



The politicisation of reconciliation in Zimbabwe: a case study of the Nkayi District

By

Ruth Ratidzai Murambadoro

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree: Master of Arts in Political Science (MA, Political Science) in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

November 2014

Study Leaders: Dr C. Wielenga and Prof K. Miti



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DECLARATION

I Ruth Ratidzai Murambadoro declare that the dissertation which I hereby submit for the degree of Master of Arts (Political Science) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or other tertiary institution. Where secondary material is consulted, this has been acknowledged carefully and referenced in accordance with university regulations.

Signature Date.....

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ABSTRACT

In Zimbabwe, reconciliation has become a contentious process and has been politicised at the international, national and community levels. Criticisms have been raised against the government related to its failure to implement inclusive reconciliation processes that can amend broken relationships in Zimbabwe, particularly at the community level. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that are traditionally assumed to have a role in bringing about reconciliation on the community level have, in Zimbabwe, become part of the politicisation of reconciliation in various ways.

This research has explored the challenges of reconciliation in Zimbabwe, with the Nkayi District in Matabeleland as a case study, because it stands at the intersection of the conflicts that have occurred in Zimbabwe over the past three decades. It serves to illustrate the political debates behind the alleged failure of government to implement reconciliation processes at the community level. Research findings revealed that the complexity of reconciliation in the Nkayi District is rooted in the lack of consensual understanding among stakeholders as to who ought to be reconciled and how the process should occur. This complexity is enhanced by the lack of an enabling environment due to the polarisation of the community by government security agents, a lack of political will by political actors, shortage of resources and a lack of common voice in the undertakings by CSOs. The research concluded that the systematic marginalisation of the Matabeleland region and the fact that the Gukurahundi massacres were never dealt with by the government, undermines any attempts at reconciliation in this region. This research argues that reconciliation in the Nkayi District begins when the government acknowledges all incidents of violence that occurred.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIPPA- Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

CCJPZ- Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe

CSO- Civil Society Organisation

EU- European Union

GPA- Global Political Agreement

Impi- Information and Media Panel of Inquiry

Jomic- Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee

MDC- Movement for Democratic Change

NANGO- National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations

NGO- Non-governmental organisation

NPRC- National Peace and Reconciliation Commission

NUST- National University of Science and Technology

ONHRI- Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration

PISI- Police Internal Security and Intelligence

POSA- Public Order and Security Act

TRC- Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UN- United Nations

US- United States

ZANLA- Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army

ZANU- Zimbabwe African National Union

ZANU PF- Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front

ZAPU- Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZHRC- Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission

ZIPRA- Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

ZLHR- Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview of the research

Reconciliation in Zimbabwe has become a contentious process and has been politicised at various levels. It has been politicised on the national level, resulting in ineffective national reconciliation organs, on the international level, with conflicting agendas from international and regional actors influencing how reconciliation unfolds, and on the community level. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that traditionally are assumed to have the role of bringing about reconciliation on the community level have, in Zimbabwe, become part of the politicisation of reconciliation in various ways. In some cases they have taken sides between the political parties, or even where they have not taken sides, the government has perceived them as siding with the opposition and has put several laws in place that inhibit CSO activity. International NGOs, aid organisations, and the media have exacerbated this by creating the impression that CSOs have a political agenda.

This research examined the complexity of reconciliation in Zimbabwe at the community level, with a particular focus on the ways in which the activities of CSOs and their endeavour to bring about reconciliation in communities has become compromised. The Nkayi District in Matabeleland Province was the case study that informed the research. This research was situated in Zimbabwe's long history of violent conflict spreading over decades, including the independence struggle (1965-1979), the Gukurahundi massacres (1980-1987), and the post-2000 electoral violence, which entrenched divisions in various communities around the country (Du Plessis & Ford 2009, Sachikonye 2011). Attempts from the government with regard to reconciliation processes thus far have taken an elitist approach in which the government has tried to amend relationships at the national level by focusing on political opponents. The examples are the Smith-regime versus the national liberation movements, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) versus the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) versus the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations.

Acts of violence against community residents such as abductions, rape, arson, and torture have occurred in the Nkayi District and no one has been held to account (Eppel 2003, 2009; Gova & Ndlovu 2013). These violations are believed to have been orchestrated by the government in

order to suppress any opposition to its leadership, and the government seems to have taken no action to address the past atrocities. The exposure of this district to violence has forced a number of its people to migrate to neighbouring countries for refuge, with South Africa being the leading host. Those that have remained behind live in constant fear and unfulfilled expectations. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that this is an Ndebele populated district, which is an ethnic minority group in Zimbabwe (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007). Worse still, socio-economic development is lacking in the Nkayi District because of the continued prevalence of structural violence. Scholars such as Lingren (2005) and Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007) have accused the government of furthering divisions in the country by limiting community development to Shona populated areas such as Mashonaland Province, and doing little to improve the standards of living in Ndebele populated areas, for example, Matabeleland Province (including the Nkayi District). For this reason, ethnicity has become a contributing factor to the challenges of building sustainable peace and reconciliation in the Nkayi District and Matabeleland Province at large. These issues pose a threat to the stability of the district, and to the attainment of sustainable peace and development in the district and Zimbabwe as a whole.

The focus of the study on community reconciliation was important because it supplements the scope of transitional mechanisms employed to assist a conflict stricken country through a transition. It provides for processes that can ensure sustainable peace and the co-existence of people within divided communities (Mbofana 2011). This is based on the premise that violence (whether physical, structural or cultural) occurs within a particular location that is composed of human beings who will continue to bear the effects of the violence if it is not addressed by processes that curb the perpetuation of violence at the locality of the incidents. Reconciliation is needed in the Nkayi District in order to address the three decades of violence sustainably (Eppel 2008, Ndlovu & Dube 2013, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). This research made use of the definition of reconciliation offered by Karen Brounéus (2003), that reconciliation is “a societal process that involves the mutual acknowledgement of past sufferings and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviour into constructive relationships towards sustainable peace.” Following this definition a reconciliation process in this district has the potential to bring transformation of behaviours, attitudes and the conflict structure. Through reconciliation, destructive behaviour among people in a community can be addressed through, for example, trust building exercises that promote restoration of broken relationships. The negative attitudes created by the conflict can be challenged through dialogue that creates room for stereotypes (e.g. dissidents) and

misconceptions (e.g. patriotic history) to be demystified. The conflict structure can also be ratified by transforming asymmetric power relations through the development of a common ground that promotes mutual respect for all entities in the community (Brounéus 2003, Ericson 2001).

So far, the prolonged silence about the violence that has taken place in Matabeleland Province (including the Nkayi District) has been superficially broken with the publication made by a faith-based CSO, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace Zimbabwe (CCJPZ) and Legal Resources Foundation, in 1997 popularly known as *'Breaking the Silence.'* It unearthed many of the atrocities committed during the Gukurahundi massacres as narrated by the individuals in communities around Matabeleland and Midlands Provinces. The government has still not commented on the findings of the CCJPZ. It has not yet pursued approaches that address any forms of violence at the community level, which has led various scholars to assume that there is more that can be done by CSOs to rebuild broken relationships and sustainable peace at the community level in Zimbabwe (Mbofana 2011, Sachikonye 2011, Saki & Katema 2011).

According to Bratton (1994), CSOs are a sphere of social interaction between the household, the market and the government, which manifests through norms of community cooperation, structures of voluntary association and networks of public communication. They function as a realm of consent through which citizens may choose to accept or challenge the use of force by government representatives and other community members. When operating in violence stricken communities they become the voice of the voiceless (for example in Zimbabwe, the CCJPZ and Radio Dialogue play this role), and a custodian that fights for the restoration of sustainable peace and mutual respect for the co-existence of community members (Gova & Ndlovu 2013).

However, the progression of CSOs' work on reconciliation in the Nkayi District has been hindered by the constant clash of interests between CSOs and the government, which results in the latter resorting to tighter policies and security measures that limit the ability of CSOs to engage with the local communities freely. The government has restricted the media so that citizens do not get to hear criticism of current affairs in Zimbabwe broadcast by private media houses and CSOs. It has put restrictions such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Act and the Access to Information Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) that prohibit CSOs to deliberate on political issues in the country freely, and these restrictions have left many CSOs fighting for their existence (Mbofana 2011, Sachikonye 2011).

CSOs have been compromised by their reliance on donor aid for resources to conduct their activities and because donor aid often comes with politically motivated agendas. This has put many CSOs in opposition to the government due to allegations of undermining the legitimacy of the ruling government. These tensions make it difficult for Zimbabwe to implement inclusive reconciliation processes that can address the atrocities of the past and reconcile broken relationships within various communities countrywide. It is for this reason that this research sought to understand the agents involved in the incidents of violence in the Nkayi District in order to deduce their perceptions of reconciliation. This enabled the researcher to identify strategies that could be useful to address divisions and rebuild broken relationships in these communities (Du Plessis & Ford 2009, Machakanja 2010, Sachikonye 2011).

This research sought to establish what the contribution to reconciliation these stakeholders, particularly CSOs, are attempting to make and in what ways their attempts have been affected by the before mentioned tensions between CSOs and the government. Nkayi District was chosen for the research because it stands at the intersection of the dynamics of conflicts that have occurred in Zimbabwe over the past three decades. It can serve to illustrate the political debates behind the alleged failure of government to implement reconciliation processes at the community level. The findings of this research have the potential to lead to recommendations to guide future projects on reconciliation in the Nkayi District and other similar communities in Zimbabwe, as well as the rest of Africa.

1.2. Aim and objectives

The main aim of this research was to examine the attempts to facilitate reconciliation by CSOs in the context of Zimbabwe's episodes of violence, and to determine how the reconciliation process is affected by the interactions of various agents/stakeholders, such as the government, aid organisations, the media and the dynamics within the community itself. A lesser aim was to explore possible methods to facilitate reconciliation within communities in the Nkayi District.

The specific research objectives ensuing from this broad aim are:

- Determine the nature of violence the people of the Nkayi District have experienced.
- Identify the way the government, CSOs and the communities within the Nkayi District perceive reconciliation.
- Identify the measures taken by the government to reconcile the people of Nkayi.

- Identify the ways in which CSOs have attempted to facilitate reconciliation in the Nkayi District.
- Identify the factors that have influenced the ability of CSOs to facilitate reconciliation within communities in the Nkayi District.

1.3. Justification and relevance

The Nkayi District (a rural communal area in the Matabeleland North Province, which is populated by a majority of Ndebele and minority of Shona people) has made news headlines as the scene of intense political violence over the past three decades (Gova & Ndlovu 2013, Ncube 2001, *The Zimbabwean* 2012). The government is often seen to be the main actor that is expected to take the lead in administering transitional mechanisms that can reconcile broken communities. Research however shows that most governments in Africa (including Zimbabwe) have paid little attention to reconciliation initiatives after major conflicts because national leadership either ignores reconciliation processes or limits it to an elitist approach that only benefits a minority of the country's population (Eppel 2008, Machakanja 2010, Machinga 2012, Mashingaidze 2010, Mbire 2011). In the case of Zimbabwe, the government has mostly attempted to reconcile the population at a political level by signing agreements with its rival political parties such as the 1987 Unity Accord signed to end the Gukurahundi massacres. Another example is the Global Political Agreement (GPA) signed to remedy the stalemate that emerged from the 2008 elections (Du Plessis & Ford 2009, Sibanda 2011).

Reconciliation processes in many African countries (including Zimbabwe) have also been misused as a tool to achieve political gain. An example is the repeated use of political amnesty provisions by the government of Zimbabwe (Clemency Order 1980, 1988 and 2000) to protect perpetrators of past social injustices (CCJPZ 1997). Eppel (2008) and Sachikonye (2011) argue that these amnesties have given the ruling party the modus operandi to override any call to hold perpetrators accountable and put an end to the abuse of violence to control the population. Even the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) that was set up in 2009 to develop mechanisms to address past atrocities failed to operate due to bad management, poor funding and lack of political will on the part of the ruling government (Machakanja 2010, Machinga 2012, Mbire 2011). Eppel (2009) and Sachikonye (2011) are therefore of the view that the government has intentionally paid little attention to reconciliation processes that can

address the tensions within communities in Zimbabwe in order to avoid being implicated in the atrocities which the process is meant to address.

The CCJPZ (1997) publication called '*Breaking the Silence*' remains the main source of information on the incidents that occurred during the Matabeleland massacres. The government has not published findings of the Dumbutshena and Chihambakwe Commissions of Inquiry that were established in 1981 and 1983, respectively, to investigate incidents of violence in the region. Efforts to reconcile the people in Matabeleland continue to emerge from programs conducted by CSOs such as a recent a workshop conducted by Radio Dialogue in the Nkayi District in March 2013, which drew participants from communities around the district. This meeting has illuminated the gravity of the wounds the district still holds from decades of political violence. Although without a broadcasting license, Radio Dialogue is now serving the region (Matabeleland North and South Provinces) as a radio broadcasting station with the aim of creating the space for previously marginalised members of the community to share their experiences and reconcile their differences (Gova & Ndlovu 2013).

The work by Sachikonye (2011) and Saki and Katema (2011) suggest that CSOs in the country (including the Nkayi District) are taking a leading role in creating pockets of reconciliation at the community level (for example Radio Dialogue, Bulawayo Agenda and CCJPZ). Through various rehabilitation programmes, they attempt to repair divisions amongst community members and empower individuals to develop a culture of respect for co-existence (Gova & Ndlovu 2013, Sachikonye 2011, Sokwanele 2013, *The Zimbabwean* 2012). This supports scholarly debates that recommend the engagement of CSOs in reconciliation processes because they have the potential to bridge the gap between a national elite-level discourse on reconciliation and local understandings. This study examined these debates against the backdrop of other stakeholders engaging in reconciliation activities in the Nkayi District in order to establish the progress of reconciliation processes in the district and consider how they can be applied to similar communities in the country and Africa at large.

1.4. Formulation and demarcation of the research problem

This Masters research was based on scholarly debates on Zimbabwe that are advocating for the 'free' engagement of CSOs in reconciliation processes because of their potential to bridge the gap between a national elite-level discourse on reconciliation and local understandings (Mbofana 2011, Sachikonye 2011, Saki & Katema 2011). The aim of the research was to

investigate further the contribution of CSOs to reconciling the Nkayi District and to identify the challenges that emerge from their activities.

Considering the failure of the government of Zimbabwe to implement reconciliation through its initiatives such as ONHRI, the activities of CSOs such as Radio Dialogue, CCJPZ, and Bulawayo Agenda are potentially a promising avenue for reconciling the people of Nkayi. However, this research showed that CSOs have limited impact in a district like Nkayi because the government has suppressed their activities through either security forces or policy reforms that make their efforts a difficult task (CCJPZ 1997, Gova & Ndlovu 2013). The fundamental research problem covered by this research was therefore captured in the following research questions:

- a) What effect has violence had on the people of Nkayi? This question looks at how physical, structural and cultural violence has affected attitudes, behaviours and the conflict structure in the district.
- b) What perceptions of reconciliation do CSOs, the government and the people of Nkayi District hold? This question looks into the understandings of reconciliation shared by the various stakeholders in the research, and examines how they influence reconciliation processes in the district.
- c) What role has been played by the government and CSOs in the Nkayi District to address violence and nurture reconciliation? This question looks at the various programmes that have been introduced by these stakeholders and their progress on transforming attitudes, behaviours and the conflict structure in the district.

The research was also demarcated by conceptual, temporal, and geographical terms. With regards to conceptual delimitations, the research made use of what can be called a psychosocial lens of understanding the concept of reconciliation as described by Bloomfield (2006), Brounéus (2003, 2008), Lederach (1997), Ericson (2001), Rosoux (2008) and Schaap (2003, 2008) bearing in mind the contributions of other scholars on the subject. The research drew its understanding of the conflict in Zimbabwe and the contribution of the various stakeholders involved by referring to literature from scholars such as Bratton (1994), Du Plessis and Ford (2009), Eppel (2003, 2008, 2009), Lingren (2005), Machakanja (2010), Machinga (2010), Mbire 2011, Mbofana (2011), Mlambo (2013), Msindo (2012), Muzondidya and Ndlovu-

Gatsheni (2007), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009), Sachikonye (2011), Saki and Katema (2011), as well as government websites, accredited journals and institutes, and credible media sources.

In terms of the temporal, the research was situated in Zimbabwe's long history of violent conflict spreading over decades, including the independence struggle from 1965-1979, the Matabeleland massacres from 1980-1987, and the post-1998 electoral violence, which disrupted the well-being of various communities around the country (Eppel 2008, Mlambo 2013, Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007, Ndlovu & Dube 2013). Finally on the geographical, the research was limited to the Nkayi District which is composed of 21 473 households spread across 30 wards with a total population of 109 135 people (52 088 males and 57 047 females) (Census 2012). The Nkayi District was chosen because it is not only the least developed district in Zimbabwe, but because it has made headlines as the scene of intense political violence during the past three decades of the Zimbabwean conflicts including the Gukurahundi massacres in early 1980s (Gova & Ndlovu 2013, Ncube 2001, *The Zimbabwean* 2012). Focusing on this district did not only help determine the main sources of violence in the district but it also contributes to the literature on the possible ways for reconciling and building sustainable peace in this district, as well as other communities in similar predicaments in Zimbabwe and Africa at large.

1.5. Defining the central terms

The key terms that were used in this research that need to be defined are reconciliation, violence and civil society organisations (CSOs). In this section, an overview of these three terms is discussed to highlight the focal areas of the research. A full literature review follows in chapter two.

1.5.1. Reconciliation

There are many debates about the concept of reconciliation relating to how it can be employed as a peace-building mechanism for communities in transition, and many models have been developed to understand reconciliation in communities. This research made use of Rosoux's (2008) framework of reconciliation, which identifies three approaches, namely, structuralist, spiritualist and psychosocial. The structuralist approach (minimalist view), which mainly draws from international law focuses on reconciliation as a collective activity that often takes the form of national or international legal proceedings that address past human rights violations by using

truth commissions, international courts or national tribunals (Lederach 1997, Van der Merwe 1999, Villa-Vicencio 2003). The spiritual approach (maximalist view) mainly draws from theology and it emphasises reconciliation as healing broken relationships through forgiveness (Bloomfield 2006, Huyse & Salter 2008).

The psychosocial approach, which mainly draws from sociology, psychology and anthropology, is the median between the two extremes. Through this lens, the aspects of reconciliation studied are those related to the rebuilding of relationships among divided communities, which largely happens through engaging the divided parties. The divided parties are drawn into dialogue processes that allow them to familiarize themselves with the dynamics of the conflict and envision the future they want for their community (Eppel & Raftopoulos 2008, Sarkin 2008). Brounéus' (2003) definition of reconciliation, which looks at behaviour, attitudes and conflict structure, falls under the psychosocial approach. As mentioned earlier, Brounéus' (2003) defines reconciliation as "a societal process that involves the mutual acknowledgement of past sufferings and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviour into constructive relationships towards sustainable peace." Bloomfield (2006) and Villa-Vicencio (2003) add to the above understandings of reconciliation by arguing that reconciliation is an evolving process rather than an end goal. Its potential to return a broken community to a 'modicum of normality' renders it a necessary approach to be used to reinstate peace in violence stricken communities.

The psychosocial approach was the central theoretical framework for this research because it allows the research to look at the conditions necessary for fostering reconciliation, as well as the complex ways in which reconciliation impacts communities in transition (Eppel & Raftopoulos 2008, Sarkin 2008, Villa-Vicencio 2003). The psychosocial approach to reconciliation is a helpful framework for peace-building because its approach for reconciliation (largely dialogue) promotes the involvement of indigenous initiatives in which conflicting parties can come together and work towards a common understanding that promotes their co-existence (Brounéus 2003, Ericson 2001, Villa-Vicencio 2003). It is not only important for the research to understand how people in the district could commit horrendous acts against each other, but also for it to identify ways that will aid these communities to construct new ways of transforming violence into peace, trauma into survival, and division into co-existence (Sarkin 2008). Sarkin (2008) further substantiates this view by arguing that reconciliation in simple terms describes a process of coming together and formulating methods and practices that make way for violence stricken communities to return to a 'modicum of normality' (a position of sustainable peace and

co-existence) even though its inhabitants might have been subjected to inhumane crimes. Ericson (2001), who argues that the benefit of any reconciliation process is the establishment of healthy relationships and sustainable peace between divided communities, substantiates this position. Through the psychosocial approach, the warring parties do not merely discuss their grievances against each other, instead they also engage in self-reflection on their role and behaviour in the conflict that helps them to envisage a shared future. Reconciliation is, thus, a process through which communities can move away from a divided past towards a shared future (Assefa 1999, Long & Brecke 2003, Van der Merwe 1999).

1.5.2. Violence

According to Galtung (1969), violence occurs when the social, political and economic life of a population is affected such that the state of physical and mental wellbeing of the group or individual is pushed below their potential well-being. Many forms of violence have affected the population of Zimbabwe, but for this research, focus was given to physical, cultural and structural violence. Confortini (2006) adds that these three forms of violence affect the population in any of the following ways: physical and psychological well-being of persons, access to basic material needs (e.g. nutrition and health), exercise of basic human rights (e.g. freedom of expression and the right to life), as well as the non-material needs (e.g. happiness, peace and self-actualization).

Physical violence occurs when an act or encounter with force inflicts harm on the human self (Confortini 2006). Physical violence is often an intentional act whereby one inflicts pain, injury or death on another making use of a part of their body or foreign object. When one uses force on a person, the intention is usually to coerce the other party to submit to the expectations of the offender, for example gang rape, beatings and murder. Physical violence often erodes dignity and can deprive one the right to life.

Cultural violence occurs when aspects of the culture of a population group are used to legitimise oppression of another population group within the same community (Confortini 2006). Farmer (1996) defines culture as the varying aspects of the human population (i.e. values, norms and practices) that are shared by a particular grouping. Culture enables the community to identify coherence within local modes of thought and life, as well as the differences between distinct coherent systems. It also breeds an awareness of identity and belonging among communities.

According to Confortini (2006) and Galtung (1969), structural violence occurs from institutionalised practices of the community that harm or disadvantage individuals or a part of the community. It appears in all aspects of the community that deny individuals access to held aspirations (good life) and social progress. Structural violence does not have a specific person who can be held responsible for inflicting it because it is embedded in the socio-political and economic organisation of the community. Often it stems from historical processes that conspire to constrain individual agency. Gilman (1983) adds that structural violence manifests itself as unequal power and unequal life chances. This includes unequal distribution of resources (i.e. material and non-material) as well as unequal distribution of power to decide on the distribution of resources. It brings out issues of hierarchy and power dynamics within the community. Those who feel deprived of access to power and resources tend to feel like second-class citizens.

1.5.3. Civil Society Organisations

The definition of CSOs is highly contested and it is not the position of this research to engage in debates over the definition but rather to formulate a working definition that allows for the examination of their role in post-conflict transitions. Ranchod (2007) defines CSOs as all actors outside of the government who occupy the space of unforced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. Salamon (2010) and Seckinelgin (2002) add that CSOs are the supranational sphere of social and political participation, which involves various population groups who engage in dialogue, deliberation, confrontation and negotiation with each other and with the government and the business world. They occupy the space between the government, the market and the household. These actors can take the form of registered charities, non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups (Bratton 1994, Chandhoke *et. al.* 2002).

1.6. Research design

Data for this research was obtained through a month-long fieldwork survey, between the 1st and 25th of April 2014 taking place in Harare, Bulawayo and the Nkayi District. The case study research approach as it pertains to the Nkayi District involved breaking down the district into sub-administrative units (villages/communities under the leadership of a chief or headman) in

order to capture the views of a diversity of households in the district. Since the research team encountered challenges with the police at the Nkayi District police station (as explained in Chapter 4), only three villages/communities were chosen for the research because of convenience (Babbie & Mouton 2001, Tobin & Begley 2004, Vambe 2012). This arrangement was made to maintain the security of the research team and participants, but it did not affect the credibility of data gathered during the fieldwork.

This research made use of two sampling techniques, namely, snowball sampling and stratified purposive sampling. A sample size of 36 people was used and the sample selection was made based on the role of various stakeholders in reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe, namely, the community of Nkayi, CSO representatives, government officials and the media. The research participants from the Nkayi community were selected through a snowball sampling method (selected from referral). This approach was chosen because there is still a lot of censorship around gathering information and conducting public gatherings in Zimbabwe due to government policies such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA). These policies make many citizens hesitant to confide in someone they are not familiar with (Machakanja 2010, Sachikonye 2011).

The community members of the Nkayi District that were selected were survivors and witnesses of the violence that has occurred, as it was difficult to get the view of perpetrators due to their fear of being alienated and the researcher had to respect their choice (Vambe 2012). The CSOs and government official respondents were selected through stratified purposive sampling, which refers to selecting participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research question, in this instance the criteria refers to CSOs and government representatives dealing with reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe (including the Matabeleland Province) (Creswell *et al.* 2007).

The researcher conducted three sets of interviews (see Appendixes 1, 2 and 3 for questions) and two focus group discussions (see Appendix 5). The first set of interviews involved 14 members of the Nkayi District drawn from three villages/communities in the district, of both genders. The 14 members also participated in focus group discussions that ensued after the interview sessions. A second set of interviews involved 16 representatives from various civil society organisations drawn from churches, human rights activists, aid organisations and the media (including social media). The third set of interviews were conducted with four representatives from the government drawn from the two MDC political parties, ZANU PF and ZAPU, which

are the main parties present in Matabeleland. The separation of interviews into the three strata assisted in identifying the issues that drive the interactions and tensions among these stakeholders in Zimbabwe. Two academic experts who have written substantially on the phenomenon of reconciliation and related issues about Zimbabwe were also interviewed (see Appendix 4). Including academics on the list of respondents provided the researcher access to peer debriefing (Koch 2006, Leininger 1994, Tobin & Begley 2004).

A triangulation approach was adopted for this research (validating data through cross reference from two or more sources) in the form of conducting archival studies (macro level), and interviews and focus groups (micro level), in order to enrich the output of the research (Babbie & Mouton 2001). In some cases, audio devices were used with the permission of the participant in order to enhance data capturing as well as cross examination of data at later stages of the research.

A case study of the Nkayi District was selected because of the plurality of its population (e.g. Kalanga, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, Sotho and Tsonga, among others), which made it possible for the researcher to capture a diversity of perceptions on reconciliation (Census 2012, NANGO 2012). In this case, the researcher described her research intentions to the community members and had the opportunity to test the hypothesis on the scope and limits of reconciliation in Matabeleland, particularly looking at the perceptions of the Shona-Ndebele people on the violence the region has encountered since independence.

The research required the researcher to interact with various communities and stakeholders in the Nkayi District dealing with reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe. Permission to conduct the research was granted by the Provincial Administrator of Matabeleland North Province and the Nkayi District Administrator. During the research, permission was asked from the participants before they took part in the research, and all information gathered was only used where consent was given and pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of respondents (Moch & Gates 1999). Participants willingly participated in the research and they were allowed to withdraw from the research at any point. Participants were not coerced to respond to any questions they were not comfortable with.

The Nkayi District is comprised of people proficient in mainly Shona and Ndebele, the research questions were translated from English to Shona and Ndebele for the interviews and focus groups. The researcher recruited a convenor, who also acted as an interpreter, who comes from

the district and speaks both languages familiar to the community members. The convenor was an esteemed member of the community and her proficiency in both Shona and Ndebele made the research easier as people were willing to open up because they could converse in a familiar language (Babbie & Mouton 2001).

The researcher had the privilege of being exposed to the underlying dynamics of reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe from in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions with the relevant stakeholders, encounters that are difficult to attain through quantitative research (Creswell 2002, Houghton *et al.* 2013). Through a case study of the Nkayi District, the researcher gained a multi-perspective view on reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe by gathering the views of the community members and various stakeholders that have engaged in reconciliation activities in the Matabeleland region. Due to the small sample size, the research results cannot be generalised to be a reflection of the whole population of Nkayi. More so, the results cannot be generalised to be a reflection of the whole population of Zimbabwe. However, the data gathered will be useful in contributing to understanding the dynamics related to CSO activity in reconciliation at the community level. Hence, this research paves the way for future comparative research to be conducted in order to establish broader understandings and methods that can be useful to reconcile violence stricken communities.

1.7. Research structure

This dissertation is organised into six chapters. This first chapter has introduced and contextualised the research in order to give a clear outline of the scope and focus of the research. Definitions of key terms and the methodology of the research were also given.

Chapter Two focuses on the theoretical frameworks for the concept of reconciliation in order to conceptualise the central framework that was adopted by the research. The purpose of this chapter is to situate this research within debates around the use of the concept of reconciliation and to identify the various stakeholders involved in reconciliation processes.

Chapter Three gives insight into the politicisation of reconciliation in Zimbabwe. This chapter identified the various forms of violence (structural, physical and cultural) that have occurred in Zimbabwe (including the Nkayi District) and the reconciliation initiatives that have been taken by various stakeholders involved in the country.

Chapter Four describes the case study research technique as it was used in the research. This chapter explored in depth the triangulation approach taken by the researcher to conduct fieldwork research in Zimbabwe, highlighting the success of the research, as well as the limitations.

Chapter Five presents the findings from the fieldwork. The purpose of this chapter is to situate the perceptions about reconciliation of the community members of the Nkayi District against the literature review conducted in Chapters Two and Three, in order to highlight congruence, differences and the gaps in views on the subject.

In Chapter Six, the research concludes by drawing upon the findings of the preceding chapters in relation to the broad focus of the research. Drawing from their contributions, limitations, and influence in the Nkayi District, the research positioned these findings within the broader understanding of the role of CSOs in reconciliation processes. Based on these findings, future prospects and recommendations concerning the role of CSOs in post-conflict transition processes in Africa were considered.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUALISING RECONCILIATION

2.1. Introduction

Reconciliation is a highly contested concept because of the various connotations it raises among actors in the global political community. Andrew Schaap (2008) has summarized the major objections scholars have had concerning the concept along six ‘objections’ which formed the basis of the first part of this chapter. The second part of this chapter examined the framework of reconciliation. There are many debates about how reconciliation can be employed to build peace and stability for communities in transition and Valerie Rosoux’s (2008) framework is one possible model out of many. In this research Rosoux’s (2008) model of reconciliation, namely, the structuralist, spiritualist, and psychosocial approaches, was adopted to establish the scope and limits of reconciliation as a peace-building mechanism. The model was adopted for this research because her three approaches (structuralist, spiritualist and psychosocial) enabled the researcher to situate the scope and limits of reconciliation efforts in Zimbabwe and to identify strategies that can be employed to address past injustices.

The structuralist approach (minimalist view) emphasises the legal aspects of reconciliation. A reconciliation process through this lens addresses social injustices in the aftermath of a violent incident by making perpetrators accountable for their actions. The spiritualist approach (maximalist view) emphasises religious practices that address social injustices such as mercy and the forgiveness of one another of any wrongdoings. The psychosocial approach (median view) emphasizes reconciliation as a dialogue process that allows for communities in transition to transform their attitudes, conflict structure and behaviour such that in the face of conflict they resolve it by non-violent actions (Rosoux 2008).

This research focused on reconciliation in communities from a psychosocial lens because it enabled the researcher to test the hypothesis concerning reconciliation in Matabeleland, particularly aspects of the community that influence perceptions of the Shona-Ndebele people on the violence the region has encountered since independence. It enabled insight into the actions that ought to be taken for reconciliation to occur in this region. It brought to the fore strategies that can nurture sustainable relationships among divided communities, as well as address the complex ways (attitudes, behaviour of the people and the structure of the conflict)

the various conflicts in Zimbabwe have affected the people of Matabeleland (including the Nkayi District) (Eppel & Raftopoulos 2008, Sarkin 2008, Villa-Vicencio 2003). As mentioned before, the research made use of Brounéus (2003) definition, namely, that reconciliation is “a societal process that involves the mutual acknowledgement of past sufferings and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviours into constructive relationships towards sustainable peace.” This definition befits the psychosocial approach because it addresses the behaviours, attitudes and the structure of the conflict in a community. Ericson’s (2001) view of reconciliation substantiates the psychosocial approach to reconciliation in that she believes that reconciliation can transform attitudes and behaviours of people living in divided communities. She notes that through interactive dialogue the divided parties do not only come together to discuss their grievances but also gain the opportunity to reflect on the conflict structure, and the attitudes and behaviours that developed as a result of conflict. This platform for deliberating issues might help warring parties to move on from the past through sharing views on how to transform their response to conflict.

In addition to all of this, this chapter explores the position of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in dealing with communities in transition in order to identify the role of non-state actors in facilitating reconciliation.

2.2. The challenges of conceptualising reconciliation

Bloomfield (2006), Lederach (1997) and Schaap (2008) are among the scholars that discuss the debates concerning the concept of reconciliation. Schaap (2008) has classified these debates into six broad categories, namely, the ambiguous, illiberal, assimilative, exculpatory, quietest and the question-begging objections. He argues that the use of the concept of reconciliation in the global political community bears ideological claims that influence communities to legitimise particular codes of conduct at varying times and this often gives privilege to the interests of some people over others. This tendency of political actors to misuse reconciliation processes to promote particular members of the community makes its use in political communities highly contentious, especially when dealing with communities that have differing expectations about addressing the past (Lederach 1997, Schaap 2008). The research explored the six objections in detail in order to identify the challenges that surround the use of the concept of reconciliation.

The research made use Schaap's (2008) framework of the six objections to explore the literature on reconciliation more broadly.

2.2.1 Ambiguous objection

Andrew Gunstone in Schaap (2008) argues that reconciliation is an ambiguous concept because it can have varying meanings to different people within the same community. These varying meanings can make it difficult for communities in transition to develop reconciliation processes into a coherent ideal that can be applied to accommodate the perceptions of all stakeholders. As such, reconciliation does not have a single meaning that can be formulated into a public policy that is useable across a heterogeneous community. Bloomfield *et al.* (2003) and Lederach (1997) point out that when communities in transition have differing views of reconciliation, it might become difficult to cater for the expectations of all parties. Schaap (2003) adds that it becomes challenging to discern between processes of reconciliation that will be acceptable to the community concerned and those that might actually bring about reconciliation.

Schaap (2003) asserts that the compromise with choosing acceptable reconciliation processes to accommodate the varying expectations of communities in transition becomes apparent when the process fails to address the underlying causes of the conflict. Lederach (1997) points out that social injustice often occurs because some members of the community have certain privileges that are not available to others. In this case, a reconciliation process needs to take into consideration the inequalities and asymmetric power relations that influence the attitudes and behaviours of the people. When that has been accommodated, the expectations of the parties in conflict should also be considered when deciding on the processes of reconciliation to use to address past injustices. Bloomfield (2006) and Lederach (1997) add that when reconciliation addresses the underlying causes of the conflict it is more likely to drive the community in transition towards sustainable co-existence. In such instances, reconciliation has the potential to empower people to seek non-violent means of addressing their differences in order to curb the recurrence of past social injustices (Anderlini *et al.* 2004).

2.2.2 Illiberal objection

Schaap (2008) explains the illiberal objection by arguing that the motives of political actors involved in reconciliation processes can constrain people to look into the future following an ideal that is not necessarily compatible with the dynamics of their community. Phillips (2005)

adds that this often arises when reconciliation processes are intertwined with religion. In religious practice, reconciliation is regarded as a process of rebuilding moral values in the community following theological prescriptions, particularly Christianity (Schaap 2008). As such, in Christian practice when people commit social injustices, they are regarded as sinful beings who should seek deliverance from their immoral actions. In order for one to be delivered of their actions they ought to seek for forgiveness from the one they did wrong to (Schaap 2008). Phillips (2005) notes that when an offender asks for forgiveness the community expects the victim to respond with pardon. This focus on reconciliation as granting pardon to an offender and abstaining from seeking revenge requires high moral standing, which might overshadow the natural processes that various people go through before they are ready to move past the resentment that has been created by the unjust actions (Rosoux 2008).

Brudholm and Rosoux (2009) concede that reconciliation as forgiveness places a demand on people to let go of the past, which in most cases creates superficial reconciliation because the act of forgiving takes more than one just mentioning that they have forgiven someone. Other religious practices, for example African Traditional Religion (ATR) and Buddhism, have rituals and ceremonies that ought to occur before an offender is forgiven and if these procedures are not accommodated in the reconciliation process its success becomes minimal (Mapfumo 2013). Sarkin (2008) notes that social injustice does affect people's attitudes; it often triggers behavioural change and disrupts the organisational setting of the people within their community. It becomes too burdensome for one to be asked for forgiveness on moral grounds when the perpetrator is expected to take responsibility by following other procedures, for example, undergoing a cleansing ceremony to rectify the unspeakable actions (Phillips 2005, Sarkin 2008). An example is the case of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) proceedings in South Africa, which faced challenges from the way the commissioners conflated the legal process of amnesty with the Christian concept of forgiveness (Van der Merwe 2003). It becomes problematic to pressure people to forgive when the underlying causes of the conflict have not been deliberated on and resolved through processes that are acceptable to the population involved.

2.2.3 Quietest objection

According to Kelvin Gilbert in Schaap (2008) when reconciliation processes force the population to move on by forgiving and forgetting past social injustices, it might overshadow

their need to deliberate on issues arising from their experience. An example is the public call to ‘let by gones be by gones’ made by the then Prime Minister of Zimbabwe Robert Gabriel Mugabe in 1980 which discouraged the population of Zimbabwe from deliberating on social injustices that occurred during the liberation struggle for the sake of moving forward (Mashingaidze 2010, Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007). Mashingaidze (2010) points out that by ignoring the need to address past social injustices, in effect, the government forced mostly the victims to forego their quest for justice (both retributive and restorative). This created the perception among community members that the government absolved the offenders at the expense of the law (Msindo 2012, Sachikonye 2011).

Brudholm and Rosoux (2009) and Minow (1998) substantiate the above by noting that forgiveness and justice should not be treated as exclusive variables because they are inherently compatible. Rosoux (2008) argues that both forgiveness and justice are necessary variables that can assure reconciliation but it is important for communities in transition not to overplay one over the other. Minow (1998) suggests that seeking justice can encourage community members to refrain from social injustices, while forgiveness might give room for offenders to be accommodated without prejudice. As such, both variables should be exercised in moderation so that they do not overpower the conditions that make it possible for people to move away from destructive attitudes and behaviours. Bloomfield *et al.* (2003), Brounéus (2003) and Rosoux (2008) assert that the fundamental goal of reconciliation is to create the space for communities in transition to develop constructive behaviour, healthy attitudes and a sustainable structure for their community to deal with conflicts using non-violent measures.

2.2.4. Assimilative objection

Schaap (2008) argues that some reconciliation processes develop from the assumption that political leaders are custodians of their communities and they will adopt actions that fulfil the expectations of the grassroots. He adds that, in most cases, political leaders prioritize preserving their political goals at the expense of the population they represent. For example, the government of Zimbabwe has refused to take responsibility for the Matabeleland massacres by arguing that the use of excessive force was necessary to protect the government from the threat posed by ZIPRA dissidents (Sachikonye 2011). In this case, reconciliation by ignoring the past runs the risk of reinforcing the political claims of the powerful in community at the expense of the views of the grassroots. Stewart Mocha in Schaap (2008) notes that reconciliation processes

that are guided by biased political motives become misused as a tool of silencing the demands of some members of the community to preserve the interests of the ruling government.

2.2.5 Exculpatory objection

Anthony Moran in Schaap (2008) challenges the processes of reconciliation in which the governments of communities in transition use public apology as the sole attempt to bring about reconciliation. He argues that reconciliation should not be simplified to a public apology because reconciliation obliges political actors to look into the underlying causes of social injustices within their communities and to set up measures that will curb the recurrence of inhumane actions. Brudholm and Rosoux (2009) substantiates the above by noting that making a public apology in the absence of measures to reprimand the perpetrators of violence undermines the need for offenders to take responsibility for their actions. A public apology can divert attention from the victims' demands for truth and closure about the past or the whereabouts of their loved ones and might leave some with resentments. Rosoux (2008) condemns the abuse of public apologies by political actors because they easily translate into empty pronouncements that are used as an excuse to ignore the demand for truth and justice by the victims.

Eppel and Raftopoulos (2008), Mashingaidze (2010) and Msindo (2012) argue that there are some instances where a public apology might offer some form of relief for victims. They refer to the case of the Matabeleland massacres that occurred in Zimbabwe in the early 1980s that have not been acknowledged by the government. In this instance, Msindo (2012) believes that if the government of Zimbabwe offers an apology to victims, this would be an official acknowledgement of the injustices of the past, which demonstrates government's respect for the dignity of victims and its willingness to take responsibility for the lives that were destroyed by the incidents. Schaap (2008) notes that a public apology becomes rhetoric if the government fails to set up supporting measures that will stop communities from using violence again to fulfil their goals.

2.2.6. Question-begging objection

Schaap (2008) challenges the assumption that reconciliation is a process that can facilitate communities in transition to return to a state of normalcy that existed before the conflict. He challenges this claim because, in most cases, this state of normalcy that reconciliation aspires to

achieve never existed before. Anderlini *et al.* (2004) add that the assumption that reconciliation will return divided communities to a state of normalcy is limited because it ignores the underlying causes of conflict in the affected community. Often people get into conflict because they are unsatisfied about a particular issue in their present state of life, for example economic inequality. If reconciliation focuses on bringing back the community to a state of normalcy that presided prior to conflict without addressing the issues that ignited the conflict, it can easily escalate the issues the community is fighting against (Schaap 2004).

Pronk (2012) substantiates the above by noting that conflict is not necessarily bad but can be a useful means by which communities can be transformed and potentially develop. As such, when a reconciliation process assumes that the community in transition will return to a state of normalcy that existed before the conflict, it can regenerate the unwanted practices that might have triggered the conflict in the first place. He suggests that reconciliation should not aim to return a community to its previous state but rather to transform the current state by working on the underlying causes that fuelled the conflict. He urges that it is important for the leaders of the community in transition to understand the expectations of its people before imposing new ideals of what constitutes a return to normality.

2.3. Approaches to reconciliation

Santa-Barbara in Webel and Galtung (2007) argues that communities excel when their members live in harmony than in a state of enmity. This is based on the view that when community members have a positive working relationship, they are likely to seek non-violent means to resolve any disputes that arise amongst them. Ojulu (2011) adds that when there is animosity, community members are likely to resort to violence in order to resolve their disputes because negative feelings create resentment and the urge to revenge in order to get even with the offender. It is unhealthy for communities to live as enemies because animosity prevents members from engaging with one another. It can prevent people from capitalising on the optimum opportunity of societal development that is created when people work together as an entity (Ojulu 2011). It can also lead to a cycle of violence especially when members cease to believe in the desirability of co-existence with others in the same community (Bloomfield 2006, Santa-Barbara in Webel & Galtung 2007).

Lederach (1997) and Santa-Barbara, in Webel and Galtung (2007), believe that reconciliation is a means by which communities in transition can address the social injustices of the past and transform violence into peace, hatred into mutual respect and divisions into co-existence. A reconciliation process has the potential to transform behaviour, attitudes and the conflict structure, following the definition of reconciliation offered by Karen Brounéus (2003). Brounéus (2003) definition that is used in this research highlights the importance of mutual acknowledgement of the past and the changing of destructive behaviours and attitudes into constructive relationships. As a result of reconciliation, destructive behaviour among people in a community can be addressed through, for example, trust building exercises that promote restoration of broken relationships. The negative attitudes created by the conflict can be challenged through dialogues that create room for stereotypes and misconceptions to be demystified. The conflict structure can also be corrected by transforming asymmetric power relations that perpetuate conflicts through the development of a common ground that promotes mutual respect for all entities in the community (Bloomfield *et al.* 2003, Broneus 2003, Ericson 2001). The next section explores reconciliation according to Rosoux's (2008) three approaches.

2.3.1. Structuralist approach

Rosoux (2008) associates the structuralist approach (minimalist view) with scholars that advocate for the use of the legal system to address social injustices of the past. Reconciliation in this approach pursues justice for the victims of war, violence or human rights abuses. Anderlini *et al.* (2004) define justice as the fair and equitable treatment of all people under the law. In the event of a conflict, justice ensures that the warring parties receive due respect through the legal system. Lederach (1997) argues that reconciliation can be a means to solicit justice for previously disadvantaged members of the community. He maintains that communities in transition should strive to account for the past by acknowledging the sufferings of the victims and removing the offenders from the community. Assefa (1999) and Van der Merwe (1999) also state that through transparency and revelation of the past, the legal framework is able to regain some dignity and closure for the victims. In this case, the necessary conditions for reconciliation are satisfied when the community in transition is able to solicit clarity on the past incidents and restitution to victims for the inconveniences that resulted from the incident.

Anderlini *et al.* (2004) assert that justice, which ensures that perpetrators are held accountable, can be pursued through retribution. The process of reconciliation through retributive justice involves identifying the injustices that have occurred, identifying the perpetrator and taking

corrective measures to make the perpetrator accountable for the unlawful actions (Rosoux 2008). Retributive justice can serve as a deterrent measure in the community as perpetrators are made to take responsibility for their past actions by either serving a jail term or paying compensation. The structuralist approach presumes that the sentencing of offenders can deter other community members from committing similar atrocities because undesirable actions can cost them through reparations (Rosoux 2008). The main goal of this approach to justice is to offer an opportunity for victims to be at par with their offenders. It also reduces the chance for community members to turn to vigilante justice (Anderlini *et al.* 2004).

Retributive justice includes restitution (offering compensation to rectify harm) usually through financial payments made to the victim by either the offender or the government (Anderlini *et al.* 2004). The symbolic value of restitution is correcting the imbalance that is created by the effects of violence. Mapfumo (2013) and Mashingaidze (2010) highlight that a majority of the victims of social injustices in Zimbabwe have continued to hold resentments against their offenders because they are expecting to be compensated for the losses they incurred. Mbire (2011) adds that their resentments are often triggered by the fact that offenders have continued to prosper using resources they stole from the victims. Some victims, for example survivors of the post-2008 electoral violence in Buhera District, are now living in poverty because a neighbour destroyed their livestock and property during the violence, which makes it difficult for one to accommodate the person who has created the unfavourable living conditions (Mapfumo 2013). Mashingaidze (2010) and Sachikonye (2011) point out that reconciliation in these communities will mostly occur after victims have received restitution for their losses. A challenge with offering compensation to victims often occurs when the court has to decide on the type of restitution that would satisfy the expectations of the victims and correct the imbalance caused by the atrocities they may have suffered. The findings made by the 2010 SA Reconciliation Barometer in Lefko-Everett *et al.* (2011) on restitution procedures aimed at addressing social injustices identified the fact that while some victims would appreciate some form of compensation for the injustices incurred, many victims believe that no form of compensation can equate to the suffering they encountered. It adds that most victims prefer to see their offender suffer the same way they did and this is often met through long jail sentences or death sentence rather than amnesty or compensation. As such, it can be difficult for some victims to move forward when they still hold that the perpetrator owes them a lot more than they have received through compensation (Brudholm & Rosoux 2009, Rosoux 2008).

Assefa (1999), Lederach (1997) and Van der Merwe (2003) argue that the challenge with retributive justice is that prosecutions mainly focus on determining the wrongful acts of a perpetrator and this often diverts attention from the testimonies of the victim. They argue that pursuing reconciliation through legal systems that concentrate on retributive justice can be limiting because it prioritises serving justice and this can overlook unveiling the truth that a victim ought to get to attain healing. Criminal court proceedings are usually long (e.g. it can take months or years for the court to reach a verdict) and lawyers often get entangled in following court procedures than soliciting the truth that is needed for justice to be served (Anderlini *et al.* 2004). Rosoux (2008) and Villa-Vicencio (2011) argue that truth and justice are difficult to attain when people are in conflict because the trade-off for justice can manipulate individual accounts of truth about the past. An example is the situation where the legal system offers amnesty to offenders in exchange for a confession. In such instances, an offender might give an account of the past that can warrant the least sentence by law (Boraine 2004, Sarkin 2008). Trial proceedings of this nature can lead to re-victimisation of victims especially when the trial involves hostile parties (Anderlini *et al.* 2004, Boraine 2004).

2.3.2. Spiritualist approach

In the spiritualist approach, Rosoux (2008) emphasises that the act of forgiveness (whether conditional or unconditional forgiveness) is the means by which the community is expected to reconcile. She argues that some political actors consider reconciliation as an act of forgiveness whereby communities in transition are expected to move forward by forgiving the inhuman acts committed by the offender. The spiritualist approach to reconciliation is grounded in theology, especially the religious practice of Christianity, which urges communities to be compassionate, to forgive one another of their wrongdoings and to accept the things they cannot change and to concentrate on those they can change (Bloomfield *et al.* 2003, Huyse & Salter 2008).

Hamber (2007) and Hayner (2001) add that reconciliation efforts in this approach focus on encouraging victims to forgive their perpetrators so that the negative attitudes they hold do not continue to affect their well-being. The act of forgiveness on the part of the victim can occur out of good will (unconditional forgiveness) or if the perpetrator offers an apology (conditional forgiveness) for the inhuman actions (Hayner 2001). Forgiveness as an act of good will means that the victim chooses to forgive in order to stop feeling disempowered by the past. This involves acknowledging that the victim is not a subject of the perpetrator but a survivor of the inevitable past (Hamber 2007). Hamber (2007) reiterates that when one is in control of their

attitude and behaviour they are able to determine how they want other people to associate with them. This allows victims to regain control of their lives by replacing negative attitudes with positive ones (Huyse & Salter 2008, Lederach 1997, Minow 1998). According to Hamber (2007), conditional forgiveness requires that the perpetrator admit responsibility for the inhuman actions and volunteers to amend relations with the offended party. Forgiveness because of an apology means that the perpetrator takes responsibility for the past by showing remorse for the inhuman actions and repenting from destructive behaviour (Rosoux 2008).

Brudholm and Rosoux (2009) point out that often when people are hurting they expect an offender to apologise for the wrong act and repent from destructive behaviour. Taking these actions is a sign that the perpetrator is giving due respect to the victim (either the actual victim or family of the victim in the case of death) and regrets the past inhuman actions. Hamber (2007) argues that the act of forgiveness on the part of the victim in this instance becomes difficult to attain if the offender has not apologised and shown remorse for the past inhuman actions. Brudholm and Rosoux (2009) disagree with this emphasizes of reconciliation as an act of forgiveness by highlighting that human beings have varying abilities to forgive and move past the reservations they may have on an offender. Rubin and Hewstone (2004) substantiates the above by arguing that the proximity of a perpetrator to a victim and the severity of the offence committed often influence the ability and time needed by one to get over the offences committed. They further state that the attitude and behaviour of the offender towards the victim can also influence the severity of the offences committed, which makes it difficult for a victim to forgive an offender when the inhuman actions have not been reprimanded. Bloomfield (2006), Huyse and Salter (2008) and Minow (1998) assert that it is unreasonable, therefore, for a reconciliation process to concentrate on forgiveness when the underlying issues have not been addressed.

Machakanja (2010) gives the case of Zimbabwe as an example where the government has not offered an apology to its people for the past social injustices such as the Gukurahundi massacres and this makes it a challenge to expect the victims of violence to forgive their offenders, particularly government security agents. According to Vambe (2012) Gukurahundi is a Shona term that refers to the first rain that washes away chaff before the spring rains. In the case of the Matabeleland massacres it has been used to refer to the killings and torture of over 20 000 people by government security forces in Midlands and Matabeleland regions 1981-1987 during a government campaign to eradicate the stronghold of ZIPRA dissidents in these regions

(Msindo 2012). To some extent Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Matabeleland, particularly faith-based organisations, for example Grace to Heal, have been facilitating pockets of reconciliation in Tsholotsho and Lupane through community engagement programs that include teachings on forgiveness (Grace to Heal 2012). Grace to Heal programs have not been able to spread out to other parts of the region mainly because of limited resources and a lack of support from the government. Grace to Heal's reconciliation efforts in these communities focus on providing support to victims and helping the people to work together to build non-violent means of resolving issues in their communities.

2.3.3. Psychosocial approach

In the psychosocial approach, Rosoux (2008) emphasises dialogue as the means by which communities in transition get reconciled. Her understanding of reconciliation in this instance is influenced by anthropology, psychology and sociology disciplines. She regards this approach as the median between the above approaches (structuralist and spiritualist) and argues that reconciliation is founded on creating a space that stimulates the deliberation of issues. Dialogue can occur in two forms, namely, as a verbal exchange between two or more people and as an act whereby conversation occurs through other people. Dialogue as an act involves conversations presented through artistic performances that enhance social learning, education and exchange of ideas (Ellinor & Gerard 1998).

As noted, reconciliation is a contested concept because it has different meanings for different people (Schaap 2008). Through dialogue, the psychosocial approach offers communities in transition the opportunity to deliberate on the process from the onset and ultimately shape the conditions for reconciliation. Dialogue allows support to be drawn towards a shared enterprise that cultivates the ability for community members to coexist as heterogeneous constituents (Villa-Vicencio 2007). Eppel and Raftopoulos (2008) add that a change in negative attitudes and destructive behaviours is often attainable when people get the opportunity to engage with one another in a safe environment that allows them to talk with one another without fear and prejudice. The psychosocial approach can go well with restorative justice, in that justice in the community is presented as a systematic means of addressing wrongdoings by focusing on transforming the traumatic experiences of victims and rebuilding of broken relationships (Anderlini *et al.* 2004). Reconciliation should not be about identifying who is wrong or right but should be a process of involving all stakeholders in addressing past harms by deliberating on them in a safe environment. The main goal of reconciliation in this case is to prevent

stigmatisation of community members whether victim or perpetrator by engaging people in dialogue (Anderlini *et al.* 2004). Dialogue processes enable people to open up to their experiences of the past. Dialogue also provides a platform for transforming the traditional relationship between communities and their government in responding to violence. In the case of ethnic violence, dialogue can enhance inter-cultural understandings among communities whose co-existence has deteriorated due to conflict, for example, the tension between Shona and Ndebele people in Matabeleland region, Zimbabwe (Msindo 2012).

Dialogue can also be presented through artistic performance, for example through film and other forms of entertainment. Notwithstanding that the media can escalate conflicts through propaganda, Chari (2010) argues that media remains the primary source of information that can furnish the community with constructive interpretive frameworks for understanding their public affairs. He argues that the way in which the media frames social events is essential for a community in transition because people, both local and abroad, depend on media to understand public affairs. Chari (2010) adds that people do not only acquire information through the media but also learn how much importance to attach to an issue based on the amount of attention it gets from the media. He points out that through, for example, film, theatre, music and news, people acquire numerous clues on how to understand and interpret certain issues in their community. These issues ultimately become prominent perceptions that influence the attitudes and behaviours of the people in the community. Chari (2010) believes that when media is used appropriately, it can transform the negative attitudes and destructive behaviours of people because it provides a platform for people to engage with their social realities. Through programs such as film festivals, music galas and theatrical shows local communities can transform their perceptions of the past, share their experiences of violence and learn how to enhance their psychosocial well-being. An example can be drawn from the Peace Concert held in Gomoza, a rural community in Lupane District, in Zimbabwe in 2012 that was organised by the civil society organisation Lupane Agenda (a chapter of the Bulawayo Agenda). The aim of the gala was to promote peace and tolerance, it brought together over 1500 people including government officials, traditional leaders, artists, CSO representatives and the local community (Church & Civil Society Forum 2012).

Rosoux (2008) argues for the psychosocial approach because she believes that reconciliation is not about restoring the community to a state of normalcy that existed before the conflict, but reconstructing new relationships among the community in a way that allows for everyone to

move forward together (co-exist). The rehabilitation of the community commences through people opening up and learning about their past in an environment that enables them to build a new history that complements their past experiences. The focus of reconciliation should not be on getting a result such as punishing the offender or coercing people to forgive one another, but to develop a sequence of processes that will rebuild and improve the relations of communities in dispute (Anderlini *et al.* 2004). Lederach (1997) adds that dialogue can enable communities in transition to start the process of reconciliation because it offers people the opportunity to create social spaces that can accommodate both victims and perpetrators as entities to a dispute. It also facilitates the acknowledgement of each party's role in the dispute through validation of experienced pain or loss and this enables people to concentrate on positive attitudes and behaviours that can foster mutual relations forged from understanding their ability to coexist (Anderlini *et al.* 2004, Brounéus 2008, Lederach 1997, Villa-Vicencio 2003).

Kayser (2000) adds that the psychosocial approach creates a space that allows communities to review their individual and collective capabilities to transform victimhood encounters into survival and to shun away from perpetual violence. As mentioned earlier, Brounéus' (2003) definition of reconciliation, which looks at behaviour, attitudes and conflict structure, falls under the psychosocial approach. She holds that reconciliation through dialogue opens up spaces for confronting the realities of violence in conflict stricken communities in order for people to be able to inhibit the perpetuation of a culture of violence (Brounéus 2003, 2008). When dealing with rural communities, Mapfumo (2013) and Sarkin (2008) note that dialogue in reconciliation can be achieved by capitalising on the traditional means of dispute resolution that pertain to the situation community. An example is the *dare* (gathering at the compound of a traditional leader for deliberations) which enables the community in transition to take ownership of the process.

As in the spiritualist approach, Rosoux (2008) cautions that dialogue should not be enforced on people or taken as a talking exercise where people gather and share ideas that lead to no action. She argues that timing is crucial in dialogue because rushing people to talk when tensions are still high can result in victimisation and the derailing of the talks can be interpreted as denying people their freedom of expression. In order to avoid stirring tensions, Rosoux (2008) suggests that dialogue processes should be handled by neutral actors who have the trust of the people and can represent the warring parties fairly, for example civil society organisations because they have the ability to bridge the gap in relations between the government and grassroots. She adds

that the government of communities in transition should begin by creating an enabling environment for people to deliberate on issues. A good example is the Speech Act in South Africa, which enabled victims and perpetrators to come forward and participate in the 1997 TRC process (Villa-Vicencio 2003).

The enabling environment allows for programs such as trauma healing and counselling, workshops, seminars and capacity building exercises to occur, in the process facilitating community interaction and transforming the people's attitudes and behaviours and the structure of the conflict. It can also encourage community members to be tolerant of each other and to be more resistant to persuasion to harm others because they are aware that issues can be resolved amicably through deliberation. For example the capacity building workshops being conducted by Grace to Heal with the youths in Tsholotsho and Lupane, Zimbabwe, have played such a role (Grace to Heal 2009). Rosoux (2008) also argues that if there is no political will dialogue processes can become mere talk and this can be detrimental to communities in transition because when people express their views openly, they often expect these opinions and suggestions to be taken on board and implemented. Thus if people state that they want social development, the government ought to make an effort to implement follow up measures that ensure the promotion and realisation of the demands and expectations of the community. Brudholm and Rosoux (2009) maintain that implementing the resolutions drawn from the people enhances the success of reconciliation efforts because the people will have a sense of ownership of the process.

Rosoux (2008) points out that the psychosocial approach can enable communities in transition to break away from the tendency to meet violence with violence or to enforce violence as a means to achieve their interests. Thus, the population is transformed by deconstructing a culture of violence through the development of nonviolent conflict resolution mechanisms built over time that enable the people to distance their behaviours and attitudes from violent practices. Kayser (2000) maintains that when people shun a culture of violence, they are able to develop non-violent means of resolving disputes, and to curb the development of destructive attitudes and behaviours within their community. This enables them to make durable peace and co-existence in harmony becomes part of their lifestyle (Bloomfield 2006, Brounéus 2008, Kayser 2000). Bloomfield (2006) and Villa-Vicencio (2003) add to the above assertion of the psychosocial approach to reconciliation by arguing that reconciliation is an evolving process rather than an end goal. Its potential to return a broken community to a 'modicum of normality'

(stability) renders it a necessary tool to use alongside other peace-building mechanisms. The psychosocial approach to reconciliation is a helpful framework in managing negative attitudes, destructive behaviours and the affected structure of the communities in Nkayi District because its methodology promotes the grassroots participation in developing a process that works towards a common understanding and promotes peaceful co-existence (Brounéus 2003, Ericson 2001, Villa-Vicencio 2003).

2.4. The position of CSOs in reconciliation processes

As mentioned before, the definition of CSOs is highly contested and, therefore, it is not the position of this research to engage in debates over the definition but rather to formulate a working definition that allows for the examination of their role in post-conflict transition. As mentioned earlier, Ranchod (2007) defines CSOs as all actors outside of the government who occupy the space of unforced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. These actors are therefore understood as providing both the space and set of values that bring people involved in projects of all kinds to work together. This space is located between the government, the market and the household (Bratton 1994, Chandhoke *et. al.* 2002). These actors can take the form of registered charities, non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups (Chandhoke *et. al.* 2002). They are influential actors in the global political arena and make an impact on domestic, international and global policies. They have access to local and international media, they potentially possess high profiles and they bring forth their agendas in ways that draw the attention of the global community (Seckinelgin 2002).

Matar (2013) and Opoku-Mensah (2008) argue that their ability to articulate the interests of disadvantaged groups to those in power in the community clearly, persuasively and confidently enhances the influence of CSOs in the global political community. CSOs have been able to set and define moral norms in the global political community because they can stand as upholders of an ethical canon that can be applied across various communities, cultures and religions of the world, among others (Yanacopulos & Hanlon 2006). They, therefore, exert influence globally because they provide the missing link at both the theoretical and policy level, in the building of sustainable political reforms, legitimate governments, and viable relations between the government, market and the household in order to prevent political decay and regressive

development (Chandhoke *et al.* 2002, Lederach 1997, Matar 2013, Opoku-Mensah 2008). In Zimbabwe, CSOs have become influential actors in the transition of the country because of the civic claims they hold. They can advance civic legal claims through their focus on legal interventions that protect the rights of the citizens, for example, the work of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) and Solidarity Peace Trust (Lesizwe 2004). They represent civic political claims on matters of governance in order to prevent political decay and safeguard respect for the rule of law. A good example is the work of Bulawayo Agenda and CCJPZ (Mbofana 2011). In addition, they represent civic social claims on matters of freedoms of the citizens such as media freedoms, freedom of expression and association, as evidenced in the work of Radio Dialogue and Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) (Gova & Ndlovu 2013, Saki & Katema 2011).

According to Anderlini *et al.* (2004), CSOs play a key role in facilitating reconciliation processes. They can offer expertise and input in the design phase of reconciliation procedures, for example, the church clergy played a huge role in the framing of the TRC in South Africa in 1997 (Minow 1998). They also can provide information for court proceedings or public hearings, for example, the CCJPZ document entitled '*Breaking the Silence*' in Zimbabwe provides a detailed record of human rights violations that occurred during the Gukurahundi massacres (CCJPZ 1997). CSOs raise awareness on various issues among the population, as shown by the fact that Grace to Heal, Radio Dialogue and Bulawayo Agenda have been hosting discussion forums for the people of Matabeleland to discuss various issues in their communities (Church & Civil Society Forum 2012, Gova & Ndlovu 2013). Finally, CSOs can provide medical, psychological and social support for victims of violence, as evidenced by the work of the Counselling Services Unit (CSU) in Zimbabwe, which provides medical and counselling services to victims of trauma (US Embassy Harare 2012).

CSOs have thus become instrumental in reconciliation processes because of their social functions and services such as trauma counselling, rehabilitation, facilitating dialogue between warring parties, provision of food and shelter, and capacity building exercises which are often duties neglected by the government, rendering these actors essential for communities in transition (Howell *et al.* 2006). They have the potential to complement government actions, especially in regions where local governments are weak, and unable or unwilling to set up reconciliation processes that cater for all citizens (Salamon 2010). Serving at the community level, CSOs can provide a channel to mobilise divided communities towards reconciliation

because they often have considerable knowledge and expertise needed to deal with volatile communities. An example is the exhumation of mass graves and reburial of some victims of Gukurahundi massacres in Matabeleland that has been conducted by the organisation Solidarity Peace Trust led by Shari Eppel (2006). The activities of Solidarity Peace Trust have given closure to families of the deceased and are, undoubtedly, significant efforts to reconcile the people of Matabeleland. Gova and Ndlovu (2013) and Ngwenya (2012) point out that CSOs working in Zimbabwe have become the main voice of the voiceless and important agents that facilitate the creation of spaces in communities for the transformation of people's attitudes and behaviour.

However, in fulfilling their mandate of providing humanitarian aid, CSOs at times may have acted in a manner that fuels conflicts with the government and create a dependency syndrome among communities receiving the donations. Eppel (2008) writes that in some instances, donations have been offered to victims of political violence that fall under one party (for example the opposition party MDC). This has created tensions among community members who suffered from political violence but have been omitted from receiving donations because they are, allegedly, supporters of the ruling party. Mbofana (2011) adds that in some communities, people have been attacked by fellow residents out of jealousy, because they have benefitted from a donation that others did not receive. He adds that humanitarian assistance can flare up tensions in communities because of how beneficiaries are identified.

Matar (2013) and Ranchod (2007) add that CSOs may not always be constructive players in conflict situations, particularly if their objectives are driven by foreign actors with perceptions of reconciliation that do not necessarily reflect the views of the members of the community concerned. The foreign ideals can override the capacity of CSOs to represent members of various communities on issues that affect them, because their preconceived ideas may impinge on practices of how ordinary people would frame their responses to a situation (Howell *et al.* 2006). Consequently, people may be disempowered, rather than empowered, when highly specialised, professional civil society actors work on the assumption of knowing what is wrong about the people's daily existence and how the matter ought to be resolved (Salamon 2010). Chandhoke *et al.* (2002) add that some CSOs end up imposing their own political perceptions instead of promoting the humanitarian work they claim to be doing. This has rendered the contribution of CSOs in the transition of violence-stricken communities problematic.

Saki and Katema (2011) also argue that, given the asymmetry of power in the global political community and the tensions between developed and developing countries, the activities of CSOs in developing countries (Zimbabwe included) can be problematic. This is often revealed when CSOs seem to be challenging the actions of national governments and national governments, in turn, perceive them as political agents of foreign governments (the European bloc and US in the case of Zimbabwe). Sachikonye (2011) and Saki and Katema (2011) argue that CSOs might have been compromised because they rely heavily on donor aid for resources to conduct their activities. Most of the aid comes from the US and European countries who were the major actors pushing for regime change in Zimbabwe. This has put many CSOs that receive foreign aid in opposition to the government on suspicions of being foreign-backed agents conveying political agendas that seek to undermine the legitimacy of the ruling government.

Machakanja (2010) and Du Plessis and Ford (2009) argue that this lack of trust in CSOs might have pushed the ruling government to suppress the views of CSOs on how to address past social injustices. The government has implemented tight policies and security measures that limit the ability of CSOs to engage freely with the local communities. It is now common for community initiatives by CSOs to be disrupted by government security forces on allegations that the gatherings are political engagements aimed at undermining the ruling government (Chitiyo 2009). Mashingaidze (2010) argues that, through policy reforms, the government may have further politicised community engagements. Examples are the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), the Access to Information Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Act, which, among other things, prevent civilians from freely deliberating on political issues in the country. These restrictions have left many CSOs fighting for their existence (Sachikonye 2011, Mbofana 2011). Sachikonye (2011) adds that the AIPPA Act has restricted the media in Zimbabwe to such an extent that citizens do not get to hear criticisms on current affairs of the country published by private media houses and CSOs. Failure to comply with the above policies is regarded as a criminal offence punishable with penalties such as fines and imprisonment. Various representatives of CSOs in Zimbabwe, for example Beatrice Mtetwa, Cynthia Manjoro, Jestina Mukoko and Abel Chikomo among others, have been arrested, tortured and detained on grounds of failing to observe the law (Human Rights Watch 2013, International Crisis Group 2012, Freedom House 2013). The harassment of representatives of CSOs by the police has created tensions between the government and this group of actors.

Chari (2010) believes these organisations are under surveillance by the government because they expose issues in the community that show the government in a bad light. Sachikonye (2011) adds that the interpretation of CSO activities by the government suggests that they are seen as threatening the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country by offering alternative perspectives to government actions that seem to promote regime change. He maintains that CSOs might have failed to advance their reconciliation endeavours because, even though they stand as a voice for the voiceless, in most cases, they do not speak with one voice. Lesizwe (2004) argues that CSOs in Zimbabwe consider their humanitarian work an essential service to the well-being of the community and, hence, they continue to advocate for the people on issues that should be addressed by the government.

2.5. Conclusion

The concept of reconciliation brings contested meanings that may be difficult to develop into a coherent political project but the processes of reconciliation have the potential to transform the attitudes and behaviours of communities in transition. As noted, in Brounéus' (2003) definition, reconciliation can bring conflicting parties together to formulate mechanisms that pave the way for the community to return to a 'modicum of normality' (a position of sustainable peace and constructive relationships) even though its inhabitants might have been subjected to social injustices. It is not only necessary to understand how people in the Nkayi District in Zimbabwe could commit horrendous acts against each other but also to identify methods that will aid these communities to construct new ways of transforming violence into peace, trauma into survival, and divisions into constructive relationships (Sarkin 2008).

In the absence of non-violent means to deal with social injustices, the divided communities will continue to pose a threat to their members because of the mutual animosity that is often created by a hurtful experience of the past. Ojulu (2011) argues that curbing the perpetuation of violence should be prioritised among communities in transition because a conflict does not only destroy the physical infrastructure and institutions of the government, but it also damages the social and cultural fabrics (soft infrastructure) of communities. Reconciliation by means of dialogue can create the social space and means through which both the social and cultural fabrics of people in divided communities can be addressed in order for the people to work on their negative attitudes, destructive behaviours and power relations (conflict structure) (Assefa 1999, Long & Brecke 2003, Van der Merwe 1999). The following chapter examines the factors

that contribute to the politicisation of reconciliation in Zimbabwe, drawing from the arguments mentioned in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3: THE POLITICISATION OF RECONCILIATION IN ZIMBABWE

3.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the complexity of reconciliation in Zimbabwe, looking at the various agents that influence reconciliation processes in the country. Special focus is given to reconciliation processes occurring at the community level as that is the focus of this research. The focus on the grassroots is influenced by Nordquist's (2006) argument that during a conflict situation, human loss, suffering and physical and environmental destruction are experienced mainly by the civilians and not government officials or their security agents. The incidents of social injustice, therefore, ought to be addressed and integrated in the peace processes and peace-building initiatives that are adopted to resolve the conflict. Mbofana (2011) and Sarkin (2008) point out that violence occurs within a particular location that is composed of human beings who will continue to bear the effects of the violence if it is not addressed by processes that curb the perpetuation of violence at the locality of the incidents.

The politicisation of reconciliation addressed in this research looks at debates among CSOs, the government and the community of Nkayi on processes of reconciliation that can address social injustices that occurred in the district. The fundamental questions this chapter examines are related to the views raised by Machakanja (2010), Mapfumo (2013), Mbofana (2011), Mlambo (2013) and Sachikonye (2011) on reconciliation. The chapter examined the following questions, among others: If acknowledging the past is central to reconciliation, has Zimbabwe acknowledged its past? Does Zimbabwe have an enabling environment for its citizens to engage in peaceful discussions about reconciliation? If not, when will be the appropriate time and what ought to be done in the meanwhile? These questions are drawn from the view that Zimbabwe's colonial and post-colonial history is full of cases of social injustices that have not been addressed. Recent incidents of social injustice include the independence struggle from 1965 to 1979, the Gukurahundi massacres (1980-1987) and the post-1998 electoral violence, which entrenched divisions in various communities around the country (Du Plessis & Ford 2009, Sachikonye 2011). Most debates about reconciliation have largely been emotive such that the various political actors in the country have failed to agree on the processes (as explained later through the example of the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration-ONHRI) that can be adopted to address the past social injustices.

As noted by Mashingaidze (2010), most of the literature on the politics of reconciliation in Zimbabwe has, on the one hand, blamed the ruling government for ignoring and failing to address past social injustices for a variety of reasons, including the fear of being blamed for having perpetrated the same injustices. Saki and Katema (2011) point out that, on the other hand, opposition parties and CSOs are pushing an agenda for reconciliation processes to be adopted by the government, but in most cases, they raise divergent views of reconciliation, which are influenced by different factors. This, in turn, may have contributed to government's decision to ignore and suppress efforts by these actors to promote reconciliation, as there was no consensus on who ought to be reconciled and how the process should occur. This view emanates from the view that the government's use of coercive force in areas where social injustices have occurred was an exercise necessary to protect the 'interests' and territorial integrity of the country (Mbofana 2011). This suggests that victims of social injustices are part of collateral damages that occur in any conflict situation, which is why in a public speech in 1999; President Mugabe referred to the Gukurahundi massacres as a 'moment of madness' (Mashingaidze 2010, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012).

Significant focus is given to the activities of both the government and CSOs at community level. The study examines the ways in which CSOs' efforts to bring about reconciliation in communities in the Nkayi District have been compromised. The Nkayi District in the Matabeleland North Province of Zimbabwe was chosen for the research because it stands at the intersection of the conflicts that have occurred in the country over the past three decades. It can serve to illustrate the political debates behind the alleged failure of government to implement reconciliation processes at the community level. This chapter does not discuss in detail the history of the Zimbabwean conflict but makes reference to CCJPZ (1997), De Waal (1990), Eppel (2003, 2008, 2009), Lingren (2005), Mlambo (2013, 2014), Msindo (2012), Muzondidya and Ndlovu- Gatsheni (2007), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009), Ranger (2010) and Sachikonye (2011), who write about the Zimbabwean context.

3.2. The politicisation of reconciliation in Zimbabwe at the national level

According to Sachikonye (2011), the government has undermined reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe because, on several occasions, political leadership failed to implement measures to address and prevent the occurrence of social injustices in the country. As described by De Waal (1990) and Mashingaidze (2010), the government has repeatedly ignored the demands by

victims related to social injustices, for example, during the Matabeleland massacres (1980-87), the land invasions (2000-2001) and Operation Murambatsvina (2005), because amnesty provisions and government security agents protected most of the perpetrators from accountability. According to Sokwanele (2005), Operation Murambatsvina refers to the militarised uprooting of informal settlements in the urban areas across the country, which resulted in the displacement of over 600 000 people and a direct loss of sources of income for 1.7 million people. Raftopoulos and Savage (2004) point out that the government of Zimbabwe has a poor record of holding to account perpetrators of such incidents of social injustices because their actions have been regarded as necessary measures taken by the government to protect the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

As noted by Raftopoulos and Savage (2004), the government's approach to reconciliation can be viewed as despotic and largely superficial due to its many amnesty proclamations that resulted in impunity. The Clemency Orders of 1980, 1988 and 2000 have allowed the government of Zimbabwe to protect human rights offenders from prosecution and, consequently, developed the modus operandi for the ruling government to override any further calls to prosecute offenders and respect for human rights (CCJPZ 1997, Eppel 2004, Sachikonye 2011). Shaw and Gotora (2011) observe that the country's police force that are responsible for investigating incidents of social injustice so that prosecutions may occur seem to have sidelined the process by not following proper procedures. An example is the police's failure to carry out a proper forensic investigation into the over 600 bodies exhumed in 2011 at Chibondo mass graves in Mount Darwin. In this case, the government refused to allow any forensic tests and DNA profiling to be made on the remains, opting for handpicked African Traditional Religion (ATR) leaders to perform rituals to identify the deceased. Many scholars and experts have criticized the actions of the government in handling the Chibondo mass graves because the timing of the exhumations and inappropriate handling of remains suggest that the procedure was conducted to champion a political agenda of the ruling party ahead of the elections (Amnesty International 2011, *New Zimbabwe* 2011, Shaw & Gotora 2011).

Du Plessis and Ford (2009) argue that the government might have intentionally paid little attention to reconciliation processes to address the social injustices at the grassroots level in order to avoid being implicated in the violation of human rights, which the process is meant to address. De Waal (1990) observes that the government of Zimbabwe has a long-standing history of intolerance because political leaders have ruled the country for many years based on a one-

party leadership model. Both the pre-independence regime (under Ian Smith) and post-independence regime (under Robert Mugabe) have been embroiled in political conflict aimed at destroying legitimate alternative political parties which may push the incumbent party to account for past injustices. Sachikonye (2011) adds that the current political rivalry between the ruling and opposition parties is an extension of the historical pattern of intolerance for political opposition that began during the colonial era. During the colonial era over 30 000 civilians died and many other human rights violations occurred in the national struggle for independence (1965-1979) between the Rhodesian Front (RF) and the liberation movements (the Zimbabwe African National Union-ZANU and the Zimbabwe African People's Union-ZAPU) (Ranger 2010, Zambara 2012).

Political rivalry has continued after the country gained independence in 1980, as evident in the conflict between ZANU and ZAPU (1980-87) and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the two formations of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) since 1999. The political leadership ruling the country has mostly attempted to reconcile the population at a political level by signing agreements with its rival parties. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) points out that the 1979 Lancaster House Agreement led to the formation of a government of national unity (GNU) made up of the minority Rhodesian Front (RF) Party, ZAPU and ZANU, but the commitment of the new government to building a reconciled population failed to materialise into a coherent reconciliation project. He asserts that the new government failed to set up a framework for reconciliation that allowed victims to solicit justice or compensation, as well as the necessary institutions to offer psychosocial support to the communities that encountered violence. The reconciliation theme of forgiveness set by the then Prime Minister Robert Mugabe through his inaugural speech that proclaimed that all parties should , 'let by gones be by gones' was disrupted in 1982 with the outbreak of a conflict between ZANU and ZAPU officials (which led to the Matabeleland massacres or Gukurahundi) (Mlambo 2014, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013).

According to CCJPZ (1997), Gukurahundi is a Shona term that refers to 'the first rain that washes away chaff before the spring rains'. In the case of the Gukurahundi massacres, the term has been used to refer to the killings and torture of over 20 000 people and the displacement of thousands others in the Midlands and Matabeleland area in Zimbabwe in the early 1980s. It was carried out by the government sanctioned security forces (the Fifth Brigade and Police Intelligence) in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions of Zimbabwe between 1981 and 1987,

during a government campaign to destroy the stronghold of the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) ex-combatants in these regions (Msindo 2012, Vambe 2012). The Fifth Brigade was a special task force (mainly comprised of Shona people and the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army-ZANLA ex-combatants) which had been trained by North Korean forces to settle the rivalry between the government (ZANU) and ZIPRA ex combatants (the armed wing of ZAPU) who were largely comprised of the Ndebele ethnic group (CCJPZ 1997). The Unity Accord, signed between ZANU (represented by Robert Mugabe) and ZAPU (represented by Joshua Nkomo) on December 22 1987 halted the Gukurahundi massacres and merged ZANU and ZAPU into one party called ZANU-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) under the leadership of Robert Mugabe. This day is now commemorated as a national public holiday. No further efforts have been made by the government to address the social injustices that occurred during the Gukurahundi era and, instead, the government issued an amnesty proclamation pardoning all crimes committed and forcing the population to move on (CCJPZ 1997, Ndlovu & Dube 2013). Many scholars have questioned the commemoration of the 22nd of December (Unity Day) and argued that the day symbolises the suppression of the people's right to truth and justice because the government has not made any efforts to address the effects of the violence that occurred (Mashingaidze 2010, Msindo 2012, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009).

A third attempt at reconciliation occurred in 2008 emerging from the mediated transitional Inclusive Government (IG) comprising ZANU PF, led by Mugabe, and the two MDC formations, namely, MDC-T, led by the then Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, and MDC-N led by Welshman Ncube (Mashingaidze 2010). The inclusive government resulted from a Global Political Agreement (GPA) signed in September 2008 after a mediation process initiated by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) led by former president of South Africa Thabo Mbeki, to resolve the June 2008 polarised elections (Sibanda 2011, Du Plessis & Ford 2009). Article VII of the 2008 GPA stipulated the need for the IG to create a framework for the country to formally recognize the social injustices of the past and promote respect for human rights, which culminated in the establishment of the Organ for National Healing and Reconciliation (ONHRI) in 2009 (Machakanja 2010).

Machakanja (2010) and Mbire (2011) have condemned ONHRI mainly because it had a top down approach that failed to cater for the demands of the grassroots. More so ONHRI was poorly structured and had a confused mandate that made it difficult for the parties involved to set up applicable guidelines for addressing social injustices that occurred in the past. Part of

ONHRI's confusion was caused by the unwillingness of some members of the government, in particular ZANU PF representatives, to acknowledge responsibility for past incidents, such as the Matabeleland massacres (1980-87), which made it difficult for the process to determine the parties to be reconciled (Machinga 2012, Mashingaidze 2010). Mashingaidze (2010) adds that ONHRI might have failed because, although it was expected to run as an independent body, the authority of the organ to exercise its mandate remained in the hands of the ruling government. Machakanja (2010) maintains that conflict of interests among parties could not be resolved because the ruling party ZANU PF has been implicated in many of the incidents of violence that ONHRI was supposed to address in order to bring perpetrators to account. As a result, the deliberations concerning reconciliation processes that might expose the actions of the ruling party pushed the organ to a deadlock.

Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru (2013) points out that, on several occasions, the meetings of ONHRI were sabotaged by members of the ruling party ZANU PF. For example, in May 2010 nearly 500 ZANU PF supporters disrupted a meeting conducted by the ONHRI in full view of the late Vice President John Nkomo (co-chair of ONHRI). Sachikonye (2011) adds that even Mzila-Ndlovu (MDC-N) who was also co-chair of ONHRI was detained in April 2011 for pointing out at a meeting in Lupane that the government needs to compensate victims of the Gukurahundi massacres. Government security forces suspected that the comments made by Mzila-Nkomo would incite the community. Thomson and Jazdowska (2012) add that, because of the above challenges the leadership of ONHRI, particularly opposition parties, ended up being reluctant to push further the reconciliation agenda in the interest of maintaining favourable relations in the IG. Thus, in the interest of preserving the power-sharing agreement, it appears opposition parties calculated that the coalition would most-likely collapse if the demand for truth and reconciliation remained a top priority on the unity government's agenda. The mandate of ONHRI ended when the IG was dissolved in 2013 and little progress had been made by the organ to address the social injustices of the past and to promote social cohesion, integration and reconciliation in the country (Sokwanele 2013).

Other government efforts at formal reconciliation processes have not been successful, with examples of this being the Dumbutshena and Chihambakwe Commissions of Inquiry in 1981 and 1983, respectively, (CCJPZ 1997, Machakanja 2010, Machinga 2012). According to CCJPZ (1997) the Dumbutshena Commission of Inquiry was set up to investigate the violence that occurred at Entumbane in Bulawayo and other demobilisation camps across the country

following the 1981 clashes between ZANLA and ZIPRA ex combatants. The Chihambakwe Commission of Inquiry was established to investigate the Gukurahundi massacres in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. Findings of both commissions were submitted to the government but the contents of the reports on the investigations have never been made public. Many human rights activists in the country, for example the Zimbabwe Victims of Organised Violence Trust (ZIVOVT) and Ibhetshu LikaZulu, have been pushing the government to release the findings on the grounds that knowing the truth about the past will pave way for national healing and reconciliation to occur (CCJPZ 1997, *The Standard* 2012).

Mashingaidze (2010) and Sachikonye (2011) argue that the inaction of the government concerning perpetrators of social injustices repeatedly since independence suggests a lack of political will because when Zimbabwe gained independence, it inherited a very sound economy that could have been harnessed to address issues of social injustices and reconciliation. Thomson and Jazdowska (2012) point out that another explanation for the failure of government in terms of reconciliation is that the country has not yet undergone a full transition. They argue that ZANU PF has been in power since independence. It has been using its dominance to ensure that the political and personal interests of individuals in the party are not threatened by calls to address the past. Consequently, when representatives of the ruling party engage in deliberations about reconciliation they tend to focus on the party's familiar redistributive demands (for example land reform and compensation for war veterans), economic justice (through indigenisation) and ascribe the blame for recurring violence on all parties (Machakanja 2010, Machinga 2012, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012).

Sokwanele (2013) points out that reconciliation remains a work in progress for the government of Zimbabwe. Chapter 12 of the 2012 amended Constitution of Zimbabwe prescribes that the government should set up independent commissions that promote democracy in the country; they are the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC), Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC), Zimbabwe Gender Commission, Zimbabwe Media Commission and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) (SW Radio Africa 2013). Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2014) argues that the effectiveness of the above commissions and their ability to work independently remains questionable. He points out that given the monolithic political architecture of the government of Zimbabwe, it is unlikely that the provisions in Section 235 of the new Constitution (which postulates the independence of commissions) can be satisfied by the current

ruling government. This argument feeds into the question raised earlier in the chapter on whether Zimbabwe presents an enabling environment to engage in reconciliation processes.

Sokwanele (2013) and Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2014) argue that though Section 235 stipulates that the above commissions are independent and not subject to control by any external actors (including political actors), they remain accountable to the parliament. The reality is that the ZANU PF party, which from previous experience has shown an aversion for reconciliation processes, dominates the current parliament. As noted by Sokwanele (2013), the NPRC, which is still under construction, will succeed ONHRI and is intended to carry forward the work that began with ONHRI for the next 10 years. However, arguments against the NPRC are already surfacing on the grounds of the method of appointment of commissioners, enabling subsidiary legislation, the absence of an enabling environment and accountability to meet the demands of the citizens who require results from the commission, among others (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum 2014). Sokwanele (2013) argues that the appointment of commissioners by the president potentially weakens the legitimacy and transparency of the process, because, given the history of the executive's decision-making process, the appointed commissioners are most likely to be supporters of the president, which makes it hard to distinguish the office of the president from the commission. Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2014) points out that it becomes a mere cosmetic exercise if the commission does not get a budget from the government to support its staff and resources to reach out to the grassroots. Langa (2014) argues that the commission is also likely to fail if it is not supported by an enabling legislation to legitimise the process. Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2014) maintains that the NPRC is likely to become another form of political convenience and ornamental reconciliation project for the country.

3.3. The politicisation of reconciliation in Zimbabwe at the international level

CSOs dealing with the Zimbabwean national crisis have increased over the past decade to fill the gap created by the inaction of the government. Through their outcry on various media platforms about the incidents of violence in Zimbabwe, they have attracted the attention of global actors to the conflict. The US, Australia and European countries such as Britain have responded to the conflict by amongst other things imposing targeted sanctions on the government. An example of this is the European Union banning of travel privileges on ZANU PF government officials and the economic sanctions since 2002 (International Crisis Group

2011). The restrictions prohibited specified local businesses from trading with many European countries and subsequently weakened the country's economy. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) and Sachikonye (2011) argue that the restrictions levelled on the government have led the ruling party to focus on combating the regime change efforts of European countries and to oppose any reconciliation processes in the country that threaten its credentials and power base.

China and other Asian countries, such as North Korea and Malaysia, have mostly supported the government of Zimbabwe by providing alternative economic markets and, in some instances, military support. North Korea provided training to the military forces that were used to control the Matabeleland uprisings in the 1980s (De Waal 1990). Langa (2014) argues that the construction in 2010 of a statue to commemorate the work of the late Vice President Joshua Nkomo made by a North Korean company instead of local sculptors has raised debates among the people of Matabeleland. President Mugabe commissioned the sculpture in December 2013 and it stands at the intersection of Joshua Nkomo Street and Eighth Avenue in Bulawayo. Many lobby groups have pointed out that a North Korean company had no moral standing to erect the sculpture because of the role their government played during the Gukurahundi massacres. The North Korean government has never shown remorse for its role in the massacres and this raises tensions among community members when such a tender is awarded to a company whose government is responsible for the death and suffering of many people in the region (CCJPZ 1997, Langa 2014).

Regional bodies, such as the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), have also played a role in reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe. According to *Nehanda Radio* (2012), the SADC Tribunal ruled in 2008 that the land invasions that occurred in Zimbabwe in 2000 and 2001 were unlawful and the government of Zimbabwe should compensate the farmers who incurred losses. The government of Zimbabwe has ignored the verdict and the ruling was made ineffective when the Tribunal was suspended in 2010. Zimbabwe's displaced commercial farmers took their case to the South African High Court which reinstated the ruling made by the SADC Tribunal and ordered the government of Zimbabwe to also pay R200 000 in legal fees. The High Court also ruled that the Cape Town property owned by the government of Zimbabwe should be auctioned to raise some funds for compensating the farmers. This has been the most notable ruling that the government of Zimbabwe has faced from a foreign non-state legal body (*Nehanda Radio 2012*).

Viljoen and Adebe (2014) point out that the AU, through the African Commission on Human Rights, potentially creates opportunities for victims to seek justice for human rights abuses committed by their governments. According to Bell (2013), Gabriel Shumba became the first Zimbabwean to win a case against the government over human rights abuses handled by a regional body. The case of torture and abuse of Gabriel Shumba by the government in 2003 resurfaced in 2013 when the African Commission found the government guilty of inhumane actions and ordered it to pay compensation to Shumba for the suffering he incurred. Bell (2013) suggests that the ruling of the African Commission might have created the opportunity for other victims of inhumane acts to challenge the government. However, the success of the African Commission in holding to account perpetrators of human rights violations is yet to be tested because the government of Zimbabwe is still challenging the ruling and this has delayed the case from being resolved (Bell 2013).

3.4. The politicisation of reconciliation at the community level

Gova and Ndlovu (2013) note that ethnic and tribal divisions are among some of the reasons the people of the Nkayi District continue to hold feelings of resentment towards each other. Scholars such as Eppel (2006), Machakanja (2010) and Sachikonye (2011) point out that the lack of political will on the part of government to address underlying issues that trigger divisions in this region is encouraging ethnic conflicts. Eppel (200) argues that the Gukurahundi massacres occurred in the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces where the majority of the population is Ndebele, which the government seemingly associated with the ZIPRA dissidents and ZAPU. She asserts that the stronghold of ZAPU in this region posed a geo-political threat to the ruling ZANU government, which might have forced the regime to employ excessive force to gain control of the region (Eppel 2009, Msindo 2012, Ndlovu & Dube 2013). Eppel (2004) and Sachikonye (2011) suppose that the withdrawal of many Ndebeles from the Unity Accord in 1999, when Joshua Nkomo died, was inevitable. Their subsequent recruitment into the opposition party (particularly the MDC that was formed in 1999) has presented the Matabeleland region as an increasing threatening force to the ruling party (which is dominantly Shona) (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007).

Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007) believe that the use of ethnicity (orientation of a group based on a common ancestry) and tribalism (orientation of a group based on a common culture or belief) to locate one's identity in Zimbabwe goes back to the colonial era. Ethnical

divisions were institutionalised by the Smith regime that used it as a modus operandi to divide the country into administrative units, namely, Mashonaland, Manicaland, Masvingo, Midlands and Matabeleland (see map insert).



Source: Zimbabwe Geohive 2013.

Mashonaland (West, East and Central) covers the northern part of the country that is largely populated by the Zezuru, a dialect of Shona. Matabeleland (North and South) and Midlands Provinces cover the west and south-west parts and their main ethnic group is the Ndebele people. Masvingo Province is located in the southeast and is inhabited by Karanga people who speak another dialect of the Shona. Manicaland is situated in the eastern part of Zimbabwe populated by the Manyika people, who also speak a dialect of the Shona (Census 2012). Msindo (2012) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) write that the administrative divisions fuelled the creation of political parties along ethnic lines (e.g. ZAPU with an Ndebele majority and ZANU with a Shona majority), which made it difficult for government officials at independence to create a well-integrated country. Eppel and Raftopoulos (2008) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) add that the actions of the government during the Gukurahundi era and subsequent unequal distribution of resources to the region remain questionable among the population because they display a Shona people contest for hegemonic control.

Mlambo (2013) argues that Zimbabwe has failed to build itself into a harmonious country with a common national identity because of the government propagated 'patriotic history'. Mlambo (2013) borrows the term patriotic history from Ranger (2010) who argues that there is a public history of the country that is constantly propagated on state-controlled media, which assumes that the country has sustained its territorial integrity mainly because of the contribution of spirit mediums of the Shona people during the colonial era. It is from this history that the legitimacy of the country and of the Mugabe regime derives. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) points out that the shaping of the history of Zimbabwe by the government around Shona patriotism might be inhibiting reconciliation among the Zimbabwean population. He asserts that the history of Zimbabwe cannot be simplified to one ethnic group because the country emerged from a complex mosaic of contending histories and memories. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) and Ranger (2010) suggests, therefore, that the honouring of only the Shona culture in public celebrations about the history of the country, for example the spirit mediums Nehanda and Kaguvi, suppresses the contribution of other ethnic groups to the formulation of present day Zimbabwe. Mlambo (2013) argues that the patriotic history being promoted by the ruling government is a self-serving oversimplification of the country's history, which legitimises ZANU-PF hegemony in the country. Thus, the tendency of ZANU PF has been to concoct government policies with an idea of benefitting certain individuals or a particular ethnic group of the population (Mlambo 2013, Msindo 2012, Sachikonye 2011).

According to Gova and Ndlovu (2013) and Vambe (2012), most people in the Nkayi District suspect that the government has intentionally marginalised the people in the Matabeleland Province because of ethnic differences between the Shona people (who are the majority in government) and Ndebele people (who are a minority both in government and the country). Gova and Ndlovu (2013) add that the Nkayi District has remained impoverished and is characterised by high volumes of poverty, lack of infrastructure, water shortages and lack of adequate food supply, and that these conditions are not as highly prevalent in Shona populated areas. The one notable attempt of the ruling government at reconciling the Shona and Ndebele people has been making both Shona and Ndebele official languages and mediums of teaching in schools, whilst other minority languages such as Nyanja, Shangani and Kalanga are officially recognized as mediums of communication mainly on radio stations (Muzondidya 2008, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012). However, in the past three decades, the education level of pupils in Matabeleland has been affected by the shortage of qualified Ndebele speaking educators. Many students who cannot speak Shona have been forced to learn in a language different from their

home language (Dube 2014). Various lobby groups and parents in Matabeleland have protested against the policy of instructing students in Shona, which infringes on the constitutional right of learners to learn in a medium of instruction they have proficiency in. Undoubtedly, the use of the Shona language by non-Ndebele speaking educators is affecting the level of literacy among non-Shona speaking students and Matabeleland remains the region with the poorest performance at grade seven, Ordinary level and Advanced level national examinations (*Chronicle 2014*, Dube 2014).

Mlambo (2013) and Msindo (2012) assert that citizenship in Zimbabwe seems to play a huge role in matters of belonging and access to resources. Individual government officials or a clique thereof often uses policy to exclude certain groups from citizenship in Zimbabwe. Shoko (2013) argues that prior to the 2002 political elections, the government barred people with dual citizenship in Zimbabwe from participating in public affairs, such as voting. An example is human rights activist Judith Todd who was born in Zimbabwe to Sir Garfield Todd, a public official of New Zealand descent who supported nationalist movements (ZAPU and ZANU) to fight the white regime in Zimbabwe. Mlambo (2013) states that the government outlawed dual citizenship because people with other citizenships than Zimbabwean were regarded as potential voters of the then newly formed opposition party MDC. The ruling out of dual citizenship brought challenges for many Zimbabwean citizens that had citizenship status in more than one country. Most of the people were forced to prove their patriotism to Zimbabwe by denouncing the other citizenships and this act of the government has perpetuated tensions in the country. Shoko (2013) commented that the revised Constitution of Zimbabwe developed by the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2013 might have resolved the issue of dual citizenship in the country. The new Constitution included clauses that made it possible for people like Judith Todd to reclaim their citizenship on grounds of birthright, among other factors. The reinstatement of dual citizenship in Zimbabwe can serve as an indication of progress in efforts by government to address issues that inhibit reconciliation in the country.

3.5. Conclusion

It is not only important to understand how people in the Nkayi District construct their perceptions of each other (Shona versus Ndebele), but also necessary to identify areas of common interest that can assist the community to develop new ways of embracing their cultural differences and nurture sustainable relationships. Even though the government has taken an

elitist approach to address social injustices of the past, using mechanisms such as ONHRI, and the Dumbutshena and Chihambakwe Commissions of Inquiry which all failed. Various scholars cited above have pointed out that the people of Matabeleland (including the Nkayi District) require the government to take responsibility for past incidents of social injustices (CCJPZ 1997, Machakanja 2010, Mlambo 2011, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012, Sachikonye 2011). This suggests that something ought to be done in order for the victims to regain their dignity that was violated during the various episodes of violence.

Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007) add that it remains unclear when would be the appropriate time to address past social injustices and how they should be addressed, but ignoring the past will only perpetuate the cycle of violence that remains prevalent in Zimbabwe, particularly during election periods. Mlambo (2013), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) and Sachikonye (2011) argue that violence in Zimbabwe over the past three decades has dehumanised the victims, perpetrators, families, communities and even outsiders who have heard narrations of the incidents. Mbofana (2011) observes that both the attitudes and behaviour of people of Zimbabwe have been affected by the past social injustices. Sachikonye (2011) maintains that it is highly impossible for any person to witness such atrocities and remain the same. A holistic approach is therefore needed to resolve the politics of reconciliation in Zimbabwe in order to address past social injustices. This research sought, therefore, to understand, through data collected from various agents (government officials, CSOs and the community of Nkayi) involved in the episodes of violence in Zimbabwe, how the above questions could be addressed. The following chapter explores the case study research that was conducted in Nkayi District on reconciliation.

CHAPTER 4: A CASE STUDY RESEARCH OF THE NKAYI DISTRICT

4.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the qualitative case study method that was used to explore the challenges of reconciliation in Zimbabwe. A qualitative case study method was adopted for this research because, amongst other things, it enabled the researcher to explore the phenomenon under study in their context (Bromley 1991, Houghton *et al.* 2013). In this case, reconciliation processes were investigated in Zimbabwe through a case study of the Nkayi District in Matabeleland North Province. The perspectives of the community members, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and government officials that have been involved in reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe were investigated. Data for this research was obtained through a month-long fieldwork survey, between 1 and 25 April 2014 in Harare, Bulawayo and the Nkayi District. This allowed the researcher to be a participant observer of the phenomenon and to gain in-depth knowledge on the livelihood of the Nkayi community, which was useful for comparison with data obtained through the other research methods utilised, namely, individual semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and archive studies, as will be described in the chapter.

During the fieldwork in Nkayi, the researcher was accompanied by an interpreter, and for a brief period, her supervisor. This small research team met with various challenges related to the use of public transport, which included hitchhiking and transport by donkey cart, in order to access the remote villages of Nkayi. These experiences were challenging for the research team as they had to endure the bad dusty roads, potholes and slow moving taxis, which made the distance of 158km between Bulawayo and Nkayi, take almost a day to complete. Although the researcher had intended to spend 3-4 days in Nkayi, an encounter with the Zimbabwean Police Intelligence (described in this chapter) forced the researcher to change this arrangement to 2 days. These challenges became part of the rich data that was collected, communicating to the research team experientially the scope and limits of reconciliation for those who participated in the research.

4.2. The philosophy of qualitative research

According to Lazar (1998) research methodology (fundamental principles and scientific methods of how to investigate and conceptualise the natural world) was first developed by the natural sciences through innumerable, systematic and repetitive empirical observations. Natural

science scholars such as Lee (1999), Seale (2004) White (1986) and White and Adams (1994) are of the view that the study of the social life could only be conducted scientifically because social facts should be validated by scientific methods. This view comes from an understanding that quantitative research methods have the ability to eradicate the influence of researcher bias. It is against this backdrop that qualitative research has emerged in the social science discipline (for example sociology and political science) to counter the scientific research methodology developed by the natural sciences. As noted by Durkheim (1897), Kuhn (2012), McNabb (2004) and Popper (1963) qualitative research enables the researcher to examine the interaction of people with issues within their context and deduce explanations. They argue that social phenomena are subjective realities that emanate from the social constructions and interpretations people make of their daily encounters. Qualitative research provides the best results for a study that seeks to understand a social phenomenon in its natural form because it involves methods that promote naturalistic inquiries. A researcher who adopts qualitative research methods to study a social phenomenon is privileged to examine the variant constructions of social life that people produce and formulate them into theory or theories that explain the social world (Creswell 1994, De Vaus 2002).

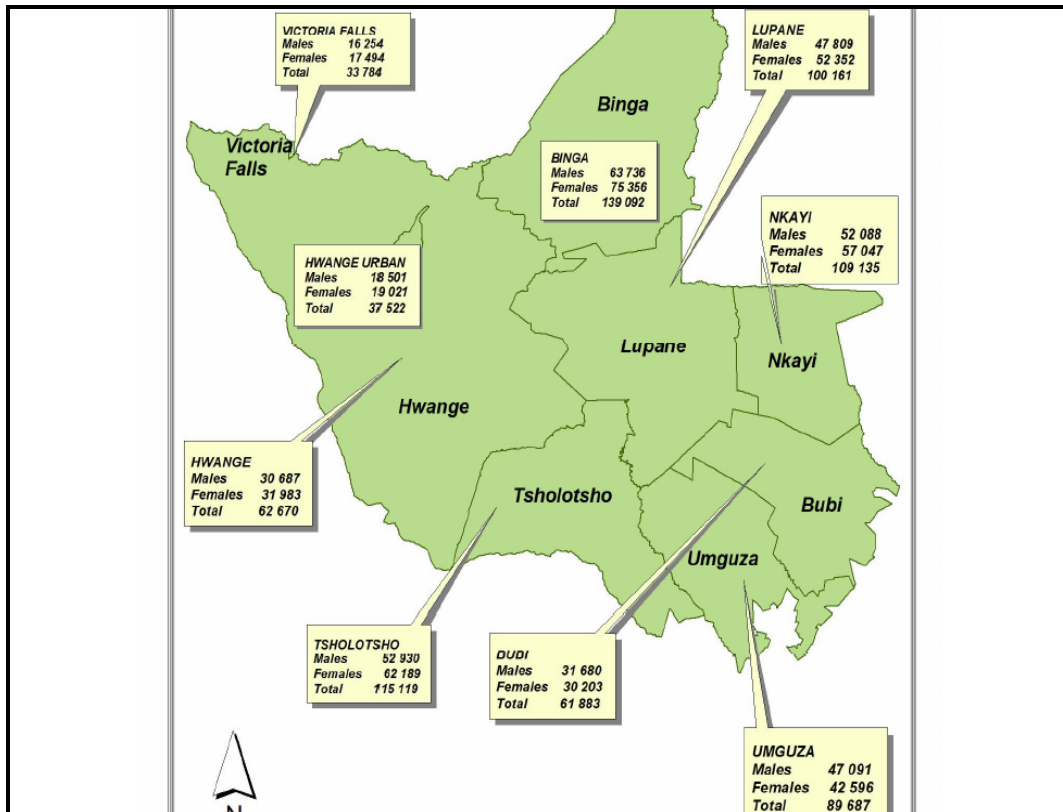
This research made use of a qualitative case study research method to examine the multiple subjective derived realities that co-exist in the Nkayi District. Bromley (1991) and Creswell (1997) describe a qualitative case study research as a systematic investigation of social events in order to describe and explain a particular phenomenon of interest. Yin (2014) adds that a case study research is a method of empirical inquiry that examines a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and aims to gather a comprehensive understanding of how participants relate and interact amongst themselves and make meanings of their social encounters in a specific situation. Through a case study of the Nkayi District, the researcher gained a multi-perspective view on reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe by gathering the views of the community members and various stakeholders that have engaged in reconciliation activities in the Matabeleland region (including the Nkayi District). The researcher had the privilege of being exposed to the underlying dynamics of reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe from in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions with the relevant stakeholders, encounters that are difficult to attain through quantitative research (Creswell 2002, Houghton *et al.* 2013).

As mentioned before, the Nkayi District is a rural communal area about 158km from Zimbabwe's second largest city Bulawayo, in the Matabeleland North Province. The main modes of transport around the district are the donkey cart and for over long distances are buses and private commuter taxis. The roads are mostly dust road with a few patches of tar surface (ZimStat 2012). According to the 2012 census, the total population of the Nkayi District is 109 135 (see map below) with a majority of the Ndebele ethnic group and a minority of the Shona ethnic group (ZimStat 2012).

The medium of communication is largely Ndebele and, to a lesser extent, Shona and English. The main settlements are clustered along family groupings within the communal areas and around service points within the growth point area. The growth point is the centre serving the population with services such as a general hospital, clinics, district administration offices, stores, and butchery among others and the communal area is the periphery serving the population with farming land, pastoral land, residential and schooling. About 69.5 % of the Nkayi district population lives in traditional huts made of mud, cow dung flooring and thatched roof, while only 5% live in modern houses made of brick and asbestos roof. Most of the modern houses are government property sheltering civil servants such as the police, nurses, doctors and government officials in the growth point area (ZimStat 2012). The interviews and focus groups discussions that took place at the chief and headman's compounds were conducted in the kitchen, which is a traditional hut as described above.

Only 3% of the households have access to a flush toilet within their compound, the majority of the households make use of a shared pit toilet or the bush. Most of the flush toilets are found in the government shelter and households within the growth point area (ZimStat 2012). The research was conducted in the communal areas of Nkayi far from the growth point. The research team witnessed some of the challenges with sanitation facilities in the district as they could only make use of a pit toilet at the headman's neighbour. Only 4.1 % of the population has access to electricity and these people are found in the growth point area, 87.3% still do not have access to electricity they rely on firewood for cooking and paraffin lamps or candles for lighting (ZimStat 2012). Part of the research was conducted in the evening making use of paraffin lamps for lighting and the meal offered to the research team was prepared on a fire because the communities involved in the research do not have access to electricity. About 58% of the Nkayi population have access to safe water (e.g. piped water, communal tapes, protected boreholes and wells) and the rest make use of water from open sources such as rivers and streams (ZimStat

2012). The communities the research participants came from are within 500-2500 metres from a water source, mainly in the form of communal taps, protected boreholes, wells and streams.



Map of Matabeleland North Population by district, adopted from ZimStat 2012.

4.3. Rationale of the Nkayi District case study research

Case study research can be conducted making use of a single case study (one particular group or phenomenon is studied) or multi-case study (two or more groups can be studied). A key advantage of a case study research method in this research is the use of multiple sources and techniques for data gathering, for example interviews, focus groups, observations and archival documents. McNabb (2004), Whelan (1989) and Yin (2014) write that a case study research technique is a popular method for investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context. The subject selected for the study is a typical example that represents some underlying points or problems that the researcher ought to address. Van Evera (1997) proposes the five situations when a case study method is used. A case study can be used when the researcher

wants to establish a theory, in instances where the researcher wants to test a theory that already exists, to identify a previous condition that is linked to the phenomenon, or to establish the relative importance of the subjects involved in the phenomenon. A case study is also used in instances where a researcher wants to establish the fundamental importance of a phenomenon in consideration of other potential examples. In this case, the researcher described her research intentions to the community members and had the opportunity to test the hypothesis on the scope and limits of reconciliation in Matabeleland, particularly looking at the perceptions of the Shona-Ndebele people on the violence the region has encountered since independence (Msindo 2012).

The case study research approach as it pertains to the Nkayi District involved breaking down the district into sub-administrative units (villages/communities under the leadership of a chief or headman) in order to capture the views of a diversity of households in the district, thereby ensuring a representative sample of the population of Nkayi. This approach allowed for a cross-sectional examination of the communities in the district and a gathering of valid, credible, dependable and transferable data, which is essential to the contribution of the research on the subject of reconciliation (Houghton *et al.* 2013). A triangulation approach was adopted for this research (validating data through cross reference from two or more sources) in the form of conducting archival studies (macro level), and interviews and focus groups (micro level), in order to enrich the output of the research (Babbie & Mouton 2001, De Vaus 2002).

The criticism often levelled against the case study technique is the dependence on a single case, which is limiting in providing a generalisation on the phenomenon under study. This shortfall is countered by the ability of the method to work well with other research methods and has the potential in bringing an understanding of the complexities of reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe as well as adding strength to already known information (Houghton *et al.* 2013). McNabb (2004) adds that the purpose of a case study technique is not to develop a representative picture of the society but rather to simply represent the specific case under study. He adds that the case description only serves as an example of similar groups. Taking from Houghton *et al.* (2013) it can be argued that a single observation of theory on reconciliation processes in the Nkayi District has the potential of paving way for further research on the same phenomenon within the boundaries of another case within Matabeleland and the rest of the country.

The Matabeleland region was chosen for the study because it is home to multiple ethnic groups, for example Shona, Ndebele, Tsonga, Kalanga, Ndau and Shangani, that could be drawn into the study (NANGO 2012). Matabeleland is one of the two regions (the other is Midlands) that have endured violence of high magnitude and its subsequent effects, noted in the death of over 20,000 people, loss of property and displacement of thousands during the Gukurahundi massacres (Msindo 2012, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008, Sachikonye 2011). Over the past three decades, some parts of the district have witnessed sporadic encounters of political violence and the district as a whole has been subjected to intense structural violence (Gova & Ndlovu 2013, Ncube 2001, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008, *The Zimbabwean* 2012).

Apart from the 1997 Report compiled by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace Zimbabwe (CCJPZ), which gathered in-depth narratives of violence in Matabeleland Province, the people of Nkayi have not had many opportunities to discuss the effects of violence that their communities have endured. Another effort has been noted in the work of Vambe (2012) through his criticised research that attempted to capture the perceptions of community members of Nkayi District, among others, on the effects of violence the region has faced. Ndlovu and Dube (2013) who argue that Vambe (2012) employed a flawed methodology, lacked a clear theoretical grounding, and that his article falls short on ideological and ethical framing which makes his findings unrealistic concerning the prevailing situation in the region, have challenged his article. Bearing in mind, the criticisms of Ndlovu and Dube (2013) on Vambe (2012), this study made use of his experiences to situate the challenge of conducting research in rural communities such as Nkayi District.

A recent ‘truth-telling’ focus group meeting hosted by Radio Dialogue (a civil society organisation based in Bulawayo), in March 2013 in the Nkayi District, which drew participants from communities around the district, illuminated the gravity of the issues the people still face from decades of violence, for example resentment, marginalisation and underdevelopment (Gova & Ndlovu 2013). Although without a broadcasting license, Radio Dialogue is now serving the region (Matabeleland North and South provinces) as a radio broadcasting station with the aim of creating the space for previously marginalised members of the community to share their experiences and reconcile their differences. The work by Sachikonye (2011) and Saki and Katema (2011) suggests that CSOs in the country (including the Nkayi District) are taking a leading role in creating pockets of reconciliation at the community level (for example Bulawayo Agenda, CCJPZ, Grace to Heal, Radio Dialogue, Shalom Projects, Solidarity Peace Trust and ZimRights). Through various rehabilitation programmes such as reburials and

workshops, they attempt to reconstruct community relations built on a culture of respect and tolerance (Gova & Ndlovu 2013, Sachikonye 2011, Sokwanele 2013, *The Zimbabwean* 2012). As mentioned before, these efforts validate scholarly debates that recommend the engagement of CSOs in reconciliation processes because they have the potential to bridge the gap between a national elite-level discourse on reconciliation and local understandings (Gova & Ndlovu 2013, Saki & Katema 2011).

This is further supported by the views of Machakanja (2010), Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012 and Sachikonye (2011) that reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe have been ceremonial events used to achieve political gains. An example is the 1987 Unity Accord between ZAPU and ZANU, which ended the Gukuhundi massacres, but no further processes have been implemented to address the underlying causes of the conflict and the effects left on the population of the Matabeleland region. As mentioned earlier, even the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) that was set up in 2009 to develop mechanisms to address past atrocities has failed to operate due to bad management, limited funding, and lack of political will, particularly by ZANU PF officials (Machinga 2012, Mbire 2011, Machakanja 2010). Eppel (2008) and Sachikonye (2011) argue that the government has intentionally paid little attention to reconciliation processes that can address the tensions within communities in Zimbabwe in order to avoid being implicated in the atrocities that the process is meant to address. Looking at the case study of the Nkayi District the researcher examined these debates by conducting interviews and focus groups discussions with community members and the various stakeholders engaging in reconciliation activities in the district. The aim was to establish the progress of reconciliation processes in this community and determine whether they can be applied to similar communities in the country and Africa at large.

4.4. Sampling method

Qualitative research samples are usually based on non-probability and purposive samples rather than probability and random samples, which is what has been used in this research. A purposive sample is a survey where participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them the holders of data required by the study. The sample is chosen on grounds that the participants are the richest possible source of information to answer the research questions. The sample size is generally smaller than the one for quantitative research. In this research, a sample size of 36 people was used and the sample selection was made based on the role of various

stakeholders in reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe, namely, the community of Nkayi, CSO representatives, government officials and the media. This research made use of two sampling techniques, namely, snowball sampling and stratified purposive sampling. The research participants from the Nkayi community were selected through a snowball sampling method (selected from referral). This approach was chosen because there is still a lot of censorship around gathering information and conducting public gatherings in Zimbabwe due to government policies such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) (Mlambo 2014, Sachikonye 2011). These policies make many citizens hesitant to confide in someone they are not familiar with (Machakanja 2010).

The community members of the Nkayi District that were selected were survivors and witnesses of the violence that has occurred, as it was difficult to get the view of perpetrators for fear of being alienated and the researcher had to respect their choice (Vambe 2012). The CSOs and government official respondents were selected through stratified purposive sampling, selecting participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research question, in this instance the criteria refers to CSOs and government representatives dealing with reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe (including the Matabeleland Province) (Creswell *et al.* 2007). In a stratified purposive sample, the sample size may or may not be fixed prior to data collection and often depends on the availability of resources and time for the researcher to complete the research. In this instance the researcher purposefully selected CSOs and government officials based on appointment confirmations from respondents who were available for an interview during the period set for the fieldwork (April 2014).

Three sets of semi-structured interviews (see Appendixes 1, 2 and 3 for questions) were conducted. The first set captured household interviews with 14 people from the various communities in the district, of both genders. The second set had interviews with 16 representatives from various civil society organisations drawn from churches, human rights activists, aid organisations and the media (including social media). The third set of interviews were conducted with four representatives from the government drawn from the two Movement for Democratic Change political parties, ZANU PF and ZAPU, which are the main parties present in Matabeleland, and two academics who have written substantial literature on the phenomenon of reconciliation and related issues about Zimbabwe (see Appendix 4). The separation of interviews into the three strata assisted in identifying the issues that drive the interactions and tensions among these stakeholders in Zimbabwe. Including academics on the

list of respondents provided the researcher access to peer debriefing because the input of experts was accommodated in situating credibility and validity of the study (Koch 2006, Leininger 1994, Tobin & Begley 2004).

Two focus group discussions (see Appendix 5 for questions guideline) were conducted with the 14 community members in the Nkayi District in order to gain insight on the perceptions, beliefs and opinions of a group of people through their interactions. Participants of a focus group therefore usually share something that directly relates to the topic being studied for there to be a discussion (Creswell 1994, Gorman & Clayton 2004). In this case, the discussions were conducted at the chief's and headman's compounds and community members that live in villages within close proximity were gathered into two focus groups of six and eight people per group respectively. The advantage of a focus group is that participants become part of the research and take part in finding solutions to the identified problems, which enables a mutual learning experience for all stakeholders.

The problem with interviews and focus group discussions is that people are often averse to opening up to strangers. The researcher averted this challenge by recruiting a convenor, who also acted as an interpreter, who comes from the Nkayi District and speaks both languages familiar to the community members. The convenor was an esteemed member of the community and her proficiency in both Shona and Ndebele made the research easier as people were willing to open up because they could converse in a familiar language (Babbie & Mouton 2001). Upon arriving in Nkayi District, the researcher visited the district administrator to seek permission to conduct research in the area and she used the permission letter to introduce herself to the village headmen and chief who govern the communities around Nkayi (see Appendixes 6, 7 and 8). This procedure has also been noted by other researchers working in rural communities such as Tindana *et al.* (2006) who assert that in rural communities' traditional leaders have influences on different aspects in the lives of their community members, including participating in a research exercise. As such, it is paramount that a researcher gets permission from the community leader/s before engaging with community members. Tindana *et al.* (2006) add that, in some instances, community members do not participate in activities without being permitted by their community leaders to take part, which confirms why it was easier for the research team to engage with the community members after introductions from the chief and headmen. The relationship between the convenor, the chief and headmen in the district also made it easier for

the community leaders to trust the researcher and this, in turn, gave the researcher advantage to engage the community.

The research made use of documents as a data gathering technique, referred earlier as archival study, whereby the researcher went through various types of written documents that shed light on the phenomenon which are not accessible in other available literature. These documents included organisational reports, books, memorandums, agendas, administrative documents and meeting minutes. In using these documents, the researcher took into consideration evaluating the authenticity and accuracy of the data sources by checking for cross references of the authors (Creswell *et al.* 2007, McNabb 2004). Observation is another technique that was used by the researcher, to a lesser extent. This refers to a process of recording the behaviour patterns of the participants of the research without necessarily questioning the observed parties (McNabb 2004). Observation enables the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being observed. In this case, the researcher was an observer as participant. The challenge of this technique is that the researcher may exclude some information that is not interesting to observe thereby limiting the inclusivity of the research. To avoid this the researcher attempted to remain conscious of the personal biases that may have emerged and prohibited them from influencing the research by sticking to the research guidelines set by the interview and focus group templates (Creswell 1994, McNabb 2004, Seale 2004).

Seale (2004) describes an interview as a two-way conversation that involves the interviewer (researcher) and interviewee (participant). A semi-structured interview was used in order to corroborate data coming from other data sources and the participants were requested to respond to a set of pre-determined questions. The researcher asked the research participants questions that were set in the interview template in order to gather information about the perceptions, beliefs and behaviour of the participant. The advantage of this technique is that interviews provide rich descriptive information that helped the researcher to understand how the participants construct knowledge about reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe for more information and clarification through follow-up questions emanating from the answers given. However, probing for more answers can create a challenge for the interview to be sidetracked by issues that are not related to the study. The researcher stayed alert throughout the conversations by keeping the interview to a maximum of an hour and tactfully guided the participants back to the focus of the research (Babie & Mouton 2001, Creswell 2012, 2002; McNabb 2004).

McNabb (2004) notes that focus group discussions involve gathering data from the interactions of participants in a group setting. Creswell *et al.* (2007) add that this view is based on the assumption that group interaction is more productive in widening the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experience and releasing inhibitions that might have discouraged participants to disclose information. The discussions for this research focused on reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe and the researcher encouraged participants to engage in deliberations including unexpected comments and new perspectives. Conducting discussions this way encouraged the production of rich data that is hard to attain using the other research methods. A focus group can be a threatening experience to some participants who are not accustomed to opening up or talking in public setting. The researcher was cautious of the group dynamics and made provisions for the participants to engage freely by conducting the discussions at a neutral venue (Creswell *et al.* 2007 and McNabb 2004). Other limitations of focus groups is that the sample size is usually small (about 5-12 participants) to allow facilitation of the conversations and this may not represent the population under study.

During the fieldwork, the first day of the Nkayi research interviews occurred in the evening in the dark, making use of a paraffin lamp, because the research team had been delayed in arriving at the chief's compound due to an encounter with the police. The chief advised that the research commence that evening since participants had been invited to the chief's compound. After the six individual interviews, the participants began sharing their views while seated in the chief's kitchen. Similarly, the other focus group discussions with eight participants occurred in the morning the following day in the kitchen at the chief's mother compound. These unintended conversations gave the researcher the opportunity to throw in questions from the focus group template, which in turn provided further information through their sharing of thoughts and experiences. The researcher got the privilege of comparing the data gathered from individual interviews with the explanations that came from group discussions, as well as observe their expressions as they engaged with one another which was useful in deducing their understanding of the research questions.

4.5. Ethical consideration and limitations of the study

The research required the researcher to interact with various communities and stakeholders in Nkayi District dealing with reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe. Permission to conduct the research was granted by the Provincial Administrator of Matabeleland North Province and the

Nkayi District Administrator. During the research, permission was sought from the participants before they took part in the research, and all information gathered was only used where consent was given from the participants and pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of respondents (Moch & Gates 1999).

The researcher consented to make available upon request from respondents findings of the research that pertains to the respondent (member checking) and make suggested changes until the research represents an accurate account of the information given by the respondent (Koch 2006, Tobin & Begley 2003). The researcher consulted with academics in the field (peer debriefing) who have written substantively on reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe to make a contribution to the research and proof read the findings of the study in order to validate the results and verify the credibility of the study (Leininger 1994). Audio devices were used for some interviews with government officials and CSOs that consented to be recorded, in order to enhance data capturing as well as cross examination of data at later stages of the research.

Several challenges were encountered in Nkayi District in particular, related to undertaking research in a rural setting and in a context in which security is a significant concern. Concerning the latter, the research team encountered the Police Internal Security and Intelligence (PISI) also known as the Intelligence Unit at the Nkayi District police station. The research team had intended to work with a pastor in the Nkayi District as this had the potential of being a helpful way of assisting with trust building with the community. However, the pastor insisted that the research team first report to the police, even though the District Administrator had granted them permission that deemed it unnecessary to consult with the police authority. At the police station, the researcher was interrogated for about an hour by six police officers who wanted to know about the research, her family background, academic background and many other personal things. The authorities went through the researcher's paper work, found no fault, and applauded the researcher for following the correct channels to get permission to conduct research in the district. The authorities released the research team with a word of caution mixed with poorly disguised threats in order to intimidate the researcher and her team. The authorities also offered to provide the team with an assistant who would participate in their research, which would have significantly compromised the ability of community members to share their views openly with the team. After this encounter, the research team parted ways with the pastor and in order to avoid the police authorities, moved deeper into the rural areas, to the home of their interpreter, who was well acquainted with the chief and headmen in the area.

Once in the rural village in Nkayi District, challenges were faced concerning undertaking research in a rural setting. The research team was housed at the chief's mother compound and lodged in a cow-dung floored, mud walled and grass thatched hut. Drinking water was drawn from a well, while food was prepared from firewood and lighting was in the form of a paraffin lamp. All interviews were held in huts, with focus groups forming informally within the compounds of the chief and headman. The police had cautioned the research team against having group meetings of more than 12 people as that would have required their special permission (another police clearance following the POSA policy) which needs to be applied for in advance. After the police encounter, the researcher had ruled out conducting the focus groups discussions in order to avoid another encounter with the police who had warned that they would be doing surveillance. Informal focus groups discussions however emerged in the compound of the chief and chief's mother who is also a headman (of six and eight people respectively), through discussions amongst the participants who had gathered in the yard after the individual interviews.

Gaining written informed consent was a challenge, the community members preferred to give a verbal consent in order to safeguard their anonymity in spite of the reassurance by the researcher that the work will be preserved in a safe place at the University of Pretoria. This experience is not peculiar to this research, as Vambe (2012) who conducted research on similar issues in the Nkayi district and other communities in Matabeleland and Midlands has observed. Like Vambe (2012), the researcher had to refrain from making the community members sign informed consent forms (see Appendix 9) or commit to voice recordings because that would have compromised their sense of anonymity. The community members still feel unsafe about their environment due to surveillance conducted by the Police Intelligence in the district (Gova & Ndlovu 2013). Tindana *et al.* (2006) confirm that getting a written informed consent from rural communities in countries where cultural values and social practices favour oral rather than written agreements can be challenging to the researcher. In this case, participants felt safer if the researcher did not collect any tangible evidence in either signature or recording that could be traced back to them. To safeguard further the anonymity of the interviewees, the researcher also undertook not to reveal the real names of villages/communities of the participants (Vambe 2012). The encounter with the police helped the researcher understand where some of these fears and suspicions stem from and it became important to ensure that the interests of the participants were respected. The most important thing for this research is that these participants took part in the research voluntarily, consented verbally, they fully understood the purpose of

the research from the vernacular explanations given by the interpreter and their identity was secured by using pseudonyms.

Arranging meetings with CSO representatives was quite difficult. Many CSOs view outsiders with suspicion for fear of victimisation by government agents in the Police Intelligence Unit. The suspicions mostly arise from the several attacks that have been made by government security forces on CSO representatives, for example Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu of WOZA (Bell 2013). The researcher had to make several calls, at times being put on hold for long periods only to be told to call again at a later time or date. In some instances, appointments were cancelled on site and this made it difficult to keep all respondents on schedule. The researcher managed to overcome most of these challenges with the assistance of referrals from other CSO representatives, which made it easier for respondents to agree to an appointment.

4.6. Conclusion

The qualitative case study research method adopted by this research enabled the researcher to gain a multi-perspective view on reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe, and to test the hypothesis on the scope and limits of reconciliation in Matabeleland, in particular the perceptions of the Shona-Ndebele people and various other stakeholders regarding the violence the region has incurred (Msindo 2012, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012). This method was best suited for this research because it allowed the researcher to incorporate multiple research techniques, particularly archival studies, in-depth interviews, focus groups and observations. Additionally non-probability and purposive sampling techniques namely snowball and stratified purposive sampling, gave the researcher the advantage of engaging with participants most relevant to the study. Working with a small sample size of 36 people allowed for in-depth deliberations to occur, encounters that are difficult to attain using quantitative techniques.

This research faced several challenges, especially related to travelling to Nkayi, because the area is very remote, it has poor road networks and a huge amount of time was lost travelling, including riding a donkey drawn cart for 15km because the route does not have regular conventional transport services. In the village, the researcher observed the lack of development of the district, in particular, bad road networks, lack of adequate sanitation facilities, poor transport system, lack of adequate education facilities, lack of electrification, dilapidated houses

and lack of tapped water; arguably the essentials that make modern living possible. Various scholars including Gova and Ndlovu (2013), Ndlovu and Dube (2013) and Vambe (2012) who attribute it mainly to the collapse of the economy, corruption and lack of proper planning by the government have observed this lack of infrastructure.

As observed by CCJPZ (1997), Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008), the encounter with the police confirmed literature on the polarisation of the Matabeleland region by government security agents who operate a strong surveillance system on people's activities for fear that information about the Gukurahundi massacres and other human rights violations would come out. The CCJPZ report (1997) recorded that the Police Intelligence were among the orchestrators of violence during the Gukurahundi massacres. This evidence explains why the police are often intimidated by researchers who come through to investigate about the past, in particular, issues of violence in the region, as that would reveal names of some of the perpetrators who may still be living in the area (Ndlovu & Dube 2013).

Since the Matabeleland massacres in the 1980s, reconciliation remains a challenge in this region of Zimbabwe. Reasons for this include the fact that the Matabeleland massacres have never been addressed and the perception of the survivors living in the Nkayi District is that the government has systematically marginalised this region from that time until today. In the following chapter, the researcher explores perceptions of violence and reconciliation, and the attempts to facilitate reconciliation by Civil Society Organisations in the context of Zimbabwe's episodes of violence. Additionally, the researcher explores the reconciliation efforts of the government and people of Nkayi in order to determine methods that can stimulate reconciliation in this region and other parts of the country with similar circumstances.

CHAPTER 5: THE SCOPE AND LIMITS OF RECONCILIATION AS A PEACE-BUILDING MECHANISM IN THE NKAYI DISTRICT

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research that was conducted in Zimbabwe from the 1st to 25th of April 2014 taking place in Bulawayo, Harare and Nkayi as explained in the previous chapter. Discussed below are the local understandings of violence and reconciliation and those of the various stakeholders involved in this district in order to establish a broader understanding of strategies and methods that can be useful to reconcile violence stricken communities. As discussed in Chapter 4, the data presented below was collected using a case study research method and the main techniques employed were participant observation, semi-structured interviews, archival studies and focus group discussions. Data analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis.

Research results principally reflect the relationship between complex local perceptions of reconciliation and the socio-political and economic conditions that influence the processes of reconciliation in the community. They show that while violence stricken communities are expected to take reconciliatory measures to address past actions that might hinder social cohesion and co-existence of populations, socio-political conditions in the local community often do not make it possible for reconciliation processes to occur. Research findings have been categorised under the following themes: local perspectives of violence, local perspectives on the effects of violence, conceptualisations of reconciliation by the local community, community awareness of reconciliation initiatives, challenges to reconciliation processes and future perspectives on a reconciled Zimbabwe. To protect the identity of participants, their real names have been replaced with pseudonyms making use of the strata they participated in (government officials, CSO representatives, Nkayi community, and academic experts). Participants in the interviews have been labelled GV (government representative), CS (civil society organisation representative), HH (household) and AC (academic expert) respectively and given a number (e.g. GV1) following the sequence that the interviews occurred.

5.2. Local perspectives of violence

Qualitative information from the individual interviews and focus group discussions helped in understanding the local interpretations of violence within the Matabeleland region and Zimbabwe at large. Key informants were four government officials who were involved in national organs set to work on reconciliation issues in the country (Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee-Jomic and Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration-ONHRI). Sixteen representatives of Civil Society Organisations based in Harare and Bulawayo dealing with transitional issues in the Matabeleland region, were interviewed. Two academic scholars with expertise on reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe and 14 community members of the Nkayi District also took part in the study. The violence participants described in the Matabeleland region (including the Nkayi District) can be arranged in three categories: physical (injuries on the human self), cultural (cultural aspects that have been used to legitimise the oppression of community groupings) and structural (institutionalised practices of society that harm or disadvantage individuals). All three forms of violence identified above are intertwined but minor distinctions can be made as discussed below.

5.2.1. Physical violence

Of the 36 participants in the study, 20 indicated that they had endured physical violence in the past 30 years. Most of the incidents of violence described by participants were associated with the Gukurahundi era with a few incidents reported to have occurred after the year 2000. As explained in Chapter 3, Gukurahundi is a Shona term that refers to ‘the first rain that washes away chaff before the spring rains’. In the case of the Gukurahundi massacres the term has been used to refer to the killings and torture of over 20 000 people by government security forces (the Fifth Brigade and Police Intelligence) in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions between 1981 and 1987, during a government campaign to eradicate the stronghold of ZIPRA ex-combatants in these regions (CCJPZ 1997). In 16 of the 20 incidents narrated by the participants, they identified government security agents as the perpetrators, particularly the Fifth Brigade (a special task force mostly comprised of ex-ZANLA and Shona speaking people that were trained by the North Korean government to retain stability in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions) and Police Intelligence (PISI). Two of the 20 participants identified ZIPRA dissidents (military wing of ZAPU mostly comprised of Ndebele speaking people) as the perpetrators. The other two identified ZANU PF youth militias as the perpetrators (in the post 2000 period).

According to Galtung (1969), physical (personal) violence refers to force that is inflicted by a human subject on another. It occurs when one intentionally uses a part of their body or an object to inflict pain, discomfort or injury in order to control a person's actions. Participant HH1 narrated that, "I was beaten up by the soldiers, my husband was shot dead, my daughter and granddaughter were abducted and raped" (HH1, 82-year-old female). This experience resonates with participant HH4 who indicated that, "The fifth Brigade soldiers beat me up and left me for dead because they said I was supporting dissidents" (HH4, 73-year-old male).

The violent encounters of these participants at the hands of government security forces are echoed in the CCJPZ (1997) report. According to CCJPZ (1997) many of the civilians that were attacked by the government security forces in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions during the Matabeleland massacres were unarmed, which renders the use of excessive force by government on its citizens a violation of human rights. According to the 1945 Charter of the United Nations (of which Zimbabwe is a member), there are a set of laws that all member states should adhere to when engaging in war, namely, 'jus ad bellum' and 'jus in bello' (Arend & Beck 2014). *Jus ad bellum* is the branch of law that looks at legitimate reasons why a government should engage in war (intra-state or interstate). In this branch of law, a government is only allowed to use violence (physical attack) as a last resort in instances where an attack has been made against it and non-violent means of conflict resolution have been exhausted. Sachikonye (2011) and Msindo (2012) assert that the Gukurahundi massacres were not part of a just war because the ruling government (ZANU) used excessive force before it had exhausted negotiating with ZAPU officials whom it accused of using its military wing, ZIPRA, to destabilise the country. This renders the attack on civilians such as HH1 and HH4 as unjustified.

Participant HH7 gave a different account of violence he suffered during the Gukurahundi era. He stated:

Dissidents came to our house and gathered us in the kitchen. They beat me, my mother, father and other siblings. When my father was bleeding to death from the wounds, they took out a gun and shot him. They instructed me to get an axe and chop my father into pieces. They told me to put my father's head in a box and take it to the soldiers to inform them that they have dealt with their sell-out/informant. Upon

returning from the soldiers' camp I found my mother dead, she had committed suicide by tying herself with a rope in that kitchen (HH7, 54-year-old male).

Jus in bello is the branch of law that regulates the actions of parties in a conflict. During conflict (including the unjustified case of Gukurahundi), actors should not make use of adverse measures that can prejudice, humiliate or injure another party or civilians in territories of conflict (Arend & Beck 2014). Participant HH1, HH4 and HH7 encountered adverse hostilities (e.g. rape, murder, beatings, destruction of property and humiliation) at the hands of government security forces and ZIPRA dissidents. As indicated in Chapter 3, these hostile encounters can destroy the social fabric of the community; the above accounts reveal that the violence stripped away the dignity of the participants and harmed their psychosocial well-being (Eppel 2009, Gova & Ndlovu 2013, Ndlovu & Dube 2013, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012)

As indicated in Chapter 3, the government has only responded to the calls made by people of Matabeleland to address the social injustices of 1980-1987 by labelling the encounters as a 'moment of madness,' during a speech delivered by President Robert Mugabe at the funeral of Vice President Joshua Nkomo in 1999 (Mashingaidze 2010, Msindo 2012). The utterances of President Mugabe triggered many debates in the country with many scholars and victims of violence challenging the government to explain who was mad at the time of the massacres and whether the madness has been treated (Ndlovu & Dube 2013). These questions indicate that the population of Matabeleland, including for example participants HH1 and HH4, are hoping the government will reveal the truth about the issues that triggered the use of excessive force, as well as account for the incidents that occurred during the conflict.

Of the 36 participants in the research, 35 of them expressed concern over the above statement because preceding actions of the government such as the land invasions in 2001-2002, Operation Murambatsvina in 2005 and the post-2008 electoral violence seem to indicate that the 'madness' of the government has continued (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007). The sentiments of the 35 participants highlight that the government has failed to stop the recurrence of violence in the country. Scholars such as Eppel and Raftopoulos (2008), Machakanja (2010), Mashingaidze (2010) and Scahikonye (2011) who argue that the government has continued to be the main perpetrator of violence in incidents that precede the Gukurahundi massacres share similar sentiments. Eppel (2008) and Sachikonye (2011) argue that the government has intentionally paid little attention to reconciliation processes that can address the tensions within

communities in Zimbabwe in order to avoid being implicated in the atrocities that the process is meant to address.

5.2.2 Cultural violence

All 36 participants related incidents of cultural violence in Zimbabwe. It is mostly evident at the community level between Shona and Ndebele speaking people in the Matabeleland region. According to Farmer (1996), culture refers to the varying aspects of the human population (i.e. values, norms and practices) that are shared by a particular grouping. Culture enables the community to identify coherence within local modes of thought and life, as well as the differences between distinct coherent systems. It also nurtures an attitude of openness and curiosity in situations where moral outrage, dismissal or disgust might be the automatic reaction to unfamiliar ways of thinking and acting. Cultural violence occurs in instances where the symbolic spheres of human existence are used to legitimise physical or structural violence (Confortini 2006). Ten of the 14 participants in Nkayi highlighted that they never knew how to speak Shona until they were subjected to the language through Gukurahundi, when government security forces attacked their village.

Participant HH14 narrated the following:

It was a Friday in April 1983. I remember that four men of the Fifth Brigade soldiers arrived at our compound early in the morning and called everyone out. They asked us [a family of eight] in Shona to tell them where the dissidents are hiding but no one could give an answer because we did not understand the language they were speaking [Shona]. They started calling us names; for example ‘*mapenzi evanhu muchadura kwaari madissidents enyu*’ (you rascals you are going to tell us where your dissidents are hiding), and they beat the whole family with the barrel of their guns calling us to tell them about the whereabouts of the dissidents (HH14, 49-year-old female).

The above narrative indicates that the Shona language was used to suppress ZIPRA dissidents and civilians who were suspected of supporting dissidents. Ndlovu and Dube (2013) point out that ZIPRA was a military wing of ZAPU, a nationalist party mostly comprised of Ndebele speaking people. During the massacres, the government security forces seemingly associated all non-Shona speaking people with the dissidents and that exposed many civilians in the region to

violence, including participant HH14. Msindo (2012) argues that Gukurahundi dehumanised the Ndebele ethnic group because if one could not speak Shona the alternative was torture or death. As highlighted in Chapter 3, the CCJPZ (1997) report recorded that Fifth Brigade soldiers often gathered people to a central point at gunpoint in the evenings, for example at a school. The people would be coerced to sing Shona songs that praised the ruling ZANU government. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008) adds that the singing often took the whole night, a practice that seems to have forced many non-Shona speaking people in this era to learn Shona in order to be spared harassment, torture and intimidation by government forces. Ndlovu and Dube (2013) substantiate that the overnight gatherings often ended with public executions of former ZIPRA officials, ZAPU members or civilians chosen at random.

This trend of using the Shona language and practices to coerce people to do particular actions seems to have continued even after the Gukurahundi massacres. Participant HH6 described the following:

The post-March 2008 contested election period was a difficult time because people felt threatened by the government especially the Border Gezi trained youths. They hosted overnight praises '*pungwe*', singing Shona songs and people were being coerced to attend (HH6, 28-year-old female).

The overnight praises, '*pungwe*', mentioned by participant HH6 reignited memories of the encounters that victims of Gukurahundi incurred. The Shona language came to symbolise domination and its continued use as narrated by participant HH6 reinforces the oppression of other ethnic groups (in this case Ndebele people). Msindo (2012) argues that conversing in Shona to an Ndebele person who is a victim of the Gukurahundi massacres (victim as either self or third party) becomes an insult because it revives memories of a traumatic period in that non-Shona speaking people were marginalised by the government. Eppel and Raftopoulos (2008) argue that Gukurahundi affected more of the Ndebele than the Shona ethnic group. It has been argued that the inability of the government to address the massacres renders what occurred in Matabeleland as an ethnic cleansing drive and evidence of an irrational reaction to the Ndebele minority that has an everlasting impact on the relations between Ndebele speaking (particularly survivors of the massacres) and Shona speaking people (Eppel 2009, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008).

Msindo (2012) points out that the experiences of the Gukurahundi era have entrenched animosity in survivors, particularly the younger generation (age 21-45 years old). Many of the younger generation particularly below the age of 30, have come to understand the issues of Gukurahundi from oral evidence. Oral narrations of survivors are being passed on from one generation to the other harbouring feelings of hatred and revenge seeking due to the absence of realistic reconciliation mechanisms. This can be witnessed in the account given by participant HH5:

I grew up without a father because he was killed during the Gukurahundi massacres. My mother told me he was abducted and later killed for refusing to tell the soldiers where the dissidents had been hiding. I resent Shona people for what their soldiers did to my father because he was an innocent man (HH5, 32-year-old male).

The resentment of participant HH5 reflects unhealthy attitudes that make the community vulnerable to destructive behaviour such as revenge, which hampers reconciliation processes. Another participant indicated that he took part in the 2001 land invasions in Matabeleland because he wanted to see how it feels to make another person suffer, as he experienced during the Gukurahundi massacres (CS5, Bulawayo). The actions of participant CS5 shows the destructive behaviours that are perpetuated if such issues remain unaddressed.

Farmer (1996) argues that culture breeds an awareness of identity and belonging among communities. Participant CS9 highlighted that language continues to play a significant role in the region as a cultural symbol to distinguish between the Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups. Tensions between these two ethnic groups are often witnessed at social events, for example a soccer match between Highlanders and Dynamos.

The participant said,

When I go to watch a local match at Barbourfields stadium [in Bulawayo], I have noticed that Highlanders supporters [Ndebele speaking people] use the match to insult Shona speaking people in the stadium [Dynamos supporters] for the Gukurahundi atrocities of the government. Highlanders' supporters often sing songs and chants in Ndebele to despise Dynamos supporters and at times, it ends in physical clashes (CS9, Bulawayo).

The statement above indicates that social events have become a stage for displaying one's identity. The soccer team, Highlanders, is based in Bulawayo and mostly draws support from the Ndebele ethnic group. Dynamos soccer team is based in Harare and its support base is mainly Shona speaking people. The soccer field has become a space for disgruntled members of the community to vent the underlying tensions.

Msindo (2012) and Ndlovu and Dube (2013) have maintained that ethnic divisions between Shona speaking and Ndebele speaking people in Matabeleland disclose some of the conflicts that occur in this region. Mlambo (2013) believes that the use of ethnicity (orientation of a group based on a common ancestry) and tribalism (orientation of a group based on a common culture or belief) to locate one's identity in Zimbabwe goes back to the early colonial settlement periods. Colonial rulers who used ethnic groupings of the indigenous population as a modus operandi to divide the country into administrative units institutionalised it; that is, Mashonaland, Masvingo, Matabeleland, Midlands and Manicaland (as was discussed in Chapter 3).

The researcher observed that, in spite of the linguistic tensions that arise from Gukurahundi experiences, socially people seem to be integrating to a degree. This can be seen in the progression of cross-cultural marriages, for example, the 14 participants in Nkayi indicated that their families or extended families have Shona in-laws, and the peaceful co-existence of neighbours that are of differing ethnic groups (e.g. Shona, Ndebele, Kalanga, Shangani and Sotho). Respondents seemingly did not associate their general concerns regarding Shona speakers as a group with the individuals they interacted with on a daily basis. Further research would need to be undertaken to understand this better.

5.2.3. Structural violence

According to Galtung (1969), structural violence is the subtle and often invisible systemic ways in which the social structures of the community harm or disadvantage individuals. This form of violence does not have a specific person who can be held responsible because it is embedded in the socio-political and economic organisation of the community. It is vested in all aspects of the community that deny individuals access to held aspirations (good life) and social progress. Often it stems from historical processes that conspire to constrain individual agency. Gilman (1983) adds that structural violence manifests itself as unequal power and unequal life chances.

This includes unequal distribution of resources (material and non-material) as well as unequal distribution of power to decide on the distribution of resources. It brings out issues of hierarchy and power dynamics within the community. Those who feel deprived of access to power and resources tend to feel like second-class citizens. CSO and government representative participants indicated that the Matabeleland region (including the Nkayi district) has been exposed to structural violence, particularly marginalisation. Participant CS6 described that:

The government free education programme of 1980-1987 was an opportunity lost by the population of Matabeleland because of Gukurahundi. While people in other regions of the country managed to go back to school and get some education, many of us in Matabeleland were not able to go to school because of the conflict. A reasonable number of ex-combatants missed an opportunity to go back to school because there was war in the region. Similarly, children missed school and many have never been able to get educated because there are too few schools and too many people who are eligible to study. Others have not been able to go beyond primary school because they do not have identity documents (ID), their parents were killed during Gukurahundi and they have been struggling to get IDs from the government (CS6, Bulawayo).

The above narrative shows that the Gukurahundi related violence resulted in some people not gaining access to education because the region was unstable. Ndlovu and Dube (2013) have raised similar concerns about the level of education of the people of Matabeleland. They argue that the state of emergency that was declared by the government in response to the conflict disrupted the flow of resources to the region, including study material and educators. The lockdown of the region consequently made it difficult for pupils to continue learning and risky for educators to work. Vambe (2012) though has challenged the view that the government purposefully suppressed the people of Matabeleland from accessing resources like education. He argues that the destruction of government property in the region (e.g. schools and road construction machinery) by disgruntled ex-ZIPRA officials forced the government to stop channelling resources to the region because it was unstable.

CCJPZ (1997) maintains that there are many parties culpable for the occurrence of the Gukurahundi massacres, the main actors being the ruling government, ZAPU, ZANLA and ZIPRA ex-combatants. Other actors noted are agents of the apartheid government and the outgoing Smith regime who actively facilitated espionage and circulation of misinformation,

and provided training and supply of resources to dissidents. Vambe (2012) argues that the reaction of the government is a common response taken by many governments in the global political community that act to preserve the resources of the country when there is instability in the country or a part thereof. Ndlovu and Dube (2013) agree with the sentiments of Vambe (2012) but argue that the actions taken by the government after Gukurahundi have not made provisions for the communities to alleviate their livelihoods that were disrupted by preceding violence. The inaction of the government poses many challenges for the community. For example, many victims and survivors of Gukurahundi suffer from anxiety, fear and depression, which can hinder people from performing well in school (NANGO 2012, Ndlovu & Dube 2013).

The 14 participants in Nkayi indicated that there are 85 primary schools, but only 28 secondary schools and no vocational training centres or tertiary institutions. This means that those who require formal training after completing secondary studies have to migrate to other provinces or neighbouring countries. The 2012 Population Census revealed that 72.4% of the children in Nkayi aged between 3 and 24 years attend primary school, but only 17.7% of the pupils make it to secondary level and 0.1% go on to tertiary level. These figures substantiate the arguments of Ndlovu and Dube (2012) that the government needs to do more to improve the level of education of people in Matabeleland (including the Nkayi District). The ability of the government to deploy more resources might be limited by the huge debt the country has accumulated from over two decades of financial maladministration (Eppel & Raftopoulos 2008, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). Gova and Ndlovu (2013) suggest that if the government could make an effort to improve the quality of education and set up more facilities for learning, it might be able to address some underlying issues that perpetuate structural violence in this region.

Of the 36 participants, 35 of them agreed with the view that the people of Matabeleland are the ruling government's underdog. Participant GV3 stated:

When you look at Bulawayo, which is the second capital city of the country, it has been left unattended by the government. The infrastructure that was left by the Smith regime is still the same that exists, except for a few buildings when compared to Harare. ZANU PF government has not bothered to expand development programs to Matabeleland region because the people have not voted for the party since the Gukurahundi incident. Even the Joshua Nkomo Ekusileni Medical Centre has been

left unopened for the past decade with all its state of the art machinery becoming a waste of resources. Marginalisation, particularly lack of development in the region is a deliberate ploy of government to frustrate the people of Matabeleland to come back and support the ruling party (GV3, Bulawayo).

The sentiments of participant CS6 and GV3 suggest that the Shona people are the legitimate citizens of the country and that non-Shona speaking people (in this case the Ndebele people) are the outsiders. The views of these participants reveal that the people of Matabeleland perceive that they have been deprived access to power and resources because they are second-class citizens. As identified in Chapter 3, Mlambo (2013) argues that Zimbabwe has failed to build itself into a harmonious country with a common national identity because of the government propagated 'patriotic history'. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) adds that the shaping of the history of Zimbabwe by the government around Shona patriotism might have inhibited the development of a reconciled community that embraces the cultural dynamics of its population. Mlambo (2013) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) argue that the history of Zimbabwe cannot be simplified to one ethnic group because the country emerged from a complex mosaic of contending histories and memories.

Participant CS6 also shared that the government seems to have ignored the demand by orphans of the Matabeleland massacres for identity documents because the process of acquiring IDs for these orphans has been compromised by the quest for truth from survivors. Ndlovu and Dube (2013) argue that the government has failed to produce ID documents for the many orphans in Matabeleland because doing so requires them to reveal the truth about what occurred to the parents of the survivors. Eppel (2009) asserts that the truth about the Gukurahundi massacres has remained hidden because the government employed amnesty provisions that prohibit the citizens from challenging the past, for example the general ordinance of 1988 that pardoned ZIPRA dissidents and all members of the security forces who committed human rights violations. She argues that the lack of identity documents presents many challenges to these orphans and their offspring. For example, they cannot apply for government social support services. These people continue to live as unidentified persons, a disposition that can disenfranchise one in the community and create a hovering sense of statelessness (Brudholm & Rosoux 2009).

Participant CS8 gave an interesting account of the underlying causes of structural violence in Matabeleland region:

Most of the people in government today are former liberation fighters. Most of them have not received counselling or psychosocial support to help them deal with the traumatic experiences of the liberation struggle, such that their leadership has been accustomed to violence. Mugabe for example, spent 11 years incarcerated as a political prisoner, this experience would alter any human being, considering the harsh conditions he had to endure and the time he lost. Coming out of such predicaments, heavily heartened can only make one either radical or saint (e.g. Mandela) (CS8, Bulawayo).

The narrative by CS8 suggests that the 13 years of protracted war in Zimbabwe caused a lot of harm to both civilians and individuals who fought in the liberation struggle (1966-79). Vambe (2012) argues that the trauma of violence from the liberation struggle has potentially caused the psychosocial well-being of the political leadership in the country to be inclined towards violence when their political hegemony is threatened. Cassim (2011) confirms that Zimbabwe has many ex-combatants and some of them have served as political leaders, for example the late Retired General Solomon Mujuru. He argues that the government is therefore made up of a clique of traumatised people who have been groomed by history to use force to remain in power.

Sachikonye (2011) argues that the current political rivalry between the ruling and opposition parties in Zimbabwe is an extension of the historical pattern of intolerance for political opposition that began during the colonial era (1888-1979). As mentioned in Chapter 3, political intolerance can be recognised from the antagonistic relations between the Smith regime and national liberation movements (1960-1979) which have been replicated in the independence period, evident in the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) versus the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) (1980-1987) and ZANU PF versus the two formations of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) since 1999 (Mlambo 2014, Sachikonye 2011). Machakanja (2010) argues that it is not surprising that ZANU PF officials in the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) set up in 2009 compromised the organ. She asserts that the ruling government is not fond of reconciliation processes, particularly those that seek to dig for the truth, because it threatens their credentials and power base.

Raftopoulos (2009) adds that structural violence in Zimbabwe derives from draconian policies (e.g. Law and Order Maintenance Act-LOMA 1960) that were instigated by the white regime during the colonial era to control activities of the population. He highlights that LOMA was promulgated by the white regime to control the activities of nationalist movements that were constantly threatening the political hegemony of the minority white government. Draconian policies such as LOMA continued to exist in the country even when a black majority government in 1980 replaced the white regime. Mlambo (2014) adds that employing draconian policies has become a common practice of the government as witnessed during the Gukurahundi era (when LOMA was reinstated) and the post-2000 era (with the Public Order and Security Act 2002). De Waal (1990) points out that the government of Zimbabwe has a long-standing history of intolerance because leaders have ruled the country with seemingly strict adherence to one-party leadership. Both the pre-independence (under Ian Smith) and post-independence (under Robert Mugabe) era has been embroiled in political conflict aimed at destroying legitimate alternative political parties which may force the incumbent party to account for past injustices.

Of the 36 participants, 35 participants conceded that at the political level there has never been a time when Zimbabweans have sat down to talk over their differences without resorting to violence (e.g. Gukurahundi, land invasions, Operation Murambatsvina and post-2000 electoral violence). The closest peaceful talks that have been held are the talks related to the 2009 Global Political Agreement (GPA). Even these talks did not come through a process of internal negotiation; they required the services of a mediator culminating in the Thabo Mbeki led political solution (Machakanja 2010, Mashingaidze 2010, Mlambo 2013, Sachikonye 2011).

Participant GV1 seemed to disagree with this view. He explained the position of the government using the example of the Gukurahundi era. He said:

ZIPRA was a credible threat to the ZANU government because during the liberation struggle the Russians and Cubans had trained the former in guerrilla warfare methods. Therefore, ZAPU members were always associated with their military wing ZIPRA and whenever disagreements occurred in the new government, ZANU felt threatened that ZAPU would end up using its military wing. Gukurahundi was a tactical means of thwarting ZAPU and its military wing, and the North Korean trained Fifth Brigade

and Police Intelligence did its best to ensure that the threat was eliminated (GV1, Harare).

Participant GV1 maintains that the government might have used violence as a tactical means to repress the so-called ZIPRA dissident. Ndlovu and Dube (2013) challenge the sentiments of the government as shown in the response by participant GV1 by arguing that the amount of force (over 3500 armed footmen) that was used by the government is not proportional to the claimed threat of ZIPRA ex-combatants (about 400 people). They assert that Gukurahundi has dehumanised the Ndebele ethnic group because they were the majority of the civilians affected. It has destabilised the Matabeleland region and the continued lack of development exacerbates tensions among the community along ethnic lines.

5.3. Local perspectives of the effects of violence

The effects of violence as it pertains to the 36 participants in the study can be classified into three levels, namely, inter-personal, community and national.

5.3.1. Inter-personal level

The inter-personal level refers to the immediate effects felt by the individual often expressed in attitude and behaviour. The 20 participants in the study that endured physical violence indicated that fear, despondency, suspicion, lack of trust, low self-esteem, guilt, trauma, revenge, anger, humiliation and hatred are some of the attitudes and behaviours they derive from their encounters of violence.

Participant HH7 explained:

Memories of the day I lost my parents remain vivid in my mind, at times I just keep to myself because I feel guilty that I was not able to do anything to save my parents. I feel haunted by the gruesome images of the fateful day, '*ifirimu risingaperi mumaziso angu nguva dzose*' (it is a never-ending film in my eyes). I have never been the same since that day and I do not know if I can ever become somebody (HH7, 54-year-old male).

Similar effects were shared by participant HH12 who was raped by a soldier during the Gukurahundi massacres, who says, “When I think of what I have been through I fail to comprehend how another human being could have done such actions to me without even hearing my plea to stop” (HH12, 62-year-old female).

The above narratives reveal that participants HH7 and HH12 have a continued sense of helplessness. Eppel (2009) and Msindo (2012) concede with the above sentiments that violence in this region has damaged the psychosocial well-being of the community.

5.3.2. Community level

On the community level, the main forms of violence raised by respondents were structural, as participants in the study perceive that the government has been neglecting the region. Participant CS5 said:

The quality of education in the Matabeleland region has been affected by the lack of resources such that even the throughput rate of children in the region from primary to secondary is low, hence not so many children are making it to tertiary level. For example, NUST, which is a Science and Technology university in Bulawayo, is mostly recruiting students from the other regions and not Matabeleland in spite of the advantage that it is a home university to the region (CS5, Bulawayo).

The above narrative reveals that structural violence is eroding the social capital of communities in the region. As indicated in earlier sections, some people who were orphaned by Gukurahundi have not been able to attend school because of a lack of documentation, which renders them to be employed in manual jobs that earn them amounts insufficient to sustain their families. Many of the survivors of Gukurahundi have not been able to access rehabilitation services that can help them cope with trauma. Thus, the community is burdened with people that are susceptible to psychological imbalances. The shortage of learning facilities and skilled educators is reducing the throughput of learners in the region (Dube 2014, Eppel 2003, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009).

Ndlovu and Dube (2013) who argue that the quality of education in Matabeleland region is deteriorating due to the lack of appropriate linguistic skills in educators support the views of

participant CS5. As Dube (2014) verifies in his research, Ndebele speaking people living in Matabeleland have reported feeling offended when their children are taught by a Shona educator who cannot speak Ndebele because that forces their children to speak a language different from their home language. The issue of using Shona as a medium of instruction in the Matabeleland region continues to be a contentious debate as it is the responsibility of the government to deploy educators across the country.

At the time of compiling the study, the Deputy Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Professor Mavhima had publicly acknowledged that there is a problem with the languages of instruction in the Matabeleland region (*Chronicle 2014*). The Deputy Minister relayed to the people of Matabeleland that the deployment of non-Ndebele speaking educators to the region is a contingency plan of the government to address the shortage of qualified educators that can teach in Ndebele. The main argument raised to challenge the current actions of government is that the use of Shona language by non-Ndebele speaking educators is affecting the level of literacy among non-Shona speaking students. In addition, it infringes on the constitutional right of learners to learn in a medium of instruction they have proficiency in. On the contrary, Samukele Hadebe in *Financial Gazette* (2012) argues that the issue of education in Matabeleland should not be limited to effects of Gukurahundi. He asserts that the attitudes and behaviours of scholars in the region also play a crucial role in the performance of the province. He identified that the high migration rates of youths in the region to neighbouring countries, for example South Africa and Botswana, is adding to poor performance in education because most scholars attend school pre-occupied with the idea of ‘crossing over’, which is described as an ‘*eGoli mentality*’. Dube (2014) suggests that the way forward for Matabeleland is that the government, in collaboration with the community, should work on improving learning facilities to increase the output of Ndebele proficient educators, as well as develop innovative ways of encouraging the youths to explore entrepreneurship opportunities in their communities

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) and Mlambo (2013) argue that prior to the Gukurahundi massacres, Shona speaking and Ndebele speaking people seemingly lived together without any linguistic reservations. They assert that the indoctrination of the Shona language on non-Shona speaking people by government security forces during Gukurahundi has made non-Shona speakers in Matabeleland (particularly survivors of the massacres) to hate the language. Mlambo (2013) adds that the Shona language is therefore serving the community as a constant reminder of their suffering and symbol of oppression and humiliation.

Participant CS7 described that the lack of political will on the part of government to address the past atrocities in Matabeleland region is perpetuating a downward spiral. He said:

Many communities in Matabeleland suffer from trauma because they have been fractured by state sponsored violence. There is a sense of hopelessness, most survivors are aware of their perpetrators but believe that nothing can be done to hold them to account because many of them have died and others have been protected by political amnesty provisions made by the government (CS7, Bulawayo).

The narrative of participant CS7 shows that the political atmosphere has disenfranchised some people in Matabeleland because the government has not made a meaningful effort to facilitate community integration. Eppel (2004), Mashingaidze (2010) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008) support this view, adding that impunity has been entrenched in the political culture of the community due to the inability of government to hold accountable perpetrators of the Gukurahundi massacres.

5.3.3. National level

At the national level, reference was made to the social, political and economic effects of violence that affect a wider population of the country and requires the intervention of government. All 36 participants pointed out that the constitutional provisions of the government at independence only focused on integration between black and white Zimbabweans and not black Zimbabweans from different ethnic groups or political parties. As a result, the failure to mend relations amongst the indigenous communities has become the breeding ground for further conflict between the Shona and non-Shona speaking ethnic groups, as explained earlier.

Two participants in Nkayi indicated that political violence and draconian government policies have plunged the economy of Zimbabwe into turmoil. Participant HH12 said,

When my husband was killed in 2002 for supporting the MDC, I had to step in and look after our three children. I became a cross border trader, buying cheap clothes and selling them in the city. I have had to move back to the village because Operation Murambatsvina disrupted the clothing stall I owned when I was in Bulawayo in 2005.

I have not been able to regain capital to start the business again and I am now struggling to look after my children (HH12, 42-year-old female).

Raftopoulos (2009) has described Operation Murambatsvina as a militarised uprooting of informal settlements in the urban parts of the country (including the Matabeleland region) that resulted in the displacement of over 600 000 people and a direct loss of sources of income for 1.7 million people. He argues that the government has exacerbated the socio-economic effects of structural violence in the country by making use of policies such as Operation Murambatsvina, which disrupted the living patterns of the communities. Participant HH12 lost her source of income due to Operation Murambatsvina. She explained that her only form of educational qualification is a grade seven certificate and that has limited her opportunities for employment in Bulawayo after her business was disrupted.

Participant GV1 stated that the government is not the only actor responsible for instigating structural violence in the country. He said,

When we gained independence, the ruling government got many praises from Britain and its allies because Mugabe promised them he would not look into the land question. Ignoring the land question for a decade is the biggest mistake that our government has ever made. Now the government has become a subject of humiliation in the global political community, starting with the 2002-targeted economic sanctions of Britain because we decided to do the right thing, repossessing our ancestral land (GV1, Harare).

Critics of the Zimbabwean economic situation such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) and Raftopoulos (2009) who argue that causes of socio-economic decay in the country derive from both the colonial legacy and post-independence maladministration of government support the sentiments of participant GV1. Mlambo (2014) adds that draconian government policies (for example the fast tracked 2001-2002 white farmer land invasions) and subsequent political violence have brought harsh measures (economic sanctions) from the international community, particularly Europe and the US, in a bid to change the country's authoritarian regime.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, targeted sanctions from the year 2000 onwards affected the whole population of Zimbabwe and not necessarily, the political elites that had been targeted

(Sachikonye 2011). The 2000-2008 European-orchestrated regime change agenda in Zimbabwe destabilised the economy of the country to a certain degree. A report by NANGO (2012) revealed that mismanagement, corruption, and ineptitude on the part of the government facilitated the collapse of state institutions. For example, government hospitals were no longer functional due to a shortage of resources, shops no longer had commodities to sell and people had to rely on importing from Botswana, Mozambique and South Africa. In many parts of the country water shortages led to the outbreak of cholera in 2008 and today only 58% of the Nkayi community has access to safe water (e.g. piped water, communal tapes, protected boreholes and wells) (Ndlovu & Dube 2013, ZimStat 2012). Most of the manufacturing industries and the transportation industry, for example the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) Company had to cut down operations leading to a loss of jobs. NRZ is a parastatals company with its headquarters in Matabeleland; hence, the highest numbers of employees working for the national railways company are based in this region (NANGO 2012). Participant HH3 indicated that he was retrenched from his job as a mechanic for the NRZ in 2004 due to structural resizing and has not been able to access his pension funds since 2007 because NRZ is no longer operating profitably.

All 14 participants in Nkayi described that they are facing economic hardships because they are not earning salaries that meet their daily demands. Macheke (2014) echoes the expressions of participants by arguing that the dollarisation of the economy of Zimbabwe in 2008 helped alleviate the country from hyperinflation and subsequent collapse of financial institutions. She argues that many people are not coping with the new currency because the continued use of draconian policies by the government, for example, the indigenisation policy has destabilised both local and foreign owned businesses and dispersed potential investors. She also states that the cost of living in Zimbabwe is too high considering the salaries earned by many of the citizens.

Two of the 14 people interviewed in the Nkayi District were employed in a professional job, a nurse and teacher. The rest were either self-employed as vendors, peasant farmers, and informal mine workers or working in manual labour operations among others. Indicators from the Government Gazette suggest that the income of civil servants (e.g. nurses and teachers) is US\$4,200-6,600 per annum and self /manual labour employees earn anything between US\$360 and US\$2,400 per annum, with the exception of two informal mine workers who can make up to US\$12,000 per annum. The salaries of both civil servants and self/manual labour employed

participants in the study cannot sufficiently sustain their big family setups with an average household of six people (ZimStat 2012). At the time of the research, the country was going through a liquidity crisis and deflation resulting in disruption in money circulation. Many people in the country did not have access to disposable income and that has disturbed the spending patterns of consumers (Macheka 2014). This shortage of money circulation is disrupting the flow of businesses and many business owners from big companies to small business entities, including vendors such as participants in the Nkayi District, feel this. This section has described perspectives on violence held by the participants as a basis to discuss their understandings of reconciliation.

5.4. Conceptualisation of reconciliation by the local community

As highlighted in Chapter 2, Lederach (1997) and Schaap (2008) point out that reconciliation can promote peace-building when there has been a collective acknowledgement of past violence and a determination to share responsibility to address the past. Brounéus' (2003) definition of reconciliation also identifies acknowledgement as a key aspect of peace-building. She defines reconciliation as “a societal process that involves the mutual acknowledgement of past sufferings and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviour into constructive relationships towards sustainable peace.” As indicated in Chapter 2, Brounéus' (2003) definition informs the central theoretical framework of this study (the psychosocial approach to reconciliation) with regards to aspects of reconciliation that address the dynamics of a conflict (attitudes, behaviours of people and conflict structure), as well as nurture sustainable relations in conflicted communities. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) suggests that the government needs to acknowledge all episodes of violence in the country and make deliberate efforts to harmonise relations between previously contending parties. Machakanja (2010) adds that there is need for a legal tender that binds the voices and intentions of the government. This approach has been lacking in all the previous endeavours of the government, as can be seen with the examples of the Dumbutshena Commission of Inquiry (1981) and the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration-ONHRI (2009).

All 36 participants in the study indicated that reconciliation processes in Matabeleland (including the Nkayi District) need to be conducted in a manner that will allow for truth-telling, genuine apology, acknowledgement and dialogue. Six of the participants added that justice and

compensation should be incorporated in the process in order to address the social imbalances created by the past. Nine participants indicated that memorialisation, reburials and affirmative community development programs should then follow as long-term activities in order for reconciliation to occur. In addition, 18 participants stressed that reconciliation should not be by decree, amnesia or empty rhetoric. These aspects as identified by participants form the basis of what constitutes reconciliation and which actions can lead the community towards reconciliation.

5.4.1. Reconciliation as acknowledgement

Four participants indicated that reconciliation should begin with acknowledgement. Participant CS2 said, “Reconciliation is acknowledgement of past inactions that goes beyond announcing that it was a moment of madness” (CS2, Bulawayo).

One of the academic experts shared that the government needs to acknowledge what happened. She said,

To begin reconciliation in Matabeleland we need to acknowledge violence at the executive and legislative level, currently we have a constitution and a new commission set to address these issues, but what is its use if a Bill in Parliament does not enact it? (AC1, Harare).

Participant GV3 indicated that conducting proper burials for victims of Gukurahundi is a practical way the government can offer acknowledgement to survivors of violence in the Matabeleland region. She said,

There are many unidentified graves in Matabeleland, the least that the government can do to help survivors ease off the pain they have been holding for the past 30 years is exhuming mass graves, identifying the deceased, and giving bereaved families the opportunity to mourn and rebury their beloved ones in a proper manner (GV3, Bulawayo).

All 14 participants of the two focus group discussions held in Nkayi shared this view and it was clearly a very sensitive matter. Two participants of the focus group discussions indicated that they were aware of a mass grave where their relatives have been lying for the past 30 years but

they have not been able to rebury them because government authorities have rejected their request to conduct reburials. Eppel (2006) concedes that during the Gukurahundi massacres many of the people that died were buried in mass graves because the communities were too unstable for people to conduct proper burials. She argues that many of the mass graves have not been exhumed and this has left communities without possession of the remains of their loved ones. Msindo (2012) points out that in Zimbabwean African culture, proper burial of the remains of a deceased party is a crucial element of the moral fabric of communities. He indicates that giving proper burial to deceased parties is a sign of respect to both the living and spiritual worlds. Eppel (2006) adds that to the living world, burial symbolizes respect for human dignity. To the spiritual world, burial is a passage rite that allows the spirit of the deceased to reconnect with the ancestral family. The failure of bereaved families to bury victims of Gukurahundi and other episodes of violence in Zimbabwe remains a contentious issue because of the moral obligation of communities to respect both the living and spiritual worlds.

Machakanja (2010) suggests that the government could facilitate reconciliation by making provisions for missing persons to be identified and acknowledging the past through memorials and reburials of people in mass graves. She adds that setting up memorial sites, histograms or museums for people to celebrate their history can facilitate collective acknowledgement of the past. She suggests that these efforts can serve as long-term projects in various communities across the country aiding the population (victims, survivors, perpetrators and bystanders) to gain closure and restore dignity.

5.4.2. Reconciliation as truth-telling

Thirty-five participants in the study indicated that truth-telling is a key component of reconciliation. One participant said,

I still want to understand why the dissidents killed my father in front of the whole family. I really need to know what they were thinking when they forced me to cut him into pieces. These questions remain in my mind and I do not know if I will ever get the chance to ask for the answers (HH7, 54-year-old male).

Another participant said,

Reconciliation for me means that the perpetrator is prepared to come to the victim with a genuine desire to engage in peaceful dialogue with the victim by giving the victim the opportunity to ask the unanswered questions they hold (HH1, 82-year-old female).

The above accounts of participants HH1 and HH7 show that truth-telling can serve two purposes; namely, facilitate reconciliation and an integral part of reconciliation. As indicated in Chapter 2, Rosoux (2008) argues that truth-telling is a vital aspect of reconciliation because it allows the community the opportunity to relate their memories and experiences of events. Brounéus (2008) adds that truth-telling is therapeutic for individuals and the community, which therefore facilitates healing and reconciliation. Villa-Vicencio (2007) stresses that truth-telling can assist in creating the space for open dialogue on issues, after which communities can acknowledge or deny realities of what occurred. As indicated in Chapters 2 and 3, the document 'Breaking the Silence,' by CCJPZ (1997) is a key example of the efforts of CSOs to facilitate truth-recovery in Zimbabwe and confirms the narrations of most participants in the study, for example HH1 and HH7. The report has become a key determinant of the accounts of social injustices that occurred during the Gukurahundi era, including the estimated 20,000 deaths. Other collections of truth about the social injustices that have occurred in Zimbabwe have emerged from academic writing, particularly politics and history, and records made by CSOs, for example, Counselling Services Unit and ZLHR, dealing with victims during various episodes. The efforts of CCJPZ to collect accounts of incidents in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions remains the only widespread campaign that has occurred to recover truths about this era.

The government has not commented on the CCJPZ report, which makes the people of Matabeleland assume that their experiences have been ignored (CCJPZ 1997). These sentiments are exacerbated by the inability of the government to make public the findings of the Chihambakwe and Dumbutshena Commissions of Inquiry that were set up in the 1980s to investigate the incidents of the Gukurahundi era (Ndou 2012). As indicated earlier, Mlambo (2013) asserts that the government has used 'patriotic history' to construct a one-sided account of truth about the history of the country and justify its actions on grounds of defending territorial integrity of the people. Rosoux (2008) and Schaap (2008) argue that the community should not be forced to accept a single account of truth because individuals experience

encounters differently. The truth-telling process should therefore make room for diverse accounts of truth to exist in harmony.

Villa-Vicencio (2007) adds that the contribution of truth-telling to peace-building depends on the liberty of the community to speak freely and have a sense of belonging in the process. In the absence of these, Brounéus (2008) argues that truth telling might subject victims of violence to post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and the risk of re-traumatisation. An example is the case of South Africa's TRC in 1997, which had to abandon the one-session debriefings because they were increasing post-traumatic stress disorder and depression in participants (the witnesses and victims). Gibson (2004) argues that truth-telling might have a greater contribution to change in attitudes and behaviours for people that did not know what occurred by giving them a deeper understanding of the past, than for the people directly involved or affected by the incident. He adds that at the community or national level, truth-telling can lead to change in attitudes and behaviours. An example is the case of the SA TRC, which presented the community with an opportunity to challenge beliefs about white South Africans and other races, as well as apartheid ideology and experiences, leading to the development of new understandings about South Africa. Gibson (2004) and Villa-Vicencio (2007) point out that the truth-telling element of the TRC enabled the community to share responsibility, blame and victimhood, which assisted the collective to acknowledge that the other side was also unfairly victimised. Truth can facilitate reconciliation because when people are challenged to transform dogmatic views of the past; they make room for new understandings to emerge (Gibson 2004).

5.4.3. Reconciliation as genuine apology

All 36 participants indicated that the government should apologise to the people of Zimbabwe, particularly victims of various episodes of violence in order for the past to be recognised. Participant GV2 said,

The residual hatred in Matabeleland cannot be cured unless there is a deep regret, acknowledgement and apology from the perpetrators of violence. The government should move away from declaring that 'let by gones be by gones' or it was a 'moment of madness' (GV2, Harare).

Another participant said, “If Gukurahundi was a moment of madness, the question becomes, has the mad person regained sanity now? Has he atoned for the period of madness, and what should the aggrieved do about it?” (CS4, Bulawayo).

Participant GV3 stated that it should be a sincere and genuine apology. She said,

I am a survivor of the Gukurahundi massacres. Reconciliation is, therefore, something that is very dear to my heart. It starts when the perpetrator says sorry, a genuine apology and not just saying sorry to make things go away because sorry can never bring back the lost loved ones or do away the traumatic experience (GV3, Bulawayo).

The two accounts of participants CS4 and GV3 identify the government as the actor that should offer an apology to the community. Participant GV3 indicated that the government is not the only actor that should apologise. She added that any person who knows they took part in the injustices should apologise in order to atone for their actions with the respective persons they wronged. Rosoux (2008) points out that an apology is either a written or a spoken expression of one’s regret or remorse for committing unkind actions. According to CCJPZ (1997), the late Minister of Defence Mr. Mahachi was the only government official to express public regret for the incidents that occurred during the Gukurahundi era. The *Sunday Mail* of 6 September 1992 reported on an interview with the late minister, in which he expressed regret for the Gukurahundi era and cautioned that no citizen of the country should repeat such social injustices (CCJPZ 1997). Eppel and Raftopoulos (2008), Mashingaidze (2010) and Msindo (2012) argue that if the government of Zimbabwe offers an apology to victims, this could be an indication that it was willing to acknowledge the past, showing respect for the dignity of victims and taking responsibility for the lives that were destroyed by the incident.

Anthony Moran, in Schaap (2008), cautions that reconciliation should not be simplified to a public apology because reconciliation obliges political actors to look into the underlying causes of social injustices within their communities and to set up measures that will curb the recurrence of inhumane actions. Brudholm and Rosoux (2009) reinforce the above by noting that making a public apology in the absence of measures to curb the perpetuation of violence might overlook the need for offenders to take responsibility for their actions. Given the lack of development in Matabeleland since the Gukurandi era and the continuation of violence across the country, the stance by Schaap (2008) becomes valid. He argues that a public apology becomes empty

rhetoric if the government fails to set up supporting measures that will stop communities from using violence again to fulfil their goals. Rosoux (2008) adds that if an apology is not sincere and substantiated by actions that address the imbalances created by the past incidents, it easily translates into empty pronouncements that are used as an excuse to ignore the demand by victims for truth and justice.

5.4.4. Reconciliation as dialogue

Twenty-six of the participants in the study identified dialogue as an aspect of reconciliation. They mentioned that through dialogue they would be able to share their experiences, raise questions and get acknowledgement, which arguably can begin the process of transforming attitudes, behaviours and structure of the conflict. Participant HH7 said, “Reconciliation is giving survivors the platform to talk; all that the other person does is listening. Whether I scream or shout, whatever helps me ease the pain” (HH7, 54-year-old male). Participant GV3 shares similar sentiments with HH7. She said, “Reconciliation is having an emotional dialogue with people that are just there to listen” (GV3, Bulawayo).

The above accounts are reinforced by the view of participant CS7. He said, “Reconciliation is a combination of processes that work towards re-establishing social morale in community through negotiated relations and values. It is bringing two warring parties to agree to work together peacefully and in harmony” (CS7, Bulawayo).

Lederach (1997) argues that reconciliation should be pursued through creating the space and opportunity for conflicting parties to express their experiences of violence to and with one another. He adds that through the sharing of narrations, they validate one another’s experience and those encounters can facilitate reconciliation. The researcher noted that the research participants in the Nkayi District and Bulawayo, particularly those that endured violence in the past three decades, were eager to take part in the study because it gave them the opportunity to share their experiences.

5.4.5. Reconciliation as compensation

Three accounts of participants indicated that victims of violence should receive redress for the effects of the injustices they suffered. One of the CSO representatives said, “There is need for a

structure to facilitate compensation to victims and families affected by the different episodes of violence in Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, since the government has not yet acknowledged the past, it is difficult to warrant institutions to facilitate compensations” (CS7, Bulawayo).

An academic expert in the study stated,

CSOs can also direct regeneration projects, which can act as compensation through development projects. An example is one will not necessarily get the two cattle that were lost but if the community work together on say a poultry project and share the benefits, this is a way of gaining a livelihood which was lost (AC1, Harare).

Compensation normally comes from the perpetrator or the government, but the contribution of donor aid to alleviating the effects of structural violence in conflicted communities suggests that these actors are increasingly becoming an important player in reconciliation. At the time of compiling this research, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) had donated an EU grant valued at US\$9.1 million to boost livestock production in Matabeleland North Province (*Zimbabwe Situation* 2014). The main land use activities in Matabeleland North is ranching, parks and mining because it falls under climate region 5, which receives low and erratic rainfall (Sugunan 1997). The grant is an example of affirmative community development projects that can contribute to addressing structural violence in the Matabeleland region. According to *Zimbabwe Situation* (2014), the grant will assist smallholder farmers in Nkayi and Lupane Districts, which will directly improve food, nutrition and income level of many households in these communities. More so, it will provide training to the farmers on agricultural aspects such as livestock production and rehabilitating dip tanks, among others, at two animal health clinics in the districts, which will likely create access for the community to vocational training within their area.

Participant HH7 added that,

In a few instances, compensations have been going on being administered by chief or village heads through a *dare* [traditional court]. However, this is mainly for violence that occurred after the formation of the MDC. I remember the chief demanded a youth from that homestead to return the cattle he stole from his neighbour. The firm hand of the chief on issues that affect the peaceful living of communities has spared many

people from seeking revenge. Everyone in this community knows that they can take any matter to the chief and get a fair judgment because he does not favour some over others. Our current chief learnt a lot from his father, he did not tolerate divisions (HH7, 54-year-old male).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Anderlini *et al.* (2004) identified that the symbolic value of restitution is correcting the imbalance that is created by the effects of violence. Mapfumo (2013) and Mashingaidze (2010) observe that some victims of social injustices in Zimbabwe have continued to resent their offenders because they are expecting to be compensated for the losses they incurred. Mbire (2011) adds that their resentments are often triggered by the fact that offenders have continued to excel using resources they stole from the victims. Mashingaidze (2010) and Sachikonye (2011) suggest that reconciliation in such instances will mostly occur after victims have received restitution for their losses.

5.4.6. Reconciliation as forgiveness

Three participants in the study identified reconciliation as forgiveness. One CSO representative who is also a victim of violence during the Gukurahundi era mentioned that:

Reconciliation requires forgiveness, but forgiveness should occur as a process and not an event. Christianity has helped me to move on at an interpersonal level, because I take from the Lord's Prayer that I must forgive those who trespass against me. I still require truth in order to be at peace with the past (CS8, Bulawayo).

Hamber (2007) describes the forgiveness mentioned above as an act of good will, which means that the victim chooses to forgive in order to stop feeling disempowered by the past. This involves acknowledging that the victim is not a subject of the perpetrator but a survivor of the inevitable past. Hamber (2007) and Huyse and Salter (2008) add that when one is in control of their attitude and behaviour they are able to determine how they want other people to associate with them. Taking this action enables some victims to reconcile with their past by replacing negative attitudes with positive ones (Huyse & Salter 2008, Lederach 1997, Minow 1998). As noted by participant CS8, the choice to forgive her perpetrators is an inter-personal solution, but she still requires knowing the truth about the past in order to move forward. Bloomfield (2006),

Huyse and Salter (2008) and Minow (1998) concede that it is difficult for victims to move on when the underlying issues have not been addressed.

5.4.7. Reconciliation as justice

Four out of 36, participants indicated that they want justice to be served in order for reconciliation to occur. One participant said, “It must be put on record that perpetrators of violence went on trial even if they end up being pardoned, unlike granting blanket amnesty without getting people to account for their inhuman actions” (CS10, Harare).

As indicated in Chapter 2, Lederach (1997) agrees that reconciliation can be a means to solicit justice for previously disadvantaged members of the community. In this case, the necessary conditions for reconciliation are satisfied when the community in transition is able to solicit clarity on the past incidents and restitution to victims for the inconveniences that resulted from the incident.

One of the academic experts gave a contrasting view:

Criminalizing reconciliation in Zimbabwe is equivalent to sitting on a hot potato. The government is aware that if reconciliation takes the legal approach, it will be implicated and it is this awareness that makes them shun away from any processes that led to prosecutions (AC1, Harare).

Machakanja (2010), Mashingaidze (2010) and Sachikonye (2011) agree that the government has avoided calls to address the past through the justice system in order to protect some officials from being implicated by the process. Assefa (1999), Lederach (1997) and Van der Merwe (2003) support the view that criminalising reconciliation can be challenging to communities in transition because prosecutions mainly focus on determining the wrongful acts of a perpetrator, which often diverts attention from the testimonies of the victim. Anderlini *et al.* (2004) add that criminal court proceedings are usually long (it can take months or years for the court to reach a verdict) and lawyers often get entangled in following court procedures rather than soliciting the truth that is needed for justice to be served. Rosoux (2008) and Villa-Vicencio (2011) emphasise that truth-recovery can be compromised when conflicting parties manipulate their encounters to evade harsh sentencing. Trial proceedings of this nature can lead to re-

victimisation of victims especially when the trial involves hostile parties (Anderlini *et al.* 2004, Boraine 2004).

Eppel (2008) points out that the Clemency Orders of 1980, 1988 and 2000 have allowed the government of Zimbabwe to protect human rights offenders from prosecution by law and, consequently, developed the modus operandi for the ruling government to override any further calls to prosecute offenders and uphold international human rights (CCJPZ 1997, Eppel 2008, Sachikonye 2011). As indicated earlier in Chapter 3, justice for victims has been achieved in instances where individuals pursue the criminal case with either local or international legal bodies. Example of international legal proceedings are the case of Gabriel Shumba who won a legal claim he made against the government for human rights abuses handled by the African Commission and the white commercial farmers who opened a case with the SADC Tribunal in 2008 for unlawful evictions by the government (Bell 2013, *Nehanda Radio* 2012). An example of local legal proceedings is the case of Owen Maseko who was represented by lawyers from the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) at the Constitutional Court (Dube 2014). Maseko was acquitted from allegations of publishing and communicating false statements with the intention of inciting violence through his 2011 exhibitions on Gukurahundi, which carried a sentence of 20 years (Dube 2014, Dugger 2011, Maseko 2011).

5.4.8. Reconciliation as a process

Overall sentiments of 35 of the 36 participants in the research were that reconciliation in Zimbabwe should not be made by decree, it must not be empty rhetoric and that it is not equal to amnesia.

A CSO representative shared that,

The government should not assume that the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987 and labelling the Gukurahundi era a ‘moment of madness’ has atoned for the atrocities that occurred. People’s lives were disrupted for seven years, they therefore need to be consulted on the processes of reconciliation that will resolve the issues they have and not be constricted to get over their experiences briskly (CS7, Bulawayo).

As indicated in Chapter 2, Schaap (2008) argued that in many cases reconciliation fails to occur because political leaders prioritize preserving their political goals at the expense of fulfilling the expectations of the population they represent. Lederach (1997) states that reconciliation should not be pursued by employing innovative acts to minimize the expectations of conflicting groups, but should be set up through mechanisms that engage all stakeholders as humans-in-relationship.

One of the academic experts also shared the above view:

Amnesia is not an option for Zimbabwe because people can never forget, rather we need to create space for people to remember their suffering and celebrate their narrations in different ways, for example poetry, drama, music and curriculum among others (AC2, Harare).

Schaap (2008) emphasises that, by ignoring the past, reconciliation runs the risk of reinstating political claims of the powerful in community and confining the views of the grassroots to be commensurate to the views of those in authority. Stewart Motha, in Schaap (2008), notes that reconciliation processes that are guided by biased political motives become misused as a tool of silencing the demands of some members of the community to preserve the interests of the ruling government.

A report made by the CCJPZ (1997) and the Western region National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations-NANGO (2012) supports the aspects of reconciliation identified by the 36 participants in the study. NANGO (2012) argues that addressing the Gukurahundi massacres marks the beginning of reconciliation in the region. Scholars such as Eppel (2004), Ndlovu and Dube (2012) and Sachikonye (2011) argue that unless the government makes a genuine effort to address the causes and effects of Gukurahundi, the negative attitudes, destructive behaviours and structure of conflict will remain unchanged share this view. Failing to address the attitudes, behaviours and conflict structure exposes the community to a cycle of violence and intolerance among community members.

5.5. Community awareness of reconciliation initiatives

Ten of the 14 participants in the Nkayi community indicated that they were aware of reconciliation initiatives occurring in their area. The main stakeholders identified to have worked in their community are the Roman Catholic Church, Habakkuk Trust, ZLHR, Shalom Projects, JOMIC, Red Cross International, Radio Dialogue, Bulawayo Agenda and NANGO. Services that have been accessed by these participants from stakeholders include counselling, capacity building training, rehabilitation, advocacy and donor aid. In some instances, participants could not remember the name of the stakeholder but were aware of the programs that were offered, for example, prayer sessions and evangelism programmes, which have taught the participants about biblical love, forgiveness and other similar values.

All 14 participants in Nkayi indicated that foreign donors and CSOs that come to offer handouts often fuel the underlying divisions in the community, especially when they give donations to the village heads to distribute. Participant HH4 said, “There is a lot of political sidelining in some villages, if you are supporting one party you are less likely to get access to the same amount of donated resources when they are distributed by a member of the other party” (HH4, 73-year-old male).

Eppel (2009) concedes that community leaders have in some instances misappropriated aid programs of foreign donors and CSOs. She points out that some village heads end up handing out donations to their political allies instead of benefitting the whole community and such instances trigger conflicts around the unaddressed issues in the community, in particular ethnic tensions between Shona and Ndebele people. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) adds that competition for access to resources remains prevalent in many rural communities in Zimbabwe (including the Nkayi District) due to the polarisation of the socio-political life of the community that results from a biased trajectory of the history of the country. He argues that in many instances political leaders have hijacked foreign aid and CSO donations for political advantage in communities, particularly during election periods.

Three of the participants mentioned the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (Jomic), Information and Media Panel of Inquiry (Impi) and the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) as the government led organisations that have visited their communities to

discuss about the past social injustices. One participant said, “I have attended discussion sessions held by Impi, ZHRC and Jomic, but I am disappointed that they have not done any follow up sessions on the matters the community raised” (HH8, 48-year-old female).

The sentiments of participant HH8 about the lack of coherence of government initiatives has been identified by various scholars. According to Mawarire and Gagare (2014), Impi was set up in 2013 by the Minister of Information Jonathan Moyo to investigate ways to improve the current state of media in the country. Impi develops its findings by drawing public interest on issues they have with the media (e.g. quality, content and coverage). If administered properly, the efforts of Impi can facilitate reconciliation in Zimbabwe through addressing issues like the poor signal for local television and radio broadcasting in the Matabeleland region, among others (Bhebhe 2014). As noted in Chapter 2, Rosoux (2008) under the psychosocial approach to reconciliation identified that the media is a key player in reconciliation processes, which can facilitate dialogue. Chari (2010) argues that the way in which the media functions in a country is essential for a community in transition because people, both local and abroad, depend on media to understand public affairs. He believes that when media is used appropriately, it can transform the negative attitudes and destructive behaviours of people because it provides a platform for people to engage with their social realities. Bhebhe (2014) and Mawarire and Gagare (2014) argue though that Impi might not be an appropriate body to address the state of media in the country because it was established by a minister who is responsible for engineering draconian policies (e.g. AIPPA and POSA) that have been inhibiting social engagement and freedom of expression in the community. They assert that transformation of attitudes and behaviours of people in the community through media can only be ascertained when these policies have been abrogated.

The ZHRC was set up in 2009 to address human rights abuses in the country following the procedures set up by the GPA (*Zimbabwe Independent* 2014). Chikwanha (2013) argues that lack of funding and resources (e.g. technical staff) has prevented the commission from making tangible progress to address human rights issues in the country, which renders it a mockery of the expectations of the community. She asserts that lack of political will is the main reason why the government has not made efforts to make sure the commission fulfils its mandate over the past five years. Machakanja (2011) and Mashingaidze (2010) add that the inability of government to support the commission and other similar bodies since independence proves that its efforts have been merely cosmetic and designed to safeguard its political hegemony.

Jomic was set up in 2009 following the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) that formed the Government of National Unit (GNU) in Zimbabwe. The committee was established to supervise the implementation of the GPA, which, in the process, led it to facilitate peace-building programs that included creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and promoting dialogue among the parties (Mashingaidze 2010). Participant HH4 mentioned that,

In 2012 I attended a workshop at the community hall and benefitted a lot from the open discussions because it [Jomic] presented a platform to speak openly about the past. As a result I learned to tolerate my fellow community members from the practical exercise where political party representatives [MDC-T, MDC-N and ZANU-PF] were interacting with one another in a friendly manner in public (HH4, 73-year-old male).

Participant HH4 also mentioned that he has been able to socialise better with other community members through social activities organised by Jomic such as playing netball and soccer. Lee (2011) and Mashingaidze (2010), among others, argue though that Jomic was an ‘emasculated’ committee because it did not have any authority to summon a party that breaches the GPA or enforce any decisions to address issues in the country. Lee (2011) points out that Jomic could not take any action to address issues raised by the community, for example, hate speech, selective application of law and the state media’s partisan approach. This made it an ineffective body in the transformation of attitudes, behaviours and structure of the conflict in Zimbabwe.

Jomic co-chairperson Elton Mangoma, in Sibanda (2013), disagrees with the view that Jomic was an ineffective committee in addressing issues in the country. He asserts that Jomic played an important role in fostering political tolerance in communities across the country that had been affected by polarisation among party lines. He adds that although its composition was contentious, it managed to foster peaceful co-existence among political parties, which facilitated the occurrence of peaceful political elections in July 2013. Jomic was disbanded after the election of the new government because its mandate to monitor the implementation of the GNU was redundant (Sibanda 2013). Some ZANU-PF officials in the new government (e.g. Labour Minister Nicholas Goche and Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa) had proposed that Jomic be transformed into a new Zimbabwe Political Parties Dialogue (ZPPD), which would continue to foster efforts on political tolerance in the community set by Jomic. Information Minister

Jonathan Moyo, who was supported by Vice-president Joyce Mujuru and Justice Minister Emerson Munganwa, turned down this idea (*Zimbabwe Independent* 2013).

None of the 14 participants in Nkayi was aware of the governments' Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI). As indicated in Chapter 3, ONHRI failed to develop mechanisms to address past atrocities due to lack of funding and bad management arising from lack of political will, particularly by ZANU PF officials in the organ (Machinga 2012, Mbire 2011, Machakanja 2010). The failure of these bodies (ONHRI, ZHRC, Impi and Jomic) to fulfil the expectations of the community concerning processes for reconciliation confirms the argument advanced by Schaap (2008). He argues that some reconciliation processes fail because they are established on the assumption that political leaders are custodians of their communities and they will adopt actions that fulfil the expectations of the grassroots. Stewart Motha, in Schaap (2008), notes that reconciliation processes that are guided by biased political motives become misused as a tool of silencing the demands of some members of the community to preserve the interests of the ruling government.

The researcher also observed that a key player that has been enhancing reconciliation processes in the Nkayi community is the chief. All participants in the focus group discussions acknowledged the contributions of the chief to reconciling the community. Participant HH7 shared that,

The firm hand of the chief on issues that affect the peaceful living of communities has spared many people from seeking revenge. Everyone in this community knows that they can take any matter to the chief and get a fair judgment because he does not favour. Our current chief learnt a lot from his father, he did not tolerate divisions. The late chief promoted cultural integration by encouraging the community to speak freely in their preferred language. This enabled me to perceive my neighbours as an equal member of the community and today I am married to a Shona woman although my whole family is Ndebele and they are supportive. Cross-cultural marriages are a common trend in this community (HH7, 54-year-old male).

Participant HH7 has identified traditional leadership as a crucial player for reconciliation when dealing with rural communities. The chief in this community is aiding reconciliation by promoting cultural diversity and open dialogue for people to deliberate on issues of contention.

Mapfumo (2013) and Sarkin (2008) point out that when pursuing peace-building in rural communities (in this case Nkayi District), reconciliation can be facilitated by incorporating local actors and their mechanisms of dispute resolution, for example, conducting ‘*dare*’ (gathering at the compound of a traditional leader for deliberations) and *kuripira mhosva* (offering appeasement). Tindana *et al.* (2006) adds that adapting the local practices enables the community in transition to take ownership of the process, because traditional leaders have influence on different aspects in the lives of people in the community. As indicated earlier, some traditional leaders in the country have been responsible for instigating conflicts by dividing the community along political affiliations (Eppel 2009). The issue of partisanship in Zimbabwe needs to be taken into consideration when approaching traditional leadership, because the process might be compromised if the people do not trust the community leader. Lederach (1997), Rosoux (2008) and Schaap (2008) point out that the demeanour of stakeholders facilitating reconciliation in communities in transition determines the success or failure of the process.

5.6. Challenges to reconciliation processes

The main challenge to reconciliation processes in the community as raised by the participants is the lack of political will on the part of the government. In most incidents of violence explained by the participants, the government (e.g. state security agents) has been at the core of advancing violence instead of bringing reconciliation. One of the government representatives mentioned that,

Reconciliation has not been skin deep; it has not gone deep enough to address the grievances of the victims. Current efforts of the government have rather reinforced the position of the perpetrators and the political decrees of the government have just bought time for the perpetrators to ignore the need to address the past (GV2, Harare).

Another government official asked, “Why did the government set up Chihambakwe and Dumbutshena commissions of inquiry and fail to make public their findings?” (GV3, Bulawayo).

All 14 participants in Nkayi indicated that the polarisation of the community by government sanctioned security agents, for example the PISI, instigates a sense of fear and suspicion in the community that affects their ability to co-exist. The research team had a firsthand experience of the negative impact of the police intelligence agent during their stay at the Nkayi District growth point. The fear and anxiety created by their presence was palpably evident. It was evident in the communities where the research team was operating that the people of Nkayi feel oppressed and helpless about the situation because they do not have the power to challenge the authority of police officials in their community. Laws of indemnity (referred to earlier) have exacerbated this sense of helplessness because it has prevented people from holding perpetrators of violence to account. In a few incidents, individuals in Zimbabwe have taken the initiative to hold perpetrators of violence to account. Reference was made to a man in the Midlands Province that refused to bury his son for three years until the perpetrators were brought to justice (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition 2011). This unique case was celebrated by the participants because of the bravery of the father of the deceased to fight for the justice of his son but was quickly suppressed due to the fears the participants have concerning following the example of this man. Chitiyo (2009) and Bryden and Olonisakin (2010) argue that restrictive policies and security agents that polarise conflict stricken communities can be addressed through security sector reform (SSR).

All CSO representatives in the study and two government officials mentioned that the signing of the GPA created a window of opportunity for the reconciliation process to commence, but the discussions leading to the agreement were marred by disagreements, which made it difficult for the Government of National Unity (GNU) to address issues such as past human rights violations (NANGO 2012). This has forced the country to harbour effects of violence further on, thereby denying conflicted communities the opportunity to address attitudes, behaviours and structure of the conflict.

Another challenge to reconciliation stems from stakeholders such as the CSOs. One CSO representative shared,

Humanitarian work appears to be a career path for many CSO representatives, particularly those receiving funding from the European donors. Some of the CSOs that claim to be doing peace-building projects in Matabeleland are based in Harare and

only come through to conduct workshops for short periods and do not have follow up programs (CS3, Bulawayo).

An explanation given by one of the CSO representatives based in Harare is that they have failed to establish their offices in Matabeleland, especially closer to the communities they ought to engage with because of a lack of resources and logistical constraints (CS10, Harare). The researcher witnessed the remoteness of the Nkayi community and lack of development, which makes it difficult to access some of the villages in the area. Sachikonye (2011) argues that the Zimbabwean political situation has attracted a lot of attention from the international community, which, in turn, has invited some actors to inject funds into the country to facilitate the democratic transition. As a result, humanitarian work has become a big injector of income for many households in Zimbabwe because the government has not been able to create employment to cater for the bulk of the population. He adds that many CSOs in the country run short-term projects with funds from donors and that often pushes some of them to fabricate issues in order to secure their income for a longer period.

One CSO representative whose organisation has been conducting trauma-healing programs in Lupane and Tsholotsho indicated that the lack of support from government is creating challenges for CSOs' engagement with communities. He said, "For the past 3 years our organisation has been stuck in a deadlock with a government official over the reburial of persons that died during the Gukurahundi massacres" (CS7, Bulawayo).

The participant stated that when facing resistance from the police, his organisation has adopted diplomacy as an approach to engaging with government authorities instead of fighting them. He also mentioned that the reason why some CSOs are always at loggerheads with the police is that they do not follow the appropriate procedures that need to be observed to implement their programs successfully (Mapfumo 2013, Sarkin 2008).

5.7. Future perspectives on a reconciled Zimbabwe

Participants were asked what their future aspirations concerning reconciliation were.

One of the academic experts stated:

The benchmark of reconciliation lies in the quality of life people have. If the structures and systems of the community remain oppressive and unresponsive to the socio-economic needs of the people then it remains a challenge for people to attain reconciliation. Community development ought to happen through the people, by the people and for the people (AC1, Harare).

Participant AC1 notes that reconciliation in Zimbabwe (including Matabeleland) relies on the efforts of the government to improve the standards of living for all citizens. Ndlovu and Dube (2013) support this view; they argue that if issues of underdevelopment in the Matabeleland region (including the Nkayi District) are not addressed, the community remains vulnerable to structural violence. Improved standards of living for Matabeleland people imply access to water, education, health care and industrialization, among others (NANGO 2012).

Some CSO representatives identified tolerance as an essential factor towards a reconciled Zimbabwe. One of the representatives stated,

People in Matabeleland have not been fighting since the end of Gukurahundi, mainly because the government would not want to be seen openly violating Ndebele people again. I believe that Ndebele people will not allow government to abuse its population again (CS5, Bulawayo).

This view resonates with participant CS3, “Reconciliation can only happen if people begin to embrace their cultural differences and accept diversity without putting geo-political tags, for example, Matabeleland, Mashonaland, Midlands or Manicaland” (CS3, Bulawayo). Participant CS1 added that, “Our distorted political administration and history of the country which needs to be demystified is stopping reconciliation from happening” (CS1, Bulawayo).

The above explanations reveal that participant CS1, CS3 and CS5 perceive that the process of making a reconciled Zimbabwe requires the communities to identify themselves as Zimbabweans. As indicated in Chapter 3, Mlambo (2013) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008) have expressed these sentiments. They argue that Zimbabwe is still in the process of becoming a nation-state. The notions of nationhood and identity among citizens needs therefore to be carefully constructed, taking to account the diverse cultures, races, beliefs and value systems all

individuals possess. Being able to embrace the social, political and economic dimensions that each individual brings to the community will ascertain the development of a reconciled citizenry (Mlambo 2013).

Another academic expert noted the ability of a community to deliberate issues peacefully as an indication of a reconciled country. He stated that, “The politics of reconciliation are parts of the negotiation processes that the community needs to come to a point of acknowledgement. Through opening of space for survivors to talk, the community will be able to work out change that works for its people” (AC2, Harare).

Reconciliation will most likely be attained when the government and community members work together to create an enabling environment that allows socio-political and economic development to prosper.

5.8. Conclusion

This chapter started by describing local interpretations of violence, including physical, cultural and structural violence. What was most apparent concerning these local interpretations of violence was that many actors are culpable for the incidents that have occurred in this community (government, ZIPRA dissidents, government security agents and ZANU-PF youth militia). Physical violence inflicted includes rape, torture, murder, destruction of property and humiliation. Cultural violence inflicted includes the use of Shona language to dominate other ethnic groups and structural violence has manifested as marginalisation of the community through lack of development.

The researcher described local perspectives on the effects of violence at the interpersonal, community and national levels. Noticeable effects of violence that emerge from their narrations of violence were that some people suffer from anxiety, fear and depression. Lack of development is destroying the social capital of the community as seen in the poor academic performance of scholars, political apathy and political intolerance.

The conceptualisations of reconciliation by the local community were explored and what emerged most prominently is the need for the Gukurahundi massacres to be acknowledged.

Addressing the causes and effects of the Gukurahundi era is the starting point for reconciling communities in Matabeleland (including the Nkayi District). The short-term aspects of reconciliation identified by the participants are acknowledgement, truth, genuine apology, and a space to talk which will bring recognition and closure to victims and survivors of Gukurahundi and the subsequent episodes of violence. The long-term aspects of reconciliation are compensation, justice, memorialisation and affirmative community development programs. These aspects will bring restoration of dignity to victims, social cohesion and social development, which paves way for transformation of attitudes, behaviours and structure of the conflict.

The researcher also discussed community awareness of reconciliation initiatives. What was most apparent concerning reconciliation initiatives in the community was that CSOs are facilitating pockets of reconciliation through programs such as trauma-healing and capacity building exercises, among others. Foreign aid organisations are facilitating reconciliation through affirmative community development projects that address issues of structural violence. Government bodies such as Impi, Jomic and ZHRC have engaged with some of the community members on matters of social injustices.

Challenges to reconciliation processes were explored and what was noteworthy is the lack of political will on the part of government to implement actions that can address the past social injustices. Many of the participants accused the government of using security agents to polarise the community, which in turn inhibits the progress of efforts made by CSOs and the free integration of the people.

The researcher then identified the future perspectives of a reconciled Zimbabwe. What stood out, was the building of a community that embraces cultural diversity, tolerant to competing political ideologies and committed to social development.

Violence has entrenched so many disparities in the socio-political and economic lives of the people in the Nkayi District. Even if the physical and structural effects of violence are not laid out in the open, the psychosocial impact of these encounters play a great role in the well-being and future of the community. Presently, the negative perceptions that survivors of Gukurahundi have of the government and the Shona population continue to be passed on to future generations. It is these perceptions that need to be attended to in order to address the underlying

causes of the anger, helplessness and suspicions that survivors hold. As indicated by the participants in the study, in order to understand these issues, the key is to give survivors the platform to be heard. The next chapter reflects on the above findings and discussions in earlier chapters in order to identify reconciliation processes that can address past social injustices in the Nkayi District and other similar communities in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

Reconciliation in Zimbabwe has become a contentious process and has been politicised at various levels. It has been politicised at the national level, resulting in ineffective national reconciliation organs, at the international level, with conflicting agendas from international and regional actors influencing how reconciliation unfolds, and at the community level. This research examined the complexity of reconciliation in Zimbabwe, looking at the various stakeholders that influence reconciliation processes in the country. Most debates about reconciliation have largely been emotive, such that the various political actors in the country have failed to agree on the processes (as explained in Chapters 3 and 5 through the example of the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration) that can be adopted to address past social injustices. As identified in Chapter 3, most of the literature on the politics of reconciliation in Zimbabwe has, on the one hand, the ruling government, which has been blamed for ignoring and avoiding addressing past social injustices for fear of being implicated (Mashingaidze 2010, Mbofana 2011). On the other hand, opposition parties and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are, seemingly, pushing an agenda for reconciliation processes to be adopted by the government, but in most cases, they raise divergent views of reconciliation that are influenced by competing factors (Saki & Katema 2011). This in turn has paved the way for the government to ignore and suppress efforts by these actors on reconciliation processes due to a lack of consensual understanding on who ought to be reconciled and how the procedures should occur.

In the first chapter, the research was introduced and contextualised in order to outline the scope and limits of the study. Chapter two explored the theoretical framework for the concept of reconciliation, which included Rosoux's (2008) model of reconciliation that was adopted for the study. The main purpose of this chapter was to situate the research within debates around the use of the concept of reconciliation in the global political community, as well as to identify the stakeholders involved in reconciliation processes. A literature review on the politicisation of reconciliation as it applies to Zimbabwe was covered in chapter three. This chapter examined the various forms of violence (physical, structural and cultural) that have occurred in Zimbabwe (including the Nkayi district) and identified reconciliation initiatives that have been employed by various stakeholders (e.g. CSOs, the government and the community of Nkayi) involved in

the country. In chapter four, the research explored the qualitative case study technique that was used for the study. This chapter described in detail the triangulation method that was employed by the researcher to conduct fieldwork research in Zimbabwe, highlighting the successes of the research, as well as the limitations. Chapter five presented the research findings from the data collected during fieldwork. In this chapter, the research extrapolated the perceptions on reconciliation of the community members of the Nkayi District and the various stakeholders involved, against the literature reviewed in chapter two and three.

This chapter provides a summary of how the research findings resonate with the conceptual and theoretical aspects of the study. It first examines the ways in which the research addressed the research problem and research objectives posed in chapter one. The chapter also evaluated and discussed the main findings of the research based on the previous chapters making inferences on how the literature on Zimbabwe, as well as the theoretical framework on reconciliation, relate to the results presented. The chapter concluded by synthesizing findings, discussions and recommendations of the study.

6.2. The politicisation of reconciliation in Nkayi

The research problem of the study was based on the quest to understand the contribution of CSOs in Zimbabwe to reconciliation at the community level. The research also sought to provide insight into how reconciliation processes in the country have been affected by the interactions of various stakeholders, such as the government, CSOs and the dynamics within the community itself. The driving research question for the study sought to determine the scope and limits of reconciliation in Matabeleland, particularly looking at the perceptions of the Shona-Ndebele people on the violence the region has encountered since independence. To answer this question the research had five objectives:

1. To determine the nature of violence the people of the Nkayi District have experienced.
2. To identify the way the government, CSOs and the communities within the Nkayi District perceive reconciliation.
3. To determine measures taken by the government to reconcile the people of Nkayi.
4. To identify ways in which CSOs have attempted to facilitate reconciliation in the Nkayi District.

5. To identify the factors that influenced the ability of CSOs to facilitate reconciliation within communities in the Nkayi District.

The research set out to examine scholarly debates in Zimbabwe that are advocating for the ‘free’ engagement of CSOs in reconciliation processes because of their potential to bridge the gap between a national elite-level discourse on reconciliation and local understandings (Mbofana 2011, Sachikonye 2011, Saki & Katema 2011). In particular, it was concerned with understanding the contribution of CSOs to reconciliation in the Nkayi District, as well as to identify the challenges they incur.

The research focused on reconciliation processes at the community level drawing from the argument raised by Nordquist (2006) that during a conflict situation, human loss, suffering, physical, and environmental destruction is greatest endured by the civilians and not government officials or their security agents. As described in Chapter 2 and 3, Mbofana (2011) and Sarkin (2008) substantiate that violence occurs within a particular location that is composed of a population who will continue to bear the effects of the violence if it is not addressed by processes that curb the perpetuation of violence at the locality of the incidents. These encounters therefore ought to be addressed and integrated in the peace processes and peace building initiatives that are adopted to resolve the conflict. This research was situated in Zimbabwe’s long history of violent conflict spreading over decades, including the independence struggle from 1965-1979, the Gukurahundi massacres from 1980-1987, and the post-1998 electoral violence, which entrenched divisions in various communities around the country.

Although the study could not offer a clear answer to the question of when it is the appropriate time to address past social injustices, it did confirm that ignoring the past would only perpetuate the cycle of violence that remains prevalent in Zimbabwe particularly during election periods (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007). A prominent phenomenon that emerged from the research is that the constant effect of violence in Zimbabwe over the past three decades is that the incidents have dehumanised the victims, perpetrators, families, communities and even outsiders who have heard narrations of the incidents (Sachikonye 2011). The study noted that it is unlikely for any person to be involved in or witness such atrocities and remain the same. This understanding is derived from views of scholars such as Machakanja (2010), Mbofana (2011), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) and Sachikonye (2011) who concede that both the attitudes, behaviours and the structure of communities in Zimbabwe have been affected by the past social injustices.

The complexity of reconciliation in Zimbabwe is rooted in the lack of consensual understanding among stakeholders on who ought to be reconciled and how the process should occur. The government has taken an elitist approach to address social injustices of the past, using mechanisms such as ONHRI, and the Dumbutshena and Chihambakwe Commissions of Inquiry, which all failed. The failure of government initiatives has left many human rights activists in the country advocating on behalf of the people of Matabeleland (including the Nkayi District), in particular, pushing the government to take responsibility for the past incidents (CCJPZ 1997, Machakanja 2010, Msindo 2012, Sachikonye 2011, *The Standard*).

Some CSOs have stepped in offering social functions and services such as trauma counselling, rehabilitation, facilitating dialogue between warring parties, provision of food and shelter, and capacity building exercises, which are duties that have been neglected by the government, rendering these actors an essential entity in reconciling communities in the region. The research noted that there has been a decrease in incidents and casualties associated with physical violence in the region since the end of the Gukurahundi. This finding confirms discussions mentioned in the literature review that the decline in incidents of physical violence in this region could be attributed to the rapid increase of CSOs post-1998 era, which coincided with the emergence of the opposition party MDC and the huge injection of funds by the US and European countries pushing for the regime change agenda. Gova and Ndlovu (2013) and Ngwenya (2012), as shown in Chapter 3, concede that CSOs working in Zimbabwe have become influential actors in the transition of the country because of the civic claims they hold. They have access to local and international media, they potentially possess high profiles and they bring forth their agendas in ways that draw the attention of the global community (Seckinelgin 2002). As a result, they have become the main voice of the voiceless and important agents that facilitate the creation of spaces in communities for the attitude and behaviour of people to be transformed. Matar (2013) and Opoku-Mensah (2008) emphasize that their ability to articulate the interests of disadvantaged groups clearly, persuasively and confidently to those in power often fuels conflicts with the government. This is often revealed when CSOs seem to be challenging the actions of national governments and national governments, in turn, perceive them as political agents of foreign governments (e.g. the European bloc and US in the case of Zimbabwe). This has put many CSOs that receive foreign aid in opposition to the government on suspicions of being agents conveying political agendas that sought to undermine the legitimacy of the ruling government.

The government has implemented tight policies and security measures that limit the ability of CSOs to engage with the local communities freely. Examples are the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), the Access to Information Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Act, which, among other things, prohibit civilians to deliberate on political issues in the country freely, and these restrictions have left many CSOs fighting for their existence (Sachikonye 2011, Mbofana 2011). During the research, the research team witnessed the polarisation of the community due the above government policies and security measures. As indicated in Chapter 4, the research team encountered the Police Internal Security and Intelligence (PISI) at the Nkayi District police station. Previous research in the region by CCJPZ (1997) and Vambe (2012) also noted that there is still a lot of censorship around gathering information and conducting public gatherings in Zimbabwe due to government policies that make it difficult for the population to engage freely for fear of being apprehended by the government security agents. These repressive policies and security measures form part of the systemic agents of structural violence in the community of Nkayi. Bryden and Olonisakin (2010) and Chitiyo (2011) maintain that reconciliation efforts of CSOs can become more effective if the government considers conducting security sector reform to address issues of police interference and restrictive policies.

Reconciliation in the Nkayi District begins, this research argues, when the government acknowledges all incidents of violence that occurred and makes deliberate efforts to harmonise relations between previously contending parties. The research participants identified that reconciliation efforts in the interim should include truth-telling, genuine apology and the creation of a safe environment for dialogue about the past. The long term and on-going processes of reconciliation should include compensation, justice, memorialisation and affirmative community development programs. Both the short term and long terms aspects of reconciliation identified by the participants form the basis of what constitutes reconciliation and which actions can lead the community towards reconciliation. The results of the study suggest that a holistic approach is, therefore, needed to resolve the politics of reconciliation in Zimbabwe in order to address the past social injustices. The following sections of this chapter reflect on the theoretical framework of reconciliation as it was applied to the study giving an overview of the research findings and extrapolating recommendations for future studies.

6.3. Reflections on the theoretical framework of reconciliation as it applied to the study

This research made use of Rosoux's (2008) framework of reconciliation, which identified three approaches, namely, structuralist, spiritualist and psychosocial. The structuralist approach (minimalist view) mainly draws from international law and understands reconciliation as a collective activity, which often takes the form of national or international legal proceedings that address past human rights violations by using truth commissions, international courts or national tribunals (Lederach 1997, Van der Merwe 1999, Villa-Vicencio 2003). The spiritual approach (maximalist view) is grounded in theology and it understands reconciliation as healing broken relationships through forgiveness (Bloomfield 2006, Huyse & Salter 2008). The psychosocial approach, which mainly draws from sociology, psychology and anthropology, is the median between the two extremes. In this approach, reconciliation focuses on the rebuilding of relationships among divided communities through engaging divided parties in dialogue processes that allow them to familiarise themselves with the dynamics of the conflict and envision the future they want for their community (Eppel & Raftopoulos 2008, Sarkin 2008). Reconciliation as a dialogue process allows for communities in transition to transform their attitudes, conflict structure and behaviour such that in the face of conflict, they resolve it by non-violent actions (Rosoux 2008).

The psychosocial approach was the central theoretical framework of the research because it enabled the researcher to test the hypothesis concerning reconciliation in Matabeleland (including the Nkayi District), particularly aspects of the local community that influence perceptions of the Shona-Ndebele people on the violence the region has encountered in the past three decades. It allowed the research to look at the conditions necessary for fostering reconciliation, as well as the complex ways in which reconciliation impacts transitional politics (Eppel & Raftopoulos 2008, Sarkin 2008, Villa-Vicencio 2003). It was not only important for the research to understand how people in the district could commit horrendous acts against each other but also paramount for the study to identify ways that will aid these communities to construct new ways of transforming violence into peace, trauma into survival, and division into co-existence (Sarkin 2008). As indicated in Chapter 2, Brounéus' (2003) definition of reconciliation informed the central theoretical framework of this study, with its emphasis on the importance of acknowledging the past, and with regards to aspects of reconciliation that address the dynamics of a conflict (attitudes, behaviours of people and conflict structure), as well as nurture sustainable relations in conflicted communities. She defines reconciliation as “a

societal process that involves the mutual acknowledgement of past sufferings and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviour into constructive relationships towards sustainable peace.” Her definition of reconciliation, which involves behaviours, attitudes and the conflict structure benefit the psychosocial approach. Sarkin (2008) substantiates Brounéus’ view by arguing that reconciliation in simple terms describes a process of coming together and formulating methods and practices that make way for violence stricken communities to return to a ‘modicum of normality’ (a position of sustainable peace and co-existence) even though its inhabitants might have been subjected to inhumane crimes.

The psychosocial approach to reconciliation became the central theoretical framework of this research because its strategy for reconciliation (dialogue) promotes the involvement of indigenous initiatives in which conflicting parties can come together and work towards a common understanding that promotes their co-existence (Brounéus 2003, Ericson 2001, Villa-Vicencio 2003). As mentioned in Chapter 2, dialogue can occur in two forms, namely, as a verbal exchange between two or more people and as an act whereby conversation occurs through other people. Dialogue as an act involves conversations presented through artistic performances that enhance social learning, education and exchange of ideas (Ellinor & Gerard 1998). Through dialogue, the psychosocial approach offers communities in transition the opportunity to deliberate the process from the onset and ultimately shape the conditions for reconciliation. Dialogue allows support to be drawn towards a shared enterprise that cultivates the ability for community members to coexist as heterogeneous constituents (Villa Vicencio 2012). Eppel and Raftopoulos (2008) add that a change in negative attitudes and destructive behaviours is often attainable when people get the opportunity to engage with one another in a safe environment that allows them to talk with one another without fear and prejudice.

Lederach (1997) adds that dialogue can enable communities in transition to start the process of reconciliation because it offers people the opportunity to create social spaces that can accommodate both victims and perpetrators as entities to a dispute. It also facilitates the acknowledgement of each party’s role in the dispute through validation of experienced pain or loss and this enables people to concentrate on positive attitudes and behaviours that can foster mutual relations forged from understanding their ability to coexist (Anderlini *et al.* 2004, Brounéus 2008, Lederach 1997, Villa-Vicencio 2003).

Dialogue also provides a platform for transforming the traditional relationship between communities and their government in responding to violence. Rosoux (2008) argues for the

psychosocial approach because she believes that reconciliation is not about restoring the community to a state of normalcy that existed before the conflict, but reconstructing new relationships among the community in a way that allows for everyone to move forward together (co-exist). The rehabilitation of the community commences through people opening up and learning about their past in an environment that enables them to build a new history that complements their experiences. Ericson (2001) argues that the main goal of any reconciliation process is to establish healthy relationships and sustainable peace between divided communities. Bloomfield (2006) and Villa-Vicencio (2003) substantiated that reconciliation is an evolving process rather than an end goal. The parties do not merely discuss their grievances against each other, instead they also engage in self-reflection on their role and behaviour in the conflict, which helps them to envisage a shared future. Reconciliation is, thus, a process through which communities can move away from a divided past towards a shared future (Assefa 1999, Long & Brecke 2003, Van der Merwe 1999).

Through a case study of the Nkayi District, the researcher gained a multi-perspective view on reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe by gathering the views of the community members and various stakeholders that have engaged in reconciliation activities in Matabeleland region. The main finding of this research is that the systematic marginalisation of the Matabeleland region and the fact that Gukurahundi was never dealt with by the government, undermines any attempts at reconciliation in this region. If reconciliation is primarily about acknowledging the past, then the fact that the past has not been acknowledged in Zimbabwe undermines the possibility of reconciliation. This view derives from the discussions covered in Chapter 5, which presented findings on local perspectives of violence, local perspectives of the effects of violence, conceptualisation of reconciliation by the local community, community awareness of reconciliation initiatives, challenges to reconciliation processes and the future perspectives on a reconciled Zimbabwe.

The research revealed that the community of Nkayi has been subjected to three forms of violence, namely, physical, structural and cultural violence, in the past three decades. The government, ZIPRA ex-combatants, government security agents and ZANU-PF youth militia are the actors mainly culpable for incidents of violence that have occurred in this community. The main incidents of physical violence that were shared by the participants are associated with the Gukurahundi era (1980-1987) and a few of them occurred after the year 2000. Acts of physical violence that the community has endured include rape, murder, beatings, destruction of

property, displacements and humiliation. Noticeable effects of physical violence that emerged from narratives of participants were that some of the people suffer from anxiety, fear and depression. As shown in Chapter 3, the incidents of physical violence narrated by the research participants relate to some of the findings reported by the CCJPZ (1997) report and NANGO (2012).

Structural and cultural violence remains a prevalent issue in the Nkayi community. The people of Nkayi indicated that they have been culturally alienated and marginalised by the government since the Gukurahundi era. The Shona language has become a source of cultural violence because it was the main symbol of culture used by government security agents during the Gukurahundi era to differentiate affiliates of the so-called ZIPRA dissidents among the population. This is in concurrence with the assertion made in the literature review (Chapter 3 [Section 4]) that the actions of the government during the Gukurahundi era and subsequent unequal distribution of resources to the region remain questionable (Eppel 2009, Msindo 2012, Ndlovu & Dube 2013). The study confirmed that Zimbabwe (including the Nkayi District) has failed to build itself into a harmonious country with a common national identity because of the government propagated 'patriotic history' (Mlambo 2013). The shaping of the history of Zimbabwe by the government around Shona patriotism has inhibited the development of a reconciled population of Zimbabwe. Scholars such as Eppel (2009), Machakanja (2010) and Sachikonye (2011) concede that government's lack of political will to address underlying issues that trigger divisions in this region furthers cultural and structural violence.

As mentioned in the discussions on reconciliation in Chapter 2, the study illustrated some of the disconnections between the theory and practice of reconciliation as a peace-building mechanism. Implicit in the legal design of a reconciliation processes (as discussed in section 3.1) is the assertion that reconciliation implies the pursuit of justice and compensation for victims of war, violence or human rights abuses (Anderlini *et al.* 2004). In relation to the Gukurahundi massacres, a few of the research participants indicated that the government should make an effort to make perpetrators of violence accountable but they opted for a restorative justice instead of retributive justice approach mainly because they argued that there is no amount of punishment that can be equated to the suffering they endured. However, justice for many victims has been inhibited because of amnesty provisions, for example, the Clemency Orders of 1980, 1988 and 2000 (CCJPZ 1997, Eppel 2008, Sachikonye 2011).

As illustrated in Chapter 2, Rosoux (2008) and Villa-Vicencio (2011) point out that truth and justice is difficult to attain when people are in conflict because the trade-off for justice can manipulate individual accounts of truth about the past. As a result, truth-recovery can be compromised when conflicting parties manipulate their encounters to evade harsh sentencing. Machakanja (2010), Mashingaidze (2010) and Sachikonye (2011) added that the government has avoided calls to address the past through the justice system in order to protect some officials from being implicated by the process. The study concurred that unless the government makes a genuine effort to address the causes and effects of Gukurahundi, the negative attitudes, destructive behaviours and structure of conflict in the Matabeleland region (including the Nkayi) will remain unchanged (Ndlovu & Dube 2012, Sachikonye 2011). In addition, the study identified that traditional practices such as *kuripira mhosva* (offering an appeasement) and *kuenda kudare* (submitting to the chief's court) could be pursued to facilitate justice and reconciliation at the community level. Failing to address the attitudes, behaviours and conflict structure exposes the community to a cycle of violence and intolerance.

Reconciliation is essential in Nkayi District in order to prevent the recurrence of violence. Whilst at national level reconciliation initiatives by the government, such as political agreements (e.g. Unity Accord 1987, Global Political Agreement-GPA 2008), the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) and the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) have occurred, the study has shown that the lack of political will, particularly by ZANU PF officials, to uphold the process has caused the initiatives to fail. The failure of these bodies to meet the expectations of the community concerning processes for reconciliation confirms the argument by Schaap (2008) that was described in Chapter 2. He argued that some reconciliation processes fail because they are established on the assumption that political leaders are custodians of their communities and they will adopt actions that fulfil the expectations of the grassroots. This is further supported by the views of Machakanja (2010) and Sachikonye (2011), as discussed in Chapter 4, that reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe have become ceremonial projects used to achieve political gains. As a result, other stakeholders particularly community leaders and CSOs are playing a leading role in directing reconciliation efforts in the Nkayi community. CSOs are providing services such as counselling, capacity building training, rehabilitation, advocacy and donor aid. Community leaders are providing community members a platform to deliberate on conflicting issues in a safe environment through *dare*, for example, gathering at the compound of a traditional leader for deliberations. The study identified that traditional leaders are a key player to reconciliation when dealing with

rural communities in Zimbabwe, but the literature does not account much for the contributions made by such community leaders. Mapfumo (2013), Sarkin (2008) and Tindana *et al.* (2006), as discussed in Chapter 5, point out that when pursuing peace-building in rural communities (in this case Nkayi District) adapting the local practices enables the community in transition to take ownership of the process, because traditional leaders have influences on different aspects of the lives of people in the community.

The study showed that various processes can be followed in order for the community of Nkayi to be reconciled. Acknowledgement of the past is essential because it offers victims recognition of the suffering they incurred. Brounéus' (2003) definition of reconciliation also identified acknowledgement as a key aspect of reconciliation. In the case of the Nkayi community, there is a need for authorities and perpetrators to acknowledge past wrongs and those who committed them to take responsibility. Some practical ways the past can be acknowledged is through reburials, memorial sites, histograms and museums for people to celebrate their history and collectively honour the past.

Truth-telling is also important for reconciliation to occur and it can serve two purposes, namely, facilitate reconciliation and form an integral part of reconciliation. As shown in Chapter 2, Rosoux (2008) indicated that truth-telling is a vital aspect in reconciliation because it allows the community opportunity to debunk their memories of the past. Brounéus (2008) argued that truth telling is therapeutic for individuals and the community, which therefore facilitates healing and reconciliation. Villa-Vicencio (2007) concedes that any mechanism that seeks to provide reconciliation should have an understanding of the past because truth-telling can assist in creating the space for open dialogue on issues, after which communities can acknowledge or deny realities of what occurred.

Most importantly, reconciliation entails improving the standards of living of the community in transition. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Anderlini *et al.* (2004) identified that the symbolic value of reconciliation is correcting the socio-economic imbalances that are created by the effects of violence. Lack of development is destroying the social capital of the community as seen in the poor academic performance of scholars, political apathy and political intolerance. The study concluded that the community might not return to a 'modicum of normality' in isolation from resolving socio-economic problems, strengthening accountability and transparency.

Returning to the question posed at the beginning of the study, the highly politicised nature of relations between the government, CSOs and the community of Nkayi, might be compromising avenues for reconciliation. The major challenge in achieving reconciliation in the Nkayi District is the lack of an enabling environment due to polarisation of the community by government security agents, lack of political will by political actors, shortage of resources and lack of sustainable undertakings by CSOs. Machakanja (2010) argues that reconciliation cannot occur in Zimbabwe (Nkayi District included) if there is no legal tender that binds the voices and intentions of the government. In addition, with the right support from both CSOs and the national government, the efforts of the local community leaders can be a basis for reconciliation to occur. Thus, building a culturally and politically tolerant environment might incline the district to work together to improve the livelihood of its people and resistant to undue political interferences.

6.4. Recommendations for reconciliation in the Nkayi District and Zimbabwe

The government needs to acknowledge the Gukurahundi massacres. Truth-telling initiatives may open significant discursive space for the Nkayi community to share their experiences and transform negative attitudes and destructive behaviours. They are vehicles through which a sense of belonging may be established especially for those previously marginalised (in this case the volatile relations between Shona and non-Shona speaking people in the Matabeleland region), in turn giving them the opportunity to reconfigure their perceptions of identity and power relations.

In order to attain reconciliation in the Nkayi district, it is important for the government to create an enabling environment that allows for the free engagement of all stakeholders in the community. In this regard, there is a need for harmonised implementation of public policy and security sector reform (SSR) of the security forces in Zimbabwe so that they serve the population in a civilised and non-partisan way.

In addition, there is a need for the government to take a more proactive stance on reconciliation processes in the country. This can occur through designing legislature on reconciliation, strengthening, and supporting the current initiatives such as Impi, ZHRC and the NPRC. The government can also capitalise on the expertise and manoeuvring abilities of CSOs by engaging

with them more in their processes and possibly collaborating on initiatives that address issues perpetuating violence at the community level.

More so, the government and CSOs can both capitalise on the experience of traditional leaders in managing conflicts and rebuilding relations among their community members. Learning from the personal, individual and communal processes of reconciliation may help peace-building actors to develop processes that complement top-down reconciliation projects. Thus, with a more ‘culturally sensitive’ systematic approach that incorporates activities of the local community, reconciliation will most likely occur from the buy-in of the process by the community.

Reconciliation efforts by the government should give attention to social and economic justice. The findings of the research showed that this is perhaps the most urgent issue for community members. Efforts to address structural violence will be most effective if conceptualised as rights-based projects aimed at enhancing the socio-economic rights of the community members. CSOs, the government and international actors can enhance development in the Nkayi District by funding, training and facilitating community development projects. This will ensure that community members will stop being passive recipients of initiatives and become active participants.

6.5. Conclusion

The main finding of this research is that the systematic marginalisation of the Matabeleland region and the fact that Gukurahundi was never dealt with by the government, undermines any attempts at reconciliation in this region. A prominent phenomenon that also emerged from the research is that violence in the Nkayi District over the past three decades has dehumanised the victims, families, communities and even outsiders who have heard narrations of the incidents. In addition, the research noted that there has been a decrease in incidents and casualties associated with physical violence in the region since the end of the Gukurahundi, but structural and cultural violence remain the main agents for tensions between the Shona and Ndebele speaking population in the district.

This study revealed that the complexity of reconciliation in the Nkayi District is rooted in the lack of a consensual understanding among stakeholders on who ought to be reconciled and how the process should occur. This complexity is enhanced by the lack of an enabling environment due to polarisation of the community by government security agents, a lack of political will by political actors, shortage of resources and a lack of common voice in the undertakings by CSOs. These challenges made it difficult for the study to ascertain when would be the appropriate time to address past social injustices and how they should be addressed, but what is clear is that ignoring the past will only perpetuate the cycle of violence that remains prevalent in the community of Nkayi. Reconciliation in the Nkayi District begins when the government acknowledges all incidents of violence that occurred and makes deliberate efforts to harmonise relations between previously contending parties. Reconciliation efforts in the interim should include truth-telling, genuine apology and creation of safe environment for dialogue about the past. The long term and on-going processes of reconciliation should include compensations, justice, memorialisation and affirmative community development programs. A holistic approach is therefore needed to resolve the politics of reconciliation in Zimbabwe in order to address the past social injustices. The initiatives of government, CSOs and international actors are essential to the progress of reconciliation in the Nkayi District. However, there is a need for these stakeholders to work in harmony and to develop culturally sensitive programs that have the buy-in of the local community.

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8. APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HOUSEHOLD INDIVIDUALS

Household Interviews

The main aim of this research is to examine the attempts to facilitate reconciliation by CSOs in the context of Zimbabwe's episodes of political violence and how the reconciliation process is affected by the interactions of various agents/stakeholders, such as the government, aid organizations, the media and the dynamics within the community itself. A lesser aim is to explore possible methods to facilitate reconciliation within communities in the Nkayi district.

The specific interview questions are:

- i. Did your community encounter political violence in the past three decades?
- ii. What effect has political violence had on your interaction with members of your community?
- iii. What is your understanding of reconciliation?
- iv. Are you aware of reconciliation initiatives by the following entities;
 - a. The government?
 - b. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)?
- v. In your view, what contribution do the above make to address divisions and establish sustainable peace within your community and the Nkayi district?
- vi. What challenges do these bring to your community and the district as a whole?
- vii. What methods of reconciliation would you suggest for your community and the district at large?

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CSO REPRESENTATIVES

Interview for CSO representatives

The main aim of this research is to examine the attempts to facilitate reconciliation by CSOs in the context of Zimbabwe's episodes of political violence and how the reconciliation process is affected by the interactions of various agents/stakeholders, such as the government, aid organizations, the media and the dynamics within the community itself. A lesser aim is to explore possible methods to facilitate reconciliation within communities in the Nkayi district.

The specific interview questions are:

- i. In your view, how has the Nkayi district been exposed to political violence in the past three decades?
- ii. What effect has political violence had on;
 - a. The attitudes of members of communities in the district?
 - b. The behaviour of members of communities in the district?
 - c. The conflict structure within the district over time?
- iii. How do you think the above effects can be addressed?
- iv. What is your understanding of reconciliation?
- v. Do you engage in any reconciliation initiatives?
- vi. In your view, what contribution do you make to build sustainable peace and instil respect for co-existence among divided communities in the Nkayi district?
- vii. What challenges do you face in engaging in reconciliation processes within the district?
- viii. What do you suggest to address these challenges?
- ix. Are you aware of reconciliation initiatives of the following entities;
 - a. The government?
 - b. Other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)?
 - c. Donor agencies?
 - d. Media (including social media)?
- x. What methods of reconciliation would you suggest to improve the state of divisions in Nkayi district?

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Interview for government representatives

The main aim of this research is to examine the attempts to facilitate reconciliation by CSOs in the context of Zimbabwe's episodes of political violence and how the reconciliation process is affected by the interactions of various agents/stakeholders, such as the government, aid organizations, the media and the dynamics within the community itself. A lesser aim is to explore possible methods to facilitate reconciliation within communities in the Nkayi district.

The specific interview questions are:

- i. In your view, how has the Nkayi district been exposed to political violence in the past three decades?
- ii. What effect has political violence had on;
 - a. The attitudes of members of communities in the district?
 - b. The behaviour of members of communities in the district?
 - c. The conflict structure within the district over time?
- iii. How do you think the above effects can be addressed?
- iv. What is your understanding of reconciliation?
- v. Do you engage in any reconciliation initiatives?
- vi. In your view, what contribution do you make to build sustainable peace and instil respect for co-existence among divided communities in the Nkayi district?
- vii. What challenges do you face in engaging in reconciliation processes within the district?
- viii. What do you suggest to address these challenges?
- ix. Are you aware of reconciliation initiatives of the following entities;
 - a. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)?
 - b. Donor agencies?
 - c. Media (including social media)?
- x. What methods of reconciliation would you suggest to improve the state of divisions in the Nkayi district and other districts around the country with similar circumstances?

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ACADEMIC EXPERTS

Interview for Academic Experts

The main aim of this research is to examine the attempts to facilitate reconciliation by CSOs in the context of Zimbabwe's episodes of political violence and how the reconciliation process is affected by the interactions of various agents/stakeholders, such as the government, aid organisations, the media and the dynamics within the community itself. A lesser aim is to explore possible methods to facilitate reconciliation within communities in the Nkayi District.

The specific interview questions are:

- i. In your view, how has the Matabeleland region (including the Nkayi District) been exposed to political violence in the past three decades?
- ii. What effect has political violence had on;
 - a. The attitudes of members of communities in the Matabeleland region?
 - b. The behaviour of members of communities in the Matabeleland region?
 - c. The conflict structure within the Matabeleland region over time?
- iii. How do you think the above effects can be addressed?
- iv. What is your understanding of reconciliation?
- v. Do you engage in any reconciliation initiatives?
- vi. In your view, what contribution do you make to build sustainable peace and instil respect for co-existence among divided communities in the Matabeleland region?
- vii. What challenges do you face in engaging in reconciliation processes within the Matabeleland region?
- viii. What do you suggest to address these challenges?
- ix. Are you aware of reconciliation initiatives of the following entities;
 - a. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)?
 - b. The government?
 - c. Donor agencies?
 - d. Media (including social media)?
- x. What methods of reconciliation would you suggest to improve the state of divisions in the Matabeleland region and other provinces around the country with similar circumstances?

APPENDIX 5: GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The main aim of this research is to examine the attempts to facilitate reconciliation by CSOs in the context of Zimbabwe's episodes of political violence and how the reconciliation process is affected by the interactions of various agents/stakeholders, such as the government, aid organisations, the media and the dynamics within the community itself. A lesser aim is to explore possible methods to facilitate reconciliation within communities in the Nkayi District.

The specific focus group discussions questions are:

- i. What is your understanding of reconciliation?
- ii. Do you engage in any reconciliation initiatives?
- iii. In your view, what contribution do you make to build sustainable peace and instil respect for co-existence among divided communities in the Nkayi District?
- iv. What challenges do you face in engaging in reconciliation processes within the region?
- v. What do you suggest to address these challenges?
- vi. Are you aware of reconciliation initiatives of the following entities;
 - a. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)?
 - b. The government?
 - c. Donor agencies?
 - d. Media (including social media)?
- vii. What methods of reconciliation would you suggest to improve the state of divisions in the Nkayi District and other districts around the country with similar circumstances?

APPENDIX 6: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
Research Ethics Committee

6 December 2013

Dear Ms Wielenga

Project: The politicization of reconciliation in Zimbabwe: a case study of the Nkayi district
Researcher: R Murambadoro
Supervisor: Ms C Wielenga
Department: Political Science
Reference numbers: 28264402

I am pleased to be able to tell you that the above application was **approved** by the **Research Ethics Committee** on 5 December 2013. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

The Committee requests you to convey this approval to the researcher.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

Prof Karen Harris
Acting Chair: Postgraduate Committee &
Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail:Karen.harris@up.ac.za

APPENDIX 7: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

Correspondence should not
Be addressed to individuals

Reference:



Telephone: 09-67261-3
Fax 09-65758

Ministry of Local Government
Rural & Urban Development
P.O. Box 1496
BULAWAYO

7 April 2014

The District Administrator
Nkayi

**Ref: PERMISSION FOR MISS R.MURAMBADORO MASTERS STUDENT TO
CARRY OUT A THESIS RESEARCH FROM UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
SOUTH AFRICA IN NKAYI DISTRICT.**

The above subject matter refers

Please be informed that the Provincial Administrator for Mat North Province has granted permission to Miss R. Murambadoro from the University of Pretoria South Africa to carry out a thesis research in Nkayi district.

The thesis research is a partial fulfilment of her Masters studies at the above mentioned University and her thesis research is on ;Politicization of reconciliation process in Zimbabwe, case study of Nkayi district.

Please take note that the information gathered from the research will be used solely for academic purpose and participants will partake voluntarily.

May your good office assist Miss Murambadoro with any information she may request in order to carry out her research.

D.Parenda
For Provincial Administrator
Mat North Province



Please assist
the team.

[Handwritten signature]
D.A.

APPENDIX 8: INTRODUCTION LETTER



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Dept. of Political Sciences
Humanities Building 21
<http://www.up.ac.za/>
Tel.: +27 12 420 2464

25 March 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that Miss Ruth Ratidzai Murambadoro, MA student in the Department of Political Sciences, at the University of Pretoria (South Africa) will be conducting her thesis research on reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe in partial fulfilment of her Masters studies. The research project she will be conducting her thesis on is: The politicization of reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe. Her case study will be the Nkayi district in Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe.

Miss Murambadoro accordingly will be conducting a month-long fieldwork survey in April in the Nkayi district and data will be gathered through individual interviews and focus groups with community members, as well as Civil Society Organisations and government officials that have worked on transformation issues in Zimbabwe. She will be accompanied by a translator who will be able to assist in communicating to the respondents. All information gathered will be used solely for academic purpose and participants will participate voluntarily.

Miss Murambadoro will provide you, upon request, with any additional information on the research project and answer any questions about her studies, research methods and herself. Respondents are welcome to request a copy of the research and she is willing to make suggested changes to those parts that involve your contribution until her research is submitted to the University of Pretoria for examination. Feel free to contact Miss Murambadoro or her supervisor Dr Wielenga on the provided contact details.

We will be grateful for your kind assistance in facilitating her field work and data collection tasks while in the country. Thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Cori Wielenga

Department of Political Sciences

APPENDIX 9: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT (ENGLISH VERSION)



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Dept. of Political Sciences
Humanities Building 21
<http://www.up.ac.za/>
Tel.: +27 12 420 2464

March 2014

RESEARCH PROJECT: *The politicisation of reconciliation in Zimbabwe: A case study of the Nkayi district.*

The main aim of this research is to examine the attempts to facilitate reconciliation by CSOs in the context of Zimbabwe's episodes of political violence and how the reconciliation process is affected by the interactions of various agents/stakeholders, such as the government, aid organisations, the media and the dynamics within the community itself. A lesser aim is to explore possible methods to facilitate reconciliation within communities in the Nkayi district.

The specific research objectives ensuing from this broad aim are:

- Determine the nature of violence the people of the Nkayi district have experienced.
- Identify the way the government, CSOs, the media, aid organisations and the communities within the Nkayi district perceive reconciliation.
- Identify the measures taken by the government to reconcile the people of Nkayi.
- Identify the ways in which CSOs have attempted to facilitate reconciliation in the Nkayi district.
- Identify the factors that have impacted on the ability of CSOs to facilitate reconciliation within communities in the Nkayi district.

Data for this research will be obtained through a month-long fieldwork survey in the Nkayi district. The data will be gathered using qualitative case-study research techniques. A triangulation approach will be adopted for this research (validating data through cross reference from two or more sources) in the form of secondary material (macro level), interviews and focus groups (micro level). Audio devices will also be used to enhance data capturing as well as cross examination of data at later stages of the research. A proposed timeline for the research is as follows: Literature study (October 2013-March 2014), fieldwork research (April 2014) and writing of the thesis and completion (May-September 2014).

My name is Ruth R Murambadoro, I am a postgraduate student (nr. 28264402, MA Political Science) in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria and I am conducting field research on the above topic in Nkayi district (Zimbabwe). Permission to conduct the field research has been granted by the University of Pretoria and the **Ministry of Local Government, Rural & Urban Development, Zimbabwe**.

My research findings will eventually appear in my dissertation and in journal articles.

Will you please participate in my research project by joining in the discussions and interviews?

I will do my utmost to ensure your confidentiality in all my written reports by using either code names or pseudonyms. I do not expect you to divulge any information that might compromise you or your organisation in any way. All information will be treated as confidential and you may withdraw from discussions or interviews at any time without any consequences. My aim, objectives and research methods are summarized above. I will provide you, upon request, with any additional information on my research project and answer any questions about my studies, my research methods, and myself. You are welcome to request a copy of my research and I am willing to make suggested changes to those parts that involve your contribution until my research is submitted to the department for examination. All the information gathered will be stored safely at the University of Pretoria, Department of Political Sciences for a minimum of 15 years.

You may also contact me at the following telephone number: 0764701200. My current supervisors are Dr C Wielenga and Prof K Miti. Dr Wielenga is a Post-doctoral Fellow in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria and she may be contacted via telephone (+27 12 420 4486) or e-mail cori.wielenga@up.ac.za. Prof K Miti is a professor in the same department and he may be contacted via telephone (+27 12 4204911) or e-mail katabaro.miti@up.ac.za.

I, the undersigned, have read the above and I understand the nature and objectives of the research

Project of _____ as well as my potential role in it and I understand that the research findings will eventually be placed in the public domain. I voluntarily consent to participate in all discussions, to give my expert opinion and to provide details about my life history, keeping in mind that I have the right to withdraw from the project at any stage.

I also grant the researcher the right to use my contribution to the research project in completing this project as well as other projects that may emerge from it in future.

Full name of participant	Signature of the researcher	Signature of the participant	Date