seek to satisfy the legal requirements of the law to achieve justice, but rather to right the relationships of individuals within the action group and set them on a sustainable trajectory. Also to underscore here is that although the effort of the action group was miniscule, given the small number who participated (13 participants out of an estimated adult population of over 21 000 in the Ward experienced the intervention), conversations around real problems and issues throughout the four dialogue sessions provided the much needed initiative to build capacity for transformation of relationships and reconciliation in a non-threatening environment. The dialogue sessions which began on 28 May 2016 and lasted until 25 November 2016 provided an opportunity for group members with a platform to re-conceptualise the impact of violence on their relationships outside the normal paradigms utilised by state institutions. The resultant 'peace garden' offered the scanty creativity which is crucial for peacebuilding, offering a powerful alternative to state-based efforts. The action undertaken has the potential to build peace from below. In as much as this potential is abundant, it is also important to accentuate that peacebuilding is a herculean process which the study recognises by pursuing limited aims that is, creating the necessary capacity rather than claiming to reconcile participants over a limited period of study. I allowed participants to spend close to two months after the last action of the

intervention was implemented before I evaluated the short-outcome. The next chapter presents and discusses findings on the evaluation of the intervention.

CHAPTER 9

SHORT-TERM OUTCOME EVALUATION OF THE INTERVENTION

9.1 Introduction

The purpose of the intervention reported in Chapter 8 was to create and enhance healthy relationships that are tolerant, respectful and constructive in order to build capacity for reconciliation among participants in the action group. However, as part of the change agenda, action research encompasses an evaluation component. This process permits the researcher to determine the accomplishments of the intervention using evidence-based data from participants. Evaluation was intended to determine what was achieved against what was intended to be achieved, that is, whether the intervention achieved the aim of the study and to learn from what was done. This chapter presents and discusses participants' responses to the questions asked. Their responses are also compared with findings from the control group. I must also emphasise that the evaluation carried in this study was preliminary short-term outcome of the intervention. It is also important to state that it is not possible to draw definite conclusions on the effectiveness of the intervention based on a small group of participants but the use of two groups was an appropriate way of measuring change. The chapter begins by outlining the purpose for the evaluation. This is followed by an overview of the performance indicators used to determine the worthiness of the intervention on the experiment group. The indicators were also used to compare findings with the control group. The evaluation technique and tools used in the evaluation is then outlined. This is followed by the presentation and discussion of findings and lessons learnt before I conclude the chapter.

9.2 Purpose of the evaluation

Evaluation is the systematic inquiry directed at collecting, analysing and integrating information to determine the positive contributions of an intervention. Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman (2004: 16) define evaluation as "the use of social research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programmes in ways that are designed to inform social action and to improve social conditions." The definition highlights three themes that are important in evaluation. These are the use

of appropriate methods, effectiveness of the intervention and improving further action as driving the purpose of the evaluation. The evaluation undertaken in this research related to two aspects of the definition, namely, use of social research methods and determining the effectiveness of the intervention as represented in the outcomes. Although there are different types of evaluation, I was interested in evaluating the outcome. Sonpal-Valias (2009) describes outcome evaluation as concerned with changes resulting from an intervention and the examination of the extent to which the intervention is responsible for the outcomes. I was primarily concerned with the systematic collection of data about the intervention in order to make judgements on the effect of the intervention. The purpose of my evaluation was therefore two-fold: judgement-oriented and knowledge-oriented. The former was aimed at ascertaining the overall worthiness of the intervention. In particular, how effective were the four dialogue sessions and the attendant garden project established by the group in encouraging relationship building among the participants (see section 9.5). Improvement in relationships was to be demonstrated in improved capacity among participants to embrace reconciliation. The latter sought to generate knowledge from the findings of the evaluation in the form of lessons learnt (see section 9.7) in order to expand knowledge on both the intervention and action research in general.

9.3 Indicators of positive change

The purpose of action research is to induce positive change among participants. In order to determine whether the change sought is occurring or has occurred, indicators become an important aspect of the evaluation process. This section highlights the outcome indicators which I used to determine the worthiness of the intervention. The aim of the research was to build capacity for reconciliation among the 13 participants in the action group/experiment group. A sign of changing relationships was any positive attitude and perception change among participants that would shape positive behaviour. Shapiro (2006: 5) opines that changing individuals involves strategies that shift attitudes, perceptions, feelings, behaviour and motivations of participants in an intervention. Likewise, Van Dijk (2009) notes that the behaviour of people is largely a product of attitudes and perceptions.

The dialogue sessions and the ‘peace garden’ implemented by the experiment group were targeted at attitude and perception changes among participants divided by political violence and capacitate them to embrace reconciliation. The change in attitudes and perceptions would generate behavioural change. Incidences of political violence in Zimbabwe are well documented, so are the dimensions of the violence (Research and Advocacy Unit 2016). In recent years inter-party violence has become intensified in urban areas. Harare’s high density suburbs are sometimes turned into ‘war zones’, with houses destroyed, properties vandalised, people abducted or tortured (Voice of America 2011; Kaulem 2011: 79). Such occurrences are characteristic of election periods (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO

Forum 2013). The violence has occurred primarily because of the rivalry between the ruling party and the main opposition party led by Tsvangirai. The ruling party has been seeking to regain the seat which has been held by the opposition since the 2000 general elections. This desire has been the major source of violent clashes leading to polarisation that has left the community shattered and in need to rediscover the broken relationships. The need for interventions that can build capacity for reconciliation among people from different political groups was considered essential in this context. The behavioural change indicators were improvements in inter-personal communication, minimizing mistrust, accommodation, conflict-handling skills, collaboration, cooperation, and reduction in the use of violence and hostile language among participants.

9.4 The evaluation method and tools

The evaluation process used the *post-test only design*. This involved observing the performance indicators after the intervention. Two groups of participants were involved, namely the experiment and the control group. The 13 participants in the action group constituted the experiment group, that is, those who experienced the intervention. The control group had 15 participants, of which the first 13 to be located were interviewed for the evaluation. The group did not experience the intervention but were also in need of reconciliation as demonstrated through baseline data. The criterion for selection is explained in chapter 6 (see section 6.2.3 c) but was mainly focused on minimising any substantial differences in characteristics. The characteristics of the experiment group are highlighted in chapter 8 (see section 8.2). The profiles of participants in the control group are shown in tables 9.1 – 9.2 below.

Table 9.1: Control group participants’ bio-data (age)

Age range	Number of participants	Percentage (%)
18-25	5	33.33
26-30	1	6.67
31-35	3	20
36-40	4	26.67
41 and above	2	13.33

Total	15	100
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Source: Own data

Table 9.2: Control group participants' bio-data (sex)

Sex	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
Male	11	73.33
Female	4	26.67
Total	15	100

Source: Own data

Table 9.3: Control group participants' political affiliation

Name of political party	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
ZANU-PF	6	40
MDC-T	4	26.67
ZimPF	3	20
NCA	2	13.33
Total	13	100

Source: Own data

The separation of the two groups allowed for the isolation of the effects of the intervention on the experiment group. I wanted to determine the extent to which the intervention accounted for the outcome in the action group. This also helped to minimise other factors in explaining changes in the experiment group. The method used is not strictly a control or experiment method used in quantitative research because my study was qualitative. However, the use of two groups was intended to help in establishing

the effectiveness of the intervention. The criteria used to detect positive contributions of the intervention was that if the experiment group reported positive changes as compared to the control group, then the conclusion was that the intervention had a positive outcome. The differences in the performance indicators identified above became the basis of conclusions on the outcome. The evaluation method is depicted in Figure 9.1.

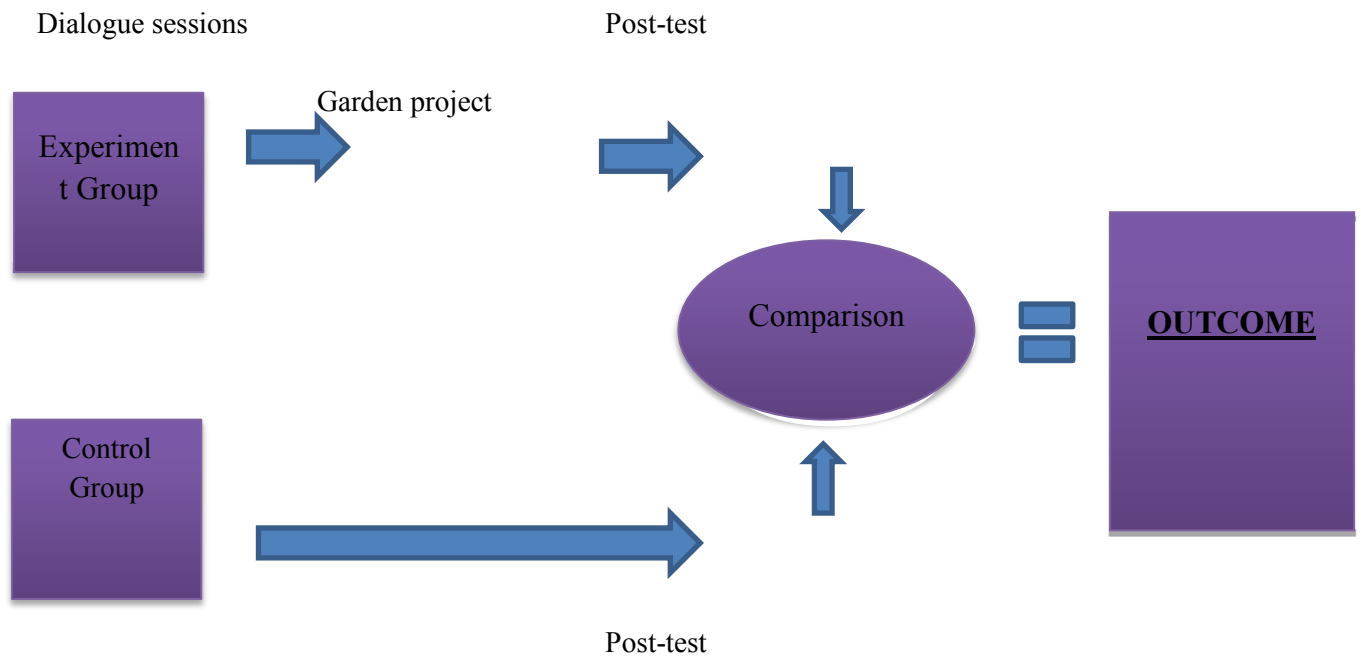


Figure 9.1: post-test only outcome evaluation (Source: own data)

Post-intervention interviews were held using two interview guides (see appendix G and H). The major questions on the guide were meant to provide direction as these were supplemented by probing questions during the actual interviews. The interview questions could not be the same because the independent variable (the intervention) implied different experiences between the two groups. Nonetheless, they were designed around common themes that allowed for direct comparisons attitudes, perceptions and skills on reconciliation between the two groups. The direct comparisons were the basis for drawing valid conclusions of the effect of the actions taken relative to actions not taken. The first guide was designed for the experiment group and asked participants to reflect on how the intervention had impacted on their relationship with fellow participants. Most of the outcome-focused questions required both short and long answers. The long answers clarified participants' short answers. Themes were generated from the long answers for presentation as findings. The post-intervention interviews were held close to two months after the last activity undertaken by the group (see Table 8.4). This period was necessary to allow me to observe the participants as they continued to interact with each other. It was also meant to allow participants ample time to reflect on what had transpired in the four dialogue

sessions. Findings from the experiment group were then used to design questions meant to gather data from the control group, which was the basis for comparing perceptions, attitudes and behaviour between the groups (see appendix H).

9.5 Outcome evaluation results

Six questions were posed to participants in the experiment group to allow them to reflect on how the intervention affected their perceptions, attitudes and behaviour in order to determine the extent to which they were developing the necessary capacity for promoting reconciliation. On the basis of the responses from the experiment group, nine questions were designed to evaluate perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of 13 participants in the control group. This was meant to note the differences that could possibly be attributed to the intervention experienced by the action group. Negative responses from the action group were however not compared to the control group although they were reported since this implied no change. I was interested in observing positive changes in the experiment group since the intervention sought to induce such change.

9.5.1. Why did you join the group?

Despite explaining to the participants the purpose of the action group, I had to ask for their personal reasons why they joined. From figure 9.2, a minority were not sure of the exact reasons why they were in the group (11%). They just found themselves volunteering for no apparent reason. A paltry 3% reported to be on an adventure mission. The highest number of participants (60%) chose to join the group to seek a learning experience. The category of participants who wanted a learning experience said that by joining the group they were seeking to hear and share information about the problems affecting peace and ways of living together. For instance, AG-P9 said:

It's important as a youth that I join any group discussing issues that affect my everyday life. This is how I can learn from others in order to improve myself and the future. I have realised that some of the problems affecting us are caused by the lack of knowledge and knowledge comes through interaction with others. So I joined the group to improve my knowledge and to try and improve my relations with others.

This group of participants also anticipated that their participation in the group would build better understanding, unity and collaboration with others. AG-P10 said:

I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to bring people of different political backgrounds together to try and dig the past, understand what happened and be able to discuss ways to change the way things are. I was positive when I decided to volunteer and I knew what I wanted.

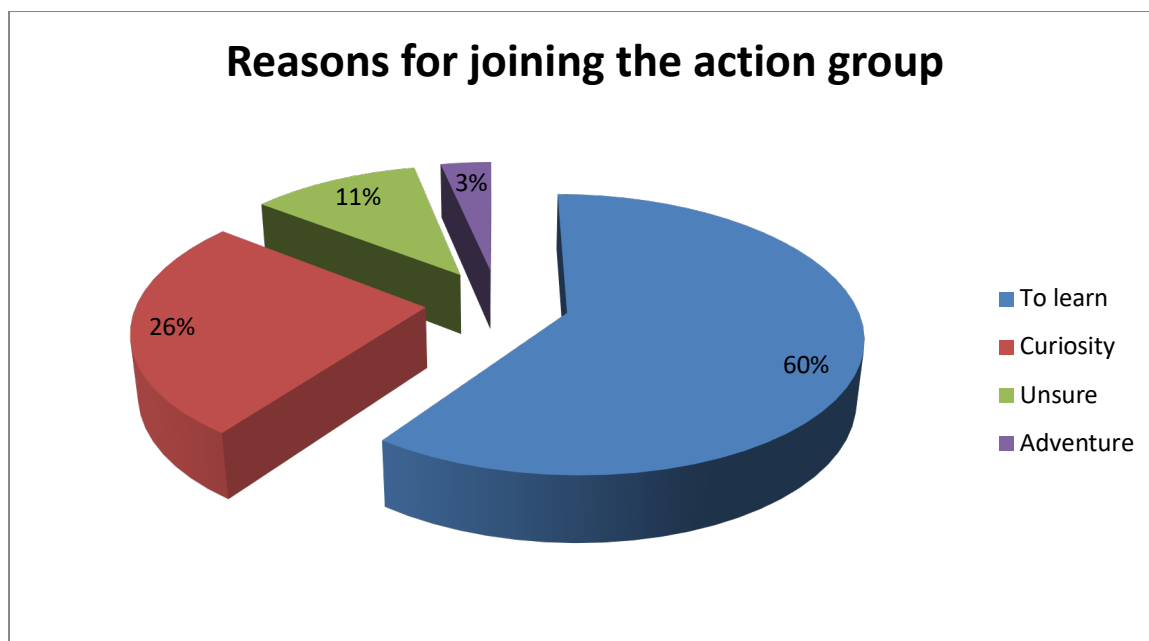


Figure 9. 2: Participants’ reasons for joining the action group (Source: Own data)

Having people with interest in peacebuilding was important for the achievement of research objectives as I was working with a majority of people who were conscious of the purpose to which the group was created. The level of consciousness was also aided by the fact that I explained the rationale for establishing the group at the end of the focus group discussions during baseline data gathering when I made the call for volunteers to join the group.

People who are politically powerful often define and attempt to find solutions to problems affecting the other communities on their own. When people join initiatives to join groups that attempt to find solutions, it suggests an acknowledgement that the current situation is unsatisfactory or needs to be improved. In such a situation, working with people who voluntarily express interest may help in that they have important experiences with the problem and may have expert knowledge to remedy the situation.

9.5. 2 What are your feelings about the activities undertaken by the group?

The question sought to gather feelings of individual participants and the specific ways in which the intervention had improved their perceptions and attitudes. The question had two parts: the short answer and a section providing an explanation to the short answer. Participants were asked to choose one of the following answers: ‘Very helpful’, ‘helpful’, ‘somewhat helpful’ and ‘not helpful’. Participants’ responses are shown in figure 9.3 below.

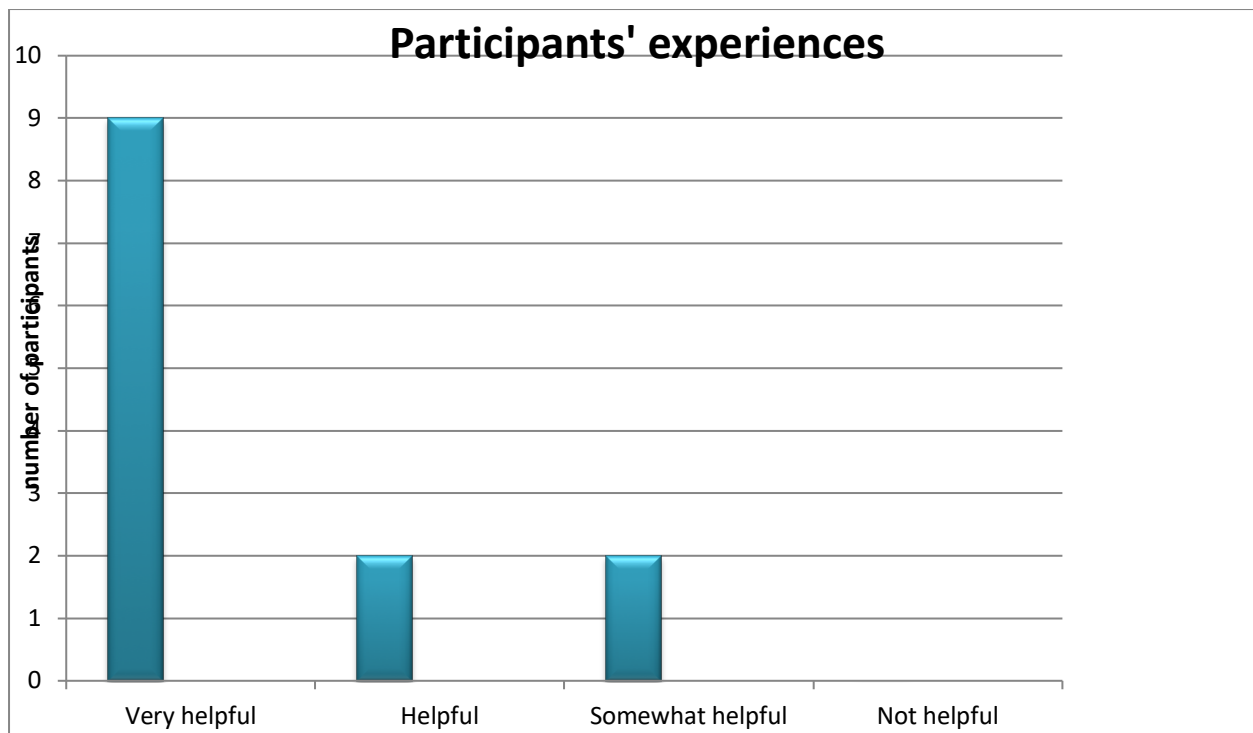


Figure 9.3: Experiment group participants' experiences with the activities of the group (Source: Own data)

Of the 13 participants in the action group, nine (69.2%) reported to have had a very helpful experience while four (30.8%) found the experience to be either helpful or somewhat helpful. The 'not helpful' response was not reported. Explanations of the short answers generated a number of themes which are subsequently reported and discussed hereunder.

a. Improved understanding

Participants alluded that the group enabled them to discuss real issues that affected them across the political divide. They indicated that dialogue enabled them to explore issues that were affecting their relations, which could have been difficult to talk about. AG-P4 said:

Sharing and talking about forgiveness helped me realise that we are only divided by politics but our different ethnic backgrounds have almost common values that promote forgiveness and peace.

AG-P13 also said:

The group made me realise that people are really hurt by violence. This is not a problem that is happening elsewhere. It's with us and I felt obligated to do something to improve the understanding of one another. I'm challenged to behave respectfully toward others even if they come from a different background from mine.

The process of re-storying and re-connecting enabled by dialogue facilitated a change among some participants. Prior to the intervention, participants held negative perceptions of the other that influenced

negative relationships. The worst affected participants belonged to opposition parties who had lost hope as they experienced stereotyping from ruling party supporters. On the other hand, some participants from the ruling party were also disturbed by the widely held perspective that all ZANU-PF supporters are violent. The dialogue process therefore provided participants on both sides an opportunity to correct perceptions about each other. Below are samples of responses on individual participants' feelings about the group:

AG-P3:

It was my first time to be in a conversation with people from other political identities. At first I thought what we were doing was just to kill time but with time I began to realise that despite our differences what we discussed was really exposing the genuine interest of our community. After three or four meetings, I began to have a little sense of being liberated and connected. My emotions were slowing down.

AG-P4:

My feeling is that what the group did moved me a bit. With every meeting, I began to feel that something positive was happening. The experiences shared, the commitment shown and the openness of others was really encouraging. After every meeting I would go home and tell my wife the discussions were one of the important things I had took part in 2016. There is hope for the future if the group continues this way.

AG-P7:

The whole process allowed me to feel and think properly. I managed to express my feelings and emotions from deep inside and I was touched to realise people can have time to listen to me. I am also developing this habit of listening when others are talking, which I was not used to before. I felt the growing cohesion and understanding in the group.

AG-P8:

The process somehow forced me to see other people in the group in better ways. The open discussions allowed me to see deep inside other people's feelings. I now understand an important point that the quality of my relationship with others determines the quality of life that I will lead. I always have to promote good understanding with others all the time.

AG-P12:

What we were doing was small but big in a way. In my case, I was completely surprised with people whom I had never talked to before coming close and initiating conversations. At first I thought this was not happening. The chats on *whatsapp* then showed me that people were coming closer through those conversations. There is this guy from the ruling party, I was beginning to feel close to him toward the last meetings but I used to avoid him. I'm not sure if this feeling will remain though but for now things appear to be moving in the right direction. We are doing the gardening together and I think we are okay (*gesturing*).

AG-P13:

The dialogue helped me to understand that even if there is a general view that supporters of the ruling party are violent, there were some who were ready to work with others for a peaceful community.

From the above quotes, it can be surmised that dialogue allows people to engage in conversations among former opponents by giving each space to talk and listen. The process allowed for change of perceptions and mind sets toward each other. Participants who were not in talking terms or who considered others as their enemies began to connect, develop a sense of safety and fear lessens. Relationships were beginning to be re-established as participants began to define their common interests and grow something new. New realities were beginning to emerge. The power of restoration and transformation embedded in dialogue was felt by participants. There is cause for optimism that participants were developing the necessary capacity to work toward peace given the variation on attitude observed in the control group.

The attitudes and perceptions from the experiment group were compared with the control group in order to observe disparities. The following question was asked to participants in the control group: *Have you made an effort to understand someone whom you have been in conflict with?* The question had two parts. The short answer, were participants had to make one choice among the following phrases: 'Always', 'Almost always', 'Sometimes' and 'Not at all'. The choices were followed by an explanation. Participants' responses are shown in Figure 9.4. From the responses in the figure, understanding among participants in the control group had not improved as responses recorded showed that of the 13 participants, 10 (76.9%) reported a 'Not at all', Two (15.4%) 'Sometimes', and one (7.7%) reported 'Almost always'. The 'Always' category was not reported. This implied that the attitude not to engage others was still rife. The explanations given to the short answers showed that use of hostile language and the tendency to justify positions were key factors sustaining the negative views on engagement. The feeling of 'us' versus 'them' was still rampant. The inability to engage one another is a sign that the person concerned can also not understand the interests of opponents. Where there is failure to understanding one another, misperceptions tend to define relationships. Yet it is fact that most of the violence that occur are fuelled by assumptions and misperceptions. People need to improve their understanding of the other if relationships are to be bettered.

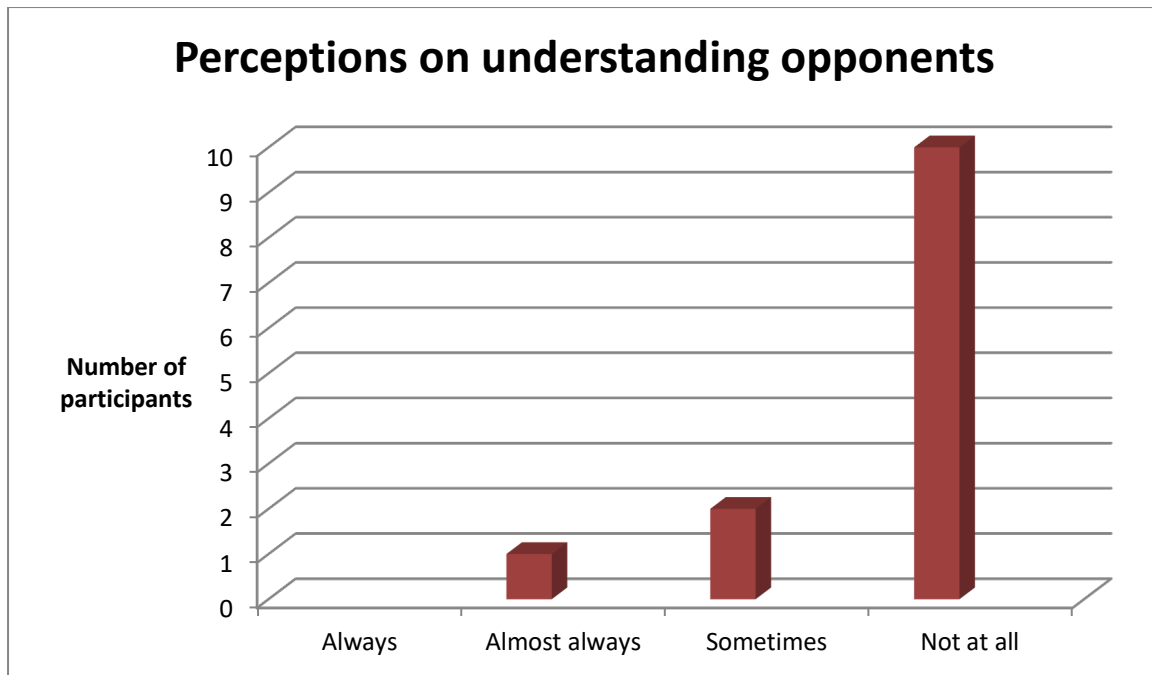


Figure 9.4: Control group participants’ perceptions on efforts to understand others (Source: Own data)

Working in a group facilitates individuals to reconcile their interests or at least achieve some level of satisfaction in their legitimate interests. As individuals engage each other, their sense of who they are in relation to others can improve. As they understand themselves better, they can also identify similarities which help to reduce distance with others. There is potential for unity and common identity among individuals who work in group environments. A group environment tends to promote interaction at an interpersonal level and help create a new environment in which members become involved (Kartz and McNulty 1994: 2-3). As one person changes, other members may see the need for change as well. Through engagement, group members begin to realise their differing needs and interests which may lead to adjustment in positions that generate negative conflict. The group environment offers opportunities to clarify the real problem that cause divisions. This is possible through sharing ideas and interaction. As individuals share their thoughts and feelings with one another in the group, mistrust is minimised, releasing the energy previously spent on fuelling the conflict.

The conviction that one’s perceptions reflect reality and that those who see things differently are wrong is part of human nature. The tendency of people to deny their own bias, even while recognising bias in others, reveals a profound shortcoming in self-awareness (Pronin 2006: 36). People are inward-looking and are mostly subjective at perceiving their positions in relation to others. Perceptions are informed by belief, context, needs, interests and motives. Such biases can compromise accurate judgement and decision making that lead to misunderstanding and conflict escalation. The most common form of misperception is that people tend to see themselves in a positive light even when evidence suggests

otherwise. People who are the source of the conflict tend not to notice it. They tend to see their behaviour, perceptions and attitudes as justified or overly positive. Through dialogue, wrong perceptions can be corrected and promote better understanding.

b. Better communication

Participants felt that the group experience was ‘very positive’ or ‘positive’ because dialogue laid the foundation for communication among them. Communication was ostensibly made easier by the *whatsapp* platform. AG-P7 had this to say:

My fear was the communication we were having in the group will disappear with the end of the dialogue meetings. I have been proven wrong for now. We are continuing to know each other better because now we are talking every moment on *whatsapp*.

The response shows the impact of dialogue where there is poor communication. Dialogue enables face-to-face encounter which encourages better understanding and communication. Through dialogue, decisions to improve communication were made. Communication in turn reduces wrong assumptions and mysteries as parties develop closer understanding and appreciation of the other. Where there is good communication, misinformation which plays a significant role in inflaming conflicts is reduced. Even if participants were not yet a united block, they were at least developing an understanding and appreciation of the other through constant communication. They were no longer seeing each other as enemies but potential friends who deserve to live with each other in peace. Experiment group participants’ views were compared with the control group.

The situation was gloomy in the control group. Respondents in the control group were asked the following question: *Do you communicate with people who have wronged you in the past or those whom you consider enemies and how do you communicate?* The question had two parts. The short answer, were participants had to make one choice among the following phrases: ‘Always’, ‘Almost always’, ‘Sometimes’ and ‘Not at all’. The choices were followed by an explanation. Responses to the question are shown in figure 9.5.

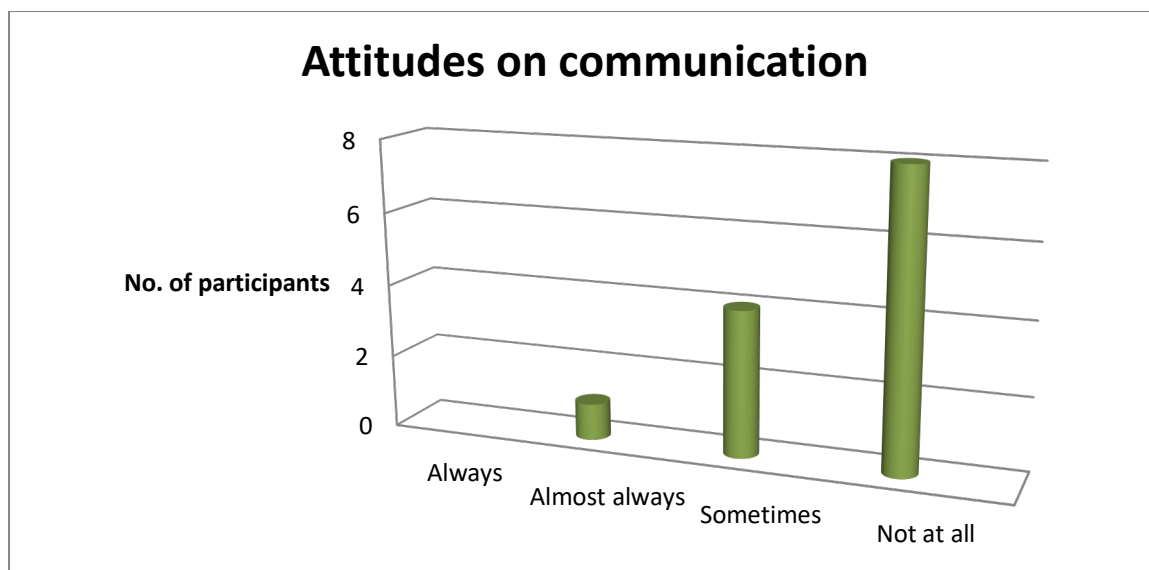


Figure 9.5: Control group participants' attitudes on communicating with opponents (Source: Own data)

The majority of participants in the group strongly indicated no purpose in communicating with people who had abused them in the past. This is evidenced by the responses in the above figure which shows that of the 13, participants, eight (61.5%) chose 'Not at all', four (30.8%) chose 'Sometimes' and one (7.7) chose 'Almost always'. The 'Always' category was not reported. Participants thought that establishing communication with people who had abused them was wrong as doing so will be glorifying their acts. Some said they were still overwhelmed by emotions of anger and frustration, discomfort, fear and insecurity as reasons why they were not keen on communicating with others. There were also sentiments that communicating with political opponents was not proper as participants feared censure in their own party structures. The 'Almost always' and 'Sometimes' choices were chosen because participants said they were communicating with the people who had wronged them whenever they came face-to-face with them because some of them had apologised for their actions and had made a commitment not to attack them in the future. They said they were finding it hard not to talk to them because some of the people were close neighbours. Participants said communicating with their neighbours was as important as communicating with their relatives since these were the people whom they were seeing every day. This was positive since people were finding time to talk to each other without the involvement of a third party. However, the fact that the 'Always' choice was not reported suggests that where there is no understanding, communication may be difficult to establish. Participants in the experiment were beginning to establish lines of communication because the dialogue that they engaged in offered them opportunities to understand each other better, transcending the misperceptions and prejudices they had before.

Results suggest that intervention strategies are meaningless if the need to communicate about issues causing negative conflict is ignored. Negative patterns of communication can often lead to greater frustration and escalation of conflict. Communication style is dependent on socialisation, culture, gender and other factors which may escalate or reduce tension (Marman et al 2004). Resorting to appropriate communication helps to clear misunderstanding and frustration among parties. In order to understand each other well, the requirement for effective speaking and listening skills is obvious. The speaker-listener technique can help individuals to communicate effectively through sharing thoughts, feelings and concerns, use of 'I' messages when speaking to accurately express opinion and feelings, asking for clarification if unsure of what the speaker has said and argue or express opinion after one has finished speaking (Markman, Stanley and Blumberg 2010). Understanding and validating other's thoughts and feelings can improve relationships and help parties to find common ground, which can result in more affective responses to conflict. Dealing with tense conflict situations can be challenging but embracing basic communication can increase opportunities for relationship growth.

c. Acting together enhanced tolerance

The peace garden was reported to be drawing people closer as they were often meeting at the garden. The action taken dovetails with the conflict transformation and restorative justice principles. Participants were taking deliberate action to transform relationships that were threatening peace by accommodating both victims and perpetrators in the project. The attitude represented the capacity that was developing among participants to promote reconciliation. AG-P2 said:

The garden is making it possible for me to see myself as part of the group. If we are not meeting to work in the garden, I feel like I'm missing something. It's gradually becoming part of my life.

AG-P5 furthered the sentiment:

The garden is bringing out important lessons for me. I'm realising how small things like these are demonstrating the power of unity. Our differences are less pronounced than our common interests. Working together in the garden is really promising some good things to come.

The garden project was creating space for the transformation of conflictual relationships beyond the conversations that were held. Participants are involving themselves in a project that has more meaning beyond being just a physical activity by enabling them to maintain the spirit of togetherness.

Participants also felt that participation in the dialogue sessions and working together in the garden was a source of emerging tolerance. AG-P2 who had failed to sit next to participants who supported the opposition parties during the first meeting of the group amplified this point:

At first I thought something bad will happen in the discussions. I could not believe that I was in the same room with the guys from the opposition discussing all those sensitive issues without exchanging insults. My tolerance improved a bit as we began to frequent the garden. I am actually talking more to some of them and sometimes our discussions end up discussing hot political issues without getting personal about it.

This change may be miniscule given the deep animosity between supporters of the ruling party and the opposition. However, it is positive change in the small group that I worked with during my research. It is a case that demonstrates the potential of dialogue and the attendant action to transform the behaviour of individuals who elect to be part of peacebuilding initiatives. The fact that the participant found it hard to sit next to supporters from rival parties was an indication of intolerance and now that the participant was developing a habit of discussing politics without being emotional was a sign of tolerance which was developing. The co-existence that was demonstrated in the response is a positive sign for hope that reconciliation can be realised. This stems from the point that a sense of tolerance enables people to appreciate each other and discover the love in one another. The discovery of this potential can facilitate the growth of mutual respect which is an indicator of the nascent capacity to reconcile with others.

The attitudes from the experiment group were compared with the control group on the basis of the following question posed to participants: *Will you collaborate with your opponents in actions that promote peace in your community?* The first part of the question required a short answer, of which the choices were: ‘Very possible’, ‘Possible’, ‘A little possible’ and ‘Impossible’. Participants’ responses are shown in Figure 9.6.

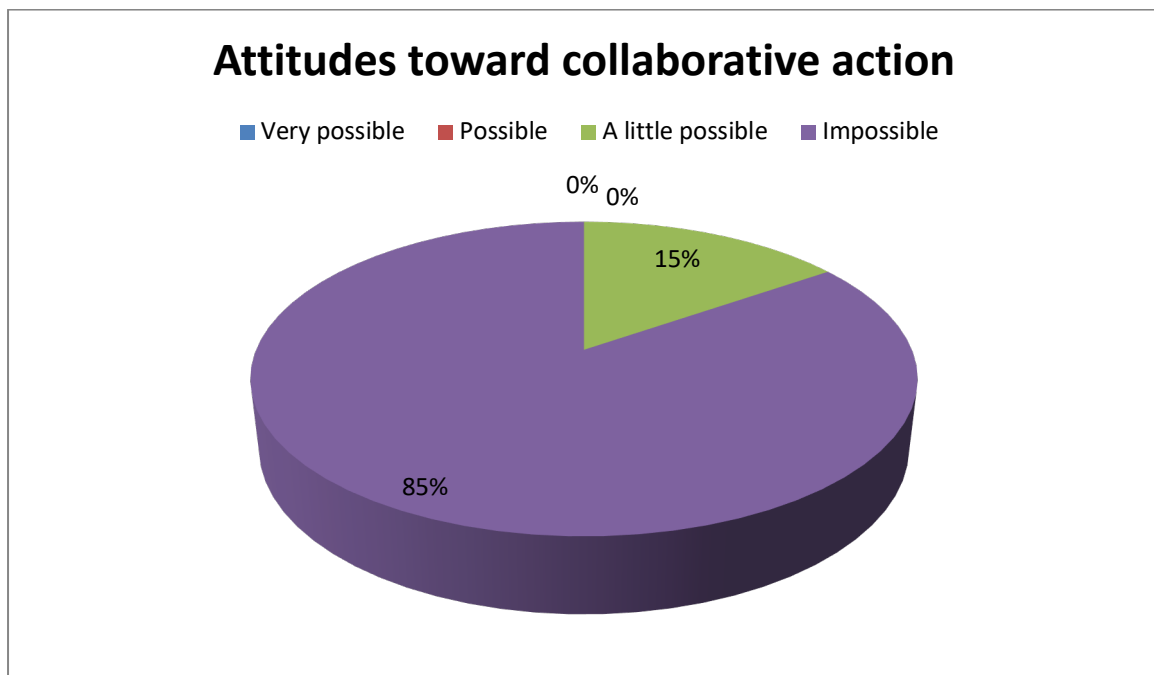


Figure 9.6: Control group participants’ attitudes toward collaborative action (Source: Own data)

The figure shows that of the 13 participants in the control group, 11 (85%) were unwilling (reported 'Impossible') to engage in collaborative action that promote peace with others, while two (15%) saw a remote possibility of doing so (reported 'A little possible'. The 'Very possible' and 'Possible' categories were not reported. The reasons for their choices were that they found it impossible to work with people of different political backgrounds or people who have caused suffering in their lives or families. Those who saw the possibility thought that the involvement of a third party in their relationship could offer opportunities for collaboration. Participants had negative views on collaboration showing that the possibility of opponents working together is a distant reality. Participants' attitudes inhibit action that may promote peace as they were not ready to collaborate or accommodate opponents to pursue common interests. Attitudes shown represent lack of capacity among participants who were not exposed to the intervention when compared with those in the experiment group. The implication is that divisions will persist and differences become more pronounced and relationships remain tense. The attitude of intolerance is quite evident given the deep political polarisation demonstrated in the responses. Participants do not appreciate each other making peaceful co-existence unlikely.

Tolerance, understanding, solidarity and cohesion constitute a key foundation for building cultures of peace (UN 1999). Tolerance is about a fair and objective attitude toward those whose opinions, practice, identities differ from one's own. It is a way of thinking, feeling and acting that gives individuals respect for those who are different (Arwine and Mayer 2012); a skill acquired by an individual in order to live with others peacefully (Bullard 1996). Tolerance acknowledges:

- Diversity and uniqueness.
- Society as organic – individuals are interdependent.
- Solidarity without conformity.
- Locating commonalities in the midst of diversity.

A greater degree of tolerance in society promotes respect for rights of others. In explaining why groups promote tolerance, we can also refer to Allport's contact hypothesis, which argues that various forms of contact reduce prejudice against others. Allport surmise that favourable change in attitudes and behaviour is higher among integrated rather than segregated people. Contact which comes through collective action helps citizens to acquire tolerance (Hinckley 2010). By and large, tolerance is a product of understanding which ensures that perceived differences do not lead to segregation or violence. Tolerance promotes social cohesion and solidarity, which in turn contributes to cultures of peace (Vollhardt et al 2009: 139). Good listening can be used to diffuse the negative feelings and emotions when they arise. The members of a group have an opportunity to be heard and their similarities and differences clarified.

Intolerance increases significantly if a person perceives that his/her way of life is under an existential threat. This weakens commitment to values such as tolerance. It is easier to be tolerant of different groups or socio-political perspectives when tolerance does not seem to carry a cost (Arwine and Mayer 2012). Intolerance is a sign of lack of trust and can be engendered by contextual factors. For instance, state policies that promote civil and political liberties and democracy tend to promote tolerance while authoritarian inclinations tend to induce intolerance among citizens.

d. Unable to change the bigger problem

This theme emerged from explanations rendered by two participants (AG-P6 and AG-P11) whose feelings toward the group activities were ‘somewhat positive’. Thus even if 11 out of 13 (84.6%) had ‘very positive’ and ‘positive’ feelings about the group experience, two participants felt that despite the group efforts, it was difficult to change the problem of political violence without including more people in similar activities. It was felt that the group was dealing with a bigger problem which required a bigger solution than what the group had done.

9.5.3 In what ways will your approach to conflict change as a result of your experience with the group?

This question sought to gather data on the specific ways in which the participants thought their approach to conflict would change from a violent to peaceful approaches as a result of the intervention. The question had two parts: the short answer and the long answer that explained the short answer. Participants were asked to choose one of the following options: ‘Very significant’, ‘significant’, ‘somewhat significant’ and ‘not in any way’. Results showed that of the 13 participants, four (31%) found the experience ‘Very significant’, 6 (46%) felt the group experience was ‘Significant’, two (15%) regarded the experience as ‘Somewhat significant’ while one (8%) thought the experience not significant in terms of informing their approaches to conflict situations. The responses are shown in Figure 9.6 below.

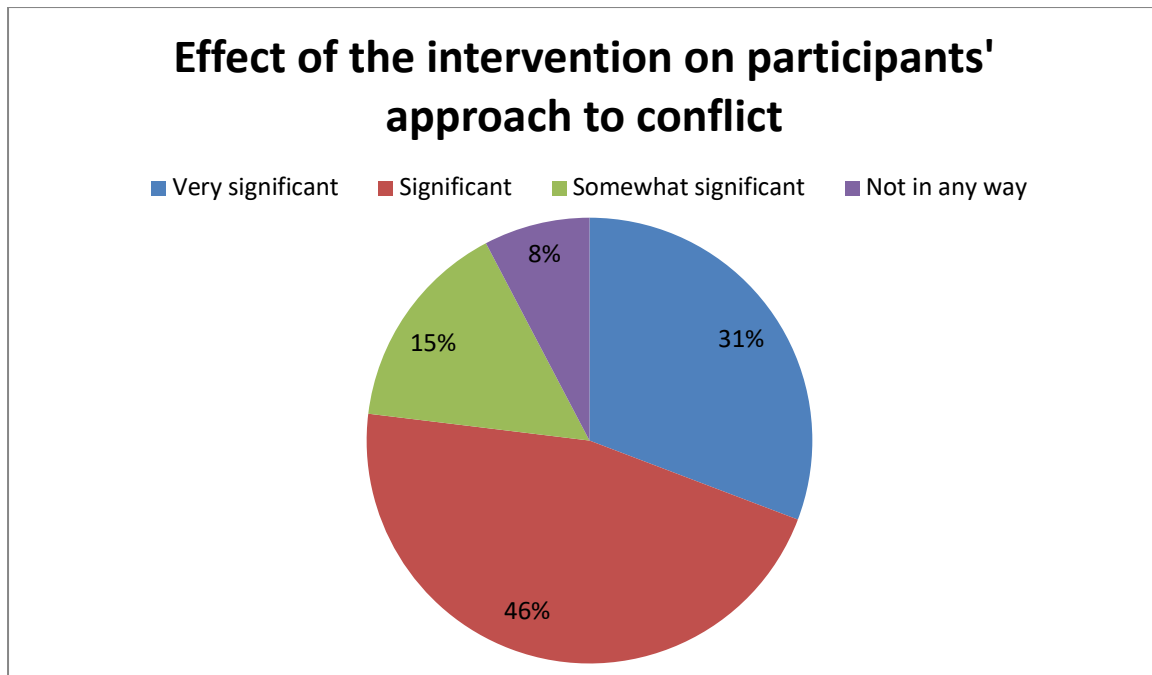


Figure 9.7: Experiment group participants' approach to conflict after the intervention (Source: Own data)

Explanations of the short answers generated themes which are subsequently reported, discussed and compared with the control group hereunder.

a. Seeking nonviolent solutions

Participants who reported the 'Very significant' and the 'Significant' (see figure 9.5) noted that in as much as conflict was normal, they intended not to use violence as an option to resolve differences. Participants strongly felt that they were ready to embrace peaceful solutions. This commitment recognised the past experiences of witnessing destruction as a result of political violence. AG-P8 captured this commitment:

When you don't know what you are doing, the tendency is to resort to violence and the excitement of violence is misleading. You can't even realise the damage that you are causing but you come to realise that the price is too high when you have an opportunity to share those experiences like we did in the group. The persistence of conflict is so distressing. I'm realising the barbarism of violence. It's hell to see others nursing injuries of violence simply because you have failed to agree on some issue. I'm beginning to see alternative ways of resolving differences which are even better than violence. Simply talking and asking a few questions before you react can be helpful.

The response was encouraging considering that the common source of division among people is politically motivated violence that is frequently sponsored by powerful political actors at the national

level. The realisation that violence is synonymous with destruction was a push factor toward nonviolent solutions. The *'talking and asking a few questions before you react'* contained in the response is an indirect reference to engagement and negotiation when faced with conflict. Such peaceful ways of approaching conflict have the capacity to yield peaceful solutions that will last for long compared to violence which leaves scars that last long. AG-P3 cemented this point:

The meetings that we had made me to understand what is necessary for peace. I now know that peace can be made through peaceful ways. Violence can never bring real peace. The message I have is that people need to learn to discuss and negotiate differences. This is not a new thing because if we have problems in the family we sit down, negotiate and compromise without resorting to fighting. I'm also trying to do the same when I disagree with others. I have been trying this at the garden when I feel someone has wronged me.

The responses demonstrate that participants were committed to having new ways of resolving conflicts. They were beginning to think of other options than violence. This marked a difference from the attitudes observed before the intervention was implemented. This could be a realisation that violence had failed to resolve differences. Violence is engendered by misperceptions and nonviolent ways such as engagement and negotiation highlighted in the responses increase the chances of clarifying the misconceptions. This is consistent with the nonviolent philosophy which is a powerful source of social change that rejects the use of physical violence. Nonviolence promotes peaceful action and promotes respect and love among parties in conflict. It promotes self-control when confronted with conflict, and is motivated by the desire for justice in society. One of the prominent agitators of the nonviolence school, Martin Luther King, Jr summarises the utility of nonviolence when approaching conflict in this manner: "Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him."

The attitudes of participants in the experiment group when faced with conflict were compared with those from the control group. Significant differences were observed on the basis of the following question posed to the 13 participants in the control group: *Would you use physical violence to resolve a conflict in which you may be involved in?* As usual, participants were given the following choices, from which they were to pick one: 'Yes', 'Maybe' and 'No'. The choices were followed by explanations. The responses from the participants were as follows: Two reported 'Yes', three said 'Maybe' and eight said 'No'. The responses are shown in figure 9.7 below.

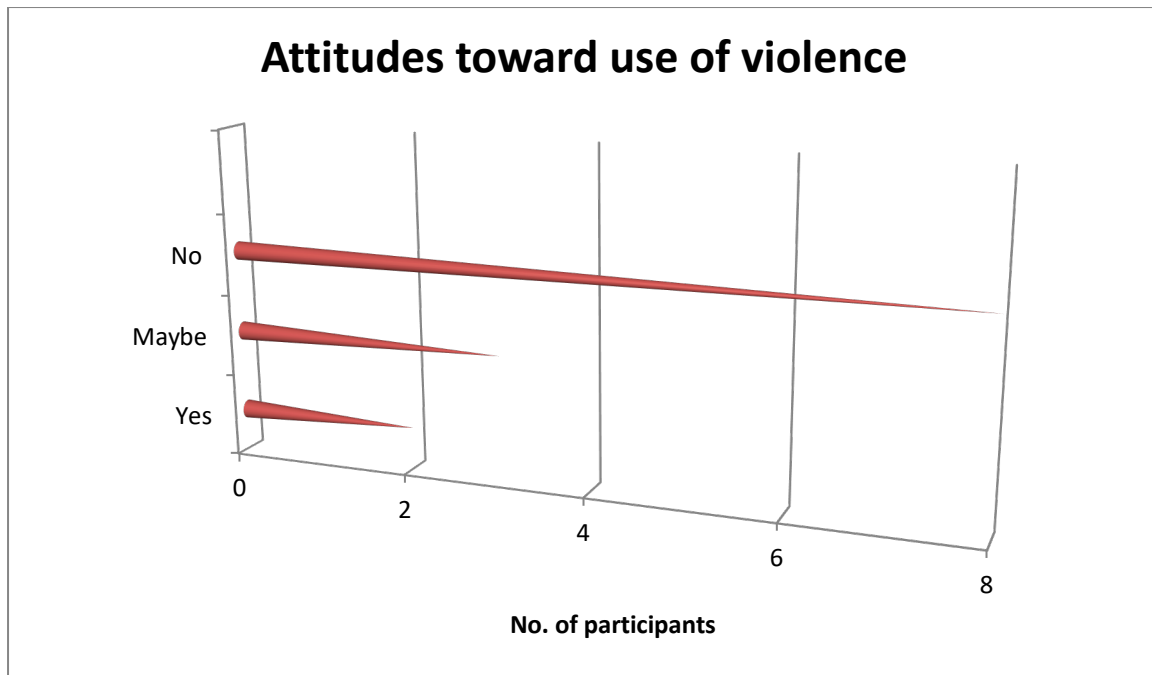


Figure 9.8: Control group participants' attitudes toward use of violence (Source: Own Data)

As shown in the figure, the majority of participants did not either believe in peaceful approaches to conflict (8 participants) or expressed doubt on whether they would use such approaches (3). However, a minority (2) were amenable to peaceful approaches. So while the persistence of violence was regarded as distressing by participants in the experiment group, the majority in the control group thought that violence was an important tool for communicating the message to one's opponents especially when politics comes into play. Hence the dominant response to the question was 'No'. Besides, use of peaceful means was also regarded by this group as a sign of weakness, a message which they did not want to send to their opponents. The 'No' option was therefore chosen by participants who found pleasure in seeing their opponents suffer. In other words, the participants were intolerant of diversity in opinions and choices. To me, these participants lacked the basic moral feeling toward others. This attitude was changing among participants in the experiment group who experienced dialogue. Participants who reported the 'Yes' option said they were socialised by their families not to use violence no matter how serious the argument. Participants who reported the 'Maybe' choice thought that they could use peaceful means if others were willing to do the same. Their choices were therefore driven by the principle of reciprocity. However, they were also prepared to use violence to defend themselves against violent opponents. The responses gotten from the control group in comparison to the experiment group expose a lack of capacity for reconciliation because proper relationships cannot be constructed on the belief in violence.

The efficacy and viability or superiority of nonviolent methods to attain social change is well established but was also confirmed by participants. Nonviolence is about making people aware of the power that lay latent within them. It is the insistence on truth, and dependence on the force inherent in truth that makes this approach attractive. It entails not the mere abstention from physical violence, but the positive use of the power of love and truth in the active transformation of minds, institutions and societies. Perhaps the best known advocate and practitioner of nonviolence, Mahatma Gandhi believed that violence was another way of injustice. He argued: “Those who seek to destroy men rather than their manners adopt violence and become worse than those whom they destroy under the mistaken belief that their manners will die with them they do not know the root of the evil.” This means that violence is not only immoral as a response to conflict; it is also ineffective because it destroys not the manners but man. Nonviolence is not a negative term but an effective response that focuses on love of doing good, even to the evil doer. However, it does not mean helping the evil doer to continue the wrong or tolerating it by passive acquiescence. Nonviolent emphasis is on peaceful intervention to conflict (Ho-Won Jeong 1999). This means presenting a peace alternative in which people act as agents seeking nonviolent solutions. Felder (1991: 13) cogently underscore this: “Peace does not mean the removal of all conflict and anger and the bringing in of love of everyone; what it does mean is that we have methods for creating balance and harmony between opposing parties.” Nonviolence is based on a culture that believes in and love of all humanity.

However, responses from the control group suggests that violence can be sustained by cultural and social norms such as cultural intolerance and stereotyping of others in society that makes it difficult for some people to accommodate other people with different norms, values, identities and beliefs. The belief in violence may also suggest that interventions in the form of government policy and laws to challenge the cultural sources of violence have not been successful (WHO 2009). The overall picture emerging from the evidence presented in literature is that political violence in Zimbabwe is imbedded in the governance culture that evolved from the colonial state to the post-colonial governments. Masunungure (2011: 50)’s observation that “the political history of the country is an uninterrupted progression of various shades of authoritarianism, first under white-settler colonialism from 1890 to 1979, and under black post-colonial regime since 1980” is vindicated. Indeed, the cause of violence during the colonial era was political, and the pattern continued after independence as evidenced by various episodes allegedly sponsored by the state.

b. Managing emotions

Participants who chose ‘Very significant’ and ‘Significant’ as shown in figure 9. 5 also acknowledged that emotions such as frustration and anger were part of human response to conflict. However, in as they acknowledged this as normal occurrences in humans, participants said they were now aware that if emotions spiral out of control, it can have destructive effect on relationships. AG-P7 recognised this:

When I get angry, I quickly acknowledge my anger without causing physical or emotional discomfort to others. I was very much used to express my anger through verbal outbursts. At first I thought this was making me feel better but the guilty feeling was always coming back at a later stage. The meetings that we had and meeting those guys at the garden here and there is helping me to do some self-control. I am developing this ability to just control myself even if I feel I should just burst.

The response shows that emotions associated with anger are natural occurrences which need to be acknowledged and managed for they have the capacity to aggravate conflict or even destroy relationship. When conflict stimulates emotions of anger, people need to find constructive responses that can generate positive conflict handling as AG-P7 is learning to do. The verbal outbursts which AG-P7 used to resort to are by their nature abusive and improper for relationship building. Acknowledging emotions through constructive responses enables one to take steps to address the conflict in a calm way. A constructive response to conflict acknowledges that anger must be brought out in the open and communicated to the other party in the conflict without hurting them. Proper management of anger not only allows for peaceful solutions to conflict but also opens avenues for forgiveness, which can lead to deepening understanding and closeness in a relationship. The purpose of managing emotions is thus to understand the cause of the emotion and conveying it in a non-harmful way. Managing emotions is never meant to suppress the feeling; it is meant to help the angered party to feel better and strengthen relationships. Participants' responses were therefore encouraging as they acknowledged the problem associated with anger when expressed to harm others. Also critical is the aspect that managing emotions is imperative because conflicts always take place along the emotional spectrum. The specific emotion of anger may come and go but the emotional dimension is permanent component of human life. By and large, relationships are defined by the kind of emotion expressed.

The responses gotten from the experiment group were compared with the control group and differences in attitudes were observed. Majority of participants in the group had expressed lack of commitment to devise ways to manage their emotions of anger. The following question was posed to participants: *Would you control your emotions of frustration and anger when someone wrongs you?* The question sought to establish the exact ways in which participants would manage their emotions in conflict situations for comparison purposes. The question had two parts: the short answer, which participants chose from one of the following: 'Yes', 'Maybe' and 'No' and the long answer which was the explanation of the short answer. The responses are shown in figure 9.8 below.

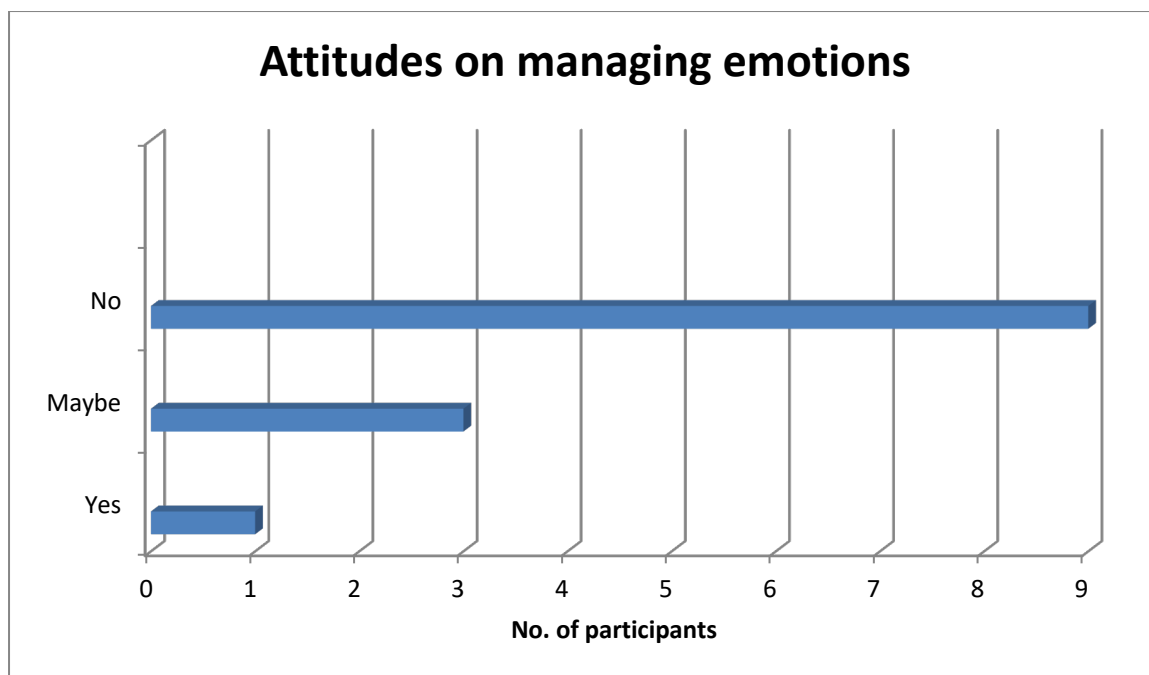


Figure 9.9: Control group participants' attitudes on managing emotions (Source: Own data)

The above figure shows that of the 13 participants in the group, nine had an attitude that emotions cannot be managed; three saw the possibility of controlling their emotions, while one expressed a positive attitude that indeed, emotions can be managed. The participant who chose 'Yes' said that she was able to control her anger by calming down inside her heart before deciding on how best to meet her needs without hurting others. The positive behaviour expressed by the participant was attributed to her socialisation within her church. She said that her church had imparted the values of peace throughout her life hence the tendency toward constructive responses when faced with a conflict situation. Participants who reported 'Maybe' said that their ability to manage emotions was dependent on the nature and extent of the wrong committed against them. The more harm they were to suffer, the lesser they were likely to control their anger, they said. The high number of participants who chose the 'No' option said that they experienced intense temper which they could not manage if they were wronged. They indicated that the only way they could manage anger was through aggressive behaviour to defend their selves whenever they felt threatened. They thought that this was necessary if they were to survive. I realised that the participants could not control their anger but were being controlled by anger. And when anger controls the person, it spirals out of control, destroys relationships and one's own quality of life. The quality of life is determined by the quality of relationships. I realised that they were failing to express their anger in an assertive but non-aggressive way which was causing hurt to others.

Emotional awareness is pivotal for people to understand themselves and others. The ability to handle conflict is connected to the emotions of anger, frustration, sadness and fear. Relationships and emotions are inseparable. However, emotions can result in either resentment or mutual respect depending on the

choices made by parties to a conflict. In a relationship characterised by mutual respect, emotions are controlled and conflict is approached from a positive frame of reference and brought to a mutually satisfying conclusion. The ability to control emotions suggests that parties use collaborative approaches to conflict intervention strategies, open expression of thoughts and feelings, recognition of each other's needs and respect for diversity and individual differences. In contrast, the emotions of anger are characterised by underlying resentment, destructive energy and negative feelings. Such feelings predispose parties to engage in intense conflict. This situation expresses itself in negative feelings of mistrust and imposes a rift among parties involved. The negative feelings are caused by (Kartz and McNulty 1994: 6):

- Use of inappropriate conflict intervention strategies.
- Preparedness to engage in future clashes.
- Unsettled grievances that accumulate over time.
- Stereotyping by one or all parties.

c. Regarding opponents as partners

The category of participants who chose 'Very significant' and 'Significant' (see figure 9.6) further said that the group experience had taught them to approach conflict with a positive outlook. They said that whatever happens in the context of human interaction needs to be approached collectively. Equally, their sentiments were that in the event of interpersonal conflict they would approach their enemies as partners in the process of seeking solutions. This demonstrated a strong shift of attitude from one of seeing opponents as enemies to one of potential friend. There was an element of accommodation that was developing among participants. AG-P6:

The way we engaged in conversations during our meetings showed me that people need each other when faced with a problem. I now believe in joint-problem solving in conflicts to change the course of the situation. I don't see how it's possible to do it alone when I'm not the only one involved (*pause*). *Chara chimwe hachitswanyi inda (this is a Shona proverb which means one needs to work with others in order to achieve his/her set goals; a lone ranger achieves less).*

The point deduced from the response is important in pointing to attitude change. There seems to be the realisation that when conflict occurs, people need not find themselves pursuing unilateral responses. Unilateral responses cause disconnection between parties as they foster artificial boundaries that promote division by forcing people into feelings of 'them' versus 'us'. The shift in attitude contained in the AG-P6's response is a positive sign of readiness to consider opponents in finding a way out of disruptive situations. The '*do it my way*' attitude was being eroded among participants. Regarding an opponent as a partner also entails the exploration of the underlying interests that led to the conflict and recognising personal differences and moving to collectively address the situation. The advantage of partnering your opponent in understanding the problem and finding solutions is that the process aids

the cause of peace as parties feel committed to peaceful solution they jointly agree upon. My view was that the intervention facilitated graduated reduction in tension among participants.

This aspect of attitude was also explored with the control group. The following question was asked: *Do you see yourself working with someone whom you think has wronged you to understand the problem and find solutions together?* Participants were asked to choose one of the following answers, which they were to offer explanations as well: ‘Very possible’, ‘Possible’ and ‘Impossible’ The majority of participants perceived working with their opponents as unacceptable. This showed a big variation with the experiment group where the majority thought it was necessary to engage one’s opponent to analyse the problem in order to devise solutions that are mutually acceptable. As shown in figure 9.9, two participants thought it was ‘Possible’ to partner one’s enemy to resolve conflicts when they arise and 11 thought it was ‘Impossible’ to do so. None thought it was ‘Very possible’.

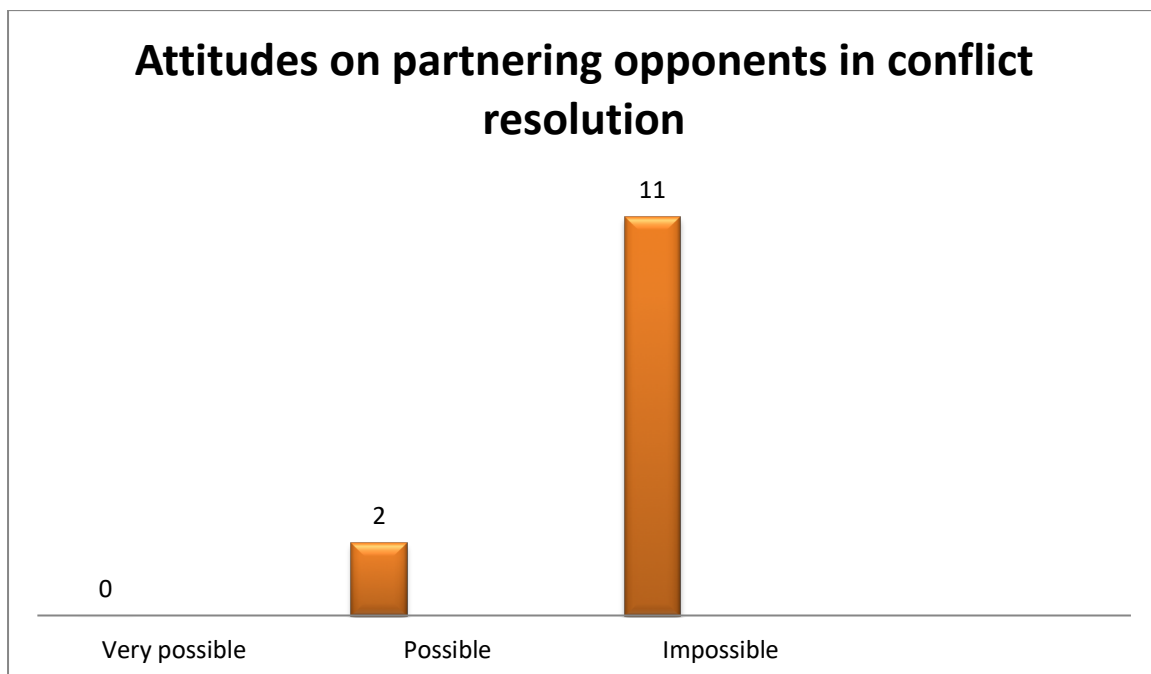


Figure 9.10: Control group participants’ attitudes on partnering opponents in conflict resolution
(Source: Own data)

The belief that engaging opponents is a sign of weakness was a key factor influencing participants’ attitudes. This was partly explained by a self-perception that they were always right and therefore they did not need to listen to what their opponents would say. Some were unwilling to let go the resentment of having been wronged hence their emotions were inhibiting collaboration. What is unfortunate from the responses of the majority in the control group was the suggestion that most participants were ignorant of the fact that unresolved conflicts between themselves and their opponents would fester if not addressed. And because conflicts involve perceived threats to people’s well-being and security, they also destroy relationships. The need to partner opponents to analyse and find solutions reported by the

majority in the experiment group is therefore a positive commitment to relationship building by participants who experienced the intervention.

Essential to positive approach to conflict is rapport, which is the ability to create a relationship of responsiveness and attentiveness with the other. Collaboration promotes constructive attitude, meaning that regardless of what happened in the past, individuals have to act on the basis of positive intention. By collaborating with former enemies, participants demonstrated that:

- People have the means to effect change they wish to make in their relationships.
- People can do the best they can to work with the minimal resources to achieve positive change.
- Mutually acceptable solutions are always available in any conflict situation.
- People have capacity to choose cooperation than destructive competition.

The process of collaboration involves parties using reflective listening to change from negative emotional situations to positions amenable to resolving disputes and differences peacefully. The process allows parties to clarify misunderstanding and facilitate movement from focus on the past to a focus on the future. The process of collaboration suggests that parties involved have come to acknowledge the positive intentions of the other. The purpose of collaboration is to achieve a constructive emotional state where parties formerly in conflict have a clear and mutual understanding of each other's beliefs, needs and interests, building consensus and commitment (Verma 1998). Outcomes that result from collaborative efforts normally provide long-term solutions.

d. Considering others' needs and feelings

Participants expressed sentiments that they would strive to create rapport and openness with others in order to understand their needs and feelings. For instance, AG-P4 made the point when he said:

Feeling for others was not important for me. Now I'm trying to develop this habit by showing others that I understand them better by listening attentively whenever they talk to me if we disagree on *whatsapp* or when we usually meet at the garden. I'm beginning to realise how useful this is for me to understand why someone is disagreeing with my views.

Listening to others when conflict occurs will facilitate the gathering of all the details about the issue generating misunderstanding. The gathered detail puts one in a position to understand the needs and feelings of the other before solutions can be explored. Imposing solutions before understanding the needs and feelings of the other assures failure of solutions or they become short-lived. A commitment to understand the feelings and needs of the other reduces tension if the other party knows that his/her interests are being acknowledged. The responses were encouraging considering that prior to the intervention; conflicts among participants were also attributed to failure to acknowledge others as parties justified and defended their positions without taking time to listen to others. The importance of this approach to conflict is that it is collaborative and seeking to ring-fence relationships.

I did not seek to compare the findings on this section with the control group based on the assumption that since most of the participants (11- see figure 9.9) had ruled out the possibility of partnering opponents in problem analysis and exploring solutions together when conflict arises, I concluded that there was no way they could be forthcoming in understanding the needs and feelings of others. If they were negative about engaging others, it also implied that they were unsympathetic to their needs and feelings. I supposed that they still held a negative attitude on the worthiness of considering needs and feelings of their opponents.

Empathy is a contested concept but in peace studies it is generally understood as a psychological and a personality element that concerns the understanding of feelings of others' concerns and approaching the world from their view, recognising differences in feelings over similar issues. Empathy can be deciphered in three forms (Goleman 2013):

- Cognitive empathy – the ability to see the world through others' eyes.
- Emotional empathy – the ability to feel what the other person does.
- Empathetic concern – the ability to express care to another person.

The multiple ways in which empathy manifests is important in social communication as it helps improve abilities, understanding of emotions, greater sensitivity to other people's feelings and better understanding of consequences of one's behaviour. Empathy has crucial role to play in a society facing destruction brought by violence and injustice (Masterson and Kersey 2013). Thus the place of empathy in peace studies lies in legitimisation of the other's position, not to compel a person to agree with the opponent but to merely treat that position as legitimate and valid. Once empathy develops, people can have the opportunity to widen their approaches to the more complex world of tolerance, appreciation and accommodating others. People shift from egoistic inclinations to embrace selflessness. In short, empathy in peacebuilding facilitates the development of individuals that are tolerant, understanding and active agents of a culture of peace. Real peace is impossible to achieve without empathy. Interventions must promote understanding, tolerance and friendship for the cause of peace. The intervention undertaken by the action group promoted peace activists rather than political activists and fostered skills of care and understanding to promote reconciliation among participants.

However, results from the control group show that even if empathy is important in relationship building, barriers exist. Such barriers include a feeling of being different from others and maintaining personal distance at all cost. This can be a result of stereotyping, lack of respect for others, inability to listen to others, inability to manage emotions of anger, sadness and frustrations among other factors. But the failure of empathy can increase the risk of violence, victimisation and aggression (Dobrich and Dranoff 2003).

9.5.4 After your experience with the group, in what ways do you think your behaviour will promote reconciliation with others?

I asked participants to state the specific ways they thought their conduct would promote reconciliation after being part of the action group. This question sought to establish the specific behaviour traits that participants had developed after experiencing the intervention. The question had a section for short answers followed by long answers, which were explanations to the short response. Participants had to make choices for their short answers from the following: ‘Very significant’, ‘significant’, ‘somewhat significant’ and ‘not in any way’. Most participants (11 - those who chose ‘Very significant’ and ‘Significant’) stated that they would mutually encourage peaceful engagement in situations of misunderstanding in order to understand the circumstances pushing them into conflict. This was also an issue that emerged under section 9.5.4. Figure 9.10 captures participants’ short responses. Themes that emerged from the explanations to the short answers are presented and discussed below.

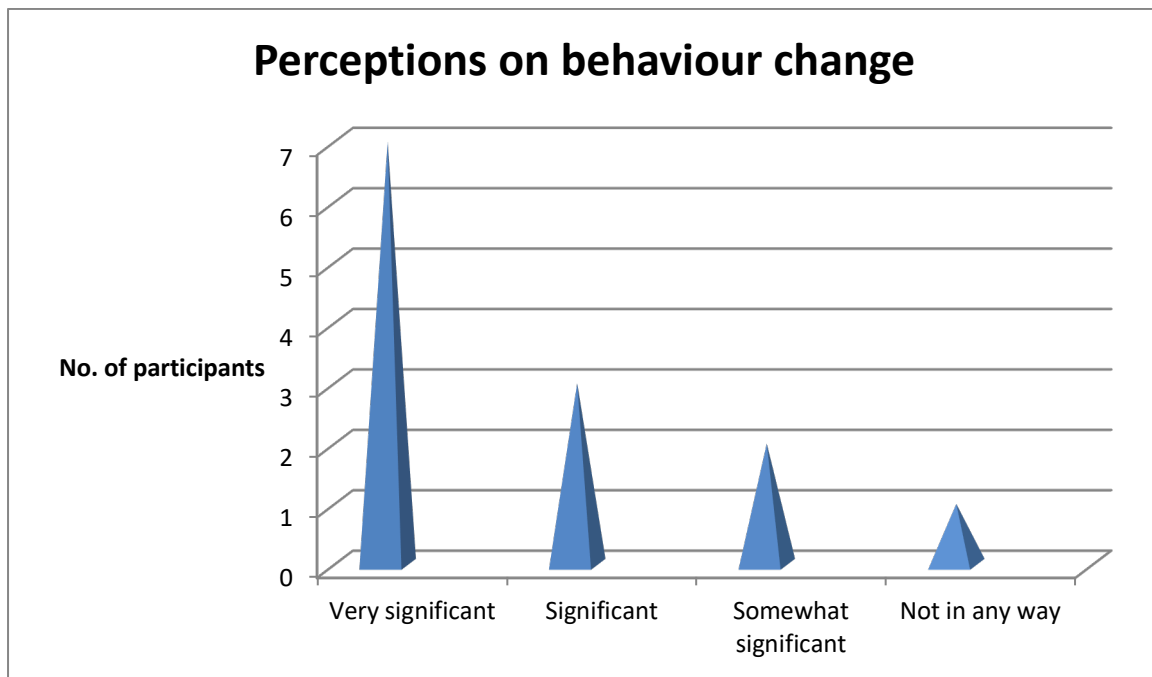


Figure 9.11: Perceptions on behaviour change among participants in the experiment group
(Source: Own data)

a. Respecting others

Participants who chose the ‘very significant’ and ‘significant’ pointed out that they would convey respect toward others. It was said that respect is one foundational aspect they will embrace to promote healthy relationships. AG-P5 emphasised that he would express respect to others first in order to be respected in return. Others emphasised that they would desist from the use of hostile language to attack opponents which they felt was a sign of disrespect. AG-P2 made a commitment to make an effort to be

cautious about on what to say to others. He said before talking to others he would consider what words to say and not to say as he considered words to be a measure of respect or lack of it. Further responses were as follows:

AG-P1 stated that:

I will avoid attitude that inflames conflict by not portraying politics as a do or die affair. Instead I will engage with other participants in respectful ways and acknowledging that we are different. I now understand that you don't need violence to win an argument and violence will not make a person see things the way I do.

AG-P12 added:

I'm moving to focus on issues that build close understanding and respecting others for what they are and the choices that they make in their lives. I think this will encourage unity among us. We are one people and the way to go is to commit ourselves to not hurt each other. Before you act violently toward others, just put yourself in the shoes of the person you want to attack. That way we should be able to build love and avoid hatred.

AG-P10 also made a commitment to avoid stereotypes that cause animosity and disunity emphasising that using the binaries of 'us' versus 'them' and other demonising labels that was a potent source of violence in the Ward. The participant further stated that he now understood better that confrontation attitude and being emotional about politics when dealing with people of opposing views undermined peaceful relations.

I sought to establish among participants in the control group their perceptions on respecting people whom they had been involved in conflict with to establish differences with the commitment expressed by participants in the experiment group. I posed the following question: *Do you think it is proper to respect people with whom you have been involved in conflict for the sake of promoting peaceful relationships?* Again, the question required a two tier response: the short answer, followed by a long answer, which was an explanation to the short answer. Participants were asked to choose one of the following short answers: 'Very proper', 'Proper', and 'Improper'. The short responses are shown in figure 9.11. Of the 13 participants in the group, 10 thought it was 'Improper' to respect your opponents or people who wronged you even if it meant that was the way to build peaceful relations; three felt it was 'Proper', while none saw it being 'Very proper'. The majority of participants who saw it improper to respect to respect others were doing so on the basis of self-pride in that they were not willing to show kindness toward their enemies. Others said they can only respect those whom they love not their enemies. To me this shows rudeness and a rejection of the basic values that bind human beings together. It shows there was no love among participants and that they were self-seeking. Yet relationships are built on the basis of love and respect. When these ingredients are lacking, any talk of reconciliation will be insincere. Comparing the dominant attitude in the control group with the dominant attitude in the experiment group, it is encouraging to note participants who experienced the intervention were making

commitment to understand and respect others. Participants were beginning to show love and using polite words toward other, which is what is need to transform relationships and encourage reconciliation in the long-term.

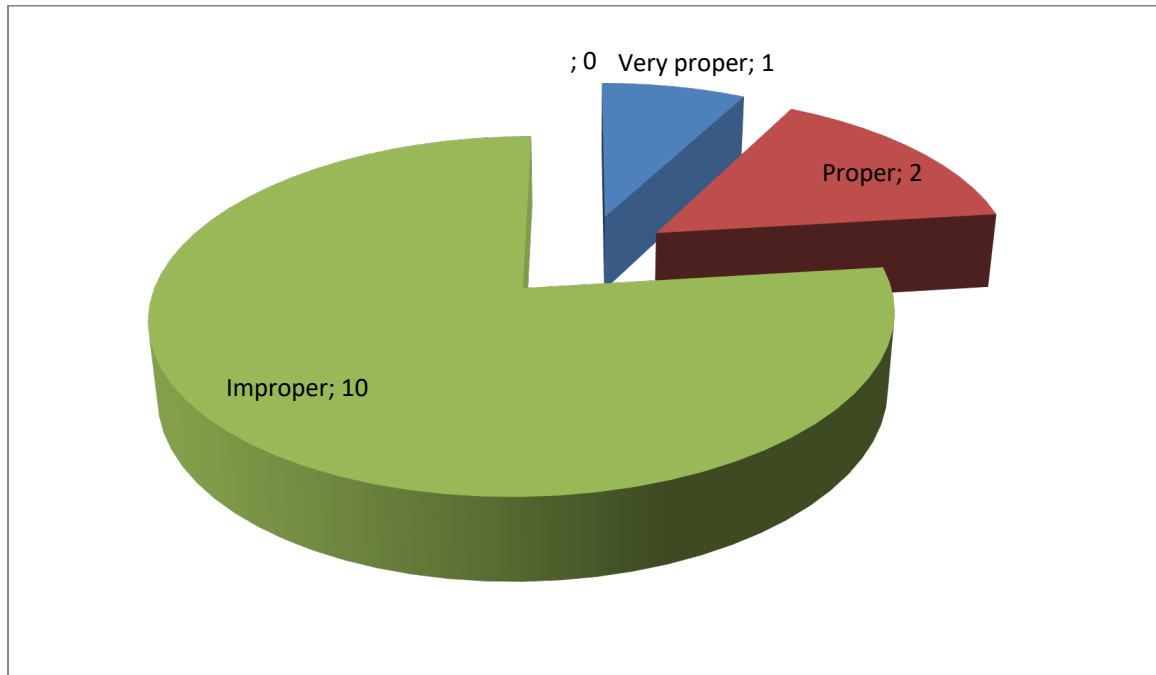


Figure 9.12: Control group participants’ perceptions on respecting opponents

(Source: Own data)

Participants’ views were important in relating respect to relationship building. Respecting others through what one says recognises the value of others in a relationship. When respect is nurtured people have the potential to rise above hatred, cruelty and violence. It can also lead to parties overcoming feelings of insecurity and fear of the other, opening opportunities for building strong and long-term mutually supportive relationships. The importance of respect in relationship building is sufficiently explored in literature. John Rawls (1971), a political philosopher whose vocation was social justice, opines that respect is a primary good in human relationships. He argues that justice is a public expression of people’s respect for another. Others have observed that respect inhibits aggression (Pruitt and Kim 2004). Equally, disrespect is often associated with scorn, humiliation and violence. Jarnoff-Bulman and Wether (un: 15) regards respect as a natural antidote to the humiliation and delegitimisation that is associated with antagonistic relationships. They further state that respect “ is an attitude and appraisal that we have to grant one another, and finding ways to facilitate such bestowals may be a key to reconciliation,” which is the process of developing mutually conciliatory accommodation from antagonist or formerly antagonistic parties (Kriesberg 1998: 1-2).

b. Working to rebuild trust

Participants who indicated ‘Very significant’ and ‘Significant’ choices (see figure 9.10) also expressed commitment to work toward re-establishing trust with others. Participants said that since most of them had managed to express regret over their past activities, it was important to forgive them and start the process of re-building trust. AG-P10 said:

The work we are doing in the garden shows me that there is some level of interdependence that we had killed over the years. The recognition that we can still be one is gradually coming back. This makes it a bit easy to work toward re-establishing trust. You never know what others are thinking but I’m working hard to re-build trust with other group members.

The control group also demonstrated the difficulty of trust among parties once involved in conflict. A majority (11 out of 13) of the participants saw it improper to trust your enemies when they found it difficult to trust their friends or even their wives or husbands whom they live with every day.

The responses from the experiment group show that people are recognising that they cannot live and work together when they fail to minimise mistrust. Equally, reconciliation is impossible without some level of trust. This was underscored by Abu-Nimer, Said and Prellis (2001: 339) when they warned that any attempt at reconciliation that excludes rebuilding trust would be inadequate for the task. Assefa (2002: 285) adds that “building and honest relationships are more important in the long-run than skills and methodology.” It was clear from responses in the experiment group that in as far as participants were finding it worthwhile to trust one another because of the interdependence realised through action taken by the group, there are also difficulties inherent in the notion of trust.

On the other hand, control group participants were reticent on the issue of trust. By its nature, trust is dynamic and can be strengthened or undermined by new developments in many years to come. A single suspicious event can dent the little trust that will be developing. This shows that trust is not only difficult but also an on-going process. Tutu (2003) also made similar sentiments that although trust is an important component of reconciliation, it was equally a challenging task in the long-term. Similarly, Lewicki and Tomlinson augment this observation by stating that rebuilding trust is not straightforward. They state that after trust has been broken, rebuilding it is determined by two considerations from the victim perspective. Firstly, the belief that the perpetrator has made sufficient effort to wright wrongs committed. Secondly, that the perpetrator has taken all necessary measures to minimise future violations. If this is the case, the victim has an incentive to attempt to restore trust and move toward reconciliation. Yet, full trust appears to be an impractical discrete end point although people can still move toward enjoying good relations as is evident in the experiment group. In that case, it is proper to work toward minimising mistrust to create mutually respectful interactions. Trust building may contribute to effectiveness and sustainability of a peacebuilding process.

c. Forgiving is difficult

The theme emerged from the explanations of two participants (AG-P11 & AG-P12) whose short answers were ‘Somewhat significant’ (see figure 9. 9). The participant acknowledged that forgiving was important as emphasised in the dialogue sessions but still they found it difficult to forgive. They cited the extent of the trauma they experienced as an aggravating factor. For instance AG-P11 said:

The discussions in the sessions were positive but what I have experienced is horrible. It’s just unbearable to say to someone who did those things I’m forgiving you just like that. Maybe with time I can do it but for now I find it extremely difficult.

It’s important to be honest with each other. You know what my friend, even if we want to forgive each other, I find it not easy inside to just forgive. The trauma I have is huge. Maybe if the people who did that to me were here I would have felt better.

The participant acknowledged that forgiving was not easy but at the same time felt it was necessary and possible with time. This attitude was important to report in the findings to demonstrate that even if the majority had experienced positive change, there were some who realised the value of the intervention in some respects and not others. Perhaps the full impact of the intervention on the two participants can be realised many years to come as they continue to interact with others in the garden and on *whatsapp*.

9.6 Lessons learnt from the evaluation

The responses from participants during the evaluation process brought to the fore a number of lessons. The lessons learnt from the process were consistent with one of the purposes of the outcome evaluation I set in section 9.2 where I indicated that besides being judgement-oriented, the evaluation was also knowledge-oriented. The lessons learnt are summarised hereunder:

- Individuals involved in violence possess the desire to change through engaging one another in purposeful conversations outside formal processes. There is potential for peacebuilding through non-formal interventions.
- Groups formed together with the people affected by social problems such as political violence are accepted by their members as agents of change.
- Encounter through dialogue has the capacity to facilitate better understanding among sworn political rivals. The group brought people together to talk, listen and exchange views generating commitment to rebuild relationships. This presents dialoguing as an arena that can turn destructive behaviour into positive characters that work for peace.
- Dialogue instils a sense of shared belonging which may allow participants to disengage in violent acts, diminish polarisation, division, stereotypes which enhances the capacity of

individuals to reduce political prejudice and tension. These are the ingredients needed to build strong peaceful relationships.

- Dialoguing can pave the way for political rivals to develop a project that yields benefits for group members in the long-term. Part of efforts to encourage reconciliation through dialogue resulted in the establishment of a garden project that will continue to assist group members to strengthen their unity and mutual co-existence beyond the dialogue sessions.

The lessons learnt suggest that the intervention incorporated the relationship dimension in its attempt to address negative perceptions and attitudes that influenced behaviour tending to undermine reconciliation. This finds support in that changes noted correspond to the four dimensions necessary to transform relationships identified by Lederach (2000) which are:

- *Personal* , or individual changes in the emotional, perceptual, and spiritual aspects of conflict. Participants testified to have improvements in their intrapersonal and interpersonal attitudes.
- *Relational* , or changes in communication, interaction, and interdependence of parties in conflict. Participants testified that they were improving communication in order to enhance mutual understanding.
- *Structural* , or changes in the underlying root causes of conflict. Participants provided evidence to the effect that they will respect the dignity of others as most conflicts were generated because of disrespect
- *Cultural* , or group or societal changes in the cultural patterns in understanding and responding to conflict. This was evident in the majority's commitment to abandon the idea that violence works and pursue peaceful/nonviolent solutions to conflict.

The transformative effect of the intervention also brought to the fore some important observations concerning the design used to achieve the aim of the study. Action research can work where there is need for solutions to vital problems. The four sessions and the garden project exposed that action research:

- Can address specific problems that affect participants who volunteer to take action.
- Helps participants to develop organisational and problem solving skills (the initiative to create the *whatsapp group* and establishing the garden are instances in point).
- Promotes communication between the researcher and the participants facing problems in a single forum.
- Makes knowledge production directly relevant to the needs of participants.

9.7 Conclusion

Short-term outcome evaluation data from participants reveal that dialogue sessions and the action taken to establish a garden are sources of encouragement for improved communication, collaboration, empathy, unity, respect, and a commitment to peaceful ways of resolving differences, all of which offer a good foundation for constructing a peaceful future. To that extent, the performance indicators in section 9.3 were achieved to a greater extent. The situation was not the same among control group participants who did not experience the intervention. Participants' responses within the action group symbolize commitment to continue building on the momentum created by the intervention to develop the necessary capacity for reconciliation. Nevertheless, in as much as positive behaviour was observed among the action group members, attribution of causality is always hard to define, as is the case in social science research in general. Attributing a causal link between a change in behaviour among action group members and a short-term intervention is always problematic. In general, evaluating peacebuilding interventions is acknowledged as difficult in literature. Chigas, Church and Corzolli (2014: 21) also detected this difficulty when they observed that "For peacebuilding, it is rare that causal attribution means total attribution, but rather it refers to contribution of the intervention." Equally, Fast and Neufeldt (2005) note the difficulty of isolating the impact of interventions from the environmental factors which may be social, economic and political, all of which can influence outcomes. In other words, it can be easy to determine what outcomes are occurring after an intervention but equally difficult is the relationship between the intervention and the outcomes *vis-à-vis* the exact contribution made by the intervention. What is certain, however, is that the intervention had an effect on participants in the action group as evidenced by the responses which were presented verbatim. Equally important is that the impact can only be fully understood in many years to come. Notwithstanding the causality difficulties, there are some reasons for optimism in the short-term outcome of the intervention. New bridges and contacts have been built among formerly antagonistic individuals, which can help to cement long-term cordial relationships that prop peace supporting norms, gradually contributing to reconciliation. The next chapter concludes the entire thesis.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

10.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the entire thesis by giving a synopsis of the study aims, objectives, the methodology used to address the aim and specific objectives, limitations, findings, implications of the findings, contributions to knowledge and the proposed focus areas for further research.

10.2 Restatement of the aim and objectives of the study

The genesis of this study related to a nationally defined and outstanding question of reconciliation. There have been ineffective state responses. Refined literature search displayed a lack of evidence that even the NPRC established in terms of Chapter 12, Section 251 of the new 2013 constitution would achieve the goal of national reconciliation. Approaching reconciliation from the perspective of locals or communities affected by political violence-induced divisions was identified as primary in understanding their perspectives on the problem in order to build their capacity for reconciliation. The aim of the study was therefore to explore the extent of the problem of reconciliation in Zimbabwe and devise a restorative-based intervention to build capacity for reconciliation among a small sample of adults in Harare. To achieve this aim, the specific objectives of the study were to:

- Establish the causes, extent and consequences of political violence in Zimbabwe;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of state-centred efforts at reconciliation in Zimbabwe;
- Ascertain the effectiveness of local-based (community) interventions to promote reconciliation in other countries comparable to Zimbabwe;
- Explore experiences, attitudes and perceptions regarding reconciliation in Zimbabwe;

- Develop and implement an intervention programme that will build capacity for reconciliation among a small sample of participants affected by political violence at local (community) level; and
- Undertake a short-term outcome evaluation of the intervention.

10.3 Framework of analysis

Peacebuilding was the overarching paradigm that motivated this study. Three questions were used to formulate a relevant framework for designing the study and analysing findings. The questions were: what intervention is needed in Zimbabwe to address the problems of recurring violence? How best can the said intervention address the problem at grassroots level? What would be the purpose of the intervention? These questions led me to conceptualise reconciliation as having a transformative effect on broken relationships if implemented based on principles espoused by the restorative justice theory. This conceptualisation yielded three theories each corresponding to the questions raised in their respective order, namely reconciliation, restorative justice and conflict transformation (see chapter 4). The theory of reconciliation was relevant in that it approaches human beings as social animals who are interdependent on each other for their existence. Reconciliation thus entails mutually conciliatory accommodation among people who were once in conflict who come to recognise each other's right to coexist. Recognising the complexities associated with reconciliation, I used restorative justice as a guiding theory within which participants' capacity for reconciliation could be developed. Restorative justice is reparative-centred, and the intervention adopted emphasised on recovering the dignity of the society as a collective (by providing an encounter between victims and perpetrators) since the effects of violence are indiscriminate. The importance of a restorative intervention was captured through dialogue sessions which were meant to transform relationships. Conflict transformation theory was consistent with the aim of laying a foundation for establishing deeper and long-term relationships in a manner that is not bound by formal processes of decision making associated with the vagaries of national politics.

10.4 Summary of research methodology

The design of the study was three-tier – exploratory, action and single case study (see chapter 6). I first explored the problem from literature and baseline interviews before I chose an area to implement the action that would contribute to the realisation of the research aim. Exploratory design was used as the entry point into the study to gather data on the nature and extent of the problem of reconciliation in Zimbabwe. I used a combination of literature and primary data generated from 14 in-depth interviews

(participants were purposively selected) and four focus groups (participants were conveniently selected), consisting of seven people each. The secondary sources provided historical descriptions to the problem, while opinion surveys were targeting both experts on the subject and people affected by political divisions. The first step of the design yielded data on:

- Causes, extent and consequences of political violence in Zimbabwe;
- Effectiveness of state-led efforts at reconciliation in Zimbabwe;
- Effectiveness of community-based efforts to promote reconciliation in other countries comparable to Zimbabwe; and
- Experiences, attitudes and perceptions on reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

After gathering sufficient detail on the dimensions of the problem, I moved to the second part of the research in which I employed the action research design in order to realise the aim of the study. Implementation of the action research was done through a single case study approach in the form of an action cohort. The action group was particularly an instructive example of the general Zimbabwean population that is lacking capacity for reconciliation. The case study allowed me to investigate in a much deeper way the effect of the intervention on the action group. A single action research cycle was used with focus on aspects such as participation, collaboration between myself and participants in analysing the problem and seeking remedies and two-way learning experience between myself and participants to contribute to knowledge and change.

After gathering baseline data, 13 participants who were randomly picked from the four focus groups constituted the action group. The group met on 11 May 2016 to receive a summary of findings from the baseline data. The physical location of the action research was Ward 30, Glenview North Constituency. The Councillor's library was the venue of all group meetings. This was followed by a meeting on 12 and 19 May to plan and adopt an intervention. Thereafter, four dialogue sessions were held from 28 May to 25 November 2016. Each session focusing on a particular theme that guided the agenda of meetings. The themes of the first to the last session were as follows in their respective order: ice-breaking (28, 29 May & 14, 15 June 2016), problem identification and analysis (28, 29 June & 20, 21 July 2016), determining direction of change (16, 17 August, 27, 28 September, 25 October 2016) determining indicators of change and planning for concrete action (25 November 2016). The practical action agreed by the group was implemented on 28 November as a symbolic gesture for participants' commitment toward reconciliation. Evaluation of short-term outcome of the intervention was done using the post-test only design which relied on comparing perceptions and attitudes between the action group and the control group (the first 13 participants interviewed out of the 15 who were not included in the action group to compare findings gathered from the action group). The direct comparison was the

basis for conclusion on the outcome of the intervention. Action research as executed through the single case approach facilitated:

- Gathering of experiences, attitudes and perceptions on reconciliation in Zimbabwe.
- Development and implementation of an intervention programme that was anticipated to build capacity for reconciliation among a small sample of participants affected by political violence.
- Short-term evaluation of the intervention.

Thematic analysis was the medium through which all primary data sets were organised and analysed.

10.5 Limitations of the study

In as far as action research is concerned; I acknowledge that only a single cycle process of nine months informed the findings of the study. In terms of improving practice, it would have been desirable to undertake more than one cycle to demonstrate the cyclical character of action research. In addition, use of action research presented some difficulties when I attempted to relate what was in literature with the actual experience in the field. Using action research for the first time could have led to some errors in application of the design if experience is factored. With the benefit of hindsight and experience, some challenges could have been overcome. However, the reasons for choosing this design are explained in detail and the core tenet of action research, *viz*, collaboration with participants occurred as the intervention was implemented and evaluated within the action group context. The results of the action provide new insights into the utility of the design, and methods for data collection and how it was analysed are detailed for anyone to critique. More so, an effort was made to present participant responses in direct quotes extracted from the transcripts. This was meant to enhance insight into the actions taken by the group. Yet, the qualitative nature of the study means that results cannot be generalised to other groups of adult Zimbabweans.

Other limitations of the design were observed during the evaluation of the action. This related to lack of detailed explanations of methods and procedures available to measure the change in literature. This could also have undermined the rigour that is expected in evaluation exercises. However, I resorted to other evaluation techniques applicable to qualitative studies available in the social science genre. The method and procedures I used are sufficiently detailed for peer review (see section 9.4).

10.6 Summary of findings

10.6.1 Objective 1: To establish the causes, extent and consequences of political violence in Zimbabwe.

This objective was addressed in chapter two. Incidences of violence that have been witnessed from a historical perspective were identified and discussed. The overall picture emerging from the evidence presented is that there is insecurity, unhealed trauma and broken relationships due to successive waves of political violence that evolved from the colonial era to post post-colonial period. Indeed, the cause of violence during the colonial era was political, and the pattern continued after independence as evidenced by, among other episodes:

- Operation *Gukurahundi* in Southern parts of the country, involving government forces and dissidents.
- Elections littered with violence.
- Violence-ridden land repossession exercise.
- Mass displacement through *Murambatsvina* (operation restore order).

The political violence is accompanied by what Sachikonye (2012) has termed CIBD-coercion, intimidation, beatings and disappearances across the political spectrum, intra and inter-party level. The global consequences of political violence were also enumerated as they related to physical and psychological injuries expressed in widespread mistrust, fear, depression, nervousness and uncertainty. The chapter demonstrated the link between political violence, the paucity of peace and the need for peacebuilding.

10.6.2 Objective 2: To evaluate the effectiveness of state-centred efforts at reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

The objective was met in chapter three which examined the worthiness of the state responses to the violence discussed in chapter 2. State-centred interventions preferred by the state since independence were identified and discussed. These are; amnesia, commissions of inquiry, ONHRI and NPRC. It was noted that the state's efforts had limitations. The major approach has been encouraging reconciliation through forgiving and forgetting. The policy of amnesia was traced back to the Lancaster House Agreement, the 1980 reconciliation policy, the pardons and unconditional forgiveness for perpetrators of election-related violence across all implicated political actors. Commissions were also established to address human rights abuses arising from the clashes between ZANLA and ZIPRA combatants in demobilisation camps, and in response to *Gukurahundi* and other violations. Unfortunately, the reports

of the both Dumbutshena and Chihambakwe commissions were never made public. Perhaps, this was motivated by well-intentioned state security considerations.

The ZHRC which was also established to investigate abuses that occurred not earlier than 2009 had a severely curtailed mandate which rendered it a mere 'paper tiger'. The doubtful efficacy of the statist approach was further displayed when the ONHRI consummated under the inclusive government. Just like the previous initiatives, the Organ was state-centred. The maladies of state-centeredness continued under the NPRC. The chapter reveals that in the absence of effective state interventions, there was need to consider local-centred interventions.

10.6.3 Objective 3: To ascertain the effectiveness of local-based (community) interventions to promote reconciliation in other countries comparable to Zimbabwe.

The objective was addressed in chapter five which examined the effectiveness of community-based interventions after experiencing violence. Case studies of community reconciliation in three countries were examined. These were the CRP in East Timor, *Gacaca* in Rwanda and *Fambul tok* in Sierra Leone. In East Timor, challenges were abound but it was noted that the CRP employed mechanisms which demonstrated that restorative-based shaming is more effective in reconciling people as opposed to vengeance. In the case of *Gacaca* in Rwanda, it was noted that despite the political involvement, the mere involvement of the community in pursuit of justice and reconciliation in the face of mass atrocity was unprecedented. It demonstrated that reconciliation is achievable when trials take place at the local level than when they were decided in faraway tribunals. Similarly, the *Fambul tok* project demonstrated the efficacy of restorative-based reconciliation in which local people have total control over the process, and how the use of local traditions can foster reconciliation without forgetting the past. By and large, the valuable lessons derived from the three cases and evaluation results from other local level initiatives provided motivation for implementation of an intervention at the community level.

10.6.4 Objective 4: To explore experiences, attitudes, and perceptions regarding reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

The objective was met in the chapters 7. Participants' views and opinions on the pre-intervention outlook were addressed in Chapter 7. Interview and focus group data showed that participants thought that the environment was fraught with violence, insecurity, forced silence, deliberate concealment of truth, lack of acknowledgement, feelings of revenge and divisions, all of which weakened state attempts at reconciliation. Taken together, the state-centred initiatives were regarded as epitomising limited attempts. The importance of the pre-intervention outlook findings suggested that the state lacked genuine commitment to promote reconciliation.

10.6.5 Objective 5: To develop and implement an intervention programme that will build capacity for reconciliation among a small sample of participants affected by political violence at local (community) level.

The objective was met in chapter 8 which presented and discussed the intervention I undertook in collaboration with 13 participants in Ward 30 of Glenview North Constituency in Harare to develop their capacity for reconciliation. Four dialogue sessions, which culminated in the establishment of a garden project by participants, involving 13 participants were held from 28 May to 25 November 2016 in Ward 30 of Glenview North Constituency. The dialogical conversations focused on themes such as ice-breaking, problem analysis, determining the direction of change, determining what was needed to change and acting together. The action group was assumed to be a conflict transformation entity that had the potential to instil capacity among participants to change perceptions, attitudes and behaviour through the sessions and acting together. Changed behaviour was seen as important to capacitate participants to promote constructive relationships based on respect, confidence-building and minimise mistrust among participants. The chapter noted that the intervention undertaken by the action group was an appropriate tool and consistent with a restorative framework by providing space for participation of both victims and perpetrators in a manner that emphasised the future and individual-centred transformation. The chapter observed that although the intervention was experienced by a small group that was never representative of the entire population in Ward 20, or the entire country, conversations around real problems and issues throughout the dialogue sessions provided the much needed initiative to build capacity for transformation of relationships and reconciliation in a non-threatening environment.

10.6.6 Objective 6: To undertake a short-term outcome evaluation of the intervention

The objective was met in chapter 9. The purpose of the intervention reported in Chapter 8 was to create and enhance healthy relationships that are tolerant, respectful and constructive in order to respond to the perennial problem of political violence over the long-term, that is, to build capacity for reconciliation. When I sought to determine whether or not this was achieved, the question of evaluation arose. Evaluation was intended to determine what was achieved against what was intended to be achieved, that is, whether the intervention achieved the aims of the study (to build capacity for reconciliation), and to learn from what was done. In order to determine whether the change sought was occurring or has occurred, the key indicator was commitment by participants to build peaceful relationships expressed through attitude, perception and behavioural change.

The evaluation process used the *post-test only design*. This involved observing the performance indicators after the intervention. Two groups of participants with minimal initial differences in terms of age, sex and political affiliation were involved, namely the experiment and the control group. The 13 participants in the action group constituted the experiment group, that is, those who experienced the

intervention. The control group consisted of 15 participants, the first 13 were interviewed, who did not experience the intervention but who were also in need of reconciliation as demonstrated through baseline data. Participants in the control group, just like the experiment group, were randomly picked from the four focus groups that generated baseline data at the exploratory phase of the research. The control group participants never experienced the intervention so that the intervention could not influence the outcome. The separation of the two groups allowed for the isolation of the effects of the intervention on the experiment group. I wanted to determine the extent to which the intervention accounted for the outcome in the action group. This also helped to minimise other factors in explaining changes in the experiment group. The criteria used to detect positive contributions of the intervention was that if the experiment group reported positive changes as compared to the control group, then the conclusion was that the intervention had a positive outcome. The differences in the performance indicators identified above became the basis of conclusions on the outcome.

What difference did the intervention made to the participants in the action group compared to the control group? Participants expressed positive experiences with respect to gaining understanding of each other, improved communication, enhanced mutual affection and tolerance, seeking nonviolent solutions when faced with conflict, the ability to manage emotions, empathy among other positives. However, others thought the intervention was not adequate in addressing the issues that were national in character such as impunity. The chapter also noted that participants' views suggested that the intervention incorporated the relationship dimension in its attempt to address negative perceptions and attitudes that influenced behaviour tending to undermine reconciliation. The transformative effect of the intervention was seen as evidence that action research can work where there is need for solutions to vital problems at local levels.

10.7 Implications of the findings

Key findings emerged from the study that can be relevant for shaping and designing local-centred interventions to promote peacebuilding. This study reinforces the widely acknowledged fact that the impact of intra-and inter-party violence is still alive in Zimbabwe. Participants' opinions which were related to historical data obtained from literature strongly confirm the limited impact of state-centred interventions to promote reconciliation. The weaknesses associated with amnesia and the various Commissions established by the state are cases in point. Findings further demonstrate that insecurity, unhealed trauma, imposed silence, fear, lack of acknowledgement and apology among other factors complicate the reconciliation journey unless genuine efforts are undertaken. Which are unlikely until a process of reform is instituted by Mugabe's successor in ZANU-PF. The adoption of dialogue and the

subsequent action taken by the action group to establish a garden project may be a typical intervention that can build capacity for reconciliation for those who have survived the episodes of political violence.

Thus in a violent macro-political context that permeates every level of human existence, the development and implementation of restorative initiatives such as dialogue is not an option but a necessity. As demonstrated by participants in the action cohort, peace is impossible without dialogue. In order to promote reconciliation in a holistic way, there is need to facilitate dialogue among divided people, however miniscule the sample of participants can be, to foster skills of understanding, respect and proactive action that nurture a culture of peace. Dialogue conveys values that have the potential to lay the ground for sustainable reconciliation by embracing diversity, improved understanding, development of empathetic skills and commitment to nonviolence.

Findings also reveal that the potential for reconciliation exists in any community, and outsiders need to take advantage of dialogue to activate this latent potential. Dialogue is an active agent of peace in communities struggling with violent pasts. This is an essential ingredient of peacebuilding that can no longer be considered a peripheral option. Dialogue equips people with peace supporting values like tolerance, effective communication, empathy, collaboration, trust building, which promote human dignity. Participants in the group awakened the humanity in the action group to promote, among themselves, skills that helped them realise the dignity with which each person ought to be treated despite the bad things that happened among them in the past. The attitudes, perceptions and behaviour observed after the intervention makes a strong case that dialogue can make every community in Zimbabwe peaceful once again.

10.8 Contribution to knowledge

The core contribution of the study is the ability to integrate academic and practical knowledge while contributing to peacebuilding practice. Coghlan (2007: 335) has described the context of doctoral studies as changing from the focus on advancement of theoretical knowledge in the 19th century to encouraging shift toward practitioner knowledge production that focused on practical contributions in the 20th century. Indeed, the design underpinning this study took into account the dual purpose that contemporary doctoral studies are expected to serve. Findings of the study contribute to academic knowledge through its theoretical significance to peacebuilding.

The findings demonstrate a correlation between restorative justice and attitudes, perceptions and behaviour that build capacity for reconciliation among participants in the action cohort. The intervention was not punitive and judgemental but sought to right destroyed relationships – a key pillar of restorative justice. This was achieved by efforts to rediscover the sense of humanity through dialogue and

collaborative action. The research showed that the people who joined the peace initiative acknowledged that the current situation in which politically powerful individuals define and attempt to find solutions to problems affecting them was unsatisfactory and needed to be improved. Working with the 13 participants helped in that they possessed important experiences over the problem and had knowledge to remedy the situation, giving them voices in literature for the first time.

Dialoguing in the group facilitated individuals to reconcile their interests and achieve some level of satisfaction in their legitimate interests. As individuals engaged each other, their sense of who they were in relation to others gradually improved. As they understood themselves better, they also began to identify similarities which helped to bridge differences. This demonstrated that there is potential for unity and common identity among individuals who work in group environments despite the extent of divisions prior to intervention. Through group engagement, group members began to realise their differing needs and interests which led to adjustment in positions that cause divisions. The group environment offered opportunities to clarify the real problem that cause divisions through sharing perspectives and intense interaction. As individuals shared their thoughts and feelings with one another, mistrust was minimised, releasing the energy previously spent on fuelling the conflict. In this way, dialogue offered the platform to correct perceptions that intensified misunderstanding among participants. The study further demonstrate that understanding and validating other's thoughts and feelings improved participants' relationships and helped them find common ground, which resulted in the symbolic gesture of a peace garden. This affirmed the view that dealing with tense conflict situations can be challenging but embracing basic communication can increase opportunities for relationship growth.

Dialogue also fostered values of tolerance, understanding, solidarity and cohesion, all of which, as argued, are necessary for an individual to acquire in order to live with others peacefully. Members of the group had an opportunity to be heard and their similarities and differences clarified. This was aided by a commitment among participants to rely on nonviolent ways of handling future conflicts. This was important in that it challenged the cultural and social norms that promote political violence.

Emotional awareness also emerged as pivotal for people to understand themselves and others. The ability to handle conflict was seen as being connected to the emotions of anger, frustration, sadness and fear. After the intervention, relationships in the action group were shifting toward mutual respect as participants were developing capacity to control their emotions and approach others from a positive frame of reference. The ability to control emotions was inspired by collaboration, open expression of perspectives and feelings, recognition of each other's needs, respect for diversity and individual differences, and empathy that was developing among participants in the group. Dialogue was amply demonstrated as a useful transformative mechanism, which can be added to the peacebuilding toolkit. Equally, the way in which the was intervention implemented and evaluated was sufficiently described

and discussed with the hope to provide practical guidance to practitioners working to transform destructive conflicts through reconciliation.

10.9 Areas for further research

The qualitative nature of the study meant that results cannot be generalised to other groups of adult Zimbabweans. However, the arguments advanced in this thesis can be strengthened and enhanced in future attempts at peacebuilding in respect of two areas:

- Results from the evaluation of the intervention show that there is reason for optimism when dialogue is restorative-based. The intervention can be implemented with a group of adult participants representing diverse political backgrounds, aiming to accord participants' experience of exploring the problem of reconciliation, apply dialogical conversations and evaluate the outcome in their own context.
- Studies can be carried out in future using the action cohort in this study to assess the long-term impact of the intervention in promoting reconciliation. This is worthwhile on account that the evaluation undertaken in this study was short-term outcome evaluation. The impact of the intervention on the participants can be fully understood in many years to come.
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10.10 Conclusion

In concluding the thesis, it is important to note that the action group participants endorsed the intervention as a positive catalyst for promoting peaceful relations among themselves. Participants' responses offer evidence of how building capacity for reconciliation needs to be conceptualised through interventions that are participatory, collaborative and acceptable to the specific local contexts. In such interventions, restorative-focused dialogical conversations followed by symbolic gestures of reconciliation are useful in changing relationships. This is found to be a viable alternative to promoting reconciliation in the absence of effective state-centred responses to political violence.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INFORMATION



Dear Participant

Thank you for taking interest in my research. My name is Lawrence Mhandara. I am currently enrolled for a Doctor of Philosophy (Peacebuilding) at Durban University of Technology. I wish to provide information of my research study so that you have a clear understanding of what it is about.

The title of my study is 'Building capacity for reconciliation through a restorative-based intervention Zimbabwe'. The study explores the outstanding question of reconciliation in Zimbabwe focusing on efforts that have been undertaken and the associated challenges. It also strives to develop, implement and evaluate an appropriate intervention together with a cohort of participants who will be an instructive example of the generality of Zimbabweans affected by lack of reconciliation.

If you choose to be part of the study you will:

1. Be interviewed.
2. Be part of the focus group discussion consisting of six to eight participants to further deliberate on the issues raised in the interviews.
3. Be part of the 13 members of the action group to build capacity for reconciliation.

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw anytime. There will be no negative consequences should you choose to withdraw from the study. You will not be paid for participating in the study and you will not be expected to pay anything to take part in the study. The interviews, focus group discussions and action group activities will be conducted at times convenient to you.

You will not provide your name in both interviews and focus group discussions and I will not use your name when presenting findings. However, if you participate in the action group, you shall be known to other group members although your responses will be anonymised in the research report.

Should you have any problems or queries, please contact me (+263 717 266 226/+27742007996), my supervisor Dr Sylvia Kaye (031 373 6860) 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.

Sincerely
Lawrence Mhandara

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH



To: Member of Parliament
Glenview North Constituency

RE: PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN GLENVIEW NORTH CONSTITUENCY

Dear Sir,

I am currently doing a research project in Harare as part of studies towards a Doctoral degree in peacebuilding at the Durban University of Technology. My topic is 'Building capacity for reconciliation through a restorative-based intervention in Zimbabwe'.

The title of my study is 'Building capacity for reconciliation through a restorative-based intervention Zimbabwe'. The study explores the outstanding question of reconciliation in Zimbabwe focusing on efforts that have been undertaken and the associated challenges. It also strives to develop, implement and evaluate an appropriate intervention together with a cohort of participants who will be an instructive example of the generality of Zimbabweans affected by lack of reconciliation. I therefore seek to carry out my study in collaboration with adults in Ward 30.

I have chosen to do my research in Ward 30 of Glenview North constituency because it is convenient to me. The participants will be given a letter of information regarding the study and will be made to sign consent forms. The participants will be informed that participation is voluntary and they can withdraw from the study at any time. In addition, confidentiality will be maintained as their names will not be used in the study.

Your permission to undertake the research would be greatly appreciated.

Should you wish to discuss the study further, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor.

Yours Faithfully
Lawrence Mhandara
Doctoral student: Peacebuilding
Email: lmhandara@gmail.com
Contact numbers: +263 717 266 226/+27742007996

Dr Sylvia Kaye
Supervisor
Email: sylviaK@dut.ac.za
Contact number: 031 373 6860

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH



To: The Councillor
Ward 30, Glenview North Constituency

RE: PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN WARD 18 OF GLENVIEW NORTH CONSTITUENCY

Dear Sir,

I am currently doing a research project in Harare as part of studies towards a Doctoral degree in peacebuilding at the Durban University of Technology. My topic is 'Building capacity for reconciliation through a restorative-based intervention in Zimbabwe'.

The title of my study is 'Building capacity for reconciliation through a restorative-based intervention Zimbabwe'. The study explores the outstanding question of reconciliation in Zimbabwe focusing on efforts that have been undertaken and the associated challenges. It also strives to develop, implement and evaluate an appropriate intervention together with a cohort of participants who will be an instructive example of the generality of Zimbabweans affected by lack of reconciliation. I therefore seek to carry out my study in collaboration with adults in Ward 30.

I have chosen to do my research in Ward 30 of Glenview North constituency because it is convenient to me. The participants will be given a letter of information regarding the study and will be made to sign consent forms. The participants will be informed that participation is voluntary and they can withdraw from the study at any time. In addition, confidentiality will be maintained as their names will not be used in the study.

Your permission to undertake the research would be greatly appreciated.

Should you wish to discuss the study further, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor.

Yours Faithfully
Lawrence Mhandara
Doctoral student: Peacebuilding
Email: lmhandara@gmail.com
Contact numbers: +263 717 266 226/+27742007996

Dr Sylvia Kaye
Supervisor
Email: sylviaK@dut.ac.za
Contact number: 031 373 6860

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM



CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Lawrence Mhandara, 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, _____ 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

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE (PRE-INTERVENTION OUTLOOK)



Introductory remarks

Introduce myself and purpose of the interview. Thank participant for his/her participation. Outline the ethical considerations and ask for permission to tape record the session. State that the tape will only be listened to by the researcher (myself) and that the tape will be stored in a secure place.

Introductory Questions

1. Reflecting on your experiences, what is your view of the political environment in the country in general and Harare in particular?
2. How does the current environment affect peace among the people?

Objective 1

To establish the causes, extent, trends and consequences of political violence in Zimbabwe

3. What do you understand about the phenomenon of political violence?
4. In your view, what have been the major causes of political violence in the country in general and Harare in particular?
5. From your experience, how has violence manifested?
6. What has been the socio-economic and political impact of such violence?

Objective 2

To evaluate the effectiveness of past and existing efforts at reconciliation in Zimbabwe

7. What initiatives have been made so far to re-connect the people who have been divided by the political violence in the country?
8. What is your assessment of the efforts in establishing peace?
9. What have been the impediments to such efforts?

Objective 3

To explore people's experiences, attitudes, and perceptions regarding reconciliation in Zimbabwe

10. Going forward, what is your understanding of the notion of reconciliation?
11. From your experience, what do you think has been missing from the reconciliation efforts in the country so far?
12. In your view, how can the process of reconciliation be conducted to ensure long-term peace?

Closing Question

13. Any other comment?

APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE (PRE-INTERVENTION OUTLOOK)



Introductory remarks

Introduce myself and purpose of the focus group. Thank participants for their participation. Outline the ethical considerations and ask for permission to tape record the session. State that the tapes will only be listened to by the researcher (myself) and that the tapes will be stored in a secure place.

Note: The focus group discussion will only take place after interviews have been held. As such, important data from the interviews will be elaborated and discussed in the focus group. The same questions that are on the interview guide will be used to guide the discussion in the focus group.

Introductory Questions

1. Reflecting on your experiences, what are your views of the political environment in the country in general and Harare in particular?
2. How does the current environment affect peace among the people?

Objective 1

To establish the causes, extent, trends and consequences of political violence in Zimbabwe

3. What do you understand about the phenomenon of political violence?
4. In your view, what have been the major causes of political violence in the country in general and Harare in particular?
5. From your experience, how has violence manifested?
6. What has been the socio-economic and political impact of such violence?

Objective 2

To evaluate the effectiveness of past and existing efforts at reconciliation in Zimbabwe

7. What initiatives have been made so far to re-connect the people who have been divided by the political violence in the country?
8. What is your assessment of the efforts in establishing peace?
9. What have been the impediments to such efforts?

Objective 3

To explore people's experiences, attitudes, and perceptions regarding reconciliation in Zimbabwe

10. Going forward, how do you understand the notion of reconciliation?

11. From your experience, what do you think has been missing from the reconciliation efforts in the country so far?

12. In your view, how can the process of reconciliation be conducted to ensure long-term peace?

Closing Question

13. Any comments from the floor?

APPENDIX G: POST-INTERVENTION INTERVIEW GUIDE (EXPERIMENT GROUP)



Introductory remarks

Introduce the purpose of the interview. Thank participant for his/her participation and ask for permission to tape record the session. State that the tape will only be listened to by the researcher (myself) and that the tape will be stored in a secure place.

Question 1

Why did you join the group?

Question 2

What are your feelings about the activities undertaken by the group?

- a. Choose one of the following: i) Very helpful ii) Helpful iii) Somewhat helpful iv) Not helpful
- b. Explain your answer.

Question 3

In what ways will your approach to conflict change as a result of your experience in the group?

- a. Choose one of the following: i) Very significant ii) Significant iii) Somewhat significant iv) Insignificant
- b. Explain your answer.

Question 4

After your experience with the group, in what ways do you think your behaviour will promote reconciliation with others?

- a. Choose one of the following: i) Very significant ii) Significant iii) Somewhat significant iv) Not in any way
- b. Explain your answer.

Question 5

What were some of the things that happened in the group which you thought was unexpected?

Question 6

What additional comments do you have concerning your experience?

ANNEX H: POST-INTERVENTION INTERVIEW GUIDE (CONTROL GROUP)



Introductory remarks

Introduce the purpose of the interview. Thank participant for his/her participation and ask for permission to tape record the session. State that the tape will only be listened to by the researcher (myself) and that the tape will be stored in a secure place.

Question 1

Are you in a position to engage someone who holds opposing views from your/anyone who you regard as your enemy?

- a. Choose one of the following: i) Always ii) Almost always iii) Sometimes iv) Not at all
- b. Explain your answer.

Question 2

Do you communicate with people whom you have been involved in conflict with/have wronged you in the past?

- a. Choose one of the following: i) Always ii) Almost always iii) Sometimes iv) Not at all
- b. Explain your answer.

Question 3

Is it possible for you to collaborate with your opponents/enemies in any action that can promote peace?

- a. Choose one of the following: i) Very possible ii) Possible iii) A little possible iv) Impossible
- b. Explain your answer.

Question 4

Would you use physical violence to resolve differences when you are faced with conflict?

- a. Choose one of the following: i) Always ii) Almost always iii) Sometimes iv) Not at all
- b. Explain your answer.

Question 5

Would you control your emotions of frustration and anger when someone wrongs you?

- a. Choose one of the following: i) Yes ii) Maybe iii) No
- b. Explain your answer.

Question 6

Do you see yourself working with someone whom you think has wronged you/your enemy to understand the problem and seek joint solutions?

- a. Choose one of the following: i) Very possible ii) Possible iii) Impossible
- b. Explain your answer.

Question 7

Do you think it is proper to express respect to people with whom you have been involved in conflict for the sake of promoting peaceful relations?

- a. Choose one of the following: i) Very proper ii) Proper iii) Improper
- b. Explain your answer.

Question 8

Do you think you can rebuild trust with the people whom you have been in conflict with?

- a. Choose one of the following: i) Very possible ii) Possible iii) Impossible
- b. Explain your answer.

Question 9

What additional comments do you have concerning your experience?

ANNEX I: GATEKEEPER'S LETTER 2



PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE
P.O. Box CY 200
Causeway
Harare
Telephone: 7994810, 7994811,
7994871, 7994872

23 June 2015

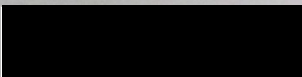
Dear Mr Mhandara

RE: PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN GLEN VIEW NORTH CONSTITUENCY

Receipt of the letter from your supervisor dated 11 June 2015 is acknowledged and I write to inform you that the request to do a research in Ward 30 of Glen View North Constituency is hereby accepted.

For further information contact me on +263772698383.

Yours faithfully


Fani Munengami (MP)
GLEN VIEW NORTH CONSTITUENCY

PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

23 JUN 2015

P.O. BOX CY 200
CAUSEWAY, HARARE
ZIMBABWE

ANNEX J: GATEKEEPER'S LETTER 2



Councillor's Library
Town House
P.O. Box 990
Harare

23 June 2015

Dear Mr Mhandara

**REF: PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN WARD 30
(GLEN VIEW NORTH CONSTITUENCY)**

Receipt of the letter from your supervisor dated 11 June 2015 is acknowledged and I write to inform you that the request to do a research in Ward 30 of Glen View North Constituency is here by accepted

For more information do not hastate to contact me on 0772 114 235 / 0773 828 199

Yours faithfully

Muzhinyi Farayi

[Redacted Signature]

.....
Councillor Ward 30 Glen View North