

**TITLE: Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle Era Conflicts and the Pitfalls of Reconciliation after Independence: A Case Study of Bikita District 1976-2013.**

**By**

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**A Thesis submitted to the Midlands State University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.**

**Faculty of Arts**

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**Declaration**

I Dorothy Goredema, hereby declare that this thesis for the Doctor of Philosophy in History at the Midlands State University, hereby submitted by me, has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other institution, and that this is my work in design and execution, and all reference materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

.....  
Signature Date

I hereby certify that the above statement is correct.

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**Dedication**

To whom that pursues peace and reconciliation.

## Abstract

This study interrogates the dynamics of conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe using Bikita as a case study. It identifies and critiques state driven approaches used by the Zimbabwean government such as blanket amnesties, deliberate amnesia and presidential pardons among others, to promote healing and reconciliation in the aftermath of the 1970s liberation war and in the post-independence electoral violence. My central argument is that state-driven approaches alone have not provide sustainable solutions to challenges facing communities emerging from violent conflict unless they are co-ordinated and harmonized with indigenous approaches. Bikita demonstrated that conflict destroys physical property as well as the social, emotional and psychological capital leaving victims insecure and traumatized. In cases such as these, state-driven approaches alone are inadequate to heal and reconcile conflicting parties. They lack the necessary mechanisms to reach and heal the emotional, spiritual and psychological aspects of the conflict hence the need for multifaceted and interactive interventions if sustainable reconciliation is to be achieved. Bikita demonstrated that indigenous approaches such as *kuripa mhosva/ ngozi*. (payment for one's crime or the appeasement of avenging spirits) *dare* (the chief's court), and the performing of burial rituals such as *kurova guva* and *kudzosa mweya wemufi mumusha* (rituals to bring back home the spirit of one who dies away from home) among others are holistic and can attend to both the physical and psychological aspects of the conflict, thereby filling the gap left out by state-driven approaches. Furthermore, the approaches are deeply embedded in the people's culture hence the community has a strong sense of ownership of, and belonging to, them. I also seek to recast discourses on healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. Most works argue for institutional transformation, a perspective which does not pay much attention to the history, cultural nuances, wounds, emotions and deeply rooted perceptions of the violated communities. By drawing on the lived experiences of the people of Bikita, the study reveals everyday practices and local perspectives of justice and culturally sensitive methods of healing and reconciliation. The study is qualitative in nature. This was preferred given that the research sought to understand lived experiences of those directly involved in the period under study. Oral interviews, focus group discussions and testimonies on people's experiences, feelings, views, perceptions, and interpretation about the events under study were complemented by written documents, academic, government and non-governmental reports.

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Abbreviations

<b>AREX</b>	Agricultural Rural Extension Services
<b>AGRITEX</b>	Agricultural Extension Services
<b>ANC</b>	African National Congress
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CCJPZ</b>	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe
<b>CID</b>	Criminal Investigation Department
<b>CIIR</b>	Catholic Institute for International Relations
<b>CIO</b>	Central Intelligence Organization
<b>CRB</b>	Community Restorative Board
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>COMOPS</b>	Combined Operations
<b>DA</b>	District Administrator
<b>DC</b>	District Commissioner
<b>DRCs</b>	Democratic Resistance Committees
<b>DSA</b>	District Security Assistants
<b>FGC</b>	Family Group Conferencing
<b>FTLRP</b>	Fast Track Land Reform Program
<b>GNU</b>	Government of National Unity
<b>GPA</b>	Global Political Agreement
<b>LAA</b>	Land Apportionment Act
<b>LCAP</b>	Liberal Centre Action Party
<b>LOMA</b>	Law and Order Maintenance Act
<b>MDC</b>	Movement for Democratic Change
<b>MDC-T</b>	Movement for Democratic Change- Tsvangirai
<b>MDC-N</b>	Movement for Democratic Change- Ncube
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>NAZ</b>	National Archives of Zimbabwe
<b>NLHA</b>	Native Land Husbandry Act
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>ONHRI</b>	Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration
<b>PDL</b>	Poverty Datum Line
<b>POSA</b>	The Public Order and Security Act
<b>PTSD</b>	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
<b>RSF</b>	Rhodesian Security Forces
<b>SADC</b>	Southern Africa Development Community
<b>SRAR</b>	2nd Rhodesian African Rifles
<b>TRC</b>	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
<b>TTL</b>	Tribal Trust Land
<b>TCs</b>	Truth Commissions
<b>UFP</b>	United Federal Party
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>WW1</b>	World War 1
<b>ZANU</b>	Zimbabwe African Union
<b>ZANU PF</b>	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
<b>ZANLA</b>	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
<b>ZAPU</b>	Zimbabwe African People`s Union
<b>ZCC</b>	Zion Church of Christ
<b>ZIPA</b>	Zimbabwe People`s Army

<b>ZIPRA</b>	Zimbabwe People`s Revolutionary Army
<b>ZHR NGO</b>	Zimbabwe Human Rights Non- Governmental Organization
<b>ZNA</b>	Zimbabwe National Army
<b>ZLHR</b>	Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights
<b>ZPP</b>	Zimbabwe Peace Projects

## Introduction

### 0.1 The Emergence and Value of Indigenous Approaches in the Field of Peace building.

Due regard must be given to indigenous and informal traditions for administering of justice and settling disputes, to help them to continue their often vital role and to do so in conformity with both international standards and local tradition<sup>1</sup>

Over the years, it has become clear to scholars and practitioners in the field of peace-building that internationally sponsored judicial and state driven approaches fail to deliver peace and justice in the very constituencies they are supposed to be benefiting. Closing the phases or amnesia,<sup>2</sup> truth commissions, amnesties, clemency orders, prosecutions and national policies of reconciliation among others have failed to adequately heal and reconcile individuals and communities. Despite the fact that these approaches are developed by experts, they fail, for example, to consider the socio-psychological and spiritual dimensions of healing and reconciliation.<sup>3</sup> Amnesties and national policies of reconciliation have been viewed as “power-based”, formal, alien and often rigid forms of official interaction between instructed representatives.<sup>4</sup> In addition, amnesties do not create space where wrongs of the past would be acknowledged or for victims to forgive perpetrators as wrongs of the past can only be forgiven if truth about the past has been revealed or is known. Amnesties

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<sup>1</sup>United Nations 2004, Quoted in Luc Huyse and Mark Salter, *Traditional Justice and Reconciliation after Violent Conflict*, Stockholm: International IDEA, 2008, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Closing the books or amnesia was the option taken by post-Khmer Rouge Cambodia. Spain also opted for amnesia after the demise of the Franco regime. The same path was taken by Mozambique and Zimbabwe after the 1970s liberation war. Pinochet of Chile also opted for impunity in the 1970s. However, from the mid-1980s onwards the growth of a human rights culture blossomed and challenged the use of impunity when dealing with perpetrators of politically motivated violence. Thus the United Nations (UN) and Inter-American Human Rights Court opted for prosecutions of crimes against humanity, genocide and war-crimes. Resultantly the Hague, the Arusha and International Criminal Court (ICC) were established to deal with war-crimes in Sierra Leone, Burundi and Guatemala. Still, these interventions have failed to adequately deliver peace and justice in those countries.

<sup>3</sup> For a nuanced debate about the effectiveness of Truth Commissions, prosecutions and other Statist approaches see W.A Schabas, 'Introduction' in Schabas, W.A and Darcy Shawe, eds., *Truth Commissions and Courts: The Tension Between Criminal Justice and the Search for Truth*, The Hague :Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004, pp.1; Rosalind Shaw, *Rethinking Truth and Reconciliation Commissions: Lessons from Sierra Leone*, United States Institute of Peace, Special Report, 130, 2005, pp. 1-2; Du Plessis Max and Andreas Contsandis, “Serious Human Rights Violations in Zimbabwe: Of International Crimes, Immunities and the Possibilities of Prosecutions” *South African Journal of Human Rights*, 21 (2005), pp. 337.

<sup>4</sup>See Olga Botcharova, “Implementation of Track-Two Diplomacy: Developing a Model of Forgiveness in Forgiveness and Reconciliation,” in Raymond G, Helmick, S.J and Rodney, Peterson, eds., *Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation*. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001.

; John Paul Lederach. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Washington D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997 and Joseph Montville, ‘The Arrow and the Olive Branch: A Case for Track-Two Diplomacy, The Psychodynamics of International Relationships,’ in Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, eds. *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. J McDonald, “Further Exploration of Track-Two Diplomacy”, in Kriesberd, L and S Thorson, eds., *Timing the De-Escalation of International Conflicts*, New York: Syracuse, 1991, pp. 201-220.

insist on “closing the books”, the rationale being that truth about the past would only ‘open old wounds’, yet if truth is not known, there is no reconciliation that can take place. In essence, amnesties do not create space to promote an encounter between victims and perpetrators as well as the open expression of the painful past. Perpetrators are never made to feel responsible for their actions, or to recognize the effects or impact of their offense on their victims or on society in general. For their part, truth commissions have failed to deal with the trauma generated from the conflict as well as the hatred, animosity, fear and frustrations that would have provoked or been triggered between the conflicting parties. The residual social, emotional, moral and psychological factors can compromise future peaceful co-existence of the conflicting parties, thereby escalating the intensity, magnitude and scope of the conflict.

The limitations of statist approaches in promoting healing and reconciliation has produced an ongoing discourse on the need to reconceptualise security and peace-building. Accompanied by this new outlook on security has been the need to renew and re-examine the effectiveness and ability of states and governments to play a meaningful role in resolving conflict.<sup>5</sup> Conflicts around the world are increasingly the result of internal dispute in which governments are just one of the actors involved.<sup>6</sup> In this context, it makes little sense to let the governments alone come up with approaches of healing and reconciliation. Instead all stakeholders such as local leaders, family units, community based organisations and religious leaders are supposed to be involved. Indigenous approaches have the potential to repair and restore communal relationships through familiar, local processes that all community members can associate with.

This thesis is a context-sensitive interrogation of conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation processes in Bikita district through diverse temporal phases that include the colonial interlude, the liberation struggle milieu and the post-colonial dispensation. The study unpacks the various factors that informed the conflict and episodic violence that shaped the people of Bikita’s everyday interactions. Contestations over land, access to land usage and political affiliation largely ignited the violence experienced in Bikita. In addition, individuals’ behaviour, frustrations and uncertainty over their subjective and objective interests created

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<sup>5</sup> See Tim Allen, *Trial Justice: The International Criminal Court and the Lord’s Resistance Army*, London: Zed Books, 2006, pp. 17

<sup>6</sup> J Harvermans. “Private Professionals for Peace,” in *People Building Peace: 35 Inspiring Stories from Around the World*, European Center for Conflict Prevention, 1991, [http://www.euforic.org/euconflict/pbp/2/2\\_intro.htm](http://www.euforic.org/euconflict/pbp/2/2_intro.htm). accessed 12 /10/2013.



competing goals, polarized groups and created tensions which in turn resulted in conflicts. The Bikita case study illustrates that conflicts became complex and cyclical due to unaddressed animosity, anger, hatred, and frustration among the disputants.

This study, therefore aims at identifying and exploring alternative methods of healing and reconciliation employed by communities in Bikita beyond the gaze of the state. While comprehensive studies have been done on the role of indigenous mechanisms and approaches in the healing of communities and peace-building processes in countries like Rwanda, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Angola and Liberia, there exists a gap on the same issues on the Zimbabwean case.<sup>7</sup> The central question that informs this thesis is: Following a conflict, how can nation-states repair and heal the emotional, psychological and social traumas of victims and perpetrators, and ensure that communities feel secure and build confidence between erstwhile disputants? This question broadens one's way of thinking and creates space for identifying and critically analysing the formal interventions put in place by the Zimbabwean government in dealing with conflicts and the violence that characterized the 1970s war of liberation as well as post-independence electoral violence. In 1980, Zimbabwe opted for a policy of amnesia. Amnesia is an officially imposed policy entailing a conscious decision by a government not to investigate past atrocities on the grounds that such atrocities will re-open old wounds and jeopardize a country's newly found peace. Amnesia also informed the government's 1979 and 1980 amnesties. Amnesia which found expression in blanket amnesties, presidential pardons and clemency orders. Again, the 1980 national policy of healing and reconciliation announced adopted by the Zimbabwean state was embedded in amnesia. Other state-centric approaches established include the demobilization of ex-combatants, ignoring the civilian population, offering selective financial reparations and drug therapy for those suffering from trauma and psychological problems. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of Zimbabwe was erected as a symbol of honouring 'unknown soldiers who had perished or disappeared during the war.' Approaches such as amnesties and amnesia among others ignore the meaning people attach to the reality of being violated, dehumanized or wronged. These approaches were alien to people's lived experiences. Furthermore, the state interventions neglected the need to attend to the social and psychological aspects of

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<sup>7</sup> Assumpta Naniwe-Kaburahe, "The Institution of Bashingantahe in Burundi", in Luc Huyse and Mark Salter, eds. *Traditional Justice and Reconciliation After Violent Conflict*, Stockholm: Institute Democracy for Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 2008; Alie Joe, 'Reconciliation and Traditional Justice: Traditional Based Practices of the Kpaa-Mende in Sierra Leone' in Luc Huyse and Mark Salter, ed., *Traditional Justice and Reconciliation After Violent Conflict*, Stockholm: Institute for Democracy for Electoral Assistance (IDEA), , 2008.

conflict and violence for complete healing to take place as these approaches were not adapted to Shona customs to be of relevance to both victims and perpetrators. As such, for the people of Bikita interventions by the state from 1980 to 2013 did not perceive healing and reconciliation in the manner they understood justice, healing and reconciliation.

State-centric approaches alone therefore, may not provide sustainable solutions to challenges facing families and communities emerging from a violent conflict unless they are coordinated and harmonized with indigenous approaches of conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation. The limitations of statist approaches emanate from their failure to consider socio-psychological and spiritual aspects of healing and reconciliation, gaps which can be filled by indigenous approaches.<sup>8</sup> Indigenous approaches refer to those approaches that have been used over a long periods of time by communities to resolve conflicts, deliver justice and promote healing and reconciliation. As the Bikita case study will illustrate, while state interventions were/are necessary for securing stability, maintaining order and a smooth process of transformation, these interventions alone were not sufficient in promoting enduring peace and reconciliation. In Bikita, amnesties, via presidential pardons, or a public announcement through the public media for people to forget and forgive each other did not adequately attended to the socio-psychological effects of the conflict.

The Bikita case study demonstrated that conflict leaves both victims and perpetrators with physical, emotional and psychological scars. Perpetrators too are in need of rehabilitation and reconciliation with the community. Committing acts of violence leaves the offender in distress and this can be worse when the incident happened between family members and close relatives. The offender is left burdened by feelings of guilt, sinfulness, fear of revenge from the victim's family, and even imprisonment by authorities. In addition, the offender is also worried about the security of his or her family members and self. In short, conflict destroys physical life and property as well as the emotional, psychological and social capital leaving both victims and perpetrators traumatized, insecure and in need of rehabilitation,

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<sup>8</sup> For a nuanced discussion on the need to heal the social and psychological aspects of a conflict see Tameni Keneni, "Exploring *Gumaa* as an indispensable psycho-social method of conflict resolution" *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol 13, number 1 (2013), p.g 41; Soyinka Wole, 'Memory, Truth and Healing,' in Amadiume If and Abdullai An-Na'im, eds., *The Politics of Memory: Truth, Healing and Social Justice*, London: Zed Books, 2000, p.g 21-37; Daniel Christie, 'Peace Building: Approaches to Social Justice,' in Christie Daniel, Wagner, Richard and Winter Deborah, eds., *Peace, Conflict and Violence :Peace Psychology for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 2001, p. 15.

healing and reconciliation. Healing at the emotional and psychological level allows for the repairing of broken relationships and rebuilding and restoring of mutual trust lost in the process of conflict.<sup>9</sup> Mutual trust is important and necessary for communities and the society to remain an integral and functional unity.

Thus, in circumstances such as these approaches that are individualistic and far removed from the people's lived experiences and expectations largely fail to reach and heal victims. Tony Karbo and Martha Mutisi warn that sustainable conflict resolution mechanism should ultimately aim at socio-psychological reintegration, re-establishment of community relationships and reunification of offenders into their community.<sup>10</sup> However, the approaches put in place by the Zimbabwean government from 1980 to 2013 did little to adequately meet these objectives of peace building.

This study therefore underscores the fact that that conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation has physical, spiritual, economic, social and psychological dimensions that can only be holistically addressed by multi-dimensional approaches. Healing and reconciliation is a complex process which requires maximizing the benefits of victims through compensation and restitution as well as helping the conflicting parties recover from the animosity, bitterness, hatred, anger, fear and frustration that had developed from the conflict via interventions with the necessary mechanisms. Drawing on the Bikita people's lived experiences, the study shows how victimized individuals and communities took the initiatives to promote healing and reconciliation outside official sanctioning Indigenous approaches such as *kugeza ropa* (cleansing ceremonies performed by ex-combatants) at individual, family and community level,<sup>11</sup> *kuripa ngozi* (appeasement or repayment of avenging spirits), *kurova guva and kugeza mweya yevafi mumusha* (conducting burial rites for those who died away from home or when the whereabouts of the deceased's remains are not known), and

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<sup>9</sup> Hamber, Brandon. 'Healing' in Bloomfield, *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: A Handbook*, Stockholm: Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance ( IDEA), 2003

<sup>10</sup> Karbo, Tony and Martha Mutisi. *Psychological aspects of post-conflict reconstruction: Transforming mindsets: The case of the Gacaca in Rwanda*, <http://www.unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/.../UN/UNPANO32152.pdf> Accessed 12 September 2013

<sup>11</sup> In Shona culture it is believed that when one witnesses death even if they did not commit the crime of killing, they are also contaminated. It was and still is believed that such persons need cleansing to wash the blood and the contamination of death from them otherwise they will be followed by countless misfortunes in life emanating from the contamination of death. In Zimbabwe, many returning ex-combatants went through this ritual. Families conducted these rituals on behalf of sons and daughters who had fought in the war. Communities also carried out these rituals to wash the blood senselessly spilled in their areas during the war.

*kugeza mweya yerima* (exorcism of evil spirits) among others exemplify this. For the people of Bikita, the approaches proved effective and relevant because they were and are deeply embedded in their culture, hence families and the community had a strong sense of ownership of and belonging to them. These rituals created social space where victims and perpetrators and their families expressed and gave meaning and voices to their suffering, fears and anxieties addressed as compared to models of counselling or drug therapy imposed earlier on by the state. For Bikita, these approaches were able to meet the objectives of healing and reconciliation by “healing breaches, redressing the imbalances and restoring broken relationships.”<sup>12</sup> Thus indigenous approaches highlight the agency of “ordinary people” as they demonstrate everyday practices of healing and reconciliation which are realistic when dealing with loss, pain, trauma and suffering.

Scholarship on transitional justice in Zimbabwe largely critique state centric and top-down approaches such as clemency orders, amnesties and presidential pardons. Leading scholars and exponents of the liberal peace paradigm such as Brian Raftopolous,<sup>13</sup> Shari Eppel<sup>14</sup>, Pamela Machakanja<sup>15</sup> and Lloyd Sachikonye<sup>16</sup> among others underscore the need for

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<sup>12</sup> Tutu Desmond, *No Future without Forgiveness*, p.34.

<sup>13</sup> Brian Raftopolous, “Unreconciled Differences: The Limits of Reconciliation Politics in Zimbabwe,” in Brian Raftopolous and Tony Savage, eds., *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2005; Eppel, Shari and Brian Raftopolous, *Prospects for Transitional Justice in Zimbabwe*. Pretoria: IDASA, 2008;

Brian Raftopolous, “Introduction,” in Brian Raftopolous, ed., *The Hard Road to Reform: The Politics of Zimbabwe’s Global Political Agreement*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2013

<sup>14</sup> Also see Eppel, Shari. “Healing the dead: Exhumation and Reburial as Truth-telling and peace-building activities in rural Zimbabwe,” in Tristan Anne, Borer, ed. *Telling the Truths: Truth Telling and Peace Building in Post- Conflict Societies*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2006; Eppel, Shari. “Gukurahundi: The Need for Truth and Reparation” in Brian Raftopolous and Tony, Savage, eds. *Zimbabwe: Justice and Political Reconciliation*. Cape Town: Institute of Justice and Reconciliation, 2004; Eppel, Shari and Brian Raftopolous, *Prospects for Transitional Justice in Zimbabwe*. Pretoria: IDASA, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Also see Pamela Machakanja who is also not quite different from Paftopolous and advances the liberal peace paradigm. See Pamela Machakanja. *National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe: Challenges and Opportunities*. South Africa: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2010, p. 12-15.

<sup>14</sup> Also see Sachikonye, Lloyd.M. *When a State Turns on its Citizens*. Auckland Park: Jacana Media Pvt Ltd, 2011.

institutional reforms and transformation. These scholars argue for transitional justice mechanisms centred on institutional arrangements that are most likely to maintain peace such as the establishment of professional and non-partisan judiciary, army, police, intelligence services and the liberalization of the economy.<sup>17</sup> In this statist framework, entrenched political, socio-economic and institutional inequalities have to be restructured and made much more inclusive and merit based. However, much of this scholarship is largely silent on the history, cultural norms, wounds, feelings and deeply rooted perceptions of victimized individuals, families and communities.

The thesis further unpacks how after the violent elections of 2008 the people of Bikita once again resorted to the use of indigenous approaches such as *dare* (chief's traditional court), *kunyaradzana* (consolation of victims), *kubatsirana* ( offering a helping hand to victims of political violence), and *kutaurirana* (sustainable dialogue) following the 2001 and 2008 electoral violence. Chiefs also made use of *misangano yekupira kunashe zvinonetsa* (chiefly meetings to resolve burning issues within communities) and *misangano yepfiga mwedzi* (chief's month-ending meetings) to promote healing and reconciliation. The *dare* or traditional court was made use of to resolve conflicts emanating from the 2001 and 2008 electoral violence. Through the *dare* system, offenders were encouraged to acknowledge responsibility or guilt for the wrongs done following the presentation of evidence by the victim and witnesses. Social space to repent and demonstrate genuine remorse was created. This process gave offenders the opportunity to ask for forgiveness from the victims. Through these platforms victims were encouraged to show mercy and grant forgiveness to the perpetrators. Where necessary the offenders were asked to pay compensation to the victim/s, a gesture of genuine remorse on the part of the offender. Lastly, the conflicting parties were encouraged to reconcile as a sign that the vendetta was over.

The *dare* approach effectively attended to the grudges, bitterness and anguish of victims. My research show that these approaches contributed significantly towards healing, reconciliation, peace and stability within the district. Meetings called by chiefs and headmen at the local level engaged members of the community to discuss issues that had affected them. Traditional leaders are strategically positioned to address these issues as they are in

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<sup>17</sup> Brian Raftopoulos , "Introduction," in Brian Raftopoulos , ed., *The Hard Road to Reform: The Politics of Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2013

direct contact with their communities. In turn, this builds trust, respect and confidence among those directly involved in the conflict. Furthermore, chiefs and headmen are able to influence rural communities and can change the hostilities and perception of their followers through their positions in the social-political hierarchy. Meetings were important in transforming and fostering harmony and a consensus based approach to future conflicts.

Finally, the people of Bikita's history of attempting to deal with conflict and promote healing and reconciliation is a local success story with a global resonance. From the mid-1990s, the people of Bikita were already using indigenous approaches in sync with an emerging global shift from formal or statist approaches to indigenous or traditional approaches.<sup>18</sup> Internationally, a common denominator among communities emerging from conflict was the desire to develop more holistic approaches that would promote sustainable peace.

## 0.2 Why Study Conflicts in Bikita?

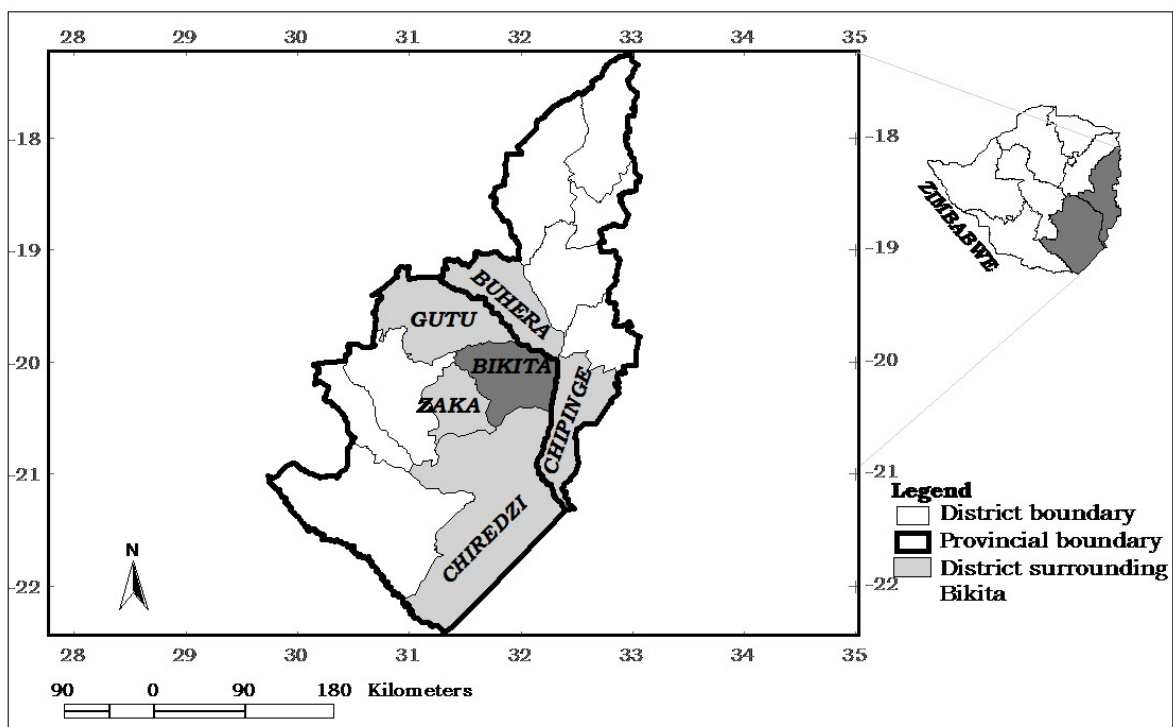


Figure 1: Map showing the location of Bikita District in Zimbabwe.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Brian Raftopoulos, "Unreconciled Differences: The Limits of Reconciliation Politics in Zimbabwe," in Brian Raftopoulos and Tony Savage, eds., *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2005. Also see Hamber, Brandon. 'Healing' in Bloomfield, *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: A Handbook*, Stockholm: Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance ( IDEA), 2003

<sup>19</sup> Map made by Kudakwashe Muringanisi, Geography Department, Midlands State University, Gweru, 2013.

Bikita district lies about 80km east of Masvingo town. The name Bikita conjures up complex historical associations for different people. For some, Bikita is the home of the Duma ethnic group<sup>20</sup> and for others, Bikita is home not only for the Duma but for non-Moyo groups too.<sup>21</sup> And yet for others, Bikita is the land of *harurwa* (edible stink bugs).<sup>22</sup> Historically, the district formed part of the wider Duma confederacy in the pre-colonial period.<sup>23</sup> According to traditions, the Duma confederacy was established in 1700 and Dikita (Bikita) was made the capital. The Duma changed the name of the area which they settled in from Denga to “*Dikita*.” The name Dikita (Bikita) derived from the fact that the area the Duma settled was and still is a concentrate of mountains and hills as well as thick forests, making it inaccessible to enemies in the event of an attack. The Duma established their administrative areas on and around these mountains and hills. Political meetings of all chiefs were held at Mandara. In addition, shrines were built on top of the mountains and on hilltops for sacrificial ceremonies or supplication of Duma ancestral spirits. However getting to the mountain or hilltop for meetings, burials or ceremonies was a mammoth task. It involved the climbing of the hills or mountains. The majority reached the hilltop soaked in sweat, *dikita*. This is where the area derived its name from. Following the establishment of colonial administration, in 1898 three districts namely Ndanga, Victoria and Gutu were created out of the Duma confederacy. Dikita fell within the boundaries of Ndanga. In 1922 the Secretary of Native Affairs advised the Administrator in council to subdivide the district into two for effective administration. He proposed that the Southern part of the district was to remain as Ndanga while the northern part was to be called Bikita. Traditions are of the opinion that the Secretary exchanged the “D” for “B” and so Dikita became Bikita in 1924.

Bikita constitutes a most desirable case for examining conflicts between individuals and communities due to a number of reasons. First, Bikita is home to people of different ethnic groups and origins, all sharing a single area, competing and contesting for access and control of land resources. Their interactions have been characterized by tensions and feuds as they negotiated and competed for power, to control resources, grazing lands, mountains, ranges for hunting and water sources. All these issues provided fertile ground for conflicts between and among different ethnic groups and communities. Secondly, Bikita district constitutes a desirable case for examining inter and intra community conflicts during the

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with mbuya Erina Muroyi, Bikita, 16 January 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Japhet Nyakunhuwa, 18 January 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Group Interview with elders of Mutsimba community, Bikita, 16 January 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with sekuru Chidzororo of the shiri totem, Bikita, 14 January 2013.

colonial period. During the colonial period, the district comprised of a European farming sector dependent on African labour, a Purchase Area where better off African farmers leased land from the government or owned their own private farms. The fact that the majority cultivated small pieces of land and grazed cattle in common grazing lands entailed the birth of conflicts as people scrambled for grazing pastures. The majority of the Africans in the reserves envied the wealth of the few Africans in the Purchase areas as well as the wealth of the European farming community such as the wealth of cattle exhibited by the Devuli ranch. Colonial policies and administration also fed into existing conflicts and communal feuds, thereby heightening conflicts during the liberation struggle era.

During the liberation struggle, the war was intense and more protracted in the area compared to other parts of the country. Bikita was one of the most contested zones during the war for three main reasons. Bikita comprised of European farming sector particularly the Devuli ranch which was the major supplier of the beef industry in Rhodesia, hence the ranch was of economic value to the government. As such the area was heavily protected by Rhodesian forces. The guerrillas knew of the value of the ranch to the Rhodesian government, therefore whenever an opportunity presented itself they would frustrate the enemy by killing or stealing cattle from the ranch. At times the guerrillas would steal cattle from the ranch out of necessity and due to shortages of food. Thus, the area became a hot bed of conflicts as people and communities sold each other to the Rhodesian forces over the issue of stolen cattle.

In addition, the district was the artery of communication from the east linking with the main road to Beit- Bridge into South Africa. This route needed to be protected because it was Rhodesia's life line economically and politically. The tourist industry depended on that route to bring in tourists from South Africa by road. The route was also used to bring in artillery from South Africa by the Rhodesia government. Furthermore, during the liberation struggle South Africa was Rhodesia's only ally and so the route was considered to be a safe outlet in the event of any trouble considering the fact that Zimbabwe is a land locked country. As such there was need to keep the route under constant surveillance and ensure that the guerrillas would not plant landmines on the route or attack the white population using the route. Whenever whites were travelling by that route, they registered with the security department and would be accompanied by a convoy of soldiers to protect them. Again the guerrillas also knew of the value of that route to the Rhodesian government and would attempt to disturb the movements of the whites. These factors intensified the war in Bikita. The heavy presence of the fighting forces in the area also led to tensions between communities.

Bikita is an exit point to Chipinge into Mozambique and was therefore strategic to the guerrillas and meant that the area easily became a hotly contested terrain by both the



guerrillas and the Rhodesian forces. When the colonial government became aware of guerrilla activities in Bikita it tightened administrative control in that area. As the war intensified, Bikita had to compete for security forces with the eastern districts that had become important infiltration routes and with European areas of higher national economic value. To get into and out of Rhodesia into Mozambique the guerrillas used the Devuli-Save-Espunga Beira route. As such the guerrillas maintained a heavy presence in the area to maintain safe exit and entry points, bringing in of artillery and medical supplies. Reports and wounded comrades also needed to be taken back into Mozambique via the same route. On their part the Rhodesian forces tightened surveillance of the exit points of the guerrillas to frustrate and deter them from either leaving or entering Zimbabwe. The Rhodesian government was compelled by these circumstances to establish the Second Rhodesian African Rifles (2RAR) with the specific objective of dealing with and covering Bikita. The fact that the war was intense and more protracted in this district also meant that it could have triggered and promoted conflicts between communities.

Politically, Bikita constitutes a most desirable case for examining conflicts between individuals and communities due to different political affiliations. Initially Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) had been the dominant political party in the area before the 1963 split of ZAPU. With the split and the independence of Mozambique in 1975 Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) mainly operated in the district. The district remained a Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) stronghold until 2000 with the emergence of the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change party (MDC). In the millennium, the district became a site of electoral conflicts as Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) wrestled the district from ZANU PF which had dominated the area for twenty-eight years. Contestation over the district was stiff and brutal, ultimately leading to the polarization of the district into Bikita West and South constituencies. Thus, for these reasons the area became the most appropriate case for studying inter and intra community conflicts and their short and long term effects on communities.

## **0.2 Theoretical Framework**

This study makes use of Olga Botcharova's theory of Track-Two Diplomacy<sup>24</sup> to

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<sup>24</sup>Olga Botcharova. "The Implementation of Track-Two Diplomacy: Developing a Model of Forgiveness and Reconciliation," in Raymond. G, Helmick, S.J., and Rodney, Peterson, eds., *Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation*. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001.

explain the indigenous and local approaches used by the Bikita communities to resolve conflicts, and promote healing and reconciliation.

### 0.2.1 Track-Two Diplomacy

“Track-Two Diplomacy” refers to unofficial or non-government interactions between members of adversarial groups to resolve conflicts. In its original conception, “track-two’ or “citizen” diplomacy refers to private citizens discussing issues that are usually reserved for official negotiations. Instead of only having favourable discussions based on strategic interests with just heads of states, an important characteristic of track-one missions, track-two seeks to include all parties to the conflict.<sup>25</sup>

According to Botcharova, track-one approaches fail to deliver peace and justice despite the fact that they are developed by informed experts who often offer seemingly balanced and quite rational solutions to the most complicated problems of people.<sup>26</sup> Thus in Botcharova’s opinion, the major weakness of track-one diplomacy is its failure to take into consideration socio-psychological and spiritual aspects of healing and reconciliation. Track-one diplomacy tends to treat these issues as peripheral yet they are the core aspects in healing and reconciliation. Observing the need to attend to the socio-psychological and spiritual dimensions of healing and reconciliation, Paul John Lederach warns that conflicts require approaches to their transformations that are rooted in social-psychological and spiritual dimensions that traditionally have been seen as either irrelevant to or outside the competency of international diplomacy.<sup>27</sup> Botcharova further argues that track-one diplomacy fails to attend to the deep need for healing by victims since interventions made under track-one appeal mostly to the political hierarchy as the exclusive decision makers. In other words, track-one (official) diplomacy tends to limit its focus to the narrow world of politicians

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<sup>25</sup> Joseph Montville, ‘The arrow and the Olive Branch: A Case for Track-Two Diplomacy,’ in Vamik Volkan, *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*, Lexington: Lexington Books, 1991, pp.82-3; Sagaren Naidoo, “The Role of Track-Two Diplomacy in the Democratic Republic of Congo Conflict,” *Africa Journal of Conflict Resolution*, no.2 (2000); Olga. Botcharova, The Role of Track-Two Diplomacy, Sagaren Naidoo “The Role of Track-Two Diplomacy in the Democratic Republic of Congo Conflict,” *Africa Journal of Conflict Resolution*, no.2 (2000); Olga Botcharova, The Role of Track-Two Diplomacy: Diplomacy: Developing a Model of Forgiveness in Forgiveness and Reconciliation,” in Raymond G, Helmick, S.J and Rodney, Peterson, eds., *Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation*. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Olga Botcharova, “Implementation of Track-Two Diplomacy: Developing a Model of Forgiveness in Forgiveness and Reconciliation,” in Raymond G, Helmick, S.J and Rodney, Peterson, eds., *Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation*. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001.

<sup>27</sup> John Paul Lederach. ‘Pacificism in Contemporary Conflict: A Christian Perspective.’ Paper Commissioned by the US Institute of Peace, 1993, p.11

whereas track-two diplomacy tries to make its impact felt on the entirety of what it describes as identity groups, namely communities that share a certain ethnic, regional, socio-economic and other identity.<sup>28</sup> Rather than just trying to inspire politicians to make discussions based on rational evaluation of option and interest, track-two diplomacy seeks to help all the people involved to change their way of thinking.<sup>29</sup> Consistent with the shortcomings described above, track-two diplomacy has emerged to fill this void.

This theory is applicable to this study because systems of justice, approaches and techniques used by people in Bikita to resolve conflicts, heal social breaches and reconcile victims and perpetrators after the war and in the post-independence era are mirrored within Track-two diplomacy. However, Botcharova cautions that one is supposed not to confuse track-two diplomacy as a substitute for official formal track-one. Rather it is designed to assist official leaders by compensating for the challenges or constraints of track-one diplomacy in resolving conflicts and promoting sustainable peace.<sup>30</sup> Track-two diplomacy is useful to this study since the theory is tailor-made to deal with protracted conflicts amongst groups denied physical and economic security, political participation and recognition by other groups.<sup>31</sup> The strength of track-two diplomacy lies in its ability to create social space for dialogue. In Joseph Montiville's opinion, dialogue is the engine to relationships. Dialogue provides mutual confirmation and thereby serves a fundamental need of parties to a conflict to be recognised as individuals with values and unique identities.<sup>32</sup> Track-two diplomacy makes use of a mediator or a third party whose duty is to facilitate the process of problem-solving by bringing conflicting parties together in a neutral environment where non-hierarchical, non-competitive and non-coercive norms pre-dominate. In this environment, third parties do not seek to provide solutions to the sides but rather create and maintain an environment where the two sides can analyse their conflict and create solutions themselves.<sup>33</sup> Third parties facilitate an atmosphere of inclusiveness which is important to the process of resolution as it opens space to focus on the structural, social, attitudinal and interpersonal

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<sup>28</sup> J Haverman, "Private Professionals for Peace" in *People Building Peace: 35 Inspiring Stories from the World*, European Centre for Conflict Prevention. <http://www.euforic.org/euconflict/pbp/2/2/intro.htm>, Accessed on 13/02/2015.]

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. Also see M Lee, *Multi-track Diplomacy*, 1997. <http://www.oc.uk/csd/dsp/nzlee.html>; C Mitchell, *Track-Two Triumphant? Reflections on the Oslo Process and Conflict Resolution in the Middle-East*. ICAR Newsletter, 5 (6) (1993), pp.8-12

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Montiville, "The arrow and the Olive Branch: A Case for Track-Two Diplomacy," in Vomik Volkan, *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*, Lexington: Lexington Books, 1991, pp.82-3

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Joseph Montiville, "The Arrow and the Olive Branch: A case for Track-Two Diplomacy," p.115

<sup>33</sup> Olga Botcharova, *The Role of Track-Two Diplomacy*, p.5

dimensions of the conflict relationship. The resolution of conflict by aunts, uncles, grandmothers and family friends, chiefs and headmen are classic examples where track-two diplomacy was used. Elders of the community were at times used as mediators by village committees or chief's courts. Third parties resolved and reconciled conflicting parties by finding a common basis of understanding between the parties involved. Track-two diplomacy is also supported in the works of leading scholars on peacebuilding such as John Paul Lederach,<sup>34</sup> Joseph Montville,<sup>35</sup> Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson<sup>36</sup> and Donald Shriver.<sup>37</sup>

Track-Two diplomacy is appropriate for the study as it does not seek to replace state-centric approaches to conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation. Track-two diplomacy stresses that individuals or groups engaged in the resolution of a conflict need to engage in an analytic problem-solving process to address the fundamental basis of the conflict. This is what indigenous approaches like *dare*, *kuripa ngozi* and *misangano yepfiga mwedzi* (Put the English versions/translations of these terms in brackets) consider. Track-two diplomacy creates social spaces where conflict analysis takes place. Analysing the conflict first helps in the understanding of indigenous approaches used by the people of Bikita because there is need for those involved in the resolution of conflict to understand first the background of the conflict, when the conflict started, whether it was related to previous conflicts or not. Also, there is need to know the individuals involved in the conflict. The conflicting parties should be given an opportunity to give their own side of the story. The stage of storytelling is relevant because it is here that accountability and truth-telling takes place. Accountability is taking responsibility for one's actions. Ideally, a person should recognize their wrong actions, apologize and put things right. This brings relief and consolation to victims. In essence, accountability keeps feelings of revenge at bay as victims

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<sup>34</sup> John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Washington, D.C: US Institute of Peace Press, 1997.

<sup>35</sup> Joseph Montville, "The Arrow and the Olive Branch: A Case for Track-Two Diplomacy," in Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, eds., *Religion: The missing Dimensions of Statecraft*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994

<sup>36</sup> Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, eds., *Religion: The missing Dimensions of Statecraft*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994

<sup>37</sup> Also see Donald Shriver, *An Ethnic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997

The essence of these studies suggest that three major factors block the successful implementation of international peace policy and these are the failure to attend to the deep need for healing from victimisation of the parties in violent conflict, strategies that impose foreign recipes for peace and strategies that appeal to the political hierarchy as the exclusive decision-makers.

feel that justice has been done. It also unburdens the perpetrators of feelings of guilt which they would have harboured for the most part of the time.

Under track-two diplomacy, conflict analysis is also done with the aim of coming up with a win-win solution. In a win-win solution, conflict is seen as problem to be solved rather than a war to be won. The methods used focus on the needs and constraints of both parties rather than emphasizing on strategies designed to conquer. Track-two focuses mainly on analysis and development of alternative proceedings, consensus decisions on mutually agreeable solutions. As will be highlighted in the study, emphasis is on the quality of the long-term relationship between the two parties rather than the short term accommodation as is the case with statist approaches employed in post-independent Zimbabwe. Communication, attitudes and behaviours in track-two diplomacy are directed towards an increase in trust and acceptance and not the escalation of suspicion and hostilities.

In Botcharova's opinion, since conflicts are a result of frustrated interest and goals, there is need then for an analytical conflict resolution method which identifies what the frustrated goals and interest of the different classes are which would have caused conflicts. Botcharova further observes that:

Conflict resolution means terminating conflicts by methods that are analytical and that get to the root of the problem. Conflict resolution, as opposed to mere management or settlement, points to an outcome that in the view of the parties involved is a permanent solution to the problem.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, the theory is hinged on the attainment of fundamental class, group or individual interests and needs to encourage win-win solutions. If class needs and interests are to be satisfied or attained, there is need first to attain those measures that build hope, trust and belief in the essential goodness of humanity.<sup>39</sup> People should first hope for and have a vision for peace before peace can be attained. In essence there should be a vision and belief that former enemies can co-exist before any attempts of resolution are made. Similarly Kevin Avaruch posits that in order to achieve psychological and structural reconciliation in conflict resolution, there is need to tap into the emotions that develop a sense of hope, trust, empathy,

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45 Olga Botcharova, *The Role of Track-Two Diplomacy*, p.23

<sup>39</sup>Kevin Avaruch, *Culture and Conflict Resolution*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1998, p. 56

co-operation and inclusiveness.<sup>40</sup>

Track-Two diplomacy is the most ideal approach for resolving conflicts at a micro-level (individual-victims, perpetrators and at a meso level i.e clans and communities). This study considers conflicts at individual, group, class, clan and community level. The use of the chief's court ( *dare*), payment of reparations ( *kuripirana or kubata huku* ) systems among others, at family, village and ethnic levels were the most ideal fall back techniques since community members could easily associate with the indigenous/local approaches instituted. By creating social spaces where former enemies could work together towards resolving inter/intra familial or group conflict in a non-threatening, non-confrontational environment, the approach offered opportunities where grudges and bitterness were conveyed without the risk of starting fresh cycles of conflict and violence.

Track-two diplomacy is also the most effective approach to use when one is dealing with classes. Taking class or group interest into consideration, track-two diplomacy enables conflicting parties to come to the understanding that all classes have legitimate interests, needs and goals which must be satisfied. This approach is therefore relevance as it focuses on reconciliation, reparation, restoration and healing issues which are emphasised in the thesis as crucial and characteristic of indigenous approaches. These aspects are most ideal /appropriate to people living in close-knit communities who rely on continuous social and economic co-operation with each other. The strength of these indigenous approaches is that they function in sync with the socio-cultural ways of the people. Western approaches instituted from the colonial period to the present have failed to resolve conflicts because the processes and methods used do not fit into the pragmatism of the people's lived experiences. Indigenous approaches in contradiction to Western approaches, the indigenous approaches were/are based on constant consultation, negotiating solutions to problems, consensus and have respect for authority of family and community elders and leaders. Community elders and leaders play a crucial role in mediating/ bridging the gap between conflicting parties.

### *0.2.2 Concepts of Track-Two Diplomacy*

Track-two diplomacy can be understood within the framework of concepts of transitional justice, restorative justice, healing and reconciliation.

### 0.2.3 Transitional Justice.

Roht-Arriazza notes that transitional justice is a set of practices, mechanisms and concerns that arise following a period of conflict, civil strife or repression and is aimed at confronting and dealing with past violations of human rights and humanitarian law.<sup>41</sup> Transitional justice as a concept therefore seeks to ensure that all critical aspects contributing to violent conflict are addressed. The concept of transitional justice helps in the understanding of track-two diplomacy because the use or adoption of track-two diplomacy is actually part of transitional justice. Different societies may opt or prioritise different elements of transitional justice depending on the need of their communities. Thus, a society may opt for track-one which serves the interests of politicians or track-two diplomacy which is victim centred and ensures that justice plays a critical role in ensuring reconciliation. The concept also helps one understand the root of transitional justice taken by Zimbabwe following the 1970s liberation war and under the Government of national Unity in 2008.

### 0.2.4 Restorative Justice.

Carey observes that restorative justice is mainly concerned with the rebuilding of relationships in communities so that people are able to deal with their past differences, live and work together.<sup>42</sup> Thus, restorative justice focuses more on the victims as it seeks to move beyond ensuring accountability for perpetrators to consider how victims and the community deal with the aftermath of a violent past. This concept helps in explaining track-two diplomacy because track-two diplomacy is mostly concerned with restorative justice through engaging victims and perpetrators. Track-two diplomacy focuses more on the victim as the mostly affected person and upholds that since the victim is the most affected by the violence, he or she should therefore play a critical role in determining how to right the wrong.<sup>43</sup> In addition, the concept helps in the understanding of the theory as it assesses the extent to which victims of violence have a say in the approaches that are put in place under track-two diplomacy. The involvement of victims and perpetrators as well as the community is a critical aspect of achieving restorative justice through track-two diplomacy. The involvement of

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<sup>41</sup>Roht-Arriazza, Naomi. "The New Landscape of Transitional Justice," in Roht-Arriazza, Naomi and Javier, Mariezcurrena, eds. *Transitional Justice in the 21<sup>st</sup>, Beyond Truth Versus Justice*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p.1-16. .

<sup>42</sup> Carey, Sabine, MarkGibrey, Steven Poe, eds. *The Politics of Human Rights. The Quest for Dignity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

<sup>43</sup> See Hill, J. K. 'Victimization, Resilience and Meaning-Making: Moving Forward in Strength,' *Victims of Crime Research Digest Issue 2,2009* Accessed 2 November 2014 <[http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/rs/rep-rap/rd-rr/rd09\\_2-rr09\\_2/rd09\\_2.pdf](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/rs/rep-rap/rd-rr/rd09_2-rr09_2/rd09_2.pdf)>

victims and perpetrators in the process of promoting restorative justice helps in minimising a return to violence. Under track-two diplomacy, indigenous approaches such as the Zimbabwean *dare* and *kuripa ngozi* among are critical in building relationships among people and to make them face each other. Through track-two diplomacy, social spaces for perpetrators to take responsibility for the offenses they committed is created, while victims are encouraged to listen to the confessions and try to establish new relationships built on a new political environment.

Considering that gross violence cause harm not only to those directly victimised but to the whole community, collective as well as individual responses are required.<sup>44</sup> Thus, restorative justice, which is an aspect of track-two diplomacy, places emphasis on the restoration of societal harmony and helping victims and perpetrators to forge new relationships as opposed to punishment for past wrongs.<sup>45</sup> Whilst the study acknowledges the significance of punishing perpetrators, it should be borne in mind, however, that healing and reconciliation of victims require much more than punishment. As Clark observed, the punishment of criminals is necessary but should be facilitated in ways that allow perpetrators and victims to rebuild relationships.<sup>46</sup> Through the use of approaches used by the Bikita community under track-two diplomacy, this study examined the ways in which punishment of perpetrators of violence were dealt with. The attainment of restorative justice via track-two diplomacy is crucial to the success of healing and reconciliation processes because communities often identify with local norms and approaches they are familiar with.

### *0.2.5 The Concept of Healing*

The study adopts Hamber's definition of healing in peace-building. Hamber defines healing as:

Healing is any strategy, process or activity that improves the psychological health of individuals following extensive violent conflict. Strategies, processes or activities aimed at rebuilding and restructuring local and national communities more broadly are also integrally linked to this process. As such, healing is not only about assisting individuals to address their psychological health needs in an

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<sup>44</sup> Cunneen, Chris and Carolyne. Hoyle. *Debating Restorative Justice*. Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2010, p.15

<sup>45</sup>See Iris. Mark, *Reconciliation: bridging theory to practice: a framework for practitioners* The Hague: Centre for Justice and Reconciliation, 2007, p.18

<sup>46</sup>Phil. Clark, 'Hybridity, Holism, and Traditional Justice: The Case of the Gacaca Courts in Post-Genocide Rwanda', *George Washington International Law Review*. Vol. 39 (765) Oxford: University of Oxford - Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, 2007, p.8



isolated way, but is dependent upon and integrally linked to repairing and rebuilding communities and the social context. This implies restoring a normalized everyday life that can recreate and confirm people's sense of being and belonging.<sup>47</sup>

Thus healing is an attempt to address sources of physical and emotional pain and the restoration of human dignity violated by violent conflict.<sup>48</sup> The concept of healing helps in the understanding of track-two diplomacy because healing of victims is only possible through approaches that are victim centred such as those found under track-two diplomacy. Approaches that are used under track-two diplomacy consider the socio-psychological and spiritual aspects of the conflict. Healing can only take place when the socio-psychological and spiritual dimensions of a conflict are addressed that healing can take place. Thus, track-two diplomacy assists in the healing of both victims and perpetrators as the approach engages both parties to a conflict encouraging them to say their side of the story so that a win-win solution can be achieved. Under track-two diplomacy, the perpetrator too is considered a victim in a way and should be assisted in being rehabilitated through approaches that are restorative. Galtung notes that the path to healing may differ and this can be at community, national as well as individual levels.<sup>49</sup> The healing of victims is necessary to reduce the chances of them avenging and becoming perpetrators of violence in the process. In Hamber's opinion, healing should be personal with a grounding in the social context.<sup>50</sup> Psycho-social programmes, counselling, self-help support group and symbolic forms of healing form part of the healing process. In this case, the ability of approaches implemented under track-two diplomacy, exemplified by the Zimbabwean approaches of *kuripa ngozi*, *kudzora mweya wemufi mumusha*, and *kurova guva*, in healing the psychological, emotional and spiritual

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<sup>47</sup> Hamber, Brandon. 'Healing' in Bloomfield, *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: A Handbook*, Stockholm: IDEA, 2003

<sup>48</sup> The need to attend to and heal the socio-psychological effects of a conflict is addressed by a number of scholar and practitioners in the field of peace building. Generally, these scholars argue that conflict destroys the emotional, physical and psychological make-up of both victims and perpetrators hence the need to attend to these aspects if complete healing is to be achieved. For a nuanced discussion on healing the psychological and spiritual dimensions of a conflict see Hamber, B. "Does the Truth Heal? A Psychological Perspective on the Political Strategies for Dealing with the Legacy of Political Violence." in N. Biggar, ed. *Burying the Past: Making Peace and Doing Justice after Civil Conflict*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2001; Becker, D. "Dealing with the Consequences of Organized Violence". in Bracken, P.J and C. Petty, eds. *Rethinking the Trauma of War, Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*. Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2001.

<sup>49</sup> Galtung, J. 'After Violence, Reconstruction, Reconciliation, and Resolution: Coping with Visible and Invisible Effects of War and Violence' in Mahommed., Abu-Nimer ed. *Reconciliation, Justice and Coexistence: Theory and Practice*, Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2001, p.17

<sup>50</sup> Hamber, Brandon. 'Healing' in Bloomfield, *Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: A Handbook*, Stockholm: IDEA, 2003

dimension of conflicts is assessed. Programmes as well as symbolic forms of healing are found under track-two diplomacy. Amadiume and An-Naim argue that despite the fact that societies choose different paths to reconciliation, healing remains a pre-requisite for effectiveness.<sup>51</sup>

### 0.2.6 Reconciliation

Clark defines reconciliation as a process which involves the rebuilding of fractured individual and communal relationships after a conflict with the view towards encouraging meaningful interactions and co-operation between former antagonists.<sup>52</sup> Reconciliation therefore involves more than just the absence of physical violence to relationships between people as it requires the reshaping of relationships to lay the foundation for future interactions between victims and perpetrators. Track-two diplomacy creates social space for reconciliation to take place since the theory is mostly concerned with the building of relationships and the restoration of societal harmony. Under track-two diplomacy, reconciliation is an expected outcome of the processes used. It is believed by the proponents of the theory that what brings people together is the acknowledgement that a wrong was done and that it needs to be worked on in the form of reconciliation. This study, through indigenous approaches implemented by the people of Bikita, explores how reconciliation is perceived in Zimbabwe and in Bikita in particular in as far as management of political views is concerned. People's perceptions have an impact on the success or failure of reconciliation policies. As already indicated earlier on, track-two diplomacy creates social space for victims and perpetrators to meet and engages them in dialogue. This process results in a closure of bad relations. In Galtung's opinion, reconciliation is a result of closure on the past.<sup>53</sup> Thus,

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<sup>51</sup> Medium, Ifi. and Abdullahi. An-Na'im, *The Politics of Memory – Truth, Healing & Social Justice*. London: Zed Books, 2000, p.23

<sup>52</sup> Clark. Phi, 'Hybridity, Holism, and Traditional Justice: The Case of the Gacaca Courts in Post-Genocide Rwanda', *George Washington International Law Review*. Vol. 39 (765), Oxford: University of Oxford - Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, 2007, p.8

For a nuanced discussion on what reconciliation entails see Lederach, John Paul. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1997; Rigby. Andrew, *Justice and Reconciliation after the Violence*. London: Lynne Rienner, 2001.

<sup>53</sup>Galtung. Johan, 'After Violence, Reconstruction, Reconciliation, and Resolution: Coping with Visible and Invisible Effects of War and Violence' in Mahommed, Abu-Nimer, ed., *Reconciliation, Justice and Coexistence: Theory and Practice*, Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2001, p.17

track-two diplomacy facilitates a closure to past hurts, enabling victims and perpetrators to reconcile and start the healing process.

Although this study is informed by track – two diplomacy and the above discussed concepts, it should be noted that the theory is not exhaustive in explaining conflicts resolution, healing and reconciliation. Since most conflicts are multidimensional, so are their causes. Various approaches were at times resorted to, some analytical whilst others were drastic and cohesive depending with the situation. To that extent, this study does not seek to be rigid in comprehending these issues. The study is also guided by empiricism. The need to include empiricism in the study is motivated by the desire to have a holistic understanding of conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation approaches and systems.

#### *0.2.7 Literature Review*

In this study I am in conversation with two categories of literature on transitional justice. By transitional justice, I refer to a set of approaches, mechanisms and concerns that arise following a period of conflict, civil strife or repression. There are studies on formal or official approaches that can be adopted after a violent conflict and works on unofficial and indigenous interventions made at community level. A review of literature on conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe and elsewhere helps shed light on how Zimbabwean scholarship on the subject has developed.

#### *0.2.8 Healing and Reconciliation through Official Lenses*

Brian Raftopoulos, a leading scholar on peace addresses the problems and challenges confronting the Zimbabwean polity in attempting to build a politics of reconciliation in the context of gross inequalities inherited from settler colonial rule and within the constraints of particular international pressures.<sup>54</sup> Raftopoulos traces the political responses that emerge in a situation where a combination of unresolved long-term historical grievances and undemocratic post-colonial state exists. Raftopoulos argues that such a scenario create more problems for healing and reconciliation <sup>55</sup> Building from the above insights articulated by Raftopoulos, one becomes aware of other factors that impact negatively on policies and processes of healing and reconciliation. Raftopoulos further

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<sup>54</sup>Brian Raftopoulos, “Unreconciled Differences: The Limits of Reconciliation Politics in Zimbabwe,” in Brian Raftopoulos and Tony. Savage, eds., *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2005, p. viii.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

stresses the need for good governance if sustainable healing and reconciliation is to be achieved. In addition to the observations made by Raftopolous, the Bikita case study also highlighted the need to pay attention to the history, cultural nuances, wounds, feelings, and deeply rooted perceptions of the victimized individuals and communities. The study argues that in this case indigenous approaches become, not just alternative, but possible supplement to established processes.

Victor de Waal praises the first decade of Zimbabwe's independence for the spirit of reconciliation exhibited by both blacks and whites. Victor de Waal argues that reconciliation was what Zimbabwe needed at the time to facilitate a smooth transition and to avoid the flight of white farmers, industrialists and foreign investors.<sup>56</sup> However, De Waal's perceptions are narrowly conceived. As Terence Mashingaidze rightfully observed, the policy of reconciliation failed to reconcile whites and blacks.<sup>57</sup> In addition, Mashingaidze notes that the policy occluded black to black reconciliation yet blacks had also fought each other and destroyed each other's property during the war.<sup>58</sup> Mashingaidze argues that the failure to realize this need on the part of the government together with the amnesties and clemency orders proclaimed by the president militated against a successful policy of reconciliation.<sup>59</sup> Far from being successful as De Waal claims, the Bikita case study highlighted that there was need for black to black reconciliation. Confirming Mashingaidze's observations, indeed the black population in Bikita was polarized following the conflicts and political violence which they had experienced during the war. This indicated that the 1980 policy had failed to heal and reconcile victims and perpetrators, contrary to Victor De Waal's claims. This current study therefore attempts to show that the 1980 policy of reconciliation was defective because of its top-down or state-centric nature. As such the policy failed to promote healing and reconciliation in 1980 and the years following. State-centric approaches such as amnesties, clemency orders and blanket reconciliation pronouncements that were employed in 1980 were perceived by victimised individuals, families and communities as "foreign and English" (*eChirungu*). Victimised individuals and their families and communities at large conceived these approaches as insensitive to their pain, loss, suffering and trauma. In other words, people wanted the government to use approaches are seen as being sensitive to their

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<sup>56</sup> Victor, De Waal, *The Politics of Reconciliation: Zimbabwe's First Decade*, London: Hurst and Company, 1990, p48.

<sup>57</sup> Terence, M.Mashingaidze, 'Zimbabwe's illusive National Healing and Reconciliation Processes from Independence to the Inclusive Government 1980-2009,' *Conflict Trends*, vol.1 (2009).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p 2.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

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Pamela Machakanja considers the issue of transitional justice in Zimbabwe after a decade of politically motivated violence. Machakanja stresses the importance of examining the relevance of instituting transitional justice system with a view to making informed choices.<sup>60</sup> Machakanja identifies twelve conditions that need to be in place if reconciliation, national healing and integration are to succeed within the country. These are, legislative reform, political will, transformative and restorative justice, civil society engagement, consensus building, truth-telling, education for national healing and reconciliation, research on trauma and grief and counselling for trauma and grief among others.<sup>61</sup> This study argues that the major possibility for reconciliation and integration lies in the identification, formulation and utilisation of the philosophical cultural heritage of Zimbabwe, hence the need for culturally rooted responses to the challenges of reconciliation, healing and reconciliation.

Luc Huyse identifies the four elements that need to be put in place if reconciliation and integration are to succeed. These include healing the wounds of the surviving victims of conflict and violence, retributive and restorative justice, historical accounting via truth-telling and reparation of material and psychological damages.<sup>62</sup> He argues that this was what was lacking in Zimbabwe's 1980 policies of reconciliation put in place by the government. This study argues that these elements for healing and reconciliation advocated by Luc Huyse can be achieved through the use of indigenous approaches such as *dare*, individual or community cleansing ceremonies and even the retributive justice of the *ngozi* spirit. To that extent, the study argues that the country can actually make use of these approaches to achieve healing and reconciliation.

Richard Wilson highlights the shortcomings of TRCs in the healing and reconciliation process. Wilson explores how the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up to deal with the human rights violations of apartheid from 1960-1994. While the religious sector largely applauded the Commission's religious-redemptive language of

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<sup>60</sup>Pamela Machakanja, "National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe: Challenges and Opportunities," *South Africa: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation*, 2010, p 12-15.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Luc Huyse, "Zimbabwe: Why Reconciliation Failed", in David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes and Luc Huyse, eds., *Reconciliation after violent conflict: A Handbook*, Stockholm: Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, (IDEA), 2003, pp. 34-39.

reconciliation, Wilson notes that TRC had very little effect on popular ideas of justice, healing and reconciliation.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, Wilson argues that truth commissions are insufficiently attentive to social integration and reconstruction. In addition, Wilson argues that truth commissions are remote from local realities. Whilst this study agrees with Wilson's line of thinking it goes further to posit that in a country like Zimbabwe where the environment is not conducive for the setting up of a truth commission because the ruling elite fear prosecutions, indigenous approaches can be used to recover truth and accountability. Interviews can be carried out at community level with victims and perpetrators narrating their stories. As the case study indicated, indigenous approaches recover truth, accountability, reparations or compensation and reconciliation, although they cannot be used as a replacement for a truth commission. However, P. Hayner notes that, indigenous approaches, if wisely used, can replace or make formal truth commissions unnecessary. This can be achieved by making use of an unofficial community based mechanism that responds to recent violence or a society that is hesitant to confront violence directly.<sup>64</sup>

Martien Schotmans advises that formal transitional justice mechanisms such as formal courts and TRCs must operate in the first few years after a conflict has come to an end. The initial period of transition is usually characterized by a high level of uncertainty on the part of the witnesses or victims who often seem to be reluctant to publicly testify about what happened in the past.<sup>65</sup> However with the lapse of time and the consolidation of democratic transition, people may feel more secure and more naturally encouraged to publicly share their experience about the past. By this time the TRC may have closed its offices and compiled their final report. Yet the need for truth telling, healing and social recovery may stand as a crucial element in the transitional process. Thus at such a time what could have not been accomplished by TRC's or other formal transitional justice mechanisms can be supplemented by traditional truth-telling and reconciliation mechanisms. Therefore, the major role of traditional mechanism would be that of filling up any gaps that have not been filled by formal justice mechanisms.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Richard. A Wilson, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

<sup>64</sup> Priscilla Hayner, *Unspeakable Truth: Transitional Justice and the Challenge of Truth Commissions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, London: Routledge, 2010, p. 186.

<sup>65</sup> Martien Schotmans, "The Transitional Justice gap in Sierra Leone: Is there, a need to fill it and can traditional-based justice do the job?" Paper presented at the International Conference on Taking Stock of Transitional Justice, Oxford: Oxford Transitional Justice Research Oxford University, 26-28 June 2009.

<sup>66</sup> Martien Schotmans, *The Transitional Justice gap in Sierra Leone*, p.6.

Nigusie Angessa's work compares formal justice systems with indigenous approach systems. He analyses how truth is difficult to recover through the formal justice system as compared to indigenous approaches. In his opinion, truth through the formal justice may be illusive since the ultimate decision depends on the data obtained from the plaintiff, the defendant and the witness and on other circumstantial evidence. However, all these sources of data may fail to present the truth due to acts of corruption by those who should be delivering justice. When judgement is eventually passed, social, moral and psychological factors may bring repercussions on to future peaceful coexistence of conflicting parties and their families.<sup>67</sup> Thus, Angessa argues that formal justice systems usually create turbulent conflict dynamics instead of bringing long lasting solutions to the conflicting parties. In this case, Angessa's work is an eye opener to the weaknesses of formal justice system. The work exposes that while the system can bring perpetrators of political violence to book through imprisonment, in most cases perpetrators have been declared innocent due to lack of evidence to convict them, or they were able convince the jury of their innocence. The study argues that such approaches are not victim-centred and fail to deliver justice and promote healing and reconciliation.

#### *0.2.9 The Supplementary Role of Traditional Approaches in Healing and Reconciliation.*

The re-focusing of attention from state-centric approaches to indigenous approaches has also resulted in the growth and expansion of literature on traditional approaches of healing and reconciliation. The appeal of local oriented processes lies in their potential to repair or restore communal relationships via familiar, locally grounded processes that all community members can associate with. Similarly, Aurther observed that the interest in the traditional justice from the 1990s to present is linked to perceived limitations in the initial formulation of the transitional justice concept.<sup>68</sup>

Kierran McEvoy and Anna Eriksson advocated for the use of indigenous approaches to be used in conflict resolution. They argue that:

It makes sense that communities themselves should take primary ownership over the establishment of programs, demand what type of intervention might be suitable who is going to be involved, which values will guide their work and devise their own

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<sup>67</sup>Nigusie Angessa , "The reintegrating role that can be played by a traditional conflict resolving mechanism in the Eastern Hararghe Zone of Oromiya Regional State Ethiopia," in *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol 13, no 1 ( 2013) p 20.

<sup>68</sup>Paige Aurther, "How Transitions Reshaped Human Right: A Conceptual History of Transitional Justice," *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol 31, 2 (2009), pp321-67.

benchmarks as part of a broader “legitimation process.’ They are of the opinion that those who have been on the receiving end of violence and criminality should be the direct participants in the process as innovators, planners and implementers<sup>69</sup>.

McEvoy and Eriksson`s argument deepen one`s understanding on community-based restorative justice programs being suited for embedding a bottom-up culture of human rights. Community participation in decision-making processes regarding the rebuilding of a society adds transparency, accountability, legitimacy, and importantly, minimize the risk of renewal of conflict. Experience has shown that top-down approaches to conflict resolution are often not enough to resolve deeply extended legacies of violent past. To that extent top-down initiatives need to be accompanied by culturally appropriate grassroots programs.

Mark Findley and Ralph Henham note that traditional approaches have the potential to deliver justice and heal victims because transparent, inclusive and consensual practices of restorative justice are catalyst factors for the empowerment of local communities and the promotion of grassroots ownership of justice. In their opinion, such apparatus can add legitimacy to a vital transformation of deeply ingrained culture of violence which in turn reduces the risk of renewed conflict.<sup>70</sup> Their arguments give one an opportunity to think through issues of grassroots ownership of justice. Indeed by mainstreaming the transformation process beyond the confines of state structures, a deep sense of ownership can be created among the communities which are most affected by violence.

There are a number of cases where traditional approaches have been put in practice. Tim Murithi`s work shows the effectiveness of traditional approaches.<sup>71</sup> In Northern Somalia or Somaliland, traditional leadership institutions and methods of resolving disputes were used to bring together clans and create a legislature and government. Murithi argues that by drawing upon these traditional Somali practices and combining the traditional practices with modern institutions of governance like the parliament, Somaliland, with its capital in Hergesia, has succeeded in maintaining a degree of relative peace and stability. Some have

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<sup>69</sup>Kieran McEvoy and Anna Eriksson, Restorative Justice in Transition: Ownership, Leadership and “bottom-up” human rights” in Sullivan .D and L. Tifft, eds., *Handbook of Restorative Justice*, Devon: William Publishing, 2006, p.g322-323.

<sup>70</sup>Mark Findley and Ralph Henham, Transforming international criminal justice: Retributive and Restorative justice in the trial process, Devon: Willan Publishing 2005, p. xxiii

<sup>71</sup> See Murithi, Tim and Pain, David, ed. *African Principles of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation*. Addis Ababa: Shebelle Publishing 1999; Tim Murithi, ” African Approaches to Building Peace and Social Solidarity,” *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol. 10, Number 1 (2010). p. 16

<sup>70</sup> Ibid



argued that Somaliland might be the first genuine African nation state because it was created using indigenous cultural norms of governance. Thus Murithi's work shows the efficacy of indigenous approaches since they have been applied elsewhere and with success.<sup>72</sup> For Zimbabwe the use of such approaches can also reveal interesting practices as the Bikita case study will show.

James Latigo, in his article on Uganda, convincingly summarized the effective role of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Latigo highlights that traditional mechanisms are not designed to deal with mass political violence, rape or gang rape, or with most war crimes.<sup>73</sup> It is within this framework that it becomes necessary to compliment the efforts of indigenous approaches with the criminal justice systems. His work opens a new dimension to processes and mechanisms of healing and reconciliation as it shows that multiple pathways to justice and reconciliation are necessary.

Victor Igreja's work on Mozambique demonstrates the effectiveness of rituals in bringing about justice, healing and reconciliation. In spite of the government's explicit neglect of the need for a transitional justice policy, war survivors in Gorongosa successfully resorted to their own socio-cultural mechanisms to create healing and attain justice and reconciliation. Igreja's work is evidence that traditional approaches like *gamba* practices are able to deal with the often forgotten effects of civil war such as property conflicts when refugees return and the increase in marital violence.<sup>74</sup> Again his highlights the fact that healing and reconciliation processes have spiritual dimensions which formal approaches to justice cannot address. As evidenced by the Bikita case study, burial rites of the disappeared or those who died away from home, *kuviga vakatetereka nesango nevakafira mumasango* were able to heal victimized families and communities. Furthermore, these approaches reconciled the living with their dead relatives. Lastly, this Mozambique example is testimony to the fact that traditional mechanisms can act as alternative instruments in cases where an official transitional justice policy is absent, delayed or crippled by political constraints.

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<sup>73</sup>James Latigo, "Northern Uganda: Tradition-based practices in the Acholi Region", in Luc Huyse and Mark Salter, eds., *Traditional Justice and Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: Learning from African Experiences*, Stockholm: Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 2008. .

<sup>74</sup>Victor Igreja, "Restorative justice and the role of *magamba* spirits in post-civil war Gorongosa, central Mozambique," in Luc Huyse and Mark Salter, eds., *Traditional Justice and Reconciliation after Violent Conflict*, pp. 61-82.

Joe Alie's case study of Sierra Leone shows the effectiveness of cleansing and reintegrating rituals, particularly in dealing with ex-combatants and returning abducted children. Alie's work demonstrates that rituals and cleansing ceremonies have succeeded to a greater extent in restoring family and clan relations.<sup>75</sup> Similar works which show the effectiveness of rituals and ceremonies were those done by Honwawa.<sup>76</sup> These works are of significance to the study as they prove that traditional approaches are varied, catering for mental, physical, psychological and spiritual aspects of healing and dealing with the past for both victims and perpetrators since both are usually involved in these ritualistic processes.

Bert Ingelaere's work on Rwanda focuses on the use of traditional justice and reconciliation system known as *gacaca*. The approach enabled the country to try and judge some of the perceived perpetrators of Rwanda's 1994 genocide. The lesson to be learnt from the Rwandese experience is that the traditional approach used was largely organized on the basis of local community involvement. It was the local community which encouraged the perpetrators to acknowledge their heinous acts. Victims were involved in determining what reparations needed to be made so that the perpetrators could be integrated into the community.<sup>77</sup> Although there has been criticism of the manner that *gacaca* tribunals have been implemented, the approach was very popular with the ordinary Rwandans who preferred them over the national courts and the ICTR for dealing with the genocide crimes.<sup>78</sup> In addition, *gacaca* proceedings speeded up the backlog of genocide-related cases. Similar works on the effectiveness of *gacaca* were also done by Murithi whose work clearly

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<sup>75</sup> Joe Alie, "Reconciliation and Traditional Justice: Traditional Based Practices of the Kpaa-Mende in Sierra Leone," in Luc Huyse and Mark Salter, eds., *Traditional Justice and Reconciliation after Violent Conflict*, p.21

<sup>76</sup> See Honwawa, Alcinda. "Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Rural Mozambique," *Mozambique Peace Process in Perspective*, (1998).

<sup>75</sup> Bert Ingelaere, "The Gacaca Courts in Rwanda," in Luc Huyse and Mark Salter, eds., *Traditional Justice and Reconciliation after a Violent Conflict*, pp. 33-57

<sup>76</sup>Ibid

illustrates the role of indigenous approaches in efforts to consolidate peace and restore social solidarity.<sup>79</sup>

In his book *No Future without Forgiveness*, Desmond Tutu focuses on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Here the principles of the cultural world-view known as 'Ubuntu' helped to guide the thoughts and actions of some of the perpetrators and victims who came before the TRC to confess and forgive. Tutu argues that the notion of *Ubuntu* sheds light on the importance of resolving conflicts, promoting healing and reconciliation through the principles of reciprocity, inclusivity and a sense of shared destiny between peoples. In addition, *Ubuntu* provides a value system for giving and receiving forgiveness since social spaces for sacrificing or letting go of the desire to take revenge for past wrongs is provided.<sup>80</sup> The lesson for peace building from the *ubuntu* tradition is that by adopting and internalizing the principles of *Ubuntu*, societies can contribute towards creating healthy relationships based on the recognition that within the web of humanity everyone is linked to everyone else. Furthermore, the principles of *Ubuntu* provide an inspiration and suggest guidelines for societies and their governments, on how to legislate and establish laws which will promote reconciliation and peace building.<sup>81</sup>

While traditional approaches and institutions provide us with many lessons which academics and practitioners in the field of peace can incorporate into peace building processes, there is need to recognize that most of these approaches have their limitations as these processes largely exclude the youth and women. As such there is need to combine the best lessons that tradition has to offer with progressive modern norms and standards for the protection of human rights. In this way a combination of tradition and modernity can enable Zimbabwe in particular and African in general to reconstruct their continent by drawing upon their cultural heritage. In concurrence, Nigusie Angessa, in his article on Ethiopia, also suggests that the justice system alone cannot provide sustainable solutions unless it is coordinated and harmonized with the indigenous conflict resolution and reconciliation mechanisms. This is mainly because formal justice systems do not usually deal with resolving the socio-psychological tensions among conflicting parties, a gap traditional mechanisms can

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<sup>79</sup> Tim Murithi, "African Approaches to Building Peace and Social Solidarity", *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol 10, Number 1 (2010).

<sup>80</sup> Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, p.23 ff.

<sup>81</sup> Villa-Vicencio, Charles and Verwoed, Wilhelm ,eds., *Looking Back, Reaching Forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa*, Cape-Town: University of Cape Town, 2000

help to fill.<sup>82</sup> For Arriaza, traditional justice is not just an alternative or possible supplement to more established processes. Consequently Arriaza argues for a fully integrated approach, one in which conventional legal processes are not privileged and multiple pathways to justice can be interwoven, sequenced and accommodated. He further observes that traditional approaches are laudable because they are culturally relevant since they draw upon authentic indigenous identities and rituals, tapping into profound spiritual worlds based on non-western concepts of community harmony and well-being.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, Arriaza `s analysis does shape the direction of this study. As the Bikita case study will show, justice built on established customs of reconciliation and compensation is more appropriate and pragmatic in close-knit community settings, where people remain dependent on continuous social and economic relationships with their neighbours.

The effectiveness of indigenous approaches have also been witnessed in Sierra Leone and East Timor. In these two countries traditional justice has been officially recognized and sanctioned. The 2000 Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Act authorized the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to seek assistance from traditional and religious leaders to facilitate its public sessions and in resolving local conflicts. In East Timor, the government incorporated a more exclusive range of customary law into their Reception and Reconciliation Commission (CAVR) community hearings. According to Stanley, three quarters of the reconciliation hearings involved a local dispute resolution practice named *nahe biti boot*. In both countries then, albeit to varying degrees, traditional justice has been used to supplement and legitimize more “formal” transitional processes. Rwanda is the only country where an adopted traditional accountability mechanism has been wholly made part of the official post-conflict justice policy and granted a central role as part of the formal state system.

### **0.3 Methodology**

The thesis takes a qualitative approach and applies discourse analysis to obtain data. I settled for the qualitative approach given that the research sought to understand the lived experiences of those directly involved in the liberation struggle up to the time of the GNU.

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<sup>82</sup>Nigusie. Angessa, “The reintegrating role that can be played by a traditional conflict-resolving mechanism in the eastern Hararghe zone of Oromiya regional state, Ethiopia,” in *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol. 13, Number1, (2012), p.33. .

<sup>83</sup>Laura. Arriaza and Naomi Roht- Arriaza, “Social Reconstruction as a Local Process”, *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, vol2: 2, (2008),pp. 152-172.

The research started with the source identification exercise of files, reports, newspapers and published books relevant to the study. This was followed by the documenting exercise of archival sources on Bikita and on the 1970s liberation era, secondary sources such as newspapers, published and unpublished research papers by academics on the liberation struggle and on conflict and conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation, academic reports on people's lived experiences, feelings, perceptions, representations, interpretations and attitudes about issues under study. The relevance of written sources was that they shaped the direction of the study and complemented oral interviews. Discourse analysis of the data gathered during desktop research helped the researcher to closely assess shared events which emerged during oral interviews. Some of the events gathered during desktop research were investigated and verified once the researcher got into the field. Furthermore, the study consulted and interrogated this literature thoroughly to give a most representative analysis and documentation of the nature of conflicts witnessed in Bikita from the 1970s right up to 2013 and their effects on rural individuals, families and the communities which were the major theatres of war.

Much of this study is based on oral interviews and focus group discussions with ordinary peasants, headmen, chiefs, ex-combatants, victims of political violence, perpetrators of violence, youths, historians and leading scholars in the area of peace and reconciliation. In total, I conducted more than one hundred and eighty-five interviews and six focus group discussions. Fieldwork began in January 2013 right up to 2015. The more I listened to the lived experiences of the ordinary people of Bikita, the more I came to realize that political violence did occur in Zimbabwean communities. From the oral testimonies of the ordinary people, I again came to realize the important role they played in promoting healing and reconciliation outside official sanctioning. Interviews and focus group discussions not only opened a window in which one could look at the pain, suffering, bitterness and anger of victims of violence but they also opened up new areas of inquiry. From interviews, I was able to gather grassroots' views and perceptions about issues of healing and reconciliation. These views were very important as they made me realize that processes of healing and reconciliation need to involve many actors such as the government, civil society organizations, victims, perpetrators, their families and the wider community.

In-depth face to face interviews were valuable to the research as they provoked discussions at the same time enabling the researcher to follow up ideas not anticipated in the

research items. Moreover, interviews were valuable for this research because they gave the researcher an opportunity to catch the non-verbal gestures and the hesitation which signalled alternative interpretation. In this way, interviews helped or assisted in confirming or refuting the theories of conflicts constructed during desktop research. Furthermore, during interviews, the researcher had insights on issues that are not open to desktop research; issues to do with people's attitudes, feelings, their opinions, reactions as well as issues about historical facts and events. The direct exchange of information between the researcher and the informant helped in identifying emotional excesses and sentimental expression. On the basis of this kind of psychological information it was possible to come up with new questions as part of cross-examination of the information offered verbally. In a nutshell, interviews and focus group discussions afforded the researcher the opportunity to act as a catalyst and more effectively control the situation and hence the results. The researcher maintained her pledge to withhold names of informants who indicated not comfortable at having their names written, while using names of those who so preferred.

In order to gain more insight into issues raised during the interviews, but that could not be adequately addressed within that framework, testimonies were also used. This helped to explore the extent to which some people were affected by the conflicts. Individual testimonies are realistic methods of obtaining information. They added life to the research by bringing out the raw pain, suffering or trauma experienced by victims of political violence, making issues of political violence a reality not a distant narration by some reporter. However, although oral interviews are valuable sources of history they are also partial accounts which are constrained by their interior position and are often contradictory. To overcome this weakness I conducted a broad range of interviews not only with victims or ex-combatants who were too eager to tell their story, but also with other actors such as perpetrators, scholars, politicians, chiefs and headmen. Many gave their side of the story too providing facets of the story of conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation in Bikita. In some cases pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of those who were not comfortable with having their names put in writing. A daily journal was used to enable the researcher to carry out regular recording of observations and conversations made during interviews. The daily journal afforded the researcher a moment to reflect and write her own perceptions and interpretations of the day's events. This enabled the researcher to identify gaps in the knowledge gathered. Additional people who needed to be interviewed were identified during the process.

Oral interviews, individual testimonies, focus group discussions and questionnaires were supplemented with a broad corpus of written material. There was an intensive use of archival information from the National Archives of Zimbabwe; Historical Manuscripts, Internal Affairs files, Red Cross, IDAF and Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) files. Native Commissioner`s monthly and annual reports provided a general information on demography, natural resources and other notable developments in the district. A lot of information could be gleaned on the district from these documents. Although helpful in understanding the people of Bikita`s past, these archival reports were generated for administrative purposes. They hardly consider African perspectives on the aspects they focus on. In this case oral interviews and individual testimonies became the most appropriate source to reconstruct a broader and deeper perspective on the people of Bikita and their lived experiences.

#### **0.4 Structure of the Thesis**

This dissertation is divided into seven substantive chapters in addition to the introduction and conclusion. **Chapter 1, entitled Lost lands, Deprived Livelihoods and Mass Nationalism in Bikita District** is a context setting chapter which unpacks the history of colonial land dispossessions, evictions, relocations, taxation and destocking policies that made the people of Bikita to support the liberation war effort *en masse* in the 1970s. The chapter argues that nationalist politicians of the 1950s and 60s and the guerrillas of the 1970s did not arouse peasant discontentment against the Rhodesian state, rather peasant resentment against the state had intensely developed way before the arrival of nationalist movements and the guerrillas in Bikita. Within this backdrop, guerrillas only encouraged and intensified peasant resentment against the Rhodesian state by elucidating the effects of land dispossession on the African population nationwide.

**Chapter 2 entitled War-Time Conflicts and Violence in Bikita Distict 1976-1979,** **aims** to show that over and above the armed struggle, there was an entanglement of class, intra-class, and gender, generational and intra-familial struggles which were playing themselves out in Bikita. Out of greed, hatred, personal interest, jealousy, family rivalries, animosities and even as a survival tactic, peasants in Bikita “sold” each other out to either the Rhodesian Forces or to the guerrillas. This saw the unleashing of violence by the warring forces on rural Bikita as they retaliated against civilians. Acts of violence by the Rhodesian Forces included forcible removals of rural people from their villages, burning of homesteads,

beatings, wanton arrests, abuse and rape of women, confiscation of livestock as collective punishment for supporting guerrillas (Caute, 1983, CCJP and CIIR, 1975). Murders and displacements were everyday occurrences. Many from Bikita became refugees mostly in Mozambique and Zambia. Torture was extensively used by the RFs to extract information about guerrillas. Disappearances, abductions, public display and disrespectful handling of mutilated bodies of guerrillas killed in action were common. The chapter also considers the great deal of violence committed by guerrillas against collaborators and informers of regime forces, chiefs, councillors, police, guard force, headmen, and agricultural advisors and against the civilians such as the rural African Elite. In short Bikita became a theatre of violence. As a result, the community emerged from the war, divided, traumatized and scarred. There was need to repair the social fabric through healing and reconciling both victims and perpetrators of the war.

**Chapter 3 is a critique of state initiatives towards healing and reconciliation in the aftermath of the 1970s war of liberation, 1980-1989.** The newly elected ZANU PF government made use of Western approaches. These included amnesties, national reconciliation policy announced on public media, selective demobilization of ex-combatants only leaving out civilians, selective financial repayments focusing mainly on the ex-combatants, drug therapy for those suffering from trauma and psychological problems. No arrests were made to bring perpetrators to justice nor were there any apologies given to victims of the war for injuries, loss of life, property or livelihoods. Here I critique these mechanisms arguing that they were defective in nature since they were top-down and state-centric. I argue that these approaches did not pay attention to the lived experiences of the violated individuals, families and communities. Consequently residues of unprocessed anger, bitterness, pain, hatred and feelings of hopelessness persisted despite the gestures made by the government.

**In chapter 4 entitled Beyond State Interventions: Healing and Reconciliation through Indigenous Approaches In Bikita, I** show that while official attempts at dealing with the legacies of conflict and violence looked bleak, the ordinary people in Bikita took the initiative to promote healing and reconciliation (outside official sanctioning) at grassroots level through the application of indigenous approaches such as *kugeza ropa* (cleansing ceremonies at individual, family or community levels), *kuripa ngozi* (repayment / appeasement of avenging spirits), *kurova guva* and *kudzosa mweya yevafi mumusha*,



(conducting burial rites for those who died away from home or when the whereabouts of the deceased's remains are not known), *kugeza mweya yetsvina/yerima* (exorcism of evil spirits) among others. These approaches proved effective because of their sensitivity to people's lived experiences. I argue that traditional approaches, particularly rituals, effectively addressed trauma and grief. When these are employed to deal with the effects of violence and trauma, they create social space for people to express and construe their suffering locally as compared to models of counselling or drug therapy imposed earlier on by the state. Rituals are used to repair the emotional and psychological aspects of the conflicts. Recovery is gained by helping people to come to terms with the trauma that is by externalizing it in some way. That traditional approaches such as rituals have a holistic approach since they deal with the physical, psychological and social dimensions of the conflicts and their effects is another theme explored in the chapter.

**In Chapter 5 I examine the recurrence of politically motivated violence in Bikita at the turn of the new millennium between 2001 and 2008.** In this chapter I argue that although the Bikita community had made efforts, through indigenous approaches to facilitate healing and reconciliation, there were a number of issues which needed to be dealt with at the national level to curb the recurrence of violence in Zimbabwe. At national level perpetrators were never made accountable of their actions, sending a wrong signal that one can get away with 'murder'. Secondly, Zimbabwe as a nation had failed to address and rid its people of the culture of violence. Thirdly, the nation failed to purge the war-mentality from the people's psyche. All these factors were to haunt the nation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In addition the emergence of multi-parties, in this case the Movement for Democratic Change, ZANU PF's refusal to relinquish power and its assorted economic benefits, heightened the levels of violence. In the chapter I argue that both bottom up and top bottom approaches are necessary in conflict resolution.

**The last chapter entitled Bikita in the Context of The Global Political Agreement (GPA): A New Step in the Reconciliation Agenda?** reveals and interrogates additional indigenous approaches to healing and reconciliation put in place by communities in Bikita under Zimbabwe's 2008 Global Political Agreement. I argue that although the government established the Organ for Healing and Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), rural communities that were largely affected by the 2008 violence in Bikita failed to go through processes of healing and reconciliation. ONHRI failed to carry out any official investigations

on cases of political violence nor was accountability, justice or compensation of losses achieved during its tenure. The chapter goes on to discuss how, due to frustrations with the GPA's failure to implement and sustain efforts on healing and reconciliation, the ordinary people once again took the initiative to promote healing and reconciliation through the use of indigenous approaches. Through the chief's courts, *dare ramambo*, repayments for cattle or small stock stolen during the election crisis were returned, repayments for ngozi were conducted and harmony was restored between the conflicting parties, community and individual cleansing. Rituals of expurgation were also conducted to wash off bad luck or the spirit of death (*kugeza mweya werufu*). The chapter shows that although the legal route was taken for cases of murder and rape with perpetrators brought to book, family members who remained behind went ahead and paid reparations to the victims' relatives indicating the significance and relevance of indigenous conflict resolution approaches. The work done by the Bikita communities reveal that communities have more expertise and viable approaches able to address and heal victims and perpetrators.

**Chapter 7: Conclusion** This chapter concludes the study. The chapter provides an assessment and evaluation framework of healing and reconciliation programs in Zimbabwe. This chapter makes conclusions about the ineffectiveness of top-down state-driven approaches in promoting healing and reconciliation. In addition, the chapter highlights the contribution of the research to scholarship on Zimbabwean discourses on healing and reconciliation. Lastly, possible avenues for future research are also highlighted in the chapter.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 The Lost Lands, Deprived Livelihoods and Mass Nationalism in Bikita.

Loss of land... means losing the graves of one's father and the home of one's childhood; the sense of community; of the ordered pattern of nature, or the continuity of meaning of life, is destroyed. When people lose their land, there can only be deep and bitter resentment. (Director, British Institution of Race Relations, 1969.)

### 1.2 Introduction

This context setting chapter unpacks the history of colonial land dispossessions, evictions, relocations, taxation and destocking policies that made the people of Bikita to support the liberation war effort *en masse* in the 1970s. These processes and policies left peasants in Bikita in a state of increasing resentment towards the Rhodesian state. The chapter argues that nationalist politicians of the 1950s and 60s and the guerrillas of the 1970s did not arouse peasant discontentment against the Rhodesian state, rather peasant resentment against the state had intensely developed way before the arrival of nationalist movements, politicians, and the guerrillas in Bikita. Within this backdrop, guerrillas only encouraged and intensified peasant resentment against the Rhodesian state by elucidating the effects of land dispossession through policies such as the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 (NLHA) on the African population nationwide.

### 1.3 Land Dispossessions and the Impoverishment of Blacks in Bikita

An analysis of the multiple land dispossessions experienced by the blacks in Bikita from the inception of colonial administration in 1895 to the time of the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 is necessary understanding why Blacks in Bikita became easily mobilized by nationalists and later guerrillas in the 1970s. In pre-colonial times, present day Bikita was the heartland of the Duma Confederacy established in 1700 by Mutindi.<sup>84</sup> In 1895, The Duma Confederacy came under colonial administration and was divided into three districts namely Ndanga, Victoria and Gutu.<sup>85</sup> Present day Bikita fell within the boundaries

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<sup>84</sup> For a nuanced discussion about the Duma in present day Bikita see works by Richard Mtetwa, 'The Political and Economic History of the Duma People of South Eastern Rhodesia from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to 1945,' DPhil. Thesis, University of Rhodesia, 1976.

<sup>85</sup>GN13/1899 Ndanga-Government Notice 13 of January 20, 1899.

of Ndanga. The name Bikita came into use after 1924 when the Secretary of Native Affairs advised the Administrator in council to subdivide the district into two for effective administrations. He proposed that the Southern part of the district was to remain as Ndanga while the northern part was to be called Bikita.<sup>86</sup>

Under the new dispensation, Ndanga district was made up of Nyajena, Makaure, Jiri and Ndanga reserves.<sup>87</sup>In 1908, Howman, then NC for Ndanga recommended the abolition of Nyajena and Makaure reserves as the reserves were said to be suitable for European occupation.<sup>88</sup>He explained that Makaure and Nyajena reserves were all in fine open and well watered country. The type of soils in the two reserves were said to be suitable for European farming.<sup>89</sup>In addition, the area was said to be situated on a gold belt, and close to Fort Victoria. As such it was recommended that part of Nyajena reserve between the Tokwe and Mtilikwe rivers should be surrendered to the company, a move which adversely affected the people living in Chief Nyajena and headman Maregere`s areas Sixteen thousand people living in Nyajena reserve lost their land and left behind their homes and the familiar environment as they surrendered their land to the Company. They were relocated to Ndanga reserve which adjoined the reserve in the east.<sup>90</sup>

This move increased overcrowding in Ndanga. The situation was further worsened by the fact that on top of receiving sixteen thousand blacks who had been relocated. Ndanga was also made to surrender to the company her Southern part which comprised of rich soils. The loss of land in the Southern part of the reserve robbed many families of the rich soils which they had successfully grown huge crops of sorghum. Thus the expropriation of land in both Nyajena and Ndanga reserves exposed families to food shortages as they were made to move to the northern part of the reserve which had poor soils. The rocky soils where the majority of the Africans were resettled, lacked sufficient humus and the calcium and phosphates essential for plant growth. In addition the soils washed away too easily by heavy rainfall, a situation which resulted in poor harvests.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>S2929/8/1- Government Notice 594 Bikita District.

<sup>87</sup> N3/24/34 Native Reserves in Victoria, 1901. Also see A3/2/20/5 Report of the Native Reserves Commission, 1925.

<sup>88</sup> N2/2/117/47, Howman NC Ndanga, to SN 19.1.1908.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

<sup>90</sup> See N2/2/121 Report on Native Reserves in Ndanga District for Native Reserve Commission, ix, 1909.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Headman Maregere, Bikita, 12 May 2013.

In 1909, Chief Chiwara and his people lost all their land to the company. Eighteen of his villages except Mudukuti who moved to Gutu moved into and settled among Chief Marozva` area worsening pressure on the land which was already inadequate and congested. The situation of Marozva, Jiri and Chipinda areas were further worsened by the movement of the Hlengwe people in these areas as they were trying to escape payment of Company rents. In the same year the BSAC went on to take east of Ndanga reserve for the creation of Devuli and Humani ranches. The move again, saw people being evicted from Southern and Eastern Ndanga and resettled either in Chiefs Mushayi, Dekeza, Dzoro, Mukuti, Ziki, Budzi or Musika`s areas which comprised of worthless soils and barren grazing lands.

The introduction of ranches in Bikita again affected Africans in terms of land and the quality of their cattle. Devuli and Humani ranches were extensively fenced to keep both people and wildlife outside. More land was required to create these ranches, a requirement which saw many Africans losing their land, homes and possessions in the process. Again the move saw Africans in Bikita losing their rich grazing lands to pave way for European cattle which were to occupy the ranch and benefit from the rich pastures. On average, 15 000 acres of land was considered as the minimum amount of land suitable for ranching but where opportunities allowed or permitted, a large ranch like Devuli had as much as 50 000 acres whilst Humani comprised of 38 000 acres of land. To stock up the ranches, ranch owners simply looted the bulk of their cattle from Africans in surrounding communities and added to their herds. The indigenous cattle were, “remarkable for their hardiness and ability to keep their flesh during the long dry season when pasturage is poor.”<sup>92</sup> In 1908 NC Mashonaland reported that many ranches were being filled with cattle simply looted from Africans. Stray cattle were taken over as the Company`s property. In most cases, Company police also took herds of cattle from villages as fines for failure to destock or pay taxes, moves which only served to further impoverish Africans.<sup>93</sup>In the ranches African cattle were then upgraded by crossing with bulls imported from Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) Nyasaland (Malawi) and South Africa which helped to add weight and quality to the existing durability. It should be noted, however that as the ranches owners were enriching themselves, Africans were further entrenched into poverty through the loss of both land and cattle. Loss of land to the ranch owners made the management of African cattle difficult since most

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<sup>92</sup> Weinmann, *Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1923*, University of Rhodesia, Department of Agriculture, Occasional Paper No.4, Harare: University of Rhodesia, 1972, p.101.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Chief Mabika, Matsai, 15 May 2013.

farmers could no longer rotate animals around the seasonal patchwork of “sweet” and ‘sour’ grass.<sup>94</sup>The result was that the quality of African cattle was compromised. These developments inevitably gave rise to African resentment.

In 1910, the BSAC went on to take half of chief Jiri’s reserve on the West. It was pointed out that the Company had been approached for land in that area since it was highly suitable for cattle rearing and European occupation. NC Jenkinson explained that the reserve was near the railway and Fort Victoria making it excellent for European settlement.<sup>95</sup>Rozva valley which had good red soils was also recommended for European settlement. The same period also saw the people of Chief Chikwanda losing their land to the BSAC and being settled again in Ndanga district amongst Marozva, Chipinda and Jiri’s people creating further land shortages and overcrowding in the reserves.<sup>96</sup>Chikwanda’s land was said to be excellent for tobacco growing, hence it was also in great demand. Consequently, the Government commissioner advised the director of Land Settlements that the boundary of Chief Chikwanda’s reserve “be fixed as most of the land would be sold immediately.”<sup>97</sup>

The net effect of all these movements and land expropriation under early colonial administration was that the Africans were left in a state of poverty. In Ndanga, Makaure reserve lost 58 000 acres of land, Jiri, 20 000 acres, Nyagena 20 000 acres of fertile lands and Ndanga reserve 30 000 acres of explicitly red and black fertile soils. The Bikita case study has shown that while the Europeans got rich black and red soils, which boosted up their agricultural production or harvests, Africans were moved to rocky, mountainous, remote, dry and sandy areas which were far from roads and railways so that it became impossible to produce any surplus or if it was produced, to send produce to markets. All these moves created feelings of resentments towards the Company. As Africans were congested in the reserves, their land was put up for sale to willing white settlers or companies and churches. In Ndanga district, most of the land within forty miles of Fort Victoria was taken up by Dutch farmers. The Dutch Reformed Church also took up land for the establishment of Morgenster and Pamushana Mission.

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> N2/2/117/28 Jenkinson Report of Jiri Reserve, 1911.

<sup>96</sup> See N2/2/120, Bazeley, NC Ndanga, to SN.Report on Native Reserves in Ndanga District for Native Reserve Commission, ix.1914.

<sup>97</sup> N3/24/34 Drew, NC Victoria, to CNC, 10.xii.

Land expropriation reduced the acreage put underutilisation by African families. By 1910 about 2 751 846 acres of land were at the disposal of about 48 000 people within the district.<sup>98</sup>As such the average per head was 57.3 and the density per square mile was 11.2.<sup>99</sup>By 1905 the number of cattle was calculated as 18 880.Thus, Ndanga became densely populated. In addition, it also became clear that the issue of cattle and grazing land had not been considered when these processes of land expropriation were taking place.

Africans were further impoverished by a new burden of rents, taxes and dipping fees which were required by the colonial administration. White farmers imposed high rents to allow Africans “the privileged of continuing to occupy their ancestral homes.” Africans were further burdened with taxes in the form of hut taxes which was at &1 and a further levy of 10s. for each wife. By 1914, compulsory dipping fees were at 2 shillings per head.<sup>100</sup> By 1923, three quarters of all African cattle in Ndanga was subjected to compulsory dipping. Those who failed to pay these taxes were evicted from European farms and pushed into the reserves. In 1910, landlords when obliged under the Private Locations Ordinance to pay a licence for each of their adult male tenants, promptly raised their rents further milking the already impoverished peasants. In 1912, ranching companies subjected their tenants to grazing fees. In the same year, when an outbreak of east coast fever imposed restrictions on the movement of cattle, landowners in Ndanga raised their rents.<sup>101</sup>Others ordered African cattle to quit and in 1913 some European farmers refused to allow Africans who had been evicted from their farms to move cattle across their land. As a result Africans were obliged to sell their cattle for whatever price they were offered. These chain of demands, impositions and enforcements naturally provoked hostility towards the settler government. The NC Ndanga observed that the rent on unalienated land caused ‘great dissatisfaction’ and, was ‘extremely unpopular’ in Ndanga .He also reported that grazing fees were greeted with ‘a storm of protest and angry feelings, and the people complained eloquently that the landowners ‘will be taking money from their flies in their kraals next; better be dead than pay such demands.’ That White farmers demanded excessive grazing fees and ‘made considerable profit out of the unfortunate natives’ was also noted by a British High

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<sup>98</sup> See N9/1/6 Ndanga Annual Report for Year Ended 1910.31.iii, 1911;N2/2/120 Bazeley, NC Ndanga to SN.Report on Native Reserves in Ndanga District for Native Reserve Commission, ix.1914;

<sup>99</sup> N9/1/6 Ndanga Annual Report for Year Ended 1910.31.iii.

<sup>100</sup>See Palmer Robin and Neil Parsons, eds. *The Roots of rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, London: Heinemann,1977, p.255

<sup>101</sup> N9/1/12 Report of the NC Ndanga for Year Ending 1912.

Commissioner for South Africa, Lord Athlone who visited Rhodesia in 1926.<sup>102</sup> Athlone further observed that as dipping was compulsory, the temptation to make exorbitant profits in this manner must be difficult to resist.<sup>103</sup>

As the European farmers descended to such contemptible methods of enriching themselves at the expense of the Africans, it was not surprising that many blacks in Ndanga retaliated by starting veld fires near farms to destroy pastures or to destroy fences surrounding European farms. Land expropriation, forced relocations, loss of cattle, compulsory dipping fees and an array of rents and taxes left many Africans with a very bad impression of the whites. Vambe argues that:

in the face of such evidence, it is scarcely surprising that most Africans should feel that the White Rhodesian farmer...represented the worst in European racial feelings...He was harsh, domineering, unfair, inhuman and took the law into his own hands when dealing with Africans, some of whom felt that they were placed in the same class as the cattle or even lower.<sup>104</sup>

Thus it is clear that Africans in Ndanga already resented colonial administration due to its oppressive and segregatory nature. In a desperate attempt to salvage a living from this harsh environment, African farmers in Ndanga decided to cultivate large areas of land. With the help of the plough, peasants opened up large fields for cultivation. In Ndanga ploughs had already been acquired by the Hlengwe who moved around the district ploughing large pieces of land for Ndanga community in return for cash, grain, small stock and cattle.<sup>105</sup> The majority of the people in Ndanga acquired their first ploughs after the First World War. By 1916 there were 51 ploughs in Ndanga and thirty scotch carts.<sup>106</sup> The cultivation of more land enabled Africans to produce a little surplus for sale thus earning money to meet their financial tax obligations. NC Ndanga observed that from 1910, men from Ndanga had stopped going to the mines and farms to work there as cheap labourers. In actual fact, the plough robbed the labour market of a number of African workers. In Ndanga, those who possessed ploughs charged \$5 .00 -6 .00 a month in the ploughing season which was by far more than the mine or farm worker earned.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> DO9/3 Athlone to Amery 15 October 1926.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Lawrence Vambe. *An Ill-Fated People*. London, 1972, p.149.

<sup>105</sup> N9/1/13-'14 Ndanga Annual Report for years 1910, 1911 and 1913.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.



These activities of opening up more land for cultivation with the help of the plough brought Africans in conflict with white mine and farm owners and, with colonial administration. IN his 1922 report NC Ndanga complained that:

The African practice of making large fields with the help of the plough, the amount of land for cultivation had progressively diminished and people in mountainous areas had began ploughing up and down the slopes, thus causing soil erosion.<sup>108</sup>

On the same note, Kegwin the Director of Native Development pointed out that:

African old methods of land usage were steadily reducing the value of the reserves. If things were allowed to continue as they were, there would be a great drop in fertility and a great deal in liability due to food shortages. In addition a cry would be raised by the Africans that land granted to them in the reserves was insufficient.<sup>109</sup>

Thus the plough was attacked for enabling people to cultivate large pieces of land. It was pointed out that the plough caused soil erosion and had reduced grazing land. Thus to ensure that Africans “utilized the land that had been allocated to them in the reserves effectively and conserve the soil, the Rhodesian government adopted the policy of centralization in 1927.

### *1.3.1 Centralization in Bikita 1927-1947*

Centralization was adopted by the Rhodesian government as a means to stop Africans from ploughing large pieces of land and to “enable the Africans to utilize land effectively.” In reality, centralization was put in place to push Africans on their labour market .Shifting cultivation had enabled Africans to earn cash for their tax obligations thereby affecting labour supplies on European farmers and mines. European farmers were strongly opposed to the emergence of an independent African class of entrepreneurs. .If Africans were allowed to produce more, they would be in a position to compete with European farmers on the markets. Thus centralisation would stop the African practice of shifting cultivation, reduce the land underutilisation by Africans and so prevent Africans from producing a surplus. At a conference, Prime Minister Huggins declared that the next step to be undertaken was to assist the chiefs to apportion land and to stop those natives who had been growing big areas to enable the other natives a chance to make a living.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> S1563 Annual Report for 1922.

<sup>109</sup>H.S Kegwin, Native Department, NADA, 1923, p.11-13.

<sup>110</sup>S1542.A6/1937 Address by Huggins at Joint Conference of the Rhodes Agricultural Union.

Centralization referred to the centralizing of cultivated lands into large squares and setting aside of other land squares for commercial grazing during the planting season. After harvest, *chirimo*, cattle were allowed to clean up crop residues and uneaten herbage in and around cultivated land.<sup>111</sup> The grazing lands were then rested. Villages were laid out in lines, *maraini*. Within Ndanga, land was surveyed and divided into new lines for houses, new sites for schools and churches. The creation of new lines resulted in yet fresh evictions and relocation of whole communities and families in Ndanga heightening peasants' resentment towards the colonial state. Africans had lost their lands to the whites, on top of that the settler government had burdened them with unfair and costly dues, taxes, grazing fees and rents at a time when they were producing less because of poor soils. The slightest opportunity enjoyed by Africans in the early years of the century when they tried to put more land under use was short lived, as the settler government once again came up with ways to frustrate their efforts to produce a surplus and be independent. By now the Africans were well aware that it was not company policy to promote African agriculture or the wellbeing of blacks, hence the resentment Africans felt towards the white farmers.

Under centralization, a multitude of agricultural rules such as destocking, contour ridges, gully dams, rotational grazing were insisted upon to combat soil erosion. In addition, centralization prohibited intercropping, cultivation of wetlands and near streams. All these moves had the effect of frustrating the African peasantry. In Ndanga, the cattle population had increased in the first decades of the twentieth century. In 1910 Africans owned 250 000 head of cattle. By 1925 this had increased to one and a half million. By 1927, the cattle population alone numbered nearly two million and if sheep and goats were included, the total number of livestock approached three million mark. Increase to livestock population was due to the fact that those who returned from work with money to spare invested it in cattle. The Compulsory Dipping Act of 1914 attributed to the increase in stock because dipping reduced the mortality rate among the calf crop.<sup>112</sup> In the district, it was reported that soil erosion was largely a result of the overgrazing practice of using land for creating individual wealth by means of stock rising.<sup>113</sup> To try and reduce the number of cattle in the district the government reduced the number of cattle in bride-price payments<sup>114</sup> but the problem of overstocking

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<sup>111</sup> See S1542.A4 1937/1939 Assistant Agriculturist.

<sup>112</sup> S235/571 Bikita Annual Report for 1933.

<sup>113</sup> S235/510 Bikita Annual Report for 1932.

<sup>114</sup> The marriage Ordinance of 1912 had limited the number of cattle in bride-payment to four. However the people in Bikita had resisted the limit of four to eight. As a result the problem of over-stocking persisted such

persisted. Still convinced that lobola was indissolubly linked to overstocking in the district, in 1912 NC for Bikita suggested that 50% of *lobola* should be paid in cash for legal purposes and thus forced people to sell their cattle which they had kept for *lobola*.<sup>115</sup> Despite these measures, the problem of overstocking persisted. Concern about soil erosion caused largely by overstocking saw the Rhodesian government appointing and posting to the reserves specially trained erosion-control demonstrators and soil conservation officers to Bikita to undertake the indoctrination of the African people on the dangers of soil erosion and measures for its control.

Erosion-control demonstrators also suggested that the district must destock. Destocking was met with resistance amongst the rural populace in Bikita. The society valued cattle not merely for economic but for their social and spiritual values. Cattle constituted a significant measure of personal worth, the people's traditional source of lobola, the medium of payment for tribute or of retribution for wrong doing. Lastly cattle were a focus of tribal festivities, rain making ceremonies as well as ritual and social observances of all kinds. Convinced that the irrational behaviour of Africans and not its own policies were the root of the land problems, colonial administration used a combination of persuasion and forces to ensure compliance with its policies. Destocking was forcibly implemented in 1952. Once again, leverage was exerted on chiefs and headmen, who were given culling quotas that their villages had to meet. Failure to meet these quotas resulted in the chief and sometimes the entire village having to pay fines. In other cases, police confiscated excess cattle from the villages without paying compensation and these were taken to Human and Devuli Ranch. Other cattle from Bikita reserves were also taken to white farms such as Sambu, Tokwe and Turwi Ranches. Thus smouldering resentment felt by Africans towards the issue of cattle confiscated explains why Africans stole from these ranches during the liberation struggle. The ordinary people also resented the fact that whilst they were being told to destock, chiefs were allowed to keep more cattle. Chief Muuyandiyani Mabika is said to have had 120 herds of cattle during this period. It is alleged that the cattle were obtained through confiscation from those who were said to be having many cattle.

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that by 1951 the cattle population alone numbered nearly two million and if sheep and goats were included, the total number of livestock approached three million mark.

<sup>115</sup> S1563, Annual Report for 1951 and 1952.

Mr Nhamo Shanyare recalled how the use of African-erosion demonstrators also made them to be very unpopular with the majority of the Africans. He stated:

We were also angry with these Africans who had chosen to become willing agents of the colonial governments against their own brothers. Imagine, they were the ones who fined us or called the police to arrest us or telling them that so and so has many cattle. Together with the chief, these were not good people. Whilst they insisted that we should destock they were allowed to keep as many cattle as they wanted. Where was the fairness in all this? That is why during the war we perceived them as our enemies and even the guerrillas concurred with us.<sup>116</sup>

Thus destocking was also another issue which triggered peasant resentment towards the colonial government.

Another complaint by the peasants concerned what they termed “unnecessary increased workload”<sup>117</sup> created by the methods advocated by the state which imposed a much more onerous labour system to maintain fertility in the fields and to meet state conservation models. According to Chimanya, people hated conservation because in all these measures, they were not consulted neither were they advised why this was done. Instead people were arrested for failing to comply with the laws of the conservation. People bitterly resented having to waste labor in soil conservation work, which, in their opinion did nothing to increase productivity or to give up an insurance against famine in the wet gardens.<sup>118</sup> In 1952 NC Bikita noted that hardly any labor was forthcoming from the district for conservation work. Chief Mabika explained that:

people resented the digging and moving of cattle manure to improve soil fertility saying it was an onerous task. They also resented fixed cultivation, arguing that it increased the number of weeds and thus the work required to control them. In addition, contour ridges and storm drains also required a tremendous amount of hard labour. All these requirements had to be fulfilled before one could be allowed to use their holding.<sup>119</sup>

Africans resented the manner in which agricultural officer enforced these requirements. The African demonstrators came to be seen as hated agents of unjust and arbitrary authority. Demonstrators behaved like policemen enforcing arbitrary and capricious offenses. In Bikita demonstrators ordered people to uproot all sweet potatoes. They told people that no mixed crops should be found in any land. If people disobeyed, they were punished. Evina Masukume recalls that:

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<sup>116</sup> Interview with Nhamo Shanyare, Bikita, 23 August 2013

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Tarisai Mudunguri, Matsai, 17 September 2013.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Chimenta, Matsai, 18 September 2013.

<sup>119</sup> Interview with Chief Mabika, 19 September 2013.

In the 1950s, the introduction of soil conservation brought in a lot of miseries to many people. People were asked to make ridges which took an awful lot of time. Again, people were fined for not making them to a given standard. Also the numbers of cattle owned by an individual were reduced. Permits were granted to a few individuals. Securing a dip-card was difficult.<sup>120</sup>

Young men and women carried the burden of the requirements Act since they were the ones called upon to build contour ridges and digging of storm drains by their parents. James Juru, who was a youth then, recalled that those days as young men they were bitter with the state since the Act threatened their prospects of progressing in life such as marrying a wife and establishing an independent family. It also hampered their prospects of ever accumulating cattle. Their hopes of ever making it in life were shattered by the Act since they were excluded from having land.<sup>121</sup>

According to Mapipi Nerumedzo:

The youth became very vocal during those days. Most of them were in the rural areas since there was no immediate employment for them. At the same time there was no land available for them. So there was nowhere for them to go and they became active members of the ANC. It was very easy for the ANC to recruit youth for the party that championed their grievances because the rural folks were already angry with the government. The people's anger borne of their frustrations with less land was the primary organizational factor that made it easier for the party to recruit membership.<sup>122</sup>

As such the support peasants rendered to nationalist politicians and later to the guerrillas should be understood within this backdrop.

Accumulation of cattle, farming success and independence lay at the centre of Shona identities, yet these factors were ignored by the Act. The NLHA had disregarded all these economic and social core values of the Africans. Older men and women also viewed the implementation of the Act with concern. Permanent holdings, housing stands and the exclusion of young men from owning land holdings meant that their children could not build their homes closer to them. Prior to the Act at least one son in a family was expected to build his home close to his parents. Parents took comfort in this arrangement, secured in the knowledge that the son would have the primary responsibility to assist them in old age. As such many parents resented the fact that the Act had disrupted relationships and social bonds. Stock and land restrictions threatened the broader social networks. This became the major

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<sup>120</sup> Interview with Evina Masukume, 21 September 2013

<sup>121</sup> Interview with James Juru, Ziki, 25 September 2013

<sup>122</sup> Interview with Mapipi Nerumedzo, Bikita, 5 June 2015.

concern amongst the peasants. Marriages, generally were secured by the payment of eight to ten heads of cattle to the bride's family. Under destocking, a family was allowed to keep only four herds of cattle. As such this complicated the whole *lobola* process. Thus the Act was viewed as striking at the very core of the Shona culture and tradition. In addition, the relatively affluent had prior to the implementation of the Act, used surplus cattle or grain to hire labor and to secure support from other community members. All these practices became increasingly difficult with the implementation of the Act heightening the peasants' resentment towards the Rhodesian state.

In addition to this, agricultural demonstrators who were tasked to assist in the soil and environmental conservation further aggravated an already tense and dangerous situation.<sup>123</sup> It was the job of demonstrators to enforce contour ridging-*makandiwa*. What emerged from the interviews carried out is that African agricultural demonstrators were bitterly resented by many in the reserves for being willing tools of the colonial state. They became enemies of the people for forcing peasants to construct contour ridges and for interfering with peasant agricultural activities. Consequently peasants in Bikita resisted efforts made by demonstrators through a variety of responses. Some people verbally and physically attacked the demonstrators. For example in 1954 headmen Chimbwembwe and ten peasant farmers in his village were fined by NC Bikita for assaulting demonstrator Mutumbairi in Matsai. In Mukanganwi's area, 15 cases of fines were charged on peasants who refused to plough contour ridges. In headmen Njiva's area, demonstrator Masasire was assaulted after pulling out and destroying the crops of peasants who had planted along ridges.

In some cases, both demonstrators and white development officers were attacked, verbally or physically as were some chiefs and headmen who tried to implement the new measures. Headman Zero who became a champion of these policies in Bikita became very unpopular amongst his people as they perceived his actions as aimed at getting the favours of the colonial administrators. In some cases peasants in Bikita resorted to passive resistance. Those peasants ordered to build roads and erect soil conservation measures, working on gully dams, contour ridges and rotational grazing resisted government measures by not going to work at all, whilst others resorted to deliberately doing the work inadequately.

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<sup>123</sup>Interview with Chief Mazungunye, 8 March 2013, Bikita.

Thus in Bikita peasants frustrated and resisted demonstration work. In addition, the enthusiasm with which the demonstrators carried out their tasks in most cases led to clashes with the chiefs, headmen and the ordinary people. That demonstration work was unpopular in Bikita as evidenced by the 1941 report which stated that plot holders were still using old methods of farming on their main lands as they could still raise good crops with such methods on unfertilized soil.<sup>124</sup> Chief Mabika explained that demonstrators were resented mainly because they perceived themselves as a better class of educated Africans amidst the rural populace. As a result they were insolent in most cases to elders and looked down upon those who had not been to school.

To the Rhodesian state, these policies of centralization, conservation, destocking and agricultural demonstrators were viewed through the lenses of modernization. Mahmood Mamdani defines modernization as the “brazenly arrogant nature of direct rule.”<sup>125</sup> Mamdani further observed that direct rule was based on the assumption that:

All native tradition was backward and needed to be eradicated. From this point of view, the cultural state had to be wiped clean as a prelude to a new historical trajectory, one that would hold the promise of modernity and progress. That development had necessarily to lead to the westernization of the colonial society.<sup>126</sup>

As such the enforcement of a multitude of agricultural rules and the articulation of these policies by demonstrators, land development officers and chiefs should be understood within the context of high modernism. These colonial agents demanded the construction of drain strips, gully dams, contour ridges, rotational grazing. More and more demands were made as demonstrators demanded that there was to be no intercropping, no cultivation of wet lands all in the name of modernization. Unfortunately, this high modernization was characterized by radical disjuncture with history, culture, tradition and social norms and values. The modernization process focused exclusively on the scientifically transformed and better future. This indifference towards Shona social and economic interests embittered many peasants. In the eyes of many peasants, the colonial rhetoric of soil conservation, improved livelihoods, exposure to agricultural extension services did not in any way shape and influence the peasants' immediate livelihood opportunities.

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<sup>124</sup>S1563, Annual Report for 1941.

<sup>125</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, “Commentary: Mahmood Mamdani Responds to Jean Capon's Review,” *Transformation*, 36, p.98.

<sup>126</sup>*Ibid.*

Thus there were strong objections to these policies of modernism. To the Shonas, their indigenous farming methods regarded shifting cultivation which the act prohibited as a key mechanism for the preservation of soil fertility. Intercropping which the Shona practiced was meant to reduce weeding and for the preservation of moisture and protection of soil erosion by heavy rains yet all these technics were despised under ‘modernism.’ To the peasants these demands made by demonstrators were “unnecessary” and increased their workload. Thus peasants bitterly resented having to waste labor in soil conservation work, which, in their opinion did nothing to increase productivity or give an insurance against famine.

In Ndanga, there were clear signs of opposition to these policies of conservation.. Peasants destroyed 32 140 yards of grass strips and 40 952 yards of grass buffer strips had to be re-pegged in 1956 after having been destroyed by peasants.<sup>127</sup>Meanwhile, hardly any labor was forthcoming from Bikita for conservation work. The resentment felt by peasants in the district are captured in this testimony:

We bitterly resented all this conservation measures because it was just unnecessary work forced on us. We hated the demonstrators because they arrested us for failing to comply with their nonsense. They behaved like police. Their policies actually posed a wide threat to our production strategies, economic security and social networks that is why we opposed what they told us to do. When the comrades came, we told them about how the demonstrators were making our lives tough and miserable. You see we were really angry with Smith and his puppies and our anger had reached a boiling point. *Vakomana* appeared to be the only people who could deal with these agents of the Rhodesians.<sup>128</sup>

From the interviews it also emerged that peasants perceived these moves by the Rhodesian state as an extension of its influence in the peasants` everyday lives. Indeed the peasants could be excused for thinking along those lines considering the fact that state officials controlled and directed the use of land production. They also determined who could have access to farm land, how they used that land, they could also forbid cultivation in wetlands and stream banks which indeed was intrusion into the lives of the peasantry.

### *1.3.2 The Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA).*

Colonial policies of soil conservation through centralization and destocking made from the 1920s to the time of the passing of the NLHA by the colonial state did not succeed in Zimbabwe as a whole. Thus in 1944 Alvord the chief technician behind these agricultural

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<sup>127</sup>S.160.AGR.4/6/52 Monthly Reports, I.D.O Bikita, October and November 1953.

<sup>128</sup>Interview with Jairos Siyakurima, Bikita, 3 June 2015.



policies admitted that “we have wasted out time for seventeen years in conducting agricultural demonstration work.”<sup>129</sup> Alvord placed the blame on what he called lack of good husbandry practices by Africans. In his report, the Secretary for Native Affairs also concluded that Africans will never change to new farming methods without compulsion and control. As such he called upon the state to adopt “drastic methods” to combat the deteriorating ecological conditions in the reserves.<sup>130</sup> The Godlonton Commission also advocated for an authoritarian scheme, enforcing good husbandry in African agriculture by legislative and administrative means and to be applied more swiftly.<sup>131</sup> Thus in 1951 the Rhodesian government passed the Native Land Husbandry Act.

The NLHA dubbed by Alexander as “one of the most far-reaching land reform in Africa”<sup>132</sup> aimed at solving the problems of overpopulation in the reserves created by the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. The objective of the Act was to conserve the environment in the reserves through destocking, demarcations of individual plots and the demarcations of grazing lands.<sup>133</sup> In Phimister’s opinion, the Act not only restricted the right to hold stock but also the right to hold land in the African rural areas since the Act aimed at putting a stop to labour migrations between the rural areas and the urban areas.<sup>134</sup> One CNC explained, “By making a final allocation of land, the Native will either become a peasant farmer only or an industrialized worker with his tentacles pulled out of the soil.”<sup>135</sup> Thus the Act was also meant to support a wider system of exploitation in which Africans stripped of their land and stock would make available a supply of cheap labour.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>129</sup>S1193/F3 Alvord to Chief Agriculturist, 1/4/30.

<sup>130</sup> Quoted from Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, the CNC and director of Native Development, 1961, p.25.

<sup>131</sup> Report of the Godlonton Commission on Native Production and Trade, Salisbury, 1945, para.62.

<sup>132</sup> Quoted in Alexander Jocelyn, *The Unsettled Land, State-making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1890-2003*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2006, p.g44

<sup>133</sup>See A. Pendered and W.von Memetry, ‘The Native Land Husbandry Act of Southern Rhodesia,’ *Journal of African Administration*, 7, 3, London, 1955, p.55.

<sup>134</sup> Ian.Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890-1914*, London: Longman, 1988, p.236

<sup>135</sup> Ian. Phimister, The Combined and Contradictory Resistance of the struggle against Colonialism in C. Stoneman (ed.) *Zimbabwe’s Prospects: Issues of Race, Class, State and Capitalism in South Africa*, London, McMillan, 1988b, pp 238-9.

<sup>136</sup> According to Machingaidze Victor, the rapid growth of secondary industry soon after the Second World War necessitated the need for cheap African labor.For a nuanced discussion on this see V.E.M Machingaidze, ‘Agrarian Change from Above: The Southern Rhodesia Native Land Husbandry Actand the African Responses,’ *International Journal of African Historical Studies*,24, 3, (1991), MA, p. 560.

Part 1 of the Act which dealt with good farming practices provided colonial agents with powers to enforce the provision. Failure to carry out “good farming regulations” was punishable by a fine of one pound for the first offense, five pounds for the second and fifteen pounds for the third offense. For grazing without a grazing right the penalty was forced sale of beast. For cultivation without an arable right, the penalty was confiscation of the harvest which was then sold and the proceeds paid to the Native Department Fund. Part II of the Act reduced the size of arable plots, 6 acres in high rainfall areas and 8 acres in drier areas per family. Holders of arable rights in high rainfall areas were allowed six large stock or twelve small stock or a combination of both. Bikita was among the worst affected provinces where people were being forced to dispose 13 645 herds of cattle.<sup>137</sup> In addition, the Act enforced earlier policies under centralization. Under the Act peasants were also subjected to call-up to perform labour in the direct interest of the native inhabitants...in connection with the conservation of natural resources. Justifying the Act, Arthur Pendered, a colonial official commented that:

The time has come when all indigenous natives can no longer continue to maintain a dual existence as part time employees in the European areas and as part-time farmers in the native reserves far apart from its impossibility, it is not conducive to efficiency in either area, nor can the economy of the colony afford to offer satisfactory conditions in both areas for a dual mode of life.<sup>138</sup>

Clearly the whites did not want to acknowledge that the problems of land shortages in the rural areas were a result of the LAA of 1930. The problem of overcrowding in the reserves was conceived in terms of overpopulation and a result of this move, over 300 000 people were affected by the implementation of the Act.

### *1.3.3 Implementation of the NLHA in Bikita.*

In Bikita, technical officers held that the long lines established by centralization in the 1927s-40s suffered a range of weaknesses. It was pointed out that the implementers of centralization had trapped grazing land within areas designated as arable, rendering it inaccessible in the rain season.<sup>139</sup> These technical officers also pointed out that individual arable allocations had not been made and so there was no control on field sizes. Grazing was concentrated along the village lines and was thus uneven.<sup>140</sup> Thus, re-centralization was required throughout the district. In addition, the implementation of the policy saw huge arable

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<sup>137</sup> 6.5.9R/84273 F.H Dodd Administrative Officer NLHA, October 1958.

<sup>138</sup> S1217/9, Native Reserves Land Utilization and Good Husbandry Bill, 1956.

<sup>139</sup> S2929/8/9 Assessment Committee Report on Bikita and Zaka District.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

land blocks and long settlement lines being broken up requiring families to move and rebuild their homes in new villages. Often, Duma communities were placed under Rozvi and Rozvi communities were placed under Duma, triggering a lot of confusion and tensions within the district. Under the act, ten villages under Chief Jiri were moved to join Chief Mazungunye's headman Mutsimba.<sup>141</sup> On the other hand, four villages under chief Gumunyu were again placed under chief Mazungunye while eight more were placed under Chief Marozva.<sup>142</sup> The kraalheads of Imbayaro and Taruwana lived inside Gumunyu's community whilst some of their lands and people lived in Jiri's Murwira community.<sup>143</sup> Chief Ziki claimed that after the implementation of the NLHA he lost control of fifteen villages to Chief Mazungunye to create room for Devuli ranch.<sup>144</sup> Clearly one can see that colonial land policies led to the movements of families, disrupting livelihoods and creating insecurities.

In Nyahunda, much of the area had become part of the Nyahunda purchase area. Only a small portion remained as tribal trust lands. The Senior Delineation Officer in Nyahunda pointed out in his report that these developments had created a sense of frustration and feelings of land hunger as villages were moved from Nyahunda into Ziki's country at the time of the implementation of the Act. Whilst in Ziki's country, these villages were considered to be still under Nyahunda's control and still formed part of the Nyahunda community creating a lot of unnecessary confusion.<sup>145</sup> In Chief Mabika's Matsai area, a portion of the chief's area was alienated as European ranches, Devuli and Humani ranches. According to the District Commissioner's tax registers, there were 118 villages falling under Chief Mabika. Of these, 19 were situated on around Humani ranch whilst an additional four were situated around Devuli ranch.<sup>146</sup> Another portion of Matsai was placed within the limits of Zaka District. This move saw people under Chief Gudo and headman Chamburukira being relocated to Zaka District. In 1952, relocates from Chipinge were settled in Matsai under chief Mabika, creating further shortages of land. These were Chikukuti, Rukande, Rukutwi, Dekesa, Chipfumo, Kudzinesa, Chakaza, Mafaune, Chipimo and Madzeveka.<sup>147</sup> This testifies to the fact that peasants in Bikita and many others from Chipinge lost their lands during the

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<sup>141</sup>S2929/8/1 Bikita District

<sup>142</sup> S2929/8/1 Bikita District

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> S2929/8/4 Report on the Ziki Chieftainship, D.O Lathan 1964

<sup>145</sup>S2929/8/2 Report by Delineation Officer Lathan on Nyahunda Community 1958.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> S2929/8/1/ Report on the Mabika Chieftainship, Delineation Officer Lathan 1964.

implementation of the act. Under the act the size of their fields were reduced to six or eight acres per family.

Multiple loss of lands, evictions and relocation by the peasantry resulted in frustration and intense feelings of resentment towards the Rhodesian state. In Bikita homes were destroyed or abandoned during evictions and relocations. Naturally this led to peasant hostility against the Rhodesian state and the white development officers. According to Kairos Mamhambo:

Relocation was a painful experience that gave way to the loss of our homes and fertile fields. White land developers did not discuss with us anything. They simply told us to leave our homes for Bikita, this dry, rocky place. We left behind our homes in Chipinge, homes which we had spent money and time to build. The whites separated us with our neighbours and relatives, people who understood and cared about us. We were uprooted from our familiar surroundings, our environment and our lives. I can say when we left Chipinge in 1952, we left our lives behind us.<sup>148</sup>

My informants in Bikita explained that being forced to leave their homes meant losing friends and relatives. Relocations shattered their sense of belonging and social security. Many were also bitter with these relocations because they exposed them to the anger of the ancestors. As Mrs Jenny Kufakwavanhu explained, when they moved, they left behind the graves of their fathers. In, they were not given enough time to carry out relevant rituals informing their ancestors of their departure. It was and still is part of the Shona belief systems that before leaving their old homes, one should inform their ancestors about their intended departure by performing appropriate ceremonies. This way one is able to ask the ancestors to continue protecting the family. According to Mrs Jenny Kufakwavanhu:

The whites did not discuss with us anything. We were simply told to move. This worried us very much because we did not have time to tell our ancestors that we were leaving and to ask them to continue looking after us in the new areas.<sup>149</sup>

Thus, forced relocations heightened the anxieties of the Shona elderly peasants. This is because there exist a strong emotional bond between individuals and the territory of their ancestors. As observed by David Lan:

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<sup>148</sup>Interview with Kairos Manhambo, Bikita ,3 June 2015.

<sup>149</sup> Interview with Mrs JennyKufakwavanhu, Bikita, 5 June 2015.

Home for the living is essentially the home of the dead. Life is good if you live where your ancestors lived before you. The desire to live is equalled only by the desire to be buried where your ancestors lay. The land and spiritual attachment to the land are mutually inscribed.<sup>150</sup>

Given this background it is hardly surprising that peasants in Bikita became some of the most embittered opponents of colonial administration. That the implementation of the act did not take into consideration people's cultural beliefs and societal values is substantiated by the case of the Mpakwa people of Bikita. During the implementation of the act, Latham, Bikita's Delineation Officer observed that:

The implementation of the Native Land Husbandry Act has complicated the settlement pattern by moving the people without reference to their ancestral homestead. In Bikita the Gumunyu people now occupy land claimed to be an old settlement of the Mpakwa people, where their graves are situated. Consequently the ancestors of the group are said to be confused and generally in an uproar because the Gumunyu people around Nyika kraal are said to have moved the grave stones of some of the Mpakwa forebearers.<sup>151</sup>

The Mpakwa people were so disgruntled by the move such that the District Commissioner F. H. Dodd recommended that a compromise was necessary and two of the kraals Nyika and Chitave had to move to make peace with the spirit of the Mpakwa ancestors. Dodd proposed that Bodja could remain in his present position provided he changed allegiance from Gumunyu to Mpakwa or shift into the area delineated for Gumunyu.<sup>152</sup> Other villages were placed under Gumunyu but living in Mpakwa area and belonging to Mpakwa tax records included Goto, Makaure and Bandura.<sup>153</sup> Thus, forced relocations made the people of Bikita leave behind their ancestral graves, shrines, sacred mountains and forests all perceived to be the home and territory of their ancestors creating intense feelings of disgruntlements, hatred and bitterness towards the colonial regime. Loss of lands, homes, and forced relocation from ancestral graves as well as the forced leaving of shrines, sacred mountains and forests had the cumulative effect of moving peasant resentment from mere dislike of and bitterness towards the Rhodesian state to a more overt and militant expression of discontentment displayed by peasants in Bikita after the passing and implementation of the NLHA. Within this backdrop, it became easier for nationalists politician and later guerrillas to tap on the resentment and

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<sup>150</sup> David Lan, *Guns and Rain*, p.20.

<sup>151</sup> S2929/8/1/ Bikita District.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

hatred of an already embittered peasantry to get support for the liberation war. The same sentiments were also observed by D.C Bikita who remarked that:

The NLHA seems to have been applied with little concern as to the social organization of the local people and this has led to the break-down of the functional villages. Since the social order has been submitted to tremendous pressures, incidents of discontented and suspicious people were high. People were resentful in the extreme about the implementation of the NLHA and saw little reason for the movement of villages. As a result of the high percentage of malcontents in the area, nationalist politicians have found fertile ground and their influence is aggravating an already dangerous situation.<sup>154</sup>

For these reasons it is not surprising that peasants supported nationalists and guerrillas when they arrived in the district.

It should be noted also that multiple land expropriations and relocations destroyed the livelihoods of peasants in Bikita. Land alienation and relocations reduced acreage and curtailed the peasants' ability to produce sufficient food. Reduced acreage meant that peasants could not engage in intensive agricultural activities or practice double cropping per year as had been the case before. Peasants in Bikita struggled to adjust to the small pieces of land and in selecting the right patterns for planting. In addition, land allocated to Africans was not suitable for agriculture. Some lands were rocky and sandy while other lands were not suitable for the types of crops planted. Resultantly, peasants in Bikita were exposed to food shortages which were intensified by droughts. According to Mr John Urayai:

In the first two years of cultivation, the new lands would give a family around fifteen to thirty bags of maize per acre but once ploughed and the rains washed away the finer and more fertile particles of the soil, output dropped to even five to six bags per acre. Such an outcome made us resent the policy of NLHA because it had further reduced our pieces of land.<sup>155</sup>

Loss of land resulted in many families not being able to feed themselves because of the meagre harvest. This inability to sustain themselves gave rise to discontent because when land had been available before the coming of the whites they had been able to feed their families. Mr Nhau Siyakurima recalled how:

We were generally a self-sufficient people able to feed and clothe their families. However, because of Smith's policies we were made poor, what we produced from our fields was not enough to last us till the next harvest. Our cattle were taken and given to

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<sup>154</sup> S2929/8/1/ Report on the Mabika Chieftainship, Delineation Officer Lathan 1964.

<sup>155</sup> Interview with Mr John Urayai, Bikita, 3 June 2015.

whites who owned Devuli and Humani by the ranches. The loss of our fertile fields and cattle in addition to the fines and taxes we were made to pay angered us a lot.<sup>156</sup>

The Bikita case study showed that the 1950s evictions and relocations and their consequences did mark a turning point in heightening peasant resentment towards the Rhodesian state. For many in Bikita, relocations meant the loss of power to control their physical place which again resulted in permanent social and economic disarticulation. Mr Mathew Mutero pointed out that:

Colonial land policies undermined our potential to produce adequately. Over the years we could not contain our anger and bitterness such that when nationalists arrived Bikita district was actually one of the first areas of intense peasant support for nationalism. During the 1970s when the guerrillas arrived, the district was also an area of deep peasant commitment to the liberation war. Colonial policies were behind all this.<sup>157</sup>

Loss of lands under colonial policies cut off peasants' relationships to their familiar environment. This meant that some of the peasants of Bikita's land use techniques and knowledge about soil, crop suitability, herbs, edible plants and tubers became redundant buttressing Michael Carnea's argument that, forced resettlements de-capitalizes the affected population, imposing opportunity costs in the forms of lost natural capital, lost man-made physical capital and lost social capital.<sup>158</sup> Chiriseri Chiriseri who was a young boy when his family moved from Chipinge recalled how:

My father lamented the loss of crucial herbs and plants which he used to treat people and cure diseases. You see my father was a traditional healer and our familiar forests in Chipinge were rich in these plants and herbs, most of which could not be found in Bikita. As a result, whenever he ran short of some of the herbs which could not be found here he had to travel back to Chipinge to collect some. Sometimes he could not discharge his duties to the full of his potential because he would have run out of the herbs.<sup>159</sup>

From the above one can see why the act was unpopular with the majority of the African peasantry. It disrupted their way of life, their means of survival and disrespected and belittled social values and norms.

The implementation of the Act meant that women were further alienated and segregated as far as land ownership and control was concerned. Before the act, women had cultivated their crops such as pumpkins, sweet potatoes, rapoko and rice in wet lands and

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<sup>156</sup> Interview with Mr Nhau Siyakurima, Bikita, 3 June 2015.

<sup>157</sup> Interview with Mathew Mutero, Bikita, 5 June 2015.

<sup>158</sup> Michael Carnea, 'Repairing the Fractures of Involuntary Resettlements: Introduction,' p.5.

<sup>159</sup> Interview with Chiriseri Chiriseri, Bikita 5 June 2015.

river banks, practices banned under the act. The implementation of the Act meant that a household had to adhere to its fixed holdings. Such a move only served to erode the basis of women's independence rooted in their control of certain crops and types of arable land.<sup>160</sup> Mrs Magiie Mutero explained how relocations compromised their livelihoods as women. She explained that the area around Gwindingwi where they had lived before relocation was rich in clay suitable for pottery. Many women in the area, including her had made pots for personal use and for selling. Unfortunately they were relocated to Svike-Svike which is located on the fringes of the Devuli ranch, an area which does not have the type of clay used in pot making. Mrs Mutero pointed out that they lost a trade as a result of forced relocations. Their trade in clay pots was destroyed together with the benefits they had enjoyed.<sup>161</sup>

There were also areas which were abundant in plant creepers whose fibers were used to weave mats *mhasa* baskets and brooms, in environments familiar to local people. Women from Bikita had made money from the sale of these items, a trade lost when they were evicted from their places of origin. It was difficult to find these reeds, grasses or fibers in the new and unfamiliar environment.

#### *1.3.4 Opposition to the NLHA in Bikita.*

The NLHA provoked a wide range of responses in Bikita.<sup>162</sup> However, as Ian Phimister observed, the literature on the NLHA has long recognized the intensity of resistance but has shed little light on precisely who led and participated in it.<sup>163</sup> In Phimister's opinion, reserve entrepreneurs, motivated by the desire to safeguard their disproportionate hold over land and cattle, were key in leading the resistance and so in shaping nationalism. However, the Bikita cases study showed that both the old and the youth offered resistance to policies of centralization, destocking and contour ridges. The response to the Act included refusal to enter into labour agreements with the new European owners of their homelands. Others drove their cattle onto European farms. NC Coleman observed that people strongly objected to the act as an abrogation of moral economy, they condoned European science, represented by the

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<sup>160</sup> Interview with ambuya Maria Jekero, Matsai, 10 September 2013.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with Mrs Maggie Mutero, Bikita, 5 June 2015.

<sup>162</sup> For a detailed official discussion on African Opposition to the NLHA see NAZ S2827/2/2/3, volume 2; NC Annual Report 1955; NAZS2827/2/2/5, volume 1; NC Annual Report 1957; NAZ S2827/2/2/8, NC Annual Report 1961.

<sup>163</sup> See Ian Phimister, 'Re-thinking the reserves: Southern Rhodesia's Land Husbandry Act Reviewed,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19,2, (1993) p.233-9 In this work Phimister argues that 'reserve entrepreneurs' motivated by the desire to safeguard their lands led resistance against the Rhodesian state. Many others also affected by NLHA followed suit.



beacons which marked their new lands as an offense to the spiritual order.<sup>164</sup> The effect of all this is that Bikita became one of Rhodesia's "troubled spots." In its 1960, the Internal Affairs department remarked that:

Bikita and Matsai were political hot-beds of the district. The community spirit has been of a low order over the years. Tribesmen have been implicated into acts of violence and opposition to law and order. The people are becoming politically induced. The people have been moved from European farms then under the NLHA the rocky portions that they had received after the creation of reserves were further reduced by 1951. This possibly explained why they are such a disgruntled people.<sup>165</sup>

Thus it can be argued that dissatisfaction with many of the requirements under the NLHA saw peasants in Bikita supporting nationalist activities. The nationalist parties concentrated on issues of immediate concern to the peasants such as land hunger that was being created by the obnoxious NLHA, conservation and contour ridges. At rallies the Act was attacked and the rural populace was promised a reversal of these unfair practices once the Rhodesian state was removed from power. By April 1961, security intelligence reports were indicating that the aggressive policy of nationalist politicians in the rural areas had succeeded in turning the Bikita rural masses into supporting them. Speeches of the nationalists were growing militant and even the local peasants were also following in the lead of the nationalist. They reported that:

The NDP has used the government's land policy as the principle weapon in inciting disaffection towards the government in the rural areas in their attempt to drive a wedge between the chiefs and their people. It is now abundantly clear that both in concept and application, the Native Land Husbandry policy has ignored in some ways both tribal authority and native law and custom and so enabled the agitator to foment trouble and opposition.<sup>166</sup>

The point that was missed by the commissioners is that nationalist politicians had not roused peasant resentment towards them but only heightened the resentment because African peasants were already a disgruntled lot when guerrillas arrived. The effects of the activities of the nationalist movements like the NDP were that peasants took the initiative to attack and destroy symbols of the colonial system and further threatened violence on all officials of the system including chiefs, demonstrators and colonial authorities in de-stocking. Violence became so widespread that both the government and chiefs were looking for ways and means to stop it, a situation not only experienced in Bikita but nationwide. Chiefs feared for their

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<sup>164</sup> 27.6.68/100842 Internal Affairs, 1960

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid; also see 28.18.8F/98432 Summary Report on Chief's Provincial Assembly Meetings, W.H.H Nicolle, Deputy Secretary, Development, 20 April 1964.

own personal safety so that they urged the government to ban the NDP. Although the party was banned in 1961, it was clear that the NDP had succeeded in keeping feelings of peasant resentment and mass nationalism high. The party had successfully heightened the peoples' consciousness and militancy

Demonstrators and white land developers were attacked verbally and physically as were some chiefs and headman who assisted in the implementation of the Act. People simply cleared trees and ploughed more acres than they were legally entitled to. *Madiro* or freedom farming became the most effective weapon used by the Bikita rural populace to frustrate the implementation of the NLHA. NC Bikita also complained about wanton destruction and cutting down of trees by the Africans. The 1962-1964 Annual Reports for Bikita and other districts stated that, "everywhere, people expanded old fields and opened new ones near their homes. Stream bank and wetlands cultivation proliferated."<sup>167</sup> In 1962, the Working Party D reported that these tendencies were fed by and justified through nationalists' calls for freedom farming. Nationalists incited people to reject state authority through abrogating restrictions on land use. Rumours circulated that NLHA is finished and that everyone can do as they like.<sup>168</sup> It appears that freedom ploughing was also practiced nationally because in January 1961 the Undersecretary for Native Agriculture and Lands lamented that "people were ploughing all over the place and disregarding land allocation."<sup>169</sup> The 1964 Summary Report on Chiefs' Provincial Assembly Meetings indicates that chiefs nationwide were being confronted by an identical problem of freedom farming. In the report chiefs indicated that there was common talk in the tribal areas now of "*nyika yakazarurwa, nyika ndeyedu*" (in regard to land there is freedom, the land belongs to us). Consequently people ignored the chiefs and the initial allocations made under the NLHA and ploughed everywhere and anyhow *kurima madiro* (freedom farming)<sup>170</sup> In most cases people simply added on to what had been initially allocated to them.

In neighbouring Zaka, the DC wrote to PC Southern Mashonaland, explaining that, During the few weeks, I have had reports that Africans in Victoria have suddenly gone wild and are opening up new lands all over the place. It appears that chiefs and headmen are allocating land wholesale in the grazing to the landless. <sup>171</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> 14.8.8F/69691 Development and Land Returns, Annual Reports, 1962-1964.

<sup>168</sup> 5.2.8R/82725 Working Party D, Third Report, Chapter 11, 30 July 1962.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid

<sup>170</sup> 28.18.8F/98432 Summary Report on Chief's Provincial Assembly Meetings, W.H.H Nicolle, Deputy Secretary, Development, 20 April 1964.

<sup>171</sup> 20.10.8F/98431 Summary Report on Chiefs' Provincial Assembly Meetings, W.H.H Nicolle, Deputy Secretary Development, 20 April 1964.

The above scenario shows that peasants were already embittered and had begun to resist the policies put in place by the Rhodesian state. It is also clear that they did not need guerrillas or nationalist politicians to trigger that discontentment because they had already shown their unhappiness with the Rhodesian state and its policies a situation manipulated by the nationalist in the 1960s and by the guerrillas from 1976. Nationalist politicians encouraged the peasants to frustrate the local administration. As testimony to this, the 1962 government report captured that:

ZAPU supporters attacked persons and property of suspected collaborators of the whites. Incidents of attacks, assaults and battering of policemen or law enforcing agents have been reported. Facilities associated with the implementation of the NLHA such as dip tanks and roads were destroyed.<sup>172</sup>

Such widespread use of violence encouraged by the nationalist prompted the government to ban the party in 1962. Informants in Bikita pointed out that even after the ban, people did not stop supporting the party nor did their seething hatred for Smith's government simmered down. Mr Daniel Mandemwa explained that:

We were already angry with Smith so even when politics was banned we continued defying colonial policies. We did not turn up for labour, dip our cattle and continued with *madiro* faming. This should show you that with or without politicians or guerrillas were had developed a disliking of Smith's government and we were able to resist their moves in our own small ways. Our resistance disrupted local administration of course. Even after ZAPU was banned, we continued supporting the party right up to 1976 when ZANLA guerrillas arrived and told us that they wanted to wage a war to liberate us from Smith's oppression and restore our land to us<sup>173</sup>

On his part, Mr. Muchengeti Moyo recalled how:

People in Bikita were against destocking and the vaccination of cattle. We were strongly opposed to that. The police were brought in to do forced injecting of our cattle. It was the community as a whole and not any guerrillas or politicians who organized the resistance to destocking. Resistance against colonial policies started in Bikita way before the coming of the guerrillas.<sup>174</sup>

Indeed in 1969 DC Bikita had noted that:

Even after the ban on ZAPU was passed, people did not resume with the payment of dip fees nor did they give up lands they had taken under freedom farming. After the banning of the parties in 1964, the administration has not fully restored its full authority in the district. All is not yet well. Payments of personal tax were very low and payments of dip fees were considerably in arrears. Practically all land allocated under

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<sup>172</sup> Southern Rhodesia Government, Report on the ZAPU, Salisbury, September 1962, p.6-20.

<sup>173</sup> Interview with Mr Daniel Mandemwa, Bikita, 5 June 2015.

<sup>174</sup> Interview with Mr Muchengeti Moyo, Bikita 3 June 2015.

NLHA and fully protected with good contours was abandoned and new lands were opened up, some on very steep slopes and all unprotected.<sup>175</sup>

Dick Dzoro also recalled that the ban did not lead to political disillusionment. Peasants continued to support the nationalist movement underground.<sup>176</sup> In another interview with John Mapiko, it emerged that it did not need nationalist politicians to provoke discontentment nor did the banning of the nationalist parties result in a cowed and passive peasantry<sup>177</sup>. It should be noted that the peasants in Bikita had resisted local administrative interference before the establishment of the nationalist parties. They continued to resist after the nationalist parties were banned. On the other hand, linkages with a nationalist movement in the 1950s-1960s enabled peasants to continue supporting ZAPU underground. Thus, nationalism continued to function at the local grassroots level. In Bikita, this meant that the Zimbabwe African People's Union continued to function and peasants continued to back ZAPU. Simon Chingarande recalls at the time of the split, people in Nyika, Matsai, Ziki, and Zibwowa were still very loyal to ZAPU. Many continued to back up ZAPU long after it was formally banned in 1964.<sup>178</sup> This situation of stiff resistance continued up to the time of guerrilla arrival in the district in 1976. All the guerrilla did was to tap on peasant resentment towards the Rhodesian state, explaining to peasants that if they worked together it was possible to dislodge the colonial system. However it should be made clear that support for guerrillas was made easier due to the fact that guerrillas found peasants already in a radical state. The important role played by guerrillas was the moving of protest from expressions of anger and rejection to more pointed attacks on colonial structures and authorities. Having laid this solid foundation, war in Bikita started in March 1976.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

The chapter has highlighted the effects of colonial land disposessions, evictions, relocations, taxation and destocking policies made the people of Bikita to support the liberation war effort *en masse* in the 1970s. These policies provoked peasant resentment towards the Rhodesian state such that when the guerrillas, arrived in Bikita they found peasants in a radicalized state. Within this backdrop, it became easier for nationalists politicians and later guerrillas to tap on the resentment and hatred of an already embittered peasantry to get support for the liberation war. Having looked at the various factors that made Africans hostile towards settler rule, we

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<sup>175</sup> District Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, 16 November, 1969, File, Bikita/ Zaka, DCOR.

<sup>176</sup> Interview with Dick Dzoro, Bikita 5 June 2015.

<sup>177</sup> Interview with Jim Mapiko, Bikita, 5 June 2015.

<sup>178</sup> Interview with Simon Chingarande, Bikita, 5 June 2015.

now have to look at the liberation struggle and how the war environment also presented a golden opportunity for peasants to fight other 'small wars' which had existed long before the war with perceived enemies. How peasants attempted to settle old scores and fight their own 'small wars' within the "bigger war" and the violence witnessed and experienced during this period is the major theme of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.1 Dimensions of War-time Conflicts and Violence in Bikita District 1976-1979.

#### 2.2 Introduction

Zimbabwe needs to remember and understand the war: to understand it at the level of high analysis and to understand it at the level of suffering and trauma. We need to understand it for reviewing policy, for making the record more complete, for healing memories.<sup>179</sup>

Any meaningful exploration of war-time conflicts and violence in Bikita needs to take into account why the local people participated in the war,<sup>180</sup> and what they perceived that “war” to be. The Bikita case illustrated that many supported the guerrillas when they arrived

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<sup>179</sup> Quotation from Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence O Ranger, *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War, vol 1*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1995, p.1

<sup>180</sup> See Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*, Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985; also see Terence Ranger, “Connexions between Primary Resistance Movements and Modern Nationalism in East and Central Africa Part 2,” *Journal of African History*, 9 (1968); Andre Astrow, *Zimbabwe: A Revolution that Lost its Way?* and David Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Mediums in Zimbabwe*, Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985. The motives for peasant participation in the Zimbabwean liberation war has generated debate amongst scholars. In *Peasant Consciousness*, Ranger argue that the radical consciousness developed by peasants from the 1950s in Makoni was a result of their experiences of colonial conquest, land alienation, centralization and an authoritarian state interventions in agrarian issues. He further argues that this peasant discontentment provided the basis for nationalist politics and guerrilla mobilization because when ZANU aligned guerrillas arrived in Makoni, it was not difficult for them to gain the support and trust of an already radicalized peasantry. Ranger posits that because of the high level of peasant consciousness, guerrillas had merely to intensify peasant resentment through political education and joining peasants in disrupting civilian administration. Thus, for Ranger peasants supported guerrillas because they spoke directly to rural grievances and held out some sort of hope of alleviating it. Similarly Astrow notes that the repression that the settlers sustained against the African people, combined with their declining living standards and increased landlessness helped to ensure mass support for the armed struggle. Africans increasingly came to understand that the Rhodesian State would never be prepared to relinquish the power they had amassed, unless the African people waged a war of national liberation to overthrow them. The radicalization of the African masses and their support for the war enabled the nationalist movement to become a coercive force for undermining settler society. Thus, for Astrow the radicalism displayed by Africans before the war emanated from state and settler oppression and discriminatory policies and manifested itself in violent protest against the Rhodesian state in the era of mass nationalism. In *concurrency* David Lan in book *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Mediums in Zimbabwe* stresses the close relationship between guerrillas and spirit mediums in mobilizing peasants to support and participate in the liberation struggle. Within the peasant communities of Dande, the spirit mediums legitimated the authority of the guerrillas against the chiefs who had compromised themselves by becoming handmaids of the Rhodesia state. These works clearly indicate that nationalist politicians and guerrillas did not provoke peasant resentment against colonial rule because peasants had already developed these feelings and an awareness of the oppressive nature of colonial settler economy way back. For alternative views to Ranger and Lan see Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. For Kriger, peasants supported the war because they wanted to advance their individual agenda. To them guerrillas were potential allies and so under the guise of aiding guerrillas peasants identified personal enemies as sell-outs to the guerrillas. In Kriger's opinion, this way peasants used the war to square up with perceived enemies. [This footnote is too long. It reads like some literature review]

mainly because they desired to get their land back and to rid themselves of the oppressive colonial administration and its unfair agricultural policies. Furthermore, the Bikita case study also highlighted the fact that as the war raged on, peasants also realised an opportunity presented by the war environment to use the war to settle old scores with local enemies. Thus, the war meant different things to different people. For some, the war was not only about the desire to recover the lost lands as it was also about political and social change inside their communities whilst for others the war was about *kutengesana nekuuraisana*, the selling out of each other and having others killed. Yet for others still, the war opened an enabling environment where peasant relations with the African rural elite could be altered *hondo yakabvisa udzvanyiriri*. In the memories of particular individuals like seventy year old Keresenzia Mbambo:

The war was about comrades (guerrillas) and soldiers (Rhodesian Forces) *makomuredzi namasoja*. Yes, the war was about being forced to attend *pungwes* and to witness severe beatings and gruesome murders of sell-outs and witches *vatengesi navaroyi*. The war was about not being allowed to bury your son, neighbour or relatives decently.<sup>181</sup>

In this sense, the war is remembered not in terms of actual fighting or battles between guerrillas and Rhodesian Forces but in terms of people's relations with each other and their everyday interactions. The war therefore is viewed in terms of the trauma, the pain and suffering it caused. To ex-guerrillas like Cde Hondo the war was about fighting the enemy and liberating the country.<sup>182</sup> This chapter argues that the war, viewed and perceived in this sense was a complex entanglement of class, gender, generational and intra-familial struggles all playing themselves out within the macro-struggle. To many in rural Bikita, the war was also about fighting the whites and getting rid of an oppressive colonial economic system. As such the focus of this chapter is to explore the dimensions of war-time conflicts which unfolded in Bikita during the liberation era as well as the great deal of violence exercised by the warring forces and witnessed by the rural populace. The objective here is to show that the Bikita populace emerged from the struggle either as victims or perpetrators, but nonetheless scarred, traumatized and divided by the war.

### **2.3 Bikita and the Liberation Struggle.**

During the liberation struggle Bikita fell under ZANLA's Manica Operational Province opened up in late 1975 under the auspices of the joint military alliance between

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<sup>181</sup> Interview with Keresenzia Mbambo, Bikita, 10 February 2013

<sup>182</sup> Interview with comrade Mabara Ehondo, Matsai, 13 January 2013.

ZANLA and ZIPRA known as the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA). Manica province was further divided into Chitepo, Monomotapa and Musikavanhu sectors. Musikavanhu sector covered Mt. Selinda, Chikore Mission, Jersey Tea Estate, Tuzuka, Mahenye, Rimbi, Checheche and most of the Sabi valley. The sector extended into Devuli Range, Matsai TTL, Nyika and the whole of Bikita District. The sector also covered Zaka district to such places as Chitiyo, Chiromo, Chamburukira, Matara, Zibwowa, Jerera, Mushungwa going further inland towards Masvingo town. Tonderayi Nyika and later Henry Muchena were the provincial commanders of Manica Province.<sup>183</sup> To the Rhodesian Forces, Bikita was the area which was policed by "Operation Repulse" started in 1976.

Most people in the district recall that the war started in March 1976 and it came from the south, specifically from Devuli Ranch and Matsai. This could be true because from their literature, Rhodesian forces observed that two general guerrilla operational zones in the district which were Devuli Ranch and Matsai TTL. Their military operations within Bikita were often described under this general nomenclature but Matsai gradually became the generic description of this operational area for Rhodesian Forces. This was somewhat accurate from the point of view of the deployment strategy of ZANLA guerrillas operating in the area too. According to Cde Hondo, the general route of guerrillas into Bikita was to get to Chikwekwete base near Espungabeira using vehicles. From Chikwekwete base, the guerrillas would cross the border by foot into Mt. Selinda, Jersey, right down the highlands into the Sabi valley. After crossing the Sabi River, the "comrades" then moved into the vast Devuli Ranch, then into the highly populated Matsai communal lands of Bikita district.<sup>184</sup>

Bikita district as already highlighted in the preceding paragraphs remained the most contested zone between the warring forces. To show that they were in control of the district, the Rhodesian Front Forces constructed a very big aerodrome in Zinyanduko village in Matsai. This landing ground was used by jet fighters, spotters and helicopters to refill and refuel during operations in Matsai, Nyahunda, Budzi, Ziki, Bikita and the nearby Zaka district. In addition, a big army base was established on a hilltop at Mhara in Vhimba village about a kilometre from Mashoko Mission. Wudzi police post situated near Neguvhe School was developed into another big army base. This base was situated about a kilometre from the

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<sup>183</sup> Interview with Cde Oliver Chombo, Gweru, 16 January 2013. Cde Oliver Chombo is an ex-combatant who operated in Bikita during the war but he now resides in Gweru.

<sup>184</sup> Interview with Cde Dhidhidhi weHondo, ex-guerrilla who operated in Bikita, 12 February 2013, Lower Gweru.



home of the late Matsai chief Wilson Muuyandiani Chirongedze Mukwena Mabika. Bambaninga, the biggest mountain in Matsai was made a permanent station for soldiers where they detected or monitored guerrilla movements in the surrounding communities.

Guerrillas also maintained a heavy presence in the area for the reasons that I have already mentioned in chapter one. From the above scenario, the civilians in Bikita became the “Men in the Middle” as both guerrillas and Rhodesian Forces tried to control them to further their political interests. The presence of the warring forces in Bikita and their war-time demands placed a lot of pressure on the rural populace heightening chances of social conflict as civilians tried to deal with or adjust to the war situation. The communities in Bikita remember that the first group of guerrillas arrived in mid-March 1976 and comprised of seven fighters. Among them were Cdes Musa, the Detachment Commander, Cde Bombshell Mandebvu, the political Commissar, Cde John Chakarakata, Cde Dzemutsemu, Cde Bhekiche WaMajongosi, Biggie Muchaina and Dhidhidhi weHondo. On the part of the Rhodesian Forces, the public remembers Maigurira and Sigauke very well as the leaders of the soldiers<sup>185</sup>. It emerged that Maigurira had worked at Wudzi base as the police constable before the war and had a wider knowledge of the geography of the area. Maigurira knew most of the chiefs, kraal heads, teachers, nurses and even some of the common people in the area. When the war worsened, Maigurira changed from being a policeman to a full time soldier and became a senior commander of the Rhodesian Forces in Matsai<sup>186</sup>.

As chief Mabika recalls:

The first contact between the guerrillas and the Rhodesian Forces was the battle at Jeke village in early April 1976. I remember the dates because my mother had attended that pungwe and died there. Guerrillas had called a pungwe at seven o'clock. Unknown to the guerrillas and the civilians the RFs on top of Bambaninga Mountain had detected their movements. The RFs attacked the pungwe gathering around eleven in the evening killing seven of the eleven guerrillas and thirteen civilians, ten adults and three children. After this battle everybody knew the war had started, hondo yakanga yatotanga. After this first battle, other battles were to follow in the different parts of the district right up to 1979 when the cease fire was called.<sup>187</sup>

After this first contact, further reports of the struggle from other parts of the district and from nearby Zaka and Gutu districts filtered through such that by mid-1976 the liberation struggle was in full swing in Bikita.<sup>188</sup> The individual and group recollections of the warring

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<sup>185</sup> Interview with Simbarashe Moyo, ex-youth during the war, Bikita 13 January 2013.

<sup>186</sup> Interview with oldman Garwe, Matsai, 18 January 2013

<sup>187</sup> Interview with Chief Mabika, Matsai, 17 January 2013.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

forces' first encounter and the subsequent battles witnessed are important as they begin the war stories. Many informants who lived and participated in the war are of the opinion that the firing of the first shots within the district opened the way for other "struggles" within communities, between and among individuals to unfold.

It emerged that after the previous day's contact, the RFs returned to the village the following morning, asked people about the whereabouts of guerrillas, threatened and cautioned the villagers against supporting guerrillas. They told civilians to report any guerrilla activity or movements. Afterwards the villagers were ordered to bury the deceased. The seven guerrillas were buried in a mass grave in Jeke village whilst individuals were taken for burial by their families.

On their part, guerrillas strongly felt that somebody or certain individuals had informed the RFs. Their suspicion was also confirmed by a number of elders and youth who indicated that there were "certain elements" such as agricultural extension officers, storekeepers, chiefs and headmen who were against the nationalist cause since they worked for the colonial regime. According to Mr Anania Manhambo who participated in the war as a villager or *mubereki*:

This prompted guerrillas of the need to demonstrate what they do to sell-outs and informers. This example was also meant to instil fear, intimidate and deter the civilians from divulging information about guerrilla activities to the RFs. In other words it was a measure both to ensure guerrilla security and to establish loyalty among the rural population.<sup>189</sup>

Investigations conducted by the elders "proved" that an agricultural extension officer was behind the Jeke attacks. This was followed by the capture of the agricultural extension officer who was presented at another *pungwe* this time held at the foot of Ngwenya Mountain in Zinyanduko village. Apparently Murozvi failed to "convincingly defend himself" against the allegations levelled against him:

The man was severely beaten in front of the public after which burnt plastics were dripped on his body. His wife, Mai Mufaro was screaming all the while. One of the comrades shot her dead and I remember we all went silent shocked by what had just transpired. The comrade told the crowd that that is what they do to people who want to make a joke out of them when they meant business. We were ordered to watch silently as they continued with the dripping of hot plastics on Murozvi who was now unconscious. Afterwards they shot him and ordered us not to bury the two because they

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<sup>189</sup> Interview with Annania Manhambo, Matsai, 13 January 2013.

wanted the Rhodesian Forces to “see their art work”. Although we went home, sleep could not come after witnessing the brutal murders of those two.”<sup>190</sup>

Many informants in Bikita concurred that these introductory measures were responsible for sending wrong signals to the rural population. From the set precedent, civilians were able to conclude that the warring forces and the struggle itself can be used to settle old scores with one’s enemies or to bring about political and social changes inside their communities. Guerrillas had taken heed about what peasants had told them concerning Murozvi and had acted upon peasant’s advice. They also saw that guerrillas relied upon them for security and information. Thus the war actually offered the peasant class an opportunity to alter oppressive relations with the African rural elite. All that was needed was to support the warring forces. Under the guise of supporting the colonial regime or the struggle, one could actually manipulate the RFs or the guerrillas into advancing their personal or individual agendas.

One interesting observation made during this research project was that the rural population, while concerned about the national grievances behind the macro-struggle, also wanted to advance their grievances and resentments emanating from their day to day interactions with colonial regime officers such as agricultural extension officers, chiefs and council workers. Thus, the manner in which peasants in Bikita behaved during the war bears a striking resemblance with the manner peasants in Mtoko (where Kriger conducted her study) also behaved. In her study Kriger too observed that peasants had their own ideas and agendas interwoven with those of the broader liberation struggle and saw guerrillas as potential allies or susceptible to manipulations to further their own goals.<sup>191</sup>

The Bikita case study illuminated how some of the war-time conflicts were triggered by feelings of jealousy and envy, as well as gender and generational conflicts. In the guise of aiding guerrillas in terms of security and information, less-off peasants identified better-off peasants and the rural elite as sell-outs to the guerrillas. In the same vein, feelings of anger, hatred and resentment towards *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos* also agricultural extension officers, council workers, teachers reporting guerrilla collaborators to the Rhodesian Forces. For those employed as government civil servants or running personal businesses, the war was disruptive and an unwelcome interruption to their activities. For some parents, like Lancelot

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 172.

Bundo, John Bhasera, Tawanda Mutikizizi and Hanz Sithole whose sons served in the Rhodesian Forces, their loyalties lay with the Rhodesian regime. These internal peasant grievances and tensions within villages and amongst the rural population, in addition to the external radicalism which Ranger and Lan identify as motivating factors behind peasant participation in the liberation struggle, also motivated peasants to participate in the war.

## 2.4 Memories of War-Time Conflicts

Many of the war stories illuminated the fact that the rural middle class comprising of teachers, nurses, hospital administrators, storekeepers, traders, purchase area farmers among others were the major targets of guerrilla violence. Bikita revealed that, contrary to Ranger and Lan's assertions about peasant unity and harmony, the liberation struggle was a terrain riddled with conflicts, tensions and struggles as observed by Kriger in Mtoko. The Bikita case study highlighted the fact that whilst the war itself created new conflicts, some war-time conflicts had nothing to do with the war but were pre-existing struggles which had developed way before the war. It emerged that most of the conflicts during the war had their roots in the socio-economic differences which already existed in the pre-war period. The colonial education system, the spread of the money economy as well as most colonial policies such as the NLHA had generated inequalities, accompanied by an assortment of grievances among peasants and the rural African elite. To many in the rural areas, the war was an opportunity to express resentment towards certain individuals and policies openly.

Most of the war conflicts which unfolded during the war were perceived to have had a class dimension. The war offered an opportunity to the peasants to lash out their anger and resentment against the rural middle class. Over the years missionary education had produced an African middle class comprising of catholic priests, hospital administrators, extension officers, school inspectors, agricultural extension officers, headmasters, teachers, nurses, traders and storekeepers. The middle class' life style was quite distinguished from that of the peasants in their rural surroundings.<sup>192</sup> They had acquired modern furniture like radio sets and stereos, thus maintaining an urban outlook amidst rural poverty. Teachers such as Masiya, Njini, Mabhande, Chivasa, Zhanero among others had built brick under zinc or asbestos houses. Several others like teachers Mukanga, Mathe and Manyongori had managed

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<sup>192</sup> Interview with Mufaro Mutero a former headmaster during the war, Ziki, 4 February 2013. Also see Ngwabi Bhebe and Terrence.O Ranger, eds., *Society in Zimbabwe's War of Liberation*, 1995.

to save enough money to start their own businesses such as bottle stores and butcheries, or to operate as general dealers at Mukanga, Mashoko and Matigimu business centres respectively. As such this class could afford a comfortable standard of life, dressed well and could afford to send their children to school with ease. This was envied by many peasants in the villages<sup>193</sup>.

Agricultural extension officers were resented for their unpopular land policies which they had forced the people to implement prior to the war. Agricultural officers had directed peasant production and land usage, forbidding cultivation on stream banks and wetlands. They had forced peasants to follow approved cropping systems and to build contour ridges, storm drains and grass buffer strips to control soil erosion.<sup>194</sup> All these policies were unpopular with the peasants and they blamed the extension officers for forcing them to implement the policies. The peasants did not understand that the extension officers were not the authors of these policies but merely took orders from the colonial regime. Consequently, peasants in rural Bikita viewed agricultural extension officers as responsible for their misery. When the war started in Bikita all these grudges were still rife between the peasants and the agriculture extension officers. Thus the war was an opportunity to express and resolve these resentments and conflicts generated by colonial policies such as the NLHA. As Mr Misheck Dzoro recalled:

Murozvi the AREX officer was unpopular here because he had a natural contempt for poor people. He looked down upon the people, uprooting crops, sweet potatoes if he felt the peasants had failed to follow approved cropping systems. These tendencies made him very unpopular such that when the boys (vakomana) arrived, people did not hesitate to report him as a sell-out. He was not for the masses, so he could not be identified with the causes of the struggle. In people's minds, liberation in the community could only come with undesirable elements like Murozvi out of the way.<sup>195</sup>

Storekeepers were also resented by most peasants since they had acted as agents of government marketing boards. They were responsible for purchasing grain from peasants and reselling it to the government. Peasants accused storekeepers of cheating them in these transactions by systematically under-weighing their produce. Petty traders were also unpopular as it was believed that they charged higher prices for their goods. All these grudges and tensions still raged when the war broke out in Bikita. The war actually opened an opportunity for the peasant class to settle old scores and unleash their resentment against the

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<sup>193</sup> Interview with Mufaro Mutero, Ziki, 4 February 2013.

<sup>194</sup> Interview with Titus Muchena, former AREX Officer, Bikita, 4 April 2013.

<sup>195</sup> Interview with Misheck Dzoro, Matsai, 13 January 2013.

middle class. Most of the middle class was reported to the guerrillas as sell-outs and as people who were against the war, a good example being the case of Murozvi, an AREX officer who was reported out to the guerrillas as a sell-out.

I observed that during the war, education, one's status within the community, wealth and money were all sources of jealousy amongst the rural community. These issues became the basis of accusations and counter-accusations that became part of everyday social relations and interactions within the villages. Those interviewed explained that at first guerrillas did not realise that some of the "sell-outs" were branded as such because of jealousy and envy, emanating from social-inequalities between peasants and the African elites<sup>196</sup>. This view has much in common with Fanon's observation that those Africans who acquired the skills or values associated with the colonialists were frequently stigmatized as having acquired the habits of the "masters", hence they were branded as sell-outs<sup>197</sup>. Asked why most individuals were killed as sell-outs during the war, the majority of the people concurred that many were killed because they were wealthy, had many cattle or property in their houses or they had sons working in towns who took good care of them<sup>198</sup>. As such, this study subscribes to van Velsen's argument that 'much of the conflict and violence against other Africans in the liberation struggle was an expression of a large number of the unemployed and landless rather than the result of an intensified policy of confrontation.'<sup>199</sup>.

Although the colonial state and its policies shaped much of the class conflicts experienced during the war, frustrations with the distant government made peasants vent their anger and resentment against the African elite who were closest to them. This corroborates Anthony Wallace's observation that human beings generally reserve their settled fears, suspicion and hatred to those closest to them such as kinsmen, neighbors and colleagues.<sup>200</sup> Fanon too, attributes internal conflicts among the colonized to the effects of colonial policies. His description of how the colonized behaved during the armed struggle in Algeria bears a striking resemblance to peasant behavior during the war in Bikita. Fanon observed that:

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<sup>196</sup> Interview with Mufudze, Budzi, 27 March 2013.

<sup>197</sup> Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press, 1982, pp.307-8.

<sup>198</sup> Focus group Discussion, Mbombe village Chiremwaremwa. 10 April 2013.

<sup>199</sup> Van Velsen, "Trends in African Nationalism in Southern Rhodesia", *Kroniek Van Afrika*, (1964), p.156.

<sup>200</sup> Anthony Wallace in Van Velsen, "Trends in African Nationalism in Southern Rhodesia," *Kroniek Van Afrika* (1964), p.156.

The natives fought themselves. They tend to use each other as a screen, each hide from his neighbor the national enemy. When he goes to beg for a little semolina or a drop of oil from the grocer, to whom he already owes some hundreds of francs, and when he sees that he is refused, an immense feeling of hatred and an overpowering desire to kill rises within him; and that grocer is an Algerian. He cannot even enjoy the luxury of hating a European administrator, there before him is an Algerian who is the object of his hatred. The natives come to see his neighbor as a relentless enemy.<sup>201</sup>

The class dimension of war-time conflicts is again evidenced by the conflicts between chiefs and civilians. Conflicts between these classes were fuelled by the resentment the ordinary people in relation to chiefs prior to the liberation struggle. In Bikita, chiefs Mazungunye, Mukanganwi, Ziki and Mabika were given allowances by the Rhodesian government. In addition, it was the duty of a chief to collect taxes from his area of jurisdiction. The taxes included the head of family tax, the dog tax, stock tax and dipping taxes. These taxes were very unpopular with the locals. Furthermore, chiefs had become so powerful and oppressive to their people to the extent that nobody liked them as exemplified by Chief Mabika<sup>202</sup>. Informants pointed out that Chief Mabika passed harsh punishments during his court sessions even on petty crimes. For example, if two people fought at a beer party and one was injured and bled, the chief's court accused the assailant of having spilt blood in the chief's area and therefore demanded that the assailant pay a big ox or cow to the chief. This was said to clean the blood off the chief's soil (*kugeza ropa*)<sup>203</sup>. In addition, the same person was ordered to pay a goat to be eaten by the chief's messengers (*machinda amambo*). This goat fee was known as *mbudzi yekugocha padare ramachinda*, a goat for roasting at the chief's court<sup>204</sup>. When Chief Mabika passed through one's area, women were expected to cheer him up- (*kupurudzira vashe*) whilst men would be clapping hands (*kuombera vashe*)<sup>205</sup>. These were some of the habits by chiefs which the rural populace resented. Thus ordinary people saw the liberation struggle as strategic for resolving tensions and conflicts. Guerrillas were told about these undesirable habits of chiefs by the people at *pungwes*. Guerrillas were not sympathetic with chiefs whom they often viewed as *sell-outs* and *zvimwasungata*, puppies of imperialists. Consequently, guerrillas ordered people to stop paying taxes and destroyed dip tanks in parts of Mashoko, Matsai, Ziki, Nyahunda and Nyika. Council's offices such as Matsai council were burnt to ashes. Chiefs' court sessions

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<sup>201</sup> Franz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, p p.g71-2.

<sup>202</sup> Interview with Tinashe Mashavira, Chief Mabika's Village, Matsai, 31 January 2013

<sup>203</sup> Interview with Tapera Mukanga, Matsai, 18 February 2013.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Interview with Mrs Harunashe , Matsai, 18 February 2013.

ceased and people were ordered to bring their disputes to the guerrillas, a situation not liked by chiefs.

As a result many chiefs and headman such as headman Zero, Nhema, Mabhande, Maregere and chief Mabika all died during the war after their subjects had reported them to the guerrillas as sell-outs<sup>206</sup>. However, it should be underscored that petty jealousies between the chiefly houses and their subjects also triggered and motivated peasants to report chiefs. The war offered the subject classes of chiefs an opportunity to express their resentment and anger against what was perceived as unfair treatment by the chiefs. As Tapera Mukanga recalled:

Guerrillas had no mercy for chiefs and headmen whom they considered to be sympathisers of the colonial regime. Vana mukoma (big brothers) simply executed chiefs, headmen and meted out punishments against council workers such that to us they were “men of action” or liberators of the oppressed. The native councils were much hated for extortionate taxes, forced labour and other abuses. The manner in which chiefs and the council workers enforced their policies, demanding taxes had incensed the local people that guerrillas could not have come at a better time.<sup>207</sup>

In the eyes of the guerrillas and the people, the chiefs were considered close associates of the white district commissioner from whom they got their directives to oppose the liberation struggle. According to Headman Buruuru people resented and were suspicious of chiefs and headmen because of the interactions they had with the white District Commissioners. He recalled that:

We used to collect taxes which we submitted to the Native Commissioner’s office. Before the war, we were under the Native Commissioner, receiving allowances from him. As such we visited the Bikita offices for various reasons and so people thought that we went there to report them. This is the reason why the majority of chiefs and headmen were viewed as sell-outs<sup>208</sup>.

## **2.5 Purchase Areas as Sites of Struggles**

The presence of Purchase Areas in reserves created inter-class tensions and conflicts. Kriger highlights some of these tensions in her study of Mtoko. She observed that the relations of the Budya Purchase Area farmers and those residing in nearby Tribal Trust Lands were associated with tensions<sup>209</sup>. Aquina Weinrich’s work also projected the interests of Purchase Area farmers as riddled with competition and jealousies based on access to

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<sup>206</sup> Interview with Chief Mukanganwi, Bikita 22 February 2013.

<sup>207</sup> Interview with Mr Tapera Mukanga, Matsai, 18 February 2013.

<sup>208</sup> Interview with headman Buruuru, Matsai, 20 February 2013.

<sup>209</sup> Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War*, p. 27



land<sup>210</sup>. In Bikita, Nyahunda Purchase Area was in Chief Mazungunye's area. Many people were moved to Chief Ziki's area to pave way for the scheme. Others squeezed themselves in villages under Chief Mazungunye. What frustrated the majority of the Africans moved from the area was to observe their former lands unoccupied for a long time. The occupation of the purchase Area was slow and went up to 1940. Most of the farmers settled in Nyahunda after 1940. Rugare Zhou explained that relations of the peasants and purchase area farmers was almost potentially antagonistic, riddled with envy, jealousies based on access to land and the accumulation of wealth<sup>211</sup>. Since the purchase area farmers identified themselves with the white farmers, in the eyes of the peasants they were "enemies of the people" just like the whites. This explains why many purchase area farmers were reported to the guerrillas as sell-outs and often killed "simply because they were better-off than most of the people." Peasants in the reserves used the war to settle as it were, individual or personal scores:

In the eyes of the purchase area farmers, the peasants were backward yet it was from us the backward people whom they depended on for survival and success as a class and yet they always kept the peasants at an arm's length. The purchase area farmers mainly obtained their casual labor and many of their wives from the tribal trust lands. Again, it was in the backward tribal trust land where this class of progressive farmers exported or dumped its surplus kinsfolk after the death of the first generation owner when their farms were inherited and their families fragmented. It was again from the backward peasants that commercial and purchase area farmers bought cattle at rock bottom prices, to fatten and resell at large profit but they continued to despise the peasants.<sup>212</sup>

Thus, resentment against Purchase Area farmers stemmed from the fact that they rejected any institutional ties with their tribal trust lands neighbours whom they relied on in many ways. As such the Purchase Area farmers were perceived by the majority of the people in Bikita as *vanhu vasina unhu vanodadira vamwe vavo nekuti vane mari*, (a people lacking in morals who look down upon their fellow black men simply because they had made it in life). Their actions therefore were conceived as against the principles of *unhu*<sup>213</sup>.

The grudges harboured by the peasants were that colonial administration had removed them from their land to pave way for the new class of African farmers who wanted to "buy the country" (*kutenga nyika*) regardless of the fact that their fellow kinsmen were rendered landless in the process. Ananius Mapetere explained that the Purchase Area farmers

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<sup>210</sup>Aquina Weinrich, *African Farmers in Rhodesia: Old and New Peasant Communities in Karangaland*, IAI, London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 37

<sup>211</sup> Interview with Rugare Zhou, Hozvi, Bikita 17 January 2013.

<sup>212</sup> Interview with Chief Mazungunye, Bikita, 20 January, 2013.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

were merciless cheats and fraudsters (*mbavha nemakoronyera*) because even during times of famines they still wanted to benefit unfairly from their poor neighbors.<sup>214</sup> The farmers sold their grain at exorbitant prices because they were the only ones with it. People would give them their cattle in exchange for maize. That is how they made their fortunes, by stealing from the poor. Peasants resented the fact that purchase area farmers benefitted from other people's misfortunes<sup>215</sup>. Headman Shanje Mapako from Ziki again explained that:

The farmers acquired cattle from the locals mainly by unfair means. They were a syndicate and agreed that they should resist prices ranging from certain amounts. As such no farmer would buy cattle at the owner's price, rather, they were the ones who determined the prices for the peasants, just like the whites. In most cases, because peasants needed the money or the grain, they ended up giving up their beasts at low and pathetic prices."<sup>216</sup>

Thus, many in the villages were not sympathetic to the purchase area farmers such that when the war broke out, many purchase area farmers became targets of guerrilla violence. Guerrillas also viewed purchase area farmers with skepticism. To the guerrillas, the purchase area farmers were an African class aspiring to be "whites", content with the land that had been awarded to them by the colonial regime. Their main crime was that in the eyes of the guerrillas this was a wealthy class of Africans, quite rich to buy land at the expense of fellow blacks. The purchase areas, referred to by the locals as '*matenganyika*,' literally 'translated to buyers of the land', suggested the aberration of trading one's birth right, *kutenga nyika*, for one's self when the majority had nothing, thus betraying the majority. Their actions of trading one's birth-right with the enemy also augured well with the war discourse of *mutengesi* or sell-out, a term used to refer to colonial regime collaborators. Both guerrillas and villagers assumed that the *matenganyika* would never support the cause of the war or aid the guerrillas because they were a contented class who would not easily identify with the struggle since they had excess land. As such many owners of *matenganyika* became victims of guerrilla violence during the war. Obert Ndoro remembers how Farai Manhokwe died at the hands of guerrillas after being implicated of possessing two-way radios "*zviovha-ovha*":

Guerrillas burnt Ndambani inside his house. Afterwards they shot all his cattle and burnt down the buildings at the farm. Villagers had reported that he had a two-way radio which he communicated with the RFs on the whereabouts and activities of guerrillas. It was gruesome and sad because guerrillas did not investigate these cases but went on to mete punishment.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Interview with Ananius Mapetere, Nyahunda, 23 February 2013.

<sup>215</sup> Interview with Tapiwa Mapetere, Bikita, 25 February, 2013.

<sup>216</sup> Interview with Headman Shanje Mapako, Ziki, 6 April, 2013.

<sup>217</sup> Interview with Obert Ndoro, 25 February 2013.

The Bikita case study showed that some of the war-time conflicts had nothing to do with class interests but were intra-familial. This is evidenced by the continuation of conflicts between children of first generation farmers after the death of their fathers. Research carried out in Bikita point to the fact that the general norm had been that the death of the first generation farm owner was followed by bitter inheritance disputes during which witchcraft was used in an attempt to establish proprietorship over the valuable asset. Upon the death of the owner of the farm, family wrangles or feuds eliminated or drove others away from the farm. In Nyahunda, for example, sons and daughters of the Tazvivinga, Ndambani, Shumba and Mandivenga moved into Bikita, Ziki and some went to look for employment in the then Fort Victoria town (Masvingo) after the death of their fathers<sup>218</sup>. What intensified these intra-family conflicts in the purchase areas over the inheritance of the farm was that until 1976, a purchase land farm could not legally be subdivided. When the war started in Bikita most of these conflicts and struggles over the control and inheritance of fathers' estates were still being fought between children of first generation farmers who had remained on the farms and those who had been ejected from the farms. Thus, the liberation struggle actually became one easy way of 'ridding each other of the burden of the competition', examples. The deaths of Tapson Tazvivinga, Joel Mandishaya and Kalisto Nyengera who were sold out to the guerrillas by their brothers exemplify this. However, relatives and wives of the deceased insist that these three were not sell-outs but were sold out by their half-brothers so that they could inherit the farms left behind.<sup>219</sup>

From the focus group discussions held with villagers in Bikita, it emerged that education, one's status within the community, wealth and money were all sources of jealousy amongst the rural community. These issues became the bases of accusations and counter-accusations that became part of everyday social relations and interactions within the villages<sup>220</sup>. The Bikita case study proved that many were killed because they were wealthy, had many cattle or property in their houses or they had sons working in towns who took good care of them.<sup>221</sup> What also emerged from the focus group discussion was that colonial policies, education created and deepened social and economic inequalities amongst Africans in rural communities. These conflicts and tensions were accentuated and resolved by the

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid

<sup>219</sup> Focus group discussion held at Chief Mazungunye's homestead, Nyika, Bikita, 17 June 2013.

<sup>220</sup> Interview with Munyaradzi, Budzi, 22 May 2013.

<sup>221</sup> Focus Group Discussion held in at Nyika, Bikita, 17 June 2013.

liberation struggle. Thus, small business entrepreneurs were forcibly turned into suppliers of guerrilla needs by the war committees and the youth. They were forced and indeed ended up supplying guerrillas with jeans, shoes and tinned foods. Through war committees it was agreed that the salaried class, particularly the civil servants within the district were subjected to compulsory contributions of a third of their salaries to be channeled to guerrilla supplies. When this was discovered by the Native Commissioner of Bikita, teachers' salaries in the district were withheld as punishment. Guerrillas retaliated by burning to the ground the Matsai council offices, flogging council personnel of Duma and Pfupajena councils, and vandalizing council offices.

## 2.6 The Mujibhas, War and Violence

The vabereki, or villagers also remembered with sadness how the relationship between guerrillas and mujibhas impacted negatively on them. During the struggle, guerrillas used *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos*, male and female war aides whom they sent on various errands of collecting food, blankets, clothes and delivering messages. John Zindoga an ex-mujibha recalls:

Besides collecting food, money or blankets for *vanamukoma*, big brothers, we also kept vigil as they slept. We also ensured that they were comfortable by seeing to it that they get girls to entertain them. *Vanamukoma vaidawo kuvaraidzwa munongozivawo*, our big brothers also wanted entertainment you know. So we were go-betweens. After a *pungwe* when parents were dismissed it was time for *vanamukoma* to have quality time with the girls while we kept watch for possible dangers.”<sup>222</sup>

The same sentiments were also echoed by Nhamo Maregere, another *ex-mujibha*:

During the war we also assumed roles of sentinels. *Vanamukoma* told us that it was part of our training if we wanted to qualify to go to Mozambique for training we had to pass this basic test of making sure nothing happens to comrades when one was on duty. Whilst *vanamukoma* were conducting the *pungwe* we would select and slip in a number of girls into the sleeping areas of *vanamukoma* which were known as *poshitos*. The girls would spend the night with *vanamukoma* comforting them. Of course at first the girls pretended as if they did not like it but they ended up enjoying it, I mean telling from the stories they told us. Having a comrade for a boyfriend those days was prestigious.<sup>223</sup>

Many informants in Bikita who lived and experienced the war are of the opinion that the relationship between mujibhas and guerrillas was responsible for some unwarranted deaths of innocent civilians. Chief Mukanganwi explained that:

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<sup>222</sup> Interview with John Zindoga, ex-mujibha, Ziki, 21 June 2013.

<sup>223</sup> Interview with Nhamo Maregere, ex-mujibha, Maregere, 25 June 2013,

The deaths of the so-called sell-outs and witches were products of calculated *mijibha* and *chimbwido* conspiracy to rid themselves of personal enemies. Chimbwidos fixed anyone who gossiped about their escapades with guerrillas in the mountains. If the person was a woman, then she was reported as a witch to the comrades. These youths saw the war as presenting them with a comparative generational advantage which could be used to neutralize parental and other forms of control. Remember, they were of the same age with the guerrillas, they were more of friends and together they “liberated” each other from the yoke of parental control. Both girls and boys could come and go as they pleased, claiming to be running errands for guerrillas. If a parent complained, he became a sell-out, if it was a mother or aunt, a witch. That is what the youth did to us during the war, they lost all the respect for us<sup>224</sup>.

Mrs Rudo Zimano also pointed how *mujibhas* took their daughters to the comrades and branded them as witches if they complained about such activities:

The *mujibhas* took our daughters to the mountains where they would eat and sleep with the comrades. This disturbed social relations within the family and in the community. Our husbands would scold us, pointing out that as mothers we had failed to instil values in our daughters. Sometimes fathers would complain that our daughters were soiling the family name because of their escapades with the youths and guerrillas<sup>225</sup>.

Mrs Shumirai Zviuya explained that conflicts ensued between mothers and daughters or between fathers and daughters after parents confronted the girls of their unruly behaviour. The girls would retaliate by reporting the parents to the youths or guerrillas. Mrs Zviuya explain further that in some cases, parents would get beaten up as sell-outs when they really were not sell-outs. It was revenge by the youth for having beaten up girls for spending time with the comrades or with the *mujibhas*<sup>226</sup>.

Thus, the Bikita case study also highlighted the fact that the war accentuated generational tensions. Youth’s direct dealings with guerrillas saw them exercising an unprecedented measure of power over elders, headmen and chiefs, and as such guerrillas trusted the youth and tasked them with the day to day running of the war. As observed by Kriger, the division of civilian organisations into peasant and youth wings laid the organisational basis for young people to challenge the authority of the elders. It was very common to find youth summoning a chief or a headman to a *pungwe*. If he resisted the youth could beat him up or report him to the guerrillas who would again summon the chief or headman to the *pungwe* and publicly beat him up. In an interview, Nimrod Mambudu recalled

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<sup>224</sup> Interview with chief Mukanganwi, Bikita, 5 February 2013

<sup>225</sup> Interview with Mrs Rudo Zimano, Matsai, 17 February 2013.

<sup>226</sup> Interview with Shumirai Zviuya, Matsai, 17 February 2013.

how headman Njiva was humiliated by the guerrillas in front of his people that in the end he committed suicide. Headman Njiva had refused to attend a *pungwe* citing that he was not feeling very well. The youth reported him to the comrades who told the youth to go and bring him. The youth frog marched the headman. Upon arrival at the *pungwe* Njiva was accused of betraying the guerrillas to the Rhodesian Forces. The guerrillas also claimed that they had received information that the headman had released names of the youth and all guerrilla sympathisers to the Rhodesian Forces. The headman was beaten up and the guerrillas requested that the headman step down as headman. Unable to live with the humiliation, Njiva committed suicide five days later<sup>227</sup>.

Thus, many elders resented the powers enjoyed by the youth during the war. Elders feared the youth and the fact that the youth could report them to the guerrillas if they defied their orders. In the end, elders had no option but to submit themselves to the authority of the youth. The zealotry with which the youth collected money and food from parents created tensions in the rural communities. Elders also resented the fact that in most cases the youth repeatedly exceeded guerrilla instructions even stretching the orders given by guerrillas. Parents frequently saw that youths defrauded them but they were powerless to challenge them. Mrs. Rudo Shereni highlighted that at times the youth produced counterfeit letters from guerrillas requesting money, which they converted for personal use<sup>228</sup>.

Conflicts were also witnessed between *mujibhas* and their parents. Once a parent got wind that his or her son had defrauded neighbours and relatives under the guise of carrying out guerrillas orders, a parent would confront the youth. Using the authority they had acquired during the war, the youth challenged parents' authority and control over their lives. The youth could retaliate by teaming up with other youths and report their parents to the guerrillas.

Gender struggles were also highlighted during the war. As noted by Kriger in her Mtoko case study, indeed women attempted to use the war to change gender relations with their husbands. When guerrillas arrived in a community, they urged families to be united. Husbands were warned against beating their wives and so women saw in guerrillas possible allies who could change the existing social relations<sup>229</sup>. Women in Bikita too saw in the

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<sup>227</sup> Interview with Nimrod Mambudu, village, Matsai, 23 February 2013.

<sup>228</sup> Interview with Mrs Rudo Shereni, Budzi 17 February 2013.

<sup>229</sup> Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*, p. 178

guerrillas potential allies in changing gender relations in their homes. Should a wife complain to the guerrillas about being beaten, guerrillas would summon the husband and punish him in public. Runesu Chuma, a former extension officer, narrated how during the war, women ended up challenging husbands with the full knowledge that they had the guerrillas' support. Men felt threatened and in most cases became afraid to challenge their wives fearing that they would be reported to the guerrillas<sup>230</sup>. Another example was given by Chenai Takavada, second wife to the late Jemitius. Chenai narrated how her co-wife sold out their husband to the guerrillas because she was jealousy that he had married a younger wife. Youth came to collect him at night and he never returned home<sup>231</sup>. Thus, the war heightened household tensions in some cases.

Garai Gudo explained that as husbands they resented the interference guerrillas had in their homes. He pondered; 'Imagine you are a husband and some youth comes and tells you how you should treat your wife. Us older men resented that. What does a youth know about marital affairs?'<sup>232</sup> Chief Mabika explained that most men resented guerrilla interference in their family affairs. Men argued that the guerrillas had come to fight the war and not to police the community's day to day domestic lives. Older men strongly believed that how they treated their wives was their unquestionable right<sup>233</sup>. Mr. Manikidzo Mhazo, then a war chairman, explained how in the end men complained and came to an understanding with the guerrillas. Eventually, guerrillas stopped interfering in the private affairs of husbands and wives<sup>234</sup>. However, it should be noted that household tensions or gender conflicts pre-dated the war but continued as a feature of life during the war.

Kruger considers the tensions between husbands and women during the war. However, Kruger occludes women's relationships and interactions amongst and between themselves, their relations with their families and neighbours.<sup>235</sup> From the research conducted, it emerged that the war became a site of struggle among women, their families and neighbours as well as with guerrillas and Rhodesian forces. Guerrilla or Rhodesian Forces' interactions with women, especially the young girls, heightened gossip within the rural community. Indeed, both soldiers and guerrillas at times had sexual relationships with

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<sup>230</sup> Interview with Runesu Chuma, former Extension Officer, Bikita 4 March 2013.

<sup>231</sup> Interview with Chenai Takavada, Ziki, 2 March 2013.

<sup>232</sup> Interview with Garai Gudo, 16 March 2013, Budzi

<sup>233</sup> Interview with Chief Mabika, Matsai 19 February 2013

<sup>234</sup> Interview with Manikidzo Mhazo, Matsai, 19 February 2013

<sup>235</sup> N Kruger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War*, p. 158

young women. From the interviews carried out it emerged that the *chimbwidos* or women involved with either the guerrillas or the soldiers resented having their affairs discussed. According to Mrs Etina. Mhazo ‘many women died during the war after being accused of witchcraft by these young girls. If the boyfriend was a soldier, the soldiers would come and accuse you of accommodating guerrillas. They would take you to the camp and beat the lights out of you’<sup>236</sup>.

Maria pointed out that older women were jealous of the freedom that young women enjoyed during the war. *Chimbwidos* could now move at night and there was nothing parents could do about it. Older women, out of jealousy would speak disparagingly of young women to reduce their chances of getting married. However, *chimbwidos* retaliated by teaming up with the youth and fabricated stories about older women being witches. Maria explained that that is why most women were accused of witchcraft during the war.<sup>237</sup> Young women and sometimes married women were accused of having sexual relationships with soldiers or DSA. Husbands working in town would be told by their mothers or other relatives about the unfaithfulness of their wives leading to divorce in most cases. My informants pointed out that some of the allegations were true whilst others were just said out of malice. By way of revenge the accused women falsely reported mothers-in-law or their husbands’ relatives to the soldiers as collaborators<sup>238</sup>. In whispers, B recalled that:

If your homestead was close to the road and soldiers frequented the home asking the whereabouts of guerrillas and other information, other women mostly would spread rumors that the soldiers were your boyfriends coming to check if you were free or to communicate that they were in the area. You would be bad mouthed and called names, so we also reported them to the guerrillas<sup>239</sup>

In J’s opinion:

Even if one had a relationship with the RFs or the guerrillas, was it anybody’s business to go around talking about it? I think it was good that the war taught people that they should not gossip. Truth or not it was wrong to talk or demonize other people’s relationships. And sometimes truth can get you killed, *chokwadi chako ichocho chinokuuraisa*, some things are better left unsaid, that is what people should have known. It was war, what did they want us to do? Can you say ‘no’ to someone holding a gun?<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Interview with Etina Mhazo, Matsai 19 February, 2013.

<sup>237</sup> Interview with Maria, Chingarande, 12 July 2013

<sup>238</sup> Interview with Tawanda Muchero, Chmbwembwe village, 26 February 2013

<sup>239</sup> Interview with unnonymous, Bikita, 24 June 2013.

<sup>240</sup> Interview with J, Matsai, ex-chimbwido, 18 March 2013.



What was resented most by the women whose names were scandalized was not only the social implications of such gossip but the political implications of such careless talk. Mrs Zano explained that if one's daughter was said to be involved with the soldiers it meant that the whole family was in trouble with the guerrillas. The youths would relay the information to the guerrillas and the whole family was branded as sell-outs. It also emerged that if on the other hand a girl was said to be having an affair with guerrillas the whole family was in trouble with the soldiers. Soldiers would take the girl to Odzi camp for interrogation. Whenever anything happened in the area the girl's home became the first port of call of the soldiers and if she did not have answers to their questions she was assaulted<sup>241</sup>.

Sekai (not her real name), sometime in 1977, was taken to Odzi camp after soldiers were told by a neighbour that she was having an affair with a guerrilla. She was repeatedly asked where the *gandangas* were and when they would be coming to Matsai again? She repeatedly told them that she knew nothing about it. She was tortured and returned home she was told by the youths that Mrs Svondo was responsible for tipping the soldiers<sup>242</sup>. It emerged that when a neighbour had been approached by the soldiers inquiring about the whereabouts of the guerrillas, out of fear the neighbor just blurted Sekai's name. The youth reported the matter to the guerrillas who summoned the woman. She was beaten to death as a "warning to others"<sup>243</sup>.

That some of the war-time conflicts emanated from individual animosities and intra/inter familial tensions can also be witnessed in the conduct and operations of District Security Assistants. The operations of this group heightened individual, inter and intra-family conflict within the Bikita community. Civilian testimonies in Bikita consistently made references to the operations of the Rhodesian Forces and District Security Assistants whom the Bikita community remembered collectively as *masoja* (the soldiers). DSA worked closely with the District Commissioners. The DSAs operated in Bikita from 1976 till 1979. The DSAs are generally remembered by the Bikita community as thugs, cruel and with ill morals. DSA conflicts with the civilians were often explained not in terms of military goals but in terms of individual animosities, greed and hatred. Jorum Mabika, son of the late chief Muuyandiani Mabika and an ex-DSA explained that:

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<sup>241</sup>Interview with Winnie Zano, Matsai 18 March 2013

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Sekai,(not her real name), Wudzi village Matsai, 18 March 2013

<sup>243</sup> Ibid

During the war I was a member of the DSA and operated in Matsai, my home area. Many of the DSAs had been messengers of the chiefs before the war. In addition, former community development officers, dip-tank attendants, demonstrators and forest rangers were also prominent amongst the DSAs. During the war we were given key roles as DSAs because we knew the area so well. The majority of us were deployed within our home district, where we operated amongst people whom we knew very well<sup>244</sup>. The Rhodesian government believed that deploying African troops in their home area was effective because these people were familiar with the local terrain and were well aware of the habits of the people in the area.<sup>245</sup>

It emerged that since these DSAs operated in their home area, they were in the habit of settling old scores with perceived enemies. These scores could be individual or intra-familial. DSAs usually raided homes of perceived guerrilla sympathisers, and confiscated cattle. Their knowledge of their home area made them to descend on neighbours and relatives who had wronged them in the past or those who had looked down upon them. Sometimes they would descend on people out of sheer hatred or because they simply wanted to be felt. In the end they accused neighbours, relatives or other ordinary members of the community of supporting guerrillas, harass them and burn people's homes or beat people to extract information about the whereabouts of guerrillas.

In a low voice, afraid that the walls might hear him X of Budzi remembered cases where DSAs confiscated cattle from people they knew in their home area:

This kind of bullying and greed was a source of resentment. What was mostly resented by the people was the fact that DSAs, unlike soldiers, took people's cattle and kept them for their own use. Take DSA Mabika for example. He ended up with many cattle which we knew he confiscated from people during the war. They looted from the povo, the masses. He was able to do so because he had a gun and we did not. Where do you think most of these thieves got their wealth from? Smith was not paying them much, they were only given beef and beans and those uniforms. Many of them looted buses, stole other people's cattle, looted shops, council monies and pretended it was the guerrillas. Who would ask them? Zindi who was a commander of DSAs in Bikita impounded quite a number of cattle from neighbouring villages. He would not surrender them to the DC but just put them in his kraal.<sup>246</sup>

On his part Mabika indicated that by 1979 he had 123 herds of cattle and claimed that the source of his wealth were the salaries paid to him as DSA.

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<sup>244</sup> Interview with Paul Mhere, Bikita 16 June 2013.

<sup>245</sup> Interview with Muuyandiani Mabika, Matsai, 13 January 2013.

<sup>246</sup> Interview with X, (not real name) Budzi, 18 May 2013

## 2.7 Witches and Poisoning in the War.

Many in Bikita recalled the mysterious deaths of guerrillas within the district during the war and how these triggered accusations of witchcraft amongst civilians and between guerrillas and civilians. Civilians recalled that sometime in 1977 guerrillas died mysteriously a week after eating food at a *pungwe* in Chimbwembwe village. However, it was pointed out that they had been operating in Mazambara village before moving to Chimbwembwe. When the deaths occurred, other guerrillas accused the villagers of bewitching their fellow comrades. Two women were identified by other villagers as the witches. Although these women pleaded innocent, they were beaten to death by the guerrillas. As Chenai 's husband, Sauro Zvandinakira recalled:

My wife was accused of poisoning the guerrillas yet I never knew her to be that wicked. All I know is that those two women were sold out to the guerrillas as a survival tactic. It was war-time, troubled times if you ask me, characterized with insecurities and fear. It was survival of the fittest. Faced with death, one was capable of saying anything about anyone just to serve their skins at the expense of the next person. People said anything just to make the guerrillas or the Rhodesian forces go away. That's what happened to my wife, she was sacrificed just to make the anger of the guerrillas go away<sup>247</sup>.

The use of poisons by the Rhodesian Forces created a lot of confusion and fermented conflicts between guerrillas and civilians. Whenever a death occurred, the guerrillas blamed the civilians, yet Rhodesian assassins would have been responsible or were behind the killings. According to Ellert, poisons like parathion which was impregnated into the fabric of jeans or any other clothing, lasted up to two weeks before their effects could be noticed or before killing the victim.<sup>248</sup> At this point guerrillas would have eaten and dressed at various points within the district to be certain as to who or what the source or cause of death was. Consequently, a witch hunt would follow creating fears amongst the rural community<sup>249</sup>.

According to Chief Mabika:

Poisoning in the war resulted in guerrillas consulting traditional healers, diviners, prophets and Zionists, opening the community to witchcraft accusations and the resurgence of divisive tendencies in the community. These war-time witchcraft accusations provoked some of the most traumatic incidents of the war as guerrillas were drawn into accusations of witchcraft based on local animosities that had existed among the locals long before the

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<sup>247</sup> Interview with Sauro Zvandinakira, Bikita, 17 March 2013.

Interview with Munyaradzi Zvandinakira, Bikita, 17 March 2013.

<sup>248</sup> Henry Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War*, Gweru :Mambo Press, 1989

<sup>249</sup> Interview with Jahannes Chirume, ex-Selous Scout during the liberation struggle, Masvingo, 6 April 2013

war. Both guerrillas and civilians sought recourse to diviners in attempts to seek healing, protection and solve problems.’<sup>250</sup>

From the interviews carried out in Bikita, witchcraft accusations were also interpreted as reflections of class interests since they often targeted hated wealthy neighbours. At times these accusations assumed an individual or gendered dimension, focusing on adulterous wives, unpopular mothers-in-law or women thought to have caused fertility problems within the community. These “witches” were identified through divination; or on the basis of suspicion held by party committee members, youths and diviners. These war-time killings are remembered as highly arbitrary, deeply traumatic and certainly had a lasting impact on intra-familial and intra-community relations.

Killings of witches spiraled out of control especially with regard to the numerous guerrilla deaths which resulted from the Rhodesian infiltration of poisoned food and clothing into guerilla supply networks. As pointed above, the task was intended to strike at the heart of the relationship between guerrillas and civilians. It worked well in places where the source of the poisoned goods and the cause of the guerrilla death went undiscovered. Unexplained deaths were very often blamed on certain witches. Unfortunately, part is that guerrillas could not distinguish between deaths by poisoning, witchcraft or natural causes, triggering conflicts amongst civilians and between guerrillas and civilians. Guerrillas continued to die even after the death of the alleged witches, not because she had returned to haunt them but because they continued taking the poisoned tinned foods and drinks, or wearing the poisoned clothes.<sup>251</sup> Failure to come up with an explanation of these deaths made the guerrillas descent on the very community which was looking after them, creating tensions and tearing families apart

Cases of witchcraft accusations were very traumatic to the family members of the accused. Accusations were followed by isolation by members of the community. According to headman Zero, in some instances, guerrillas went out of hand. The whole community could be accused or suspected of harboring additional witches. When a witch was killed, guerrillas would ask them to name other persons involved in witchcraft. If the accused witch was cruel, she could name anyone she hated or was jealous of and that would be the end of that person because guerrillas did not take time to investigate these cases or accusations. Failure by the guerrillas to

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<sup>250</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai, 17 May 2013.

<sup>251</sup> Interview with Socha Juru and Chamunorwa Bare, Nyika, 19 August 2013

investigate and establish the truth led to the death of many innocent people<sup>252</sup>. Jimmy Madebwe recalled that at some *pungwes* guerrillas summoned renowned *n`angas*, spirit mediums and Zionist prophets to “smell or sniff out” witches from amongst community members as they filed past. In all these events nearly all the people confessed to acts of witchcraft out of fear. The *n`anga* or prophets would sniff out witches and accuse them of doing certain evil things, using hyenas, jackals, snakes and owls against other people. Out of fear people just agreed because they could not argue with the prophets. Others would claim that they bewitched others unknowingly and were being used by other witches. All this was said out of fear, creating unnecessary animosities<sup>253</sup>

In their testimonies civilians also cited the case of food poisoning at Vitalis village done by a genuine sell-out, Dzetse. Vitalis village is situated about 4 kilometres from Matsai area. Farai Budzi recalls:

Dzetse’s son was tasked by the Rhodesians soldiers to poison the guerrillas during a *pungwe* in the village. The man succeeded in his mission and fled to town. After some days the guerrillas became sick and six of them died. A reinforcement section of the guerrillas was quickly dispatched to that village to collect and treat the sick, bury the dead and investigate what and who was behind the fatal incident. The guerrillas retaliated by burning the whole Vitalis village, herds of cattle were shot, together with people as village members failed to divulge where the suspect had fled to. Surrounding villages were forbidden to bury the dead or even to remove the carcasses of cattle. Guerrillas wanted the Vitalis village to be a constant reminder to other villages of what guerrillas do to traitors. This was intended to be a warning to other sell-outs<sup>254</sup>.

Mbuya Miriro Chivako remembered that the DA later sent soldiers to remove the dead bodies. She explained that they never mourned the deceased and it was very traumatic and painful. Dzetse never returned to Bikita even after the war. Rumor has it that he relocated to Gokwe<sup>255</sup>.

That RFs used poisoning as a counter insurgency strategy is complimented by works of many ex-Rhodesian forces, agents and assassins who have written on the Zimbabwean liberation war. Confessional books by Kenny Flower<sup>256</sup> and Jim Parker<sup>257</sup> expose how the RFs fermented conflicts between civilian and guerrillas by tasking the special Branch to issue

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<sup>252</sup> Interview with Headman Zero, Hozvi, 20 August 2013.

<sup>253</sup> Interview with Jimmy Madabwe, Mushana, 4 August 2013.

<sup>254</sup> Interview with Farai Budzi, Vitalis Village, 19 March 2013

<sup>255</sup> Interview with Miriro Chivako, Vitalis Village, 19 March 2013

<sup>256</sup> Kenny Flower, *Serving Secretly: An Intelligent Chief on Record*, Harare: Quest, 1987.

<sup>257</sup> Also see Jim Parker, , *Assignment Selous Scouts: Inside Story of a Rhodesian Special Branch Officer*, Alberton: Galago, 2006

samples of poisoned products to rural stores and wholesalers. On their part, guerrillas acquired and died after getting the poisoned items through requisition from individuals who could supply or through war committees.<sup>258</sup>

In his memoirs, a Rhodesian assassin, Martinez, explained how he used poisons like thallium parathion and ricin in poisoning food and clothes destined for use by the guerrillas. Parathion worked its way into the body through hair follicles. The assassin further disclosed that Rhodesian security forces had brought clothing to him, several hundred pairs of underpants and T-shirts, which he soaked in poison. These were dried, bundled and put into farm stores “anticipated as future terrorist targets.” Many of these farm stores were raided, the guerrillas took the clothes, wore them and died.<sup>259</sup> Louise White in her work explains how poisons like thallium were often injected into tinned foods or fizzy drinks targeted for guerrilla consumption. Other poisons like barium and fluorophosphates were smeared into denim jeans, corduroys and pants, clothing mostly preferred by guerrillas.<sup>260</sup> Jocelyne Alexander and Jo-Ann McGregor observed that guerrillas failed to distinguish the difference between poisoning by witches and poisoning by Rhodesian agents, between witchcraft and biological counter-insurgency.<sup>261</sup>

Former Selous Scouts, Gina Chirume and John Moto,<sup>262</sup> whom I interviewed in Bikita, remembered how they were tasked with the poisoning of goods which passed through them. The two remembered that:

The Selous Scouts were specifically created to infiltrate guerrilla food supply networks. We were also tasked to sow confusion and create division amongst civilians and to alienate and antagonize the guerrillas with their civilian supporters. The poisoning of tinned foods and clothes was done at our headquarters in Bindura at the Andre' Rabie barracks. That is where the whites poisoned the food and jeans. Our duty was to ensure that we administered the poisons in water holes, wells and boreholes. We were instructed to do that. I think this approach succeeded in dividing people as guerrillas and civilians became enemies. Failure to distinguish between witchcraft and actual

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<sup>258</sup> Jim Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts: Inside Story of a Rhodesian Special Branch Officer*, Alberton: Galago, 2006, p. 285.

<sup>259</sup> Ian. Martinez, “The History of the Use of Bacteriological and Chemical Agents during Zimbabwe’s Liberation War of 1965-1980 by Rhodesian Forces,” *Third World Quarterly*, vol.23 no.6 (2002) pp1163-1165.

<sup>260</sup> Louise White, “Poisoned Food, Poisoned Uniforms, and Anthrax: Or How Guerrillas Die in War”, *Osiris* vol.19, (2004), pp 227-228.

Also see Chandre Gould and Peter Folb, *Project Coast: Apartheid’s Chemical and Biological Warfare Programme*, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Geneva, pp 26-27.

<sup>261</sup> Alexander Jocelyne, McGregor Jo Ann and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the Dark Forests of Matebeleland*, Oxford: James Currey, 2000, p. 198.

<sup>262</sup> Interview with Gina Chirume and John Moto, Bikita, 2 February 2013.

poisoning made guerrillas to accuse civilians of bewitching them. What confused both guerrillas and civilians was the source of the poison. These poisons took long before their effects could be noticed.<sup>263</sup>

From these interviews it emerged that the poisoning of food and clothing by the RFs succeeded in creating a wedge between the guerrillas and the civilians. The issue of poisoning also heightened tensions between civilians and communities.

## 2.8 The Base as a Theatre of War-Violence.

War-time stories as remembered by the people of Bikita clearly highlighted the violence that accompanied the conflicts which unfolded during this time. As the war stories were told, I realized that for most people the war was also remembered through the theatres where the “war” unfolded. The base featured promptly in people’s memories as the main theatre where the war was defined, contemplated, fought and “won”. ‘Won’ because here matters were solved and judgement was meted. The base indeed became a site of all the struggles about the struggle and those struggles within it.<sup>264</sup> According to Mr Misheck Dzoro:

It was at the base, during the *pungwe* that wives reported their husbands to guerrillas and where husbands were disciplined and reformed. Thus, it was at the base that the domestic war between wives and husbands were fought. It was also at the base that family inheritance feuds were fought and resolved by the comrades. At the same base the “war” between victims of witchcraft and the witches was fought and won. Thus, all the struggles between and among individuals, families and communities were fought at the base where the “liberators” delivered justice, punished / disciplined offenders.”<sup>265</sup>

Mrs. Emmesi Mukaro recalled that:

It was at the bases that *pungwes* were held. During a *pungwe* political education took place. Again it was at the *pungwe* where the disciplining of *varoyi*, *vatenges*, *zimbwasungata*, *nharadada nenhunzvatunzva*, witches, sell-outs dogs of the imperialists, unpeaceful, trouble causers and mischief makers. Many were abused physically, sexually and psychologically at the base. So for me the base and the *pungwe* were one and the same thing. A *pungwe* was a component of the base. People brought all their problems, grievances to be resolved by guerrillas at the base during a *pungwe*.<sup>266</sup>

The above testimonies underscore the fact that as the war progressed the base became an integral part of the war. Both the base and the war became more and more about the people themselves, their interactions with one another within communities, their personal agendas,

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<sup>263</sup> Interview with Gina Chirume and John Moto, ex-Selous Scout during the liberation Struggle, Matsai, 16 May 2013.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Interview with Mr Misheck Dzoro, Matsai 13 June 2013.

<sup>266</sup> Interview with Mrs Emmesi Mukaro, Nyika, 18 June 2013.

their social tensions and aspirations. Informants in Bikita highlighted in these testimonies that the war was about sell-outs and being sold out. Selling out and the fear of being sold out to guerrillas became so endemic that people feared for their daily lives.

War-stories therefore highlight the fact that guerrillas, youth and RFs unleashed violence on civilians, a fact established by other scholars like Kriger, Sachikonye, Joycelyn Alexander and Mc Gregor among others.<sup>267</sup> According to Bhema Zano:

As the beatings were administered the crowd was ordered to sing, clap hands with women ululating. When Chamunorwa Musana the late was being beaten at Matorofa base for selling-out the two *mujibhas*, I was asked to lead the crowd in singing the song Chenjera! Chenjera!

Chorus Chenjera! Chenjera!

Vanamukoma vanoranga vatengesi!

Chorus Chenjera! Chengera!

Vanamukoma uraya vatengesi!

Chorus Chenjera! Chenjera!

I sang the song until I was told to stop. This time those administering the beatings were also told to stop. Then guerrillas started cutting Chamunorwa's lips. Blood gushed, we were all told to look at what guerrillas do to sell-outs. We were told that if we stupidly closed our eyes guerrillas were watching, they would shoot us. *Mwanangu*....., my child, I don't think I want to continue with this discussion, for many days these memories will not give me sleep. How can one live with the memory that you actually sang when someone you grew up with was actually being butchered, when he called for help but we ignored and we danced, clapped hands urging the assaulters to go on?<sup>268</sup>

Stories of severe beatings by guerrillas during the war abound. These beatings were so severe in most cases living victims suffering from back aches, head injuries or even broken limbs. It also emerged that torture, physical and psychological, accompanied these beatings as limbs were cut, with people being forced to witness deaths or killings at pungwes. Others were forcibly co-opted to be part of the killings. Cde Nyikadzino, an ex-guerrilla explained that:

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<sup>267</sup>For a nuanced discussion on guerrilla violence on peasants during the liberation war see Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War, 1992*; Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a State Turns on its Citizens: 60 Years of Institutionalized Violence in Zimbabwe*, Auckland Park: Jacana Media Pvt Limited, 2011; David Cauter, *Under the Skin: The Death of White Rhodesians*, Evanston: North-western University Press, 1983; Jocelyne Alexander, Jo AnnMcGregor and Terrance.O. Ranger, *Violence and Memory*, 2000. These scholars concur that there was a great deal of violence exercised by guerrillas against civilians and collaborators of regime forces. The violence by guerrillas was as gruesome and brutal as that used by regime forces.

<sup>268</sup> Interview with Bhema Zano, Matsai 25 February 2014.



Beatings executed at pungwes were aimed at instilling discipline in the masses. Even back at the camps in Mozambique or within liberation movements disciplining of guerrillas took place. During the war you will find that many civilians stopped selling-out, adultery, beating their wives out of fear that once exposed/ or discovered guerrillas would discipline them. In a way it was good as a deterrent measure but where beatings were executed wantonly, it severed no purpose.<sup>269</sup>

In concurrence, Cde Mao Tse Tung had this to say:

ZANU PF as a party believed and still believes that lack of internal discipline made people steal from others, sell others out or bewitch each other. As such within ZANU circles if by any chance one proves to be lacking in internal discipline through unsavory acts, then the party would be forced to instill internal discipline in that person. This is when discipline comes in. Culprits are punished in order to conform to the social order laid down that people should live in harmony. Furthermore, punishment of culprit can be used as a deterrent to bad habits. However, we were allowed to punish offenders only after a full investigation had been carried out.<sup>270</sup>

The above sentiments were also echoed by President Robert Mugabe in his 1977 speech:

The individual must comply with the order laid down by the group. Our group is the party called ZANU PF. ZANU has an order, rules and regulations which make its systems the ZANU systems of behaviour. When an individual fails to subject himself to discipline, then external discipline must apply. The party must compel him to conform. This is where punishment comes in. We who are members of the central committee demand of others compliance to rules of discipline.<sup>271</sup>

Data from oral testimonies suggests that there were three types of sell-outs. The first category of sell-out was made up of local informants for the state. These were recruited for financial gains, to gather information concerning guerrilla supplies. These were the main target of guerrilla surveillance. The second category comprised of those sell-outs who were identified by the *mujibhas* and the *chimbwidos* accused of having sold out the comrades and those who supported the Rhodesian soldiers. It emerged that in this category, many avenged personal grievances by lying about the suspected sell-outs when in actual fact they were settling old scores. The last category comprised of sell-outs and witches identified by their neighbours, not necessarily *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos*. These were often motivated by vengeance, hatred or envy. Informants in Bikita highlighted that this category of selling out was the most dangerous as it entailed the killing of innocent civilians either by soldiers or by the guerrillas.

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<sup>269</sup> Interview with Cde Nyikadzino, ex-combatant, Gweru, 16 September 2013.

<sup>270</sup> Interview with Cde Mao Tse Tung, ex-combatant, Gweru, 16 September 2013.

<sup>271</sup> R.G Mugabe, "Defining the Line", Speech Delivered at the Central Meeting at C...., August 31, 1977 in R.G Mugabe, *Our War of Liberation: Speeches, Articles, Interviews 1976-1979*, Gweru, Mambo Press, 1983, p. 33.

## 2.9 Heightened Guerrilla Violence, 1978-9.

The years 1978-9 witnessed a phases of rampant guerrilla violence in Bikita. After the signing of the internal settlement in 1978, the Rhodesian government came up with a military plan code-named “Operation Favor” aimed at making guerrillas surrender. Under Operation Favor, Rhodesian regular forces retreated from their operational areas and were replaced by Sithole and Muzorewa’s Selous Scouts and Auxiliaries.<sup>272</sup> Thus, the Rhodesian government embarked on a large-scale training of auxiliaries on a six week crash programme. Mr. Mateo Mvura recalled that:

In 1978 every young man suspected to be *mujibha* was abducted and trained on a three month crash programme to become Selous Scouts. Others served as auxiliaries or joined the second Rhodesian African Rifles 2RAR. This crash programme unleashed a flood of ill-mannered and ill-trained armed young men in the rural areas, a move which spelt disaster for everyone in terms of violence.<sup>273</sup>

ZANU PF also launched a military offensive by pursuing an equally vigorous strategy of training youth inside Zimbabwe in its liberated and semi-liberated zones. The net effects of these developments was an increasing number of militias and different groups of youth representing different factions of all the belligerents in Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle, posing a ripe environment for confusion, tensions and high levels of abuses, atrocities and violence.

The floods of young, ill-trained guerrillas now operating in the countryside lacked self-control. As such, when sell-outs or alleged witches were brought at *pungwes*, their response was instant justice. Chief Mazungunye recalled that:

This crop of young guerrillas was very cruel and daring. They unleashed blunt violence on the civilians. For example when Ananias Mhute, an informant, reported two *mujibhas* Tizirai and Chenjerai to the soldiers, the two were abducted by the RFs. They were never seen or heard of, up to today no one knows what became of the two. After two weeks the guerrillas abducted Chomunorwa, called a *pungwe* and people attended. They started by cutting his lips saying the mouth had sold out true cadres of the *chimurenga*, then they shot his legs, one by one because they had “travelled to the soldiers to report”, followed by the plucking of the eyes. It was horrible and very traumatic but people were forced to look at how the *vakomana* treated traitors<sup>274</sup>.

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<sup>272</sup> See Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a State Turns on its Citizens*, p.89

<sup>273</sup> Interview with Mateo Mvura, Mashavira Village, Matsai, 18 May 2015.

<sup>274</sup> Interview with Chief Mazungunye, Bikita, 18 May 2013.

Stories of how guerrillas mercilessly mutilated limbs abound, a theme also picked by scholars and historians<sup>275</sup>. It also emerged that most cases of selling-out were never investigated as was supposed to be the case. That indiscipline and blunt violence against civilians was rampant during this era is confirmed by most reports from detachment and sectorial commissars in Manica Province. One commissar reported that problems of indiscipline and violence against civilians were common in Bikita, Zaka and Gutu where guerrillas assaulted and shot the local masses without thorough investigations.<sup>276</sup> It also appears that the same problem of guerrilla indiscipline was experienced by the masses not only in Bikita but in the whole country. In Mberengwa, then Belingwe, a commissar reported that there was a problem of insulting, assaulting and shooting of the local masses without thorough investigations, most of whom were accused of being in possession of communication radios and arms. The report went on to explain that out of all the victims shot on account of such allegations, no radios or arms were surrendered to prove to the commanders the truth in the accusations.<sup>277</sup>

From the focus group discussion held at Mashoko Mission, participants claimed increased cases of arson. Homes, granaries, stores of suspected sell-outs or witches were burnt down. In most cases witches were burnt inside their houses and they were denied decent burials. Although I failed to come across rape victims during field work, participants concurred that guerrillas and the RFs, especially the Selous Scouts and auxiliaries, forced themselves on both young girls and married women although most women are evasive on the issue. Earlier on I recorded testimonies by *ex-mujibhas* who explained that they arranged girls for guerrillas and acted as go-betweens linking guerrillas and their girls. Women were not forth-coming to discuss cases of rape or their sexual relationships with guerrillas or the Rhodesian forces. Informants highlighted that both fighting forces demanded sexual favours from women. Children born out of these affairs with either guerrillas or RFs are referred to as *vana vemuhondo*- war-time children.

That guerrillas abused and raped women during the war has been corroborated by works of scholars like Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi and Fay Chung highlight how women

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<sup>275</sup> See works by David Caute, *Under the Skin*, 1983; Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia, *Abductions, Torture and Death in the Counter-Insurgency Campaign: A Report on the War in Rhodesia*, Salisbury, CCJPR, 1976; Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War*, 1992.

<sup>276</sup> ZANU PF Archives, ZANU Operational Department, Department of Defence (ODDD), Political Report for Manica Province 3, p. 10.

<sup>277</sup> ZANU PF Archives, ZANU Operational Department, Department of Defence (ODDD), Political Report Covering Part of the Southern Front as the Sub-Area; Sector 2, Matibi and Belingwe, 4 June 1978.

were abused by those in senior positions at the camps in Mozambique.<sup>278</sup> As observed by Medial Hove in his study on the Hlengwe, some of the consequences of war-time rape were pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections/ diseases, injury to reproductive organs and stigmatization. More-so, marriages were ruined where the rape or sex was demanded from married women. In some cases pregnancies resulted from these rapes or illicit affairs leading to divorces if the victim was a married woman.<sup>279</sup>

What these war-stories reveal is that despite the ZANLA Code of Conduct which cautioned guerrillas at the front “not to take liberties with women”, guerrillas disregarded this code as evidenced by many cases of rape and illicit affairs that occurred during this time as referred to by many informants.<sup>280</sup> Cde Oliver Chombo explained that the violation of this code of conduct could insult the ancestors of the land – *midzimu yaitsamwa yofuratira*. Such an event was likely to endanger guerrilla operations by exposing them to enemy attacks and even death at the hands of the enemy.<sup>281</sup> Mr. Mufaro Nyasha, who was a teacher during the war recalls how:

...“Makomuredzi” (comrades) had taken to robbing stores. For example sometime in August 1978 they robbed Mamutse’s shop at Mashoko, then again in the same year they broke into Mutwara’s shop at Negovane. They looted beers and jeans. They also robbed the Shu-Shine and Kuwirirana buses plying the Bikita routes demanding cash from conductors and passengers, at times taking the goods belonging to passengers. Many became excessive beer drinkers and womanizers. Many ended up sleeping in houses with women or girls, raping them if they resisted their advances. The gun became the answer for any slight provocation or problem or misunderstanding. The popular saying that day was, the gun has no room for negotiations or –the gun rules *gidi rinotonga*. In their drunken stupor, the young men eliminated anyone said to be a sell-out, adulterer, witch, thief, slanderer, the list of offenses was endless.<sup>282</sup>

Cases of guerrilla indiscipline and violence got out of hand that at one point Maurice Nyagumbo appealed to ZANU PF central committee and to Mugabe:

To make sure that vakomana (boys) stuck to the objectives of the struggle. Nyagumbo urged Mugabe to investigate reports of vakomana who are said to take liberties with

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<sup>278</sup> Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or for Worse? Women in Zimbabwe’s Liberation Struggle*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2000.

Fay Chung, *Re-Living the Memories of the Second Chimurenga: Memories from Zimbabwe’s Liberation Struggle*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2005.

<sup>279</sup> Medial Hove, “War-Legacy: Reflection on the Effects of the Rhodesian Security Forces (RFS) in South Eastern Zimbabwe during Zimbabwe’s war of Liberation 1976-1980,” in *Journal of African Studies and Development* Vol.4 (8), 2012, p. 202.

<sup>280</sup> ZANU PF Archives, File: Commissariat Department, Document: ZANU Political Education, People’s Army Lesson 4: Democracy.

<sup>281</sup> Interview with Cde. Chombo, ex-guerrilla, Gweru, 10 May 2013.

<sup>282</sup> Interview with Tendai Nyasha, teacher during the struggle, Bikita 15 June 2013.

women and married life, being high handed and arrogant towards the masses. Some are said to have resorted to pleasure seeking pursuits, beer drinking orgies, open terror and torture of suspects prior to thorough or impartial investigations and proper analysis of individual incidents.<sup>283</sup>

Guerrilla indiscipline in the last phases of the war is also captured by Nhongo-Simbanegavi. She cites examples of serious disciplinary problems amongst guerrillas operating in the Gaza province. Nhongo-Simbanegavi explains how commanders were forced to execute physical punishments to the offending guerrillas.<sup>284</sup> The indiscipline had gone to an extent whereby guerrillas ended up disregarding orders from their superiors and military codes of conduct.

The Bikita rural populace's war-stories about guerrilla violence are also substantiated by works written by scholars, historians, journalists and men who served under the Rhodesian Forces. Although these works looked at other parts of the country they help to complete the story of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. Jim Parker explained how guerrillas raped, murdered and ruthlessly brutalized the villagers to keep them living in fear.<sup>285</sup> Chenjerai Hove's work, *Shadows*<sup>286</sup>, also focuses on guerrilla violence, sell-outs and the fear of sell-outs, and the fear of the arrogance and pitilessness of the youth. It also discusses how senior officers in the camps forced themselves upon young female combatants, black and white soldiers imposing themselves on their victims. The book, indeed vividly captures guerrillas within the country forcing themselves upon the chimbwidos. It talks of children born to nameless fathers' or to guerrillas only known by their Chimurenga names, as well as the distress it caused families involved.<sup>287</sup> Shimmer Chinodya also depicts guerrilla violence in his work *Harvest of Thorns*. In the fiction Shimmer Chinodya shows how sell-outs were publicly beaten to death. His work deals with the betrayals and the violence in a war which left many traumatized and with memories full of horror for an individual to handle without psychological damage.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Morris Nyagumbo citation from , ZANU PF Archives, ZANU Operational Department, Department of Defence (ODDD), Political Report Covering Part of the Southern Front as the Sub-Area; Sector 2, Matibi and Belingwe, 4 June 1978.

<sup>284</sup> Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or For Worse*, p.112.

<sup>285</sup> Jim Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts: Inside Story of a Rhodesian Special Branch Officer*, Alberton : Galago, 2006, p. 285.

<sup>286</sup> *Shadows* by Chenjerai Hove is a fictional text. Even though this text is fictional still one can have a glimpse of the war from its narratives.

<sup>287</sup> Chenjerai Hove, *Shadows*, Harare: Baobab Books, 1991.

<sup>288</sup> Shimmer Chinodya, *Harvest of Thorns*, Harare: Baobab Books, 1989.

The Bikita rural populace's war memories have been useful in highlighting a number of issues. Firstly they showed that the liberation struggle was a terrain riddled with micro-conflicts and tensions between and among individuals, families and communities. Consequently, when the struggle unfolded in Bikita, these tensions and family feuds unfolded too such that the war ended up being a war about them, how they related to each other, what they hoped to change and other personal agendas. Secondly, these memories also underscored the fact that violence, torture and trauma accompanied war-time conflicts. Guerrillas and youth became the major perpetrators whilst the civilians in their different capacities, as villagers, parents, teachers, and headman were the victims. The war-memories highlight on the fact that ZANU and ZANLA had a code of conduct that among other issues regulated the relationships between the guerrillas and the peasants. However, as the war stories clearly showed, many a time guerrillas flaunted these codes of conduct. The Three Rules and the Eight Points provided clear-cut censure against commissions of unwarranted atrocities by guerrillas but these were flaunted as guerrillas raped, executed and deployed physical and psychological violence against the masses.

Memories of the war, as perceived by ex-guerrillas who fought in the liberation struggle and in Bikita in particular, also helped in the reconstruction of the war-story. Cde Biggie Muchaina, aka Tonderai Dodzo, whom the researcher interviewed in Kwekwe, expressed the view that the war story in Bikita would not be complete if it leaves out the violence, physical and psychological torture that guerrillas also experienced or were subjected.<sup>289</sup>

You know at times I get pained when people talk about the war and the violence guerrillas unleashed on the civilians, they sympathize with the civilians and it ends there. The guerrillas are demonized, they are the hardened killers, who have no emotion, who do not feel pain, who bring death on people's doorsteps. My child we too were victims of war-time violence. If any, we were the most affected victims, psychologically, spiritually, emotionally and physically. Please, don't underestimate the violence that accompanied the Badza and Nhari Rebellions of 1975 in Mozambique, and the Mthimkulu attempted coup in Zambia. The offenders were detained underground and others were executed. Violence and torture within the liberation movements was raw and has had long term effects on a person's being.<sup>290</sup>

This is also echoed by comrade Kuziva who also operated in neighbouring Zaka district:

During the war I witnessed raw pain of fellow comrades injured during contact with the enemy. We had to leave our comrades to die because we could not carry them to

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<sup>289</sup>Interview with Biggie Muchaina aka Tonderai Dodzo, Kwekwe, 10 September 2013

<sup>290</sup>Interview with Cde Biggie Muchaina, Kwekwe, 10 September 2013.

safety. I promised Mabhunu Muchaparara, Bhekiche waMajongosi and Zimbabwe *kuti komuredhi kana hondo yaperu, tasununguka ndichauya ndokutorai munochengetwa kumusha nehama dzenyu*, that after independence I was going to take them back to their homes for decent burials amongst their kith and kin- promises, which I never fulfilled. Such things haunt you day and night. I feel I have let down the comrades. I have seen people dying of rotten wounds inflicted by enemy bullets, I have seen guerrillas tearing each other apart, shooting each other instead of the enemy because of stress, *matekenya*, that terrible disease which affected most of us because we had no shoes, do you know it? I watched comrades dying from poisoned food and water, dying from unknown and terrible diseases. I saw it all happening in the war and I was just a sixteen year old. If that is not violence then, what is it? Are we not victims of the war, children forced to witness violence on a day to day basis by Smith and his hooligans?<sup>291</sup>

Cde Chombo explained how war-time violence had affected many guerrillas.

In the camps back in Mozambique and Zambia we witnessed violence too. Bombings at Chimoio, Tembwe, Doroia and Mkushi camps killed thousands of refugees, guerrillas, women and small children. I saw corpses of children laying everywhere, I was forced to see death at that age. Old women lay scattered amongst those with crushed skulls, shattered faces looked back at me, pleading for help I could not render. Many had arms or their legs crushed. These episodes leave the minds of those who witnessed such violence permanently scarred. I am wounded emotionally, even when I tried sleeping those days, I saw them, and yes all the dead would come back crying for help, my help. Now it's better, the dreams come after a long time, like when I think about the war or talk about it. Also now they are less violent.<sup>292</sup>

## 2.10. Memories of Rhodesian Forces Violence

Again the war-time story would not be complete without the unveiling of Rhodesian Forces' participation and also their views about the war. In Bikita the RFs are remembered collectively as *masoja* or *mapuruvheya*, the soldiers or purveyors. As already indicated memories of "masoja" have been useful in reconstructing the war in Bikita. The Rhodesian Forces such as Maigurira, John Chakarakata and Sigauke feature in most narratives. Sadly, they are remembered for their cruelty against the masses. In their oral testimonies, civilians who participated in the struggle have indicated that they were subjected to forms of violence that included terror, starvation, death, beatings and destruction of property. According to Mrs Enita Mwando:

RFs knew very well that people provided logistical support to the guerrillas. This collaboration infuriated the regime forces because although people did not divulge any information, they helped guerrillas. As such regime forces unleashed violence against the civilian population as punishment for supporting the guerrillas.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Interview with Cde Kuziva Muvengi, Kwekwe, 10 September 2013.

<sup>292</sup> Interview with Cde Oliver Chombo, Gweru, 11 September 2013.

<sup>293</sup> Interview with Enita Mwando, mubereki, Ziki, 12 March 2013.

As far as the Smith regime was concerned, what it was fighting was a “domestic insurrection” where a few terrorists were causing trouble. Smith and his government refused to accept that what was happening in Rhodesia was a liberation struggle against an oppressive colonial government. Up until the 1970s, the Smith regime had managed to convince the whole world of the nature of the “insurrection” being experienced in Southern Rhodesia. This meant that if it was a domestic insurrection, then Smith and his government had to find domestic means and approaches of dealing with the terrorists and those who might stupidly decide to collaborate with them, what they termed “flushing out the terrorists and the civilians running with the terrorists”<sup>294</sup> To achieve this objective within the confines of the law, The Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) was implemented. LOMA permitted the Rhodesian Forces to use violence, arrest or detention upon civilians if their actions and activities threatened national security. Chapter 39 of the Act stipulated that severe penalties including death sentences could be imposed on those civilians found harbouring terrorists.<sup>295</sup> As observed by Mazarire, the catch-phrase “harbouring terrorists” was dubious as this could refer to feeding, failing to report or lying about the presence of guerrillas.<sup>296</sup>

Backed by this legal Act, Rhodesian Forces unleashed terror on the civilian population. As Henry Chuma, an ex- mujibha recalled:

During the war Rhodesian Forces would beat us up severely using fists, boots, whips, sticks, electric cables, anything. During interrogation at Odzi or Bikita office, Rhodesian Forces would force us to drink large quantities of water until one vomited. In some cases plastic bags and wet towels were used to suffocate victims during interrogation. At times they could tie you in a certain position then beat you up with electric cables. They employed all sorts of inhuman punishments including the burning of whole villages.<sup>297</sup>

War-stories shared with the researcher during field work made reference to the use of collective punishments imposed on whole communities by either the Grey Scouts, Selous Scouts, District Security Assistants, Guard Force or the second Battalion of the Rhodesian African Rifles. Whole communities could be accused of collaborating with guerrillas, feeding them or failing to report guerilla presence in their community. Forms of punishments included the burning of whole villages like what happened in Chimunhu village where

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<sup>294</sup>Hansard House of Assembly Parliamentary Debate vol.95 no.13, 23 January, 1977.

<sup>295</sup> Frederic de Mulinen, *The Law of War and The Armed Forces*, Geneva: Henry Dumont Institute, 1989, pp.18-19.

<sup>296</sup>See Gerald Mazarire, “Where Civil Blood Made Soldiers Hands Unclean” Rethinking War-Time Coercion in Rural Rhodesia. Reflections on the Chivi Experience 1976-1980, p50.

<sup>297</sup> Interview with Henry Chuma, ex-mujibha, Zindove, 24 July 2013.



civilians were accused of feeding “terrorists.” As Mrs. Maria Midzi recalls, during these episodes *masoja* burnt down entire villages, homes, granaries and crops, leaving many families impoverished.<sup>298</sup>

Indeed the RFs could afford to punish communities collectively because the 1973 Emergency Powers Collective Fines Regulations empowered them to do so. Rhodesian Government Notice 101 of 1973 state that the government, through its law enforcing agents could impose collective fines on whole communities if the particular offenders could not be identified. It also empowered the Rhodesian state to confiscate the property of all inhabitants of an area if, again, a particular offender could not be identified.<sup>299</sup> It emerged that pieces of legislation such as these had empowered DSAs such as Mabika and Zindi mentioned earlier to confiscate cattle belonging to whole communities for personal gain without surrendering them to the Native Commissioner. Mujibhas on the other hand carried out thefts on neighboring European farms, Devuli Ranch or on purchase area farms on behalf of guerrillas. This was done with the objective of either crippling the country’s beef industry as well as guaranteeing supplies of meat for guerrilla consumption. According to Tichafa Murwira, an ex-mujibha:

Cattle were driven at night and slaughtered upon delivery and the meat was given to parents who kept it in concealed places such as in tsapi, granaries. The thefts in most cases prompted mapuruvheya or Rhodesian police to unleash violence on our communities demanding to know the offenders. People found it difficult to disclose or divulge information because the meat commonly referred to as makabhighi (cabbages) was given to every house hold. So the police responded with a spate of collective punishments. Cattle belonging to whole communities were confiscated. This conduct was mostly inspired by vengeance and was often far more brutal. A whole village could be beaten up with sticks, fists, you name it. Houses, granaries burnt down.<sup>300</sup>

Asked about stock theft during the struggle, farmers such as Zharare, Gono, Muchemwa and Gwara explained that civilians from neighbouring Nerumedzo, Ziki and Nyika villages were responsible for stealing their herds. Sheer hatred for purchase area farmers was said to have been the motivating factor behind these thefts. These activities were aimed at crippling the farmers. According to Mr Nhamo Gwara who survived the war:

the security forces, under the auspices of the Ministry of Combined Operations (COMOPS) tried to help us. They carried out investigations and recovered some of our herds by confiscating cattle belonging to all the villagers of implicated areas. The culprits would be put behind bars and sentenced 9 years but all this meant we became

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<sup>298</sup> Interview with Mrs Maria Midzi, mubereki , Gava, 12 July 2013.

<sup>299</sup> Rhodesian Notice 101 of 1973.

<sup>300</sup> Interview with Tichafa Murwira, ex-mujibha, Maringira village, 10 July, 2013.

targets of guerrillas again. Many farmers here died after the security forces tried to recover cattle on their behalf. We were labeled sell-outs and that meant death. So you see, we were now in the middle. In the end, we would not report the stock thefts, we just suffered in silence. That is how we emerged from the war poor with not even a single cow to grace our kraals.<sup>301</sup>

That cattle rustlers during the war were arrested is corroborated by the 1978 Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia report *Civil War in Rhodesia* and also in the Rhodesia Parliamentary debates held during that time.<sup>302</sup> In 1977 the Rhodesian parliament passed that civilians arrested for cattle rustling or stock theft were to serve a minimum of nine years in jail. Civilians found in possession of stolen meat were also arrested and would be sentenced. A Government Notice was given to the Public concerning these new developments.<sup>303</sup> Many ex-mujibhas like Lucky Chikukwa, Steven Gorimbo and Sunny Zvirikuzhe, recalled that it was during these arrests that they suffered untold torture at the hands of Rhodesian Forces.<sup>304</sup> As Steven Gorimbo recalled:

After a theft was reported, the COMOPS conducted a thorough search in each and every household of the implicated villages. Both adult females and males would be severely beaten, others shot “for getting fat from stolen meat.” The rest would be taken either to Ngundu or Fort Victoria for arbitrary imprisonment. It was here that we were often brutalized. Haaa, in jail we experienced untold suffering and many unpleasant moments at the hands of mapurisa (police). They would beat us under the feet with electric cables. They could also choose to suffocate you with plastics until you give them a good answer. Eish! Thinking of these matters simply depresses me.<sup>305</sup>

It also emerged that it was from this crop of prisoners that many disappeared and never returned home or were never heard of. Some died in prison and were disposed of without notifying their relatives. Works by Kenny Flower and Ellert who both served as Rhodesian Forces show how numerous prisoners were taken against their will to Bindura Selous Scouts headquarters where they were allegedly used as “human guinea pigs.” Members of the Selous Scouts used the prisoners to test the usefulness of the poisons after which their bodies were clandestinely buried.<sup>306</sup> This explains the “disappearances” or *kutsakatika* of some of those who had been arrested such as Morgen Nhema, Taruwanza Chifuva, Samson Mandizha

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<sup>301</sup> Interview with Nhamo Gwara, Bikita 10 March 2013.

<sup>302</sup> MS479 Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), “Civil War in Rhodesia” 1978, p.7. Also see Hansard House of Assembly Parliamentary Debates vol.95 no.16, 2 March 1977, “Collective Punishments” Speech by Mr. Musses, Minister of Internal Affairs, p. 111.

<sup>303</sup> MS536/11/4 Rhodesian Government Notices to Black Civilians and Guerrillas, 1977.

<sup>304</sup> Interviews with Lucky Chikukwa, Steven Gorimbo and Sunny Zvirikuzhe, Silveira Mission, Bikita, 10 March, 2013.

<sup>305</sup> Interview with Steven Gorimbo, Silveira Mission, 10 March 2013.

<sup>306</sup> See Kenny Flower, *Serving secretly*, p.93; H Ellert, *Rhodesia Front War*, p.56.

and Kissmore Hunda. Their families never got to know what happened to them after they were taken to Fort Victoria, now Masvingo, on charges of stock theft.

To protect the RFs from imprisonment due to these atrocities, in 1975 the Rhodesian government had already granted the Indemnity and Compensation Act. This Act granted RFs and officials with immunity against prosecution for atrocities that they committed against civilians. Sachikonye argues that this piece of legislation actually granted the RFs the *carte blanche* to commit atrocities, stealing civilian cattle under the cover of collective punishments and even murder knowing fully well that these cases will not be investigated.<sup>307</sup> In these war stories, the Selous Scouts (*madzakutsaku*), were remembered for their cruelty. It was commonplace that civilians, mostly youth and *vabereki*, other villagers had parts of their bodies like noses, ears and lips dismembered by members of the RFs. It also emerged that torture was widely used by the RFs during the struggle. These accounts are also substantiated by reports by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR).<sup>308</sup> These reports provide details of colonial state brutality which included torturing of political prisoners and detainees, severe beatings, sentencing of political prisoners to death for liberation war related activities, removals of civilians to protected villages as well as the confiscation of civilian property such as livestock as collective punishment for supporting guerrillas.<sup>309</sup>

Many raids of pungwe gatherings that were carried out by the colonial regime forces in Bikita regrettably left many civilians dead. Among such raids remembered in Bikita occurred at the pungwes held at Jeke village 1976, Mugombwi village 1976, at Mutinhiro village 1977, Masukuta village 1978, Chimunhu village 1978, Gava village, 1978, Maregere village 1978, Nerumedzi village 1978, Mbirashava 1978, Chikwira village 1978, Magurwe village 1978, Zvirikuzhe and Makudza villages 1978 among others. Although the RFs were aware that these raids would result in the deaths of many innocent civilians they cared less. Their aim, to use Mao's analogy, was "to get rid of the fish as well as the water". Similar raids occurred also in other parts of the country resulting in many deaths as documented in reports by Red Cross. These reports documented many issues arising from the liberation war,

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<sup>307</sup> See Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a State Turns on Its Citizens*, p.8.

<sup>308</sup> Also see Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, *Man in the Middle*, Harare, 1975  
Also Catholic Institute for International Relations, *Civil War in Rhodesia*, Harare, 1975.

<sup>309</sup> MS311/21 *The Man in the Middle: Torture, Resettlement and Eviction*, 1975.

Also see Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, *Man in the Middle*, Harare, 1975  
Also Catholic Institute for International Relations, *Civil War in Rhodesia*, Harare, 1975.

which included among others, the torture of political prisoners, the killings of many innocent people all in the name of fighting “terrorists”.<sup>310</sup> Cde Mabhunu Muchaparara explained that:

The fact that RFs did not exercise any restraint was an indication of sheer cruelty and a proposition to commit atrocities against civilians. They were quite aware that attacks on pungwes meant the killing or maiming of both guerrillas and civilians or anyone who fell in the war-zone. The bottom line is that these raids were indiscriminate, making civilians targets of repressive violence of RFs.<sup>311</sup>

Pungwe raids contributed a significant percentage to the deaths emanating from the liberation war. In the case of Bikita evidence from the group discussions held suggests that civilian deaths due to pungwe raids should be placed around +/- 1500 from 1976-1979.<sup>312</sup> David Cauter claims that officially the RFs had killed 3,360 civilians between 1977 and 1980 while the guerrillas had claimed the lives of 2, 751 civilians in the whole of Zimbabwe.<sup>313</sup> As observed by Sachikonye, these figures do not include a considerable number of civilians killed in regime forces' air raids in Mozambique and Zambia.<sup>314</sup> Thus the report by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation asserts that in total, by the end of the war, more than 30 000 people had lost their lives, about 10 000 injured and more than 750 000 people displaced from their homes into protected villages.<sup>315</sup>

Oral informants also explained that the death of Rhodesian soldiers after trucks of the Forces detonated landmines spelt disaster for all civilians living in that area or the surrounding communities. The RFs would decent on the communities. Civilians were subjected to terror that included severe beatings, burning of homes, granaries, shooting of cattle and arrests of suspected guerrilla collaborators. Mr Samson Manhanga recalled that:

When a landmine in Garare exploded and killed nine RFs the Mukanga and Panganayi villages faced the wrath of the RFs. They dissented on villagers asking them what they knew about the explosion, who had planted it, when and so forth. Iiii *Bhunu rinotsamwa veduwe*- a Boer can become angry! Everyone, old people, male and female adults, youth, we were thoroughly beaten. Thirty males were arrested and taken to Bikita office for interrogation.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> MS286/1/7 Red Cross, Issues Arising from the Liberation War and Relief Operations in Protected Villages. Also MS286/1/8 Red Cross, Appeals to Parties Involved in the Rhodesian-Zimbabwe Conflict.

<sup>311</sup> Interview with Cde Mabhunu muchaparara, Bikita, 2013

<sup>312</sup> Focus group Discussion held in Nyahunda, 12 April 2013.

<sup>313</sup> David Cauter, *Under the Skin*, Harmondsworth: Jacana Media, 1983, pg386.

<sup>314</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a State Turns on its Citizens*, 2011, p. 8.

<sup>315</sup> Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV), *Subliminal Terror? Human Rights Violations and Torture in Zimbabwe during 2008*, Johannesburg: CSV, 2009, p. 4.

<sup>316</sup> Interview with Mr Samson Manhanga, villager, Matsai, 19 July 2013.

These war stories indeed underscore the fact that RFs too deployed wanton violence against the civilian population in its attempt to crush the liberation struggle. This violence was justified under the pretext that they were fighting a just war against communist trained and inspired terrorists. In 1976 The Martial Law was imposed which placed the civilian society under the military tutelage of the RFs. With the imposition of this law, dawn to dusk curfews were imposed. Consequently, members of the rural population who broke these curfews were shot dead. Mrs Rudo Chabata recalls how:

Families lost their children through these curfews. Among children who died in Mukomondero village because they were said to have failed to observe curfew time is Wellington Dzvova, Shingi Munyikwa, Rose Mashavira, Kuda Mashavira, mai Jaka and mai Muzondo . Actually masoja thought they were running errands for guerrillas that is why they shot them dead.<sup>317</sup>

What emerged from these war-stories is that these deaths were painful to surviving relatives. As observed by reports documented by CCJP:

The deaths tell little of the suffering of ordinary people from all walks of life. Every aspect of life has been affected; whole communities have been uprooted and families are divided by separation or difference of political viewpoint. Fatherless families, black and white- and children who know only war and violence, young men`s lives and futures disrupted- these are some of the consequences of the civil war that is being fought.”<sup>318</sup>

Rhodesian Forces in Bikita also embarked on a sinister form of campaign which involved the display of killed guerrillas. These guerrillas were displayed at Mukanga shopping centre, Bikita police office or at Odzi camp. According to Chief Mabika:

Death had become so common. There was no respect for the dead. Even small children were exposed to death, seeing dead bodies. Soldiers handled the dead bodies of guerrillas with contempt, disrespectfully. What they did was against our culture. Kuita kwakadaro kunoita kuti midzimu ifuratire, meaning such things result in the ancestors abandoning you! In our culture they say wafa wanaka, speak no evil of the dead. How can you humiliate or shame someone in death. Sure, I am quite certain that those soldiers were under the influence of mbanje-cannabis, or haunted by the spirits of those whom they killed, ngozi dzevanhu vavaiuraya, because no sane person can do the kind of things those soldiers did. Bodies would be thrown all over for anyone to see, with flies feasting on them.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>317</sup>Interview with Mrs Rudo Chabata, Mukomondero, 17 July 2013.

<sup>318</sup> MS311/20”Hearts and Minds” Psychological Campaign, CCJP, 1974.

MS311/3/1 Christian Leaders Appeal for Inquiry into Allegations of Brutality by Security Forces.

Also see MS311/21” The Man in the Middle: Torture, Resettlement and Eviction, 1975.

<sup>319</sup> Interview with Chief Mabika, 10 July, Matsai, 2013.

The 1974 report entitled “Hearts and Minds”- Psychological Campaign by CCJP, documented how the RFs in their campaigns to win the hearts and minds of the rural populace publicly displayed and disrespectfully handled the mutilated bodies of guerrillas killed in action at a number of police stations.<sup>320</sup> The same reports and works by Julie Frederikse also explain how pictures of guerrillas killed in action were distributed in rural areas where fighting had taken place. According to Sachikonye and Frederikse, the displaying of dead guerrillas was integral to a concerted psychological campaign aimed at demoralizing, intimidating as well as traumatizing the civilians.<sup>321</sup> That RFs deliberately embarked on psychological torture to deter the civilians from supporting guerrillas is also documented by CCJP in its 1975 report.

How the Rhodesian Forces resorted to the chemical and biological warfare in an attempt to strike at the heart of the relationship between guerrillas and civilians and the confusion this campaign triggered has already been discussed. However, the Selous Scouts went on to poison boreholes, wells and any other water holes within the district. Areas around Devuli ranch such as Svike-Svike, Manjerenje, Makondo, Zibwowa are among some affected in Bikita. During a focus group discussion conducted in Svike-Svike and Makondo, informants placed the number of those who died from water poisoning to 25 in Svike-Svike and around 40 in Makondo.<sup>322</sup> Cattle were placed at 50 and 66 respectively. In essence questionnaires distributed within the district show that water poisoning claimed the lives of about 15% of the population in the district and 35% of the livestock, as well and 20% of small stock.<sup>323</sup> A British Anti-Apartheid Movement reported in 1979 that one hundred and fifteen Africans were reported dead in November 1977 after drinking poisoned water in South Eastern Rhodesia and were buried in a mass grave.<sup>324</sup> In 1976, a Zambian newspaper picked and published the stories of the Rhodesia Chemical and Biological warfare as a weapon against guerrillas. The paper condemned the poisoning campaign by the forces

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<sup>320</sup> MS311/20 “Hearts and Minds” Psychological Campaign, CCJP, 1974.

MS 589/17 Political Prisoners, Torture and Brutality in Southern Rhodesia, report by International Defense and Aid Fund (IDAF), 1977, P. 5.

<sup>321</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a State Turns on its Citizens*, p.8.

MS536/9/2 The Rhodesian side 1960s-1970s scenes in protected villages, dead guerrillas and captured weapons from District Commissioners, 1979, p. 12.

<sup>322</sup> Focus Group Discussion Held at Svike-Svike and Makondo with villagers, 19 March 2013

<sup>323</sup> Henry Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War*, 1989.

See Louise White, *How Guerrillas Died from Poisoning*, p.49

<sup>324</sup> Anti-Apartheid Movement, *Fire Force Exposed: The Rhodesian Security Forces and their Role in Defending White Supremacy*, London: Anti-Apartheid Movement, November 1979, p. 2.

calling it an “inhuman exercise” since the poison indiscriminately killed not the intended target but anyone and anything, civilians and animals alike.<sup>325</sup>

These campaigns were picked by the British print media such as the Daily Mirror and the British Broadcasting Corporation Monitoring Services in 1979, triggering concern.<sup>326</sup> Obviously the regional community, the British as well as the international community were disturbed by these high levels of violence, violation of human rights and brutality. They called for investigations into these cases of torture and brutality.<sup>327</sup> The Rhodesian government denied the report in its entirety. They responded by saying that the allegations were falsehoods and malicious.<sup>328</sup> In 1977 the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace appealed to the regional and international community to make an inquiry into these allegations of brutality by security forces.<sup>329</sup> In parliament the internationalization of RFs atrocities against civilians in the countryside was debated.<sup>330</sup> The Rhodesian august House unanimously agreed that the Security Forces were only but executing their duties of maintaining state security in a domestic crisis with communist trained terrorists. Regrettably, in such circumstances a number of unfortunate civilians were bound to be caught up in the war-zone under circumstances beyond the forces` control.<sup>331</sup> They accused the CCJP for publishing and spreading falsehoods. Consequently, Bishop Donald Lamont, who then was the chairman of the CCJP, faced the wrath of the Rhodesian government for exposing the Rhodesian security forces through the publication of atrocities they committed. Thus, Bishop Lamont was deported from Rhodesia on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 1977. In addition Sister Janice McLaughlin, a Catholic nun, who also worked for the CCJP, was also deported from Rhodesia.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> *The Zambian Daily News*, 1976.

<sup>326</sup>MS 735 The Rhodesian Crisis 1971-1979 from *British and Rhodesian Newspapers*.

MS736/4 *Daily Mirror*,” Britain Tells of Murder Rampage of Rhodesian Troops, 1976, p. 1.

<sup>327</sup>Ibid.

<sup>328</sup> *The Rhodesian Herald*, 1976, p. 1.

Also see *The Zambian Daily News*, 1976.

<sup>329</sup>MS311/3/1 Christian Leaders Appeal for Inquiry into Allegations of Brutality by Security Forces.

<sup>330</sup> MS311/26 Parliamentary Debates on alleged Security Force Atrocities and Related Matters.

<sup>331</sup> MS311/26 Parliamentary Debate on alleged Security Force Atrocities and Related Matters, 1977, p. 7

<sup>332</sup> Peter Godwin and Ian Hancock, *Rhodesians Never Die: The Impact of War and Political Change on White Rhodesia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 186.

## 2.11 The war as Perceived by Rhodesian Forces.

Indeed the war story in Bikita would not be complete without insights from the Rhodesian Forces. I interviewed some members of the RF who served in Bikita, Matsai and in neighbouring Zaka district during the liberation struggle. From the discussion we had it also emerged that although they fought the war on the Rhodesian side they too were victims of war-time violence. They too narrated how they were surrounded by death in most cases, witnessed their fellow comrades dying. For others even the death of civilians and the killing of a guerrilla was traumatic. John Moto recalled how:

They too were forced to witness violence. I recall the Garare landmine explosion. I was there, I saw it happening because I was in the second truck after the one in which seven soldiers were killed. Imagine all those people you had been with killed in an instant. Yes, we also watched our comrades dying. I survived death by a whisker. Do you know what it does to you to have this fear of being the next one to die?<sup>333</sup>

Chamunorwa Makuva explained the pain soldiers also experienced in having to bury family members killed by guerrillas because they were related to people working for Smith. According to Chamunorwa Makuva:

People tend to sympathize more with the guerrillas than us. They forget that we too lost relatives under very painful circumstances. Members of our families were often abused if not killed on our account. It was very common for our parents' or relatives to be labeled "sell-outs" because they had children working for Smith. Our homes were burnt down, parents burnt inside huts with villagers ordered not to bury them. Our families were butchered like animals. Are we not victims too? Did we not lose property, family and above all good names? *Mazita edu akasvibiswa, hapana chakaitwa kuti achenurwe!* Our names were soiled, nothing was done to correct that!<sup>334</sup>

Jorumu Mabika too, son of the late Chief Muuyandiani Mabika, who served as a DSAs during the war, had this to say:

You know its sad how people can turn against each other in a war situation. It was all about hatred, nothing else. People died because they were hated for positions they held, for their hard earned money or because their children were educated. That war left my family scarred forever. When my father, the late Chief was abducted in the middle of the night, the whole family suffered psychologically. No one knew where they had taken him, what had happened to him, where he was. We all had sleepless nights but people around here rejoiced in our suffering. We were only relieved when my father's spirit told us where his remains were through his grandson whom he used as a host in 1986. When we went to the spot he had been killed we found his remains, his chiefly regalia intact. We are victims of the war, guerrilla violence affected us negatively, it brought pain and suffering in our lives.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Interview with John Moto, ex-Rf, Bikita, 2013.

<sup>334</sup> Interview with Chamunorwa Makuva, Ex-RF, Bikita, 2013.

<sup>335</sup> Interview with Jorumu Mabika,ex-DSAs, Matsai, 19 August 2013



Others like Hardlife Jeke pointed that they too bore the scars of the war in the sense that they lost limbs. Hardlife, who lost his right leg after stepping on a land mine, explained that the missing limb is a constant reminder of war-time violence:

Even after the war, the stigma sticks on you. When I came back home people did not want to associate with me. I was contaminated as far as they were concerned. But, honestly I had not done anything to anyone. My crime was I had taken up a job as a soldier in Chiredzi. No one like us here. But we came back after the war and resettled. You know home is home. We braved all the insults hauled at us.<sup>336</sup>

## 2.12 “This is what the war did to us”

The impact of the war on Bikita and its people was summed up by Chief Mazungunye who, in a low sad voice, stated that:

The poverty that you see today, the graves we showed you lying about in fields, playing grounds, the poor roads that greeted you first before you met us is what the war did to us. The anger that you picked up in people’s voices, the bitterness poured out as we narrated those stories to you, the hatred exposed during our discussions with you is what the war did to us. The war brought us endless tears, heartaches, sorrow, suffering, pain and poverty which nobody cared about at the end. It taught us not to trust anyone but one’s self. Not to talk to strangers because tomorrow they will use those things against you. Yes this is what the war did to us. We are what the war did to us.<sup>337</sup>

From the discussions and oral testimonies collected during this research project, I came to the conclusion that the war impacted negatively on individuals, families and whole communities. People were affected by the war in one way or the other. Many emerged from the war physically and psychologically scarred. Earlier, *vabereki* and youth narrated how they were severely beaten up with sticks and whips by the warring forces. The sum total is that many emerged from the war suffering from chronic headaches in cases where beatings were done on the head, others sustained head and back injuries. In the same war both civilians and ex-combatants lost limbs such as legs, ears, teeth or eyes. Mrs. Beauty Ndudzo explained how:

I still suffer from the wounds inflicted on me during the war three decades later. I was severely beaten by soldiers during the war after I was found in possession of meat which had been given to us by the youth. I was taken to Bikita office where they demanded to know the youth behind the meat supplies. They also said I cooked for guerrillas. I was beaten everywhere that it is by the grace of God that I am still alive. But I have never recovered from the beatings, I have the headaches, my left ear was affected, my back gives me problems. That war crippled me. Today, I cannot do the household chores, simple tasks like carrying a bucket of water or spending much time in the fields.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Interview with Hardlife Jeke, ex-2RAR, Bikita 2 August 2013.

<sup>337</sup> Interview with chief Mazungunye, Bikita 7 August 2013.

<sup>338</sup> Interview with Mrs Beauty Ndudzo, Ziki, 10 September 2013.

Many were tortured physically and psychologically instilling fear in victims, fear of arrests, and fear of police stations. This fear is coupled with depression and feelings of anxiety. As Gift Gomo explained:

After I was released by the soldiers at Odzi camp I feared for my life. Everywhere, anytime I found myself looking over my shoulders expecting soldiers to emerge from the bush and arrest me. At night I could not sleep listening to sounds, fearing that soldiers could be after me. I became afraid of associating with other mujibhas or guerrillas. In the end I could not bear it so I left for Mozambique for training. Fear of soldiers and what they could do to me made me run away.<sup>339</sup>

War atrocities also impacted negatively on the people's psyche. At pungwe many were forced to watch beatings, deaths or killings. Others pointed out that they actually participated in the beatings and killings that occurred at pungwe. The displaying of dead bodies by the RFs also depressed and disturbed many. It caused nightmares and fear of death. People were constantly reminded of death.

Seeing people dying or being around death is not good for anyone. Culturally you become contaminated. The dead person's spirit can come back to haunt you for seeing them suffering and failing to do anything about it. These war time killings disturbed us a lot, they gave us sleepless nights.<sup>340</sup>

The disappearances (*kutsakatika*) which occurred during the war also impacted and continue to impact badly on many families. As the war memories showed, many young men and women left the country to join the struggle and many never returned home after the war. Informants also mentioned that others were abducted and detained then executed secretly but families were never given any information about the fate of their loved ones. Some families like the Mukanga, Chada and Mujuru have embarked on lengthy searches to find what happened to their relatives or where they were buried if they died. Thus, many families were left deeply distressed by the non-return of family members from the war. Others mentioned the issues of *vana vemuhondo*, war-time children. They explained that some guerrillas or the RFs who fathered these children never returned after the war to make themselves known. So, to get birth certificates for these children has not been easy. When others died due to illness burying them was a problem because we did not know their ancestors. In most cases these children ended up taking their mothers' surnames. This caused a lot of distress to the families concerned and the children involved. The stigma and name-calling associated with these *vana vemuhondo* could not be easily shaken off at school, when playing with others and within communities. The researcher was privileged to catch up with Paul (not real name), mwana

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<sup>339</sup> Interview with Gift Gomo, Ziki, 10 September 2013.

<sup>340</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, 10 June 2013, Matsai,

wemuhondo, after being referred to him by his grandmother. Paul now works for the national broadcaster in Harare and this is what he told me:

Growing up was not easy. I grew up with my granny, my mother had remarried and was staying in Rusape with her new family. To the community, I had no name, identity. I was simply known as *mwana wemuhondo*. If you let your grandmas' cattle trespass in other people's fields, they shouted at me saying *vana vemuhondo vanonetsa*-war-time children are troublesome. Others would scold me and say "*ndosaka uri mwana wemuhondo*"- that is why you are a war-time child. Only *gogo* grandmother loved me. She consoled me and I got this far to prove people wrong. Even today, after I built my granny a good house, they said "*muzukuru wavo uya wemuhondo ari kuvachengeta*"- her war-time grandson is taking good care of her. To them, I am and will forever be associated with the war.<sup>341</sup>

In a way, youth and the ex-combatants, who were largely the perpetrators of violence in the war, were also victims. They emerged from the war disturbed by what they had done. Many had killed, beaten people and committed acts of arson. They had caused pain and suffering. Others had robbed shops and buses and people of their money, groceries and cattle. As John Chimoto, an ex-combatant observed:

Culturally and spiritually we were damaged goods. We were contaminated, human blood made our hands unclean, it separated us with God and the ancestors. The anger of being unclean made us to continue doing those heinous acts which we regretted afterwards. We needed help, we needed God, everyone to forgive us. The war had forced us to do all these things. You had to kill or you would be killed. Honestly, what do you do in such a situation?<sup>342</sup>

From the oral interview, it emerged that ex-combatants also suffered psychologically from the war. Many, like Cdes Chombo, Mabhunu Muchaparara and Cde Nyika expressed that they saw people killed in contacts. In most cases they were consumed with fear which emanated from proximity to people being killed. They constantly suffered from fear about oneself being killed.

War-time violence also triggered mental disorders. Many informants in Bikita made reference to the issue of the *ngozi* spirits attacking youths and the ex-combatants during and after the war. *Ngozi* is the spirit of someone unjustly killed, improperly buried or mistreated when alive. The avenging spirit which is in search of justice assaults the offending family, group or individual with misfortunes in a systematic and consistent manner. The capable individual and his family could be assailed by deaths, misfortunes, mental

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<sup>341</sup> Interview with Paul(not real name), Harare, 6 December 2014

<sup>342</sup> Interview with John Chimoto, ex-combatant, 11 September, 2013.

derangements or any other strange behaviour making it difficult to ignore the avenging spirit and its demands. In Bikita the examples given are those of Nhamo, Lawrence, Trust and Joseph (not their real names) among others. Families of the affected youths and ex-combatants had to deal with these issues in a bid to assist their children or relatives. Thus, the Bikita case study shows that perpetrators are also victims of their actions. They suffer from a guilty conscience, self-pity and are angry with one's self. The war left traces of violence in people's minds and on the physical landscape. As Mr. Farai Chimombe recalled:

You should have seen this place in the immediate years following independence, it was in ruins. There were burnt ruins of houses, granaries, schools and stores. Roads such as the Panganayi, Mukanga and Mashoko were in bad shape, mined by land mines. No buses plied our routes because of poor roads. Bridges were destroyed, no dip tanks to talk about. The military bases of Mhara, Odzi, Bambananga and the Mashoko aerodrome all remained vacant, empty but constant reminders of the violence, pain and suffering experienced at those places. And of course the former bases, where people had been executed, burnt to death, where *pungwe* raids had occurred killing many innocent people. Yes all these places reminded us of what we had gone through. The graves of both civilians and guerrillas continued to haunt us, they are the harvests of war-time violence, the violence perpetrated against us.<sup>343</sup>

True the Bikita people validated their war –stories of violence by taking the researcher to some of the sites of violence. I was taken to the site of the Mugombwi, Jeke, Mashoko, Mutinhiro, Maringira and Hozvi battles. At the sites many cried as they explained the people who died at these sites, people they knew. I was also taken to the former Mhara base, Odzi camp, to Garare, the site of the landmine explosion. Graves of deceased civilians and guerrillas were shown to me, some examples of mass graves being those at Jeke, Zinyanduko aerodrome and one near Panganayi. Some of the graves are in fields, along the paths, grazing fields and two at Chinyabako and Masvingamashava school grounds. Thus the graves are found in very unusual sites and when you ask “why here?” You are told, “it happened during the war”. I visited several burial places and was shown the graves of Joel Mukamburi, Sengu Parunovengwa, Richard Kunambura Chada, Lovemore Mugombwi, amai Nyika, Chamunorwa. I was taken to sites of former bases where guerrillas had executed people, where *pungwe* raids by RFs had resulted in the deaths of many. Yes, I too saw the war, witnessed its brutality through their memories. The sadness, tears and sorrow that accompanied these visits were heart breaking and very heavy. I came to the conclusion that indeed, “the war had done this to them, it had left a legacy of violence for the district.

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<sup>343</sup> Interview with Mr Farai Chimombe, Jeke, 19 May 2013.

Lastly, many in Bikita strongly feel that they emerged from the war in a state of poverty. They indicated that prior to the war they had had stable jobs or means of livelihoods. Some were purchase area farmers, shop owners, council workers, nurses, teachers, bus conductors or millers. All these livelihoods were destroyed by the war which rendered them destitutes. Earlier on I made reference to what Chief Mazungunye said about what the war had done to them. He went on to explain how:

...sources of livelihoods were destroyed by the war. Many closed their shops after guerrillas looted all the stock they had. Millers closed down because after a day`s work all the income was demanded by the youth on behalf of the guerrillas. Schools closed, teachers left our district because of fear of being killed. Dip tanks were destroyed and cattle dippers were either killed or fled for their lives. We had cattle but we lost them either through collective punishments or through tick borne diseases. In most families breadwinners were the victims of war so many families were again robbed of able and enterprising breadwinners. Others had lost property when their homes were burnt to the ground. Bus conductors lost their jobs when buses stopped plying our routes. We came out of the war poor.<sup>344</sup>

In Chief Mabika`s opinion:

Picking up the pieces was not easy, how do you pick up the pieces when you have nothing to start with? We emerged from the war poor, our children also emerged from the same war with nothing. The neighbour or relative who could have assisted you also emerged from the same war with nothing.<sup>345</sup>

That many people emerged from the war impoverished is complimented by other testimonies given by many informants within the district. Air raids by the RFs contributed to the loss of a certain percentage of herd of cattle. Some cattle were simply lost because there was no-one to look after them, others died from drinking poisoned water. As observed by Hove, dip tanks were destroyed by ZANLA guerrillas and their supporters and as a result most cattle died from tick borne diseases. This situation was compounded by the fact that veterinary control of livestock diseases had been abandoned contributing to the loss of cattle as foot and mouth, heart water fever, *nagana* and tick borne diseases became widespread.<sup>346</sup>

## 2.13 Conclusion

The chapter highlighted that the “war” as viewed and perceived by the people of Bikita was also about their internal struggles within families and communities. With the help

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<sup>344</sup> Interview with chief Mazungunye, Bikita, 7 August 2013.

<sup>345</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai, 19 May 2013

<sup>346</sup> M Hove, War Legacy: A Reflection on the Effects of the Rhodesian Security Forces (RFs) in South Eastern Zimbabwe during Zimbabwe`s war of Liberation 1976-1980, in *Journal of African Studies and Development* vol:4 (8) 2012, p. 200.

of “liberators” the rural populace attempted and in some cases succeeded in using the war to change oppressive systems, put an end to social and economic inequalities as well as the settling of family feuds. The war, as remembered by the people of rural Bikita was accompanied by gross violence perpetrated by the youth, guerrillas and the RFs against civilians. Consequently, many emerged from the war either as victims or perpetrators of violence emotionally scarred, physically and psychologically traumatized and economically impoverished. By 1980, when Zimbabwe became independent, the social fabric of Bikita had been torn apart by the war as families and communities were left divided. Trust had been eroded by accusations and counter –accusations of selling-out and witchcraft which became part of everyday life and interactions during the war. Now that the guns had fallen silent, the daunting task awaiting the newly elected Zimbabwean government was to repair the emotional and mental harm that had resulted from the war. The next chapter considers the approaches and mechanisms implemented by the 1980 ZANU PF government aimed at healing and reconciling Zimbabwe after the war.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.1 State Initiatives towards Healing and Reconciliation in the Aftermath of the 1970s War of Liberation.

*Is it not folly therefore that in these circumstances anybody should seek to revive the wounds and grievances of the past? The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten.*<sup>347</sup>  
(President Mugabe 1980)

*If we dig up history, then we wreck the nation, we tear our people apart into factions, into tribes and villagism will prevail over our nationalism and over the spirit of our sacrifices. If we go by the past, would Ian Smith be alive today... We have sworn not to go by the past except as a record or a register. The record or register will remind us what never to do.*<sup>348</sup>

(President Mugabe 1994)

### 3.2 Introduction

After a violent conflict, incoming leaders have a number of choices at their disposal regarding strategies, approaches and mechanisms appropriate to dealing with the physical, emotional and psychological effects of a conflict. Some opt for Truth Commissions (TCs), whilst others opt for transitional justice. In 1980 Zimbabwe opted for a policy of amnesia. Amnesia is an officially imposed policy entailing a conscious decision by a government not to investigate past atrocities on the grounds that such atrocities will “re-open old wounds” and jeopardize a country’s newly found peace. Consequently, amnesia informed the government’s 1979 and 1980 amnesties. Again, the national policy of reconciliation was also embedded in amnesia. Other approaches put in place by the newly born government aimed at reconciliation and healing included the demobilization of ex-combatants only, ignoring the civilian population, selective financial reparations, and drug therapy for those suffering from trauma and psychological problems. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was erected as a symbol of honouring those “unknown soldiers” who had perished or disappeared during the war. Thus, the focus of this chapter is consider the approaches and mechanisms taken by the state in an attempt to heal and reconcile the people after the liberation struggle. I argue that these approaches were Western and too foreign that victimized individuals, families and

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<sup>347</sup>Robert G Mugabe, “1980 Independence Message”, in *The Struggle for Independence: Documents of the Recent Developments in Zimbabwe 1975-1980*, vol7, December 1978-April 1980, Institute of African Studies, Documentation Centre, Hamburg, 1984.

Also see Brian Raftopolous, “Unreconciled Differences: The Limits to Reconciliation Politics in Zimbabwe “ in Brian Raftopolous and Tony Savage ,eds.,*Zimbabwe Injustices and Political Reconciliation*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2005, p. x.

<sup>348</sup> The Sunday Mail, 11 May 1994, p. 1-4.

communities failed to identify with them. Furthermore, these approaches were perceived by victims as insensitive as they failed to acknowledge the pain, trauma and suffering of victims.

### 3.3 Expectations at Independence

Asked what their expectations were at independence, the Bikita informants talked about “justice”. In their opinion justice meant dealing with mujibhas who had stolen their cattle, putting in prison all those who had vandalized and destroyed other people’s property intentionally as well as punishing all those who had violated and victimized the masses during the war. As Munashe Mushava explained:

At independence we expected that supporters of other parties such as *mapuruvheya*, *zimbwasungata nevatenges* (purveyors and the running dogs, sell-outs) who survived the war would be punished. We also expected all sell-outs to be put in keeps. Everybody expected Nyathi to be brought back home and be hanged because of the way he had sold- out the comrades in Mozambique.<sup>349</sup>

For Mr Garikai Nyasha:

I expected the government to put Muzorewa and his *madzakutsaku* in prison for good. I expected the comrades to remind the government of our sacrifices during the war. So I thought in the new Zimbabwe we would be having it good, that we supporters of ZANU would be the government’s favourites. I expected the government to take back the land from the whites and give it to us. We had also lost many cattle, so again, I had expected the government to give us cattle taken from the whites. The whites would have been chased away.<sup>350</sup>

On his part Joram Mabika explained how:

We feared that independence was going to make things worse for us. Guerrillas had made it clear that we were the least of their favourites. We feared for our lives and thought that many of us would be thrown in prison on false allegations. However we were prepared to tell the new government about the atrocities committed by the youth and guerrillas against us or anyone who had money. Yes we were prepared to do that before we were put in prison, to clear our names of the sell-out tags that had been attached to them during the war. I expected the government to bring to book the guerrillas who had been responsible for my father’s death, for them to explain to us why they did what they did to my father.<sup>351</sup>

These were the people’s expectation at independence. Unfortunately for many, the newly elected government of Zimbabwe did the unexpected by not honouring these hopes and aspirations.

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<sup>349</sup> Interview with Munashe Mushava, Bikita, 18 September 2013.

<sup>350</sup> Interview with Mr Garikai Nyasha, Matsai, 10 September 2013.

<sup>351</sup> Interview with Joram Mabika, Matsai, 22 September 2013.



### 3.4 Dealing with the Legacies of the 1970s War .

Concerned more with issues to do with security and the consolidation of power, the newly elected ZANU PF government passed the 1979 and 1980 amnesties. It went further and proclaimed the national policy of healing and reconciliation through the public media. Through these policies, there was going to be no sweeping nationalizations, no trials and imprisonment of perpetrators of violence and no taking of land or chasing away of whites. As President Mugabe, the then Prime Minister, told the nation, he was going to ensure that there was a place for everyone in this country. He wanted to ensure a sense of security for both the winners and the losers.<sup>352</sup> At the 1979 Lancaster House Conference it was agreed that silence about the past was what the new-born country needed. Thus, in accordance with the Lancaster House Agreement, Lord Soames, the British Governor for the transitional period, passed the amnesty ordinance of 1979 and another General Amnesty Ordinance of 1980 pardoning both sides for the crimes they had committed during the liberation struggle. In March Prime Minister Mugabe then announced to the nation his national policy of reconciliation, where Zimbabweans were urged to 'forgive and forget their grim past'. Castigating any thoughts of reprisals against the perpetrators of war-time violence, Mugabe explained that "I have drawn a line through the past want people to believe in my policy of reconciliation and to respond accordingly."<sup>353</sup> Mugabe further told Zimbabweans that:

this is now the time to beat our swords into ploughshares so we can attend to the problems of developing our economy and our society. I urge you whether you are black or white to join me in the new pledge to forget our grim past, forgive others and forget, join hands in a new amity and together as Zimbabweans tremble upon racism, tribalism and regionalism and work hard to reconstruct and rehabilitate our society as we reinvigorate our economic machinery.<sup>354</sup>

From the above quotation it is clear that the President wanted Zimbabweans to close the books and "forget" what had happened to them during the war, to 'join ... [him] to forget our grim past'. President Mugabe strongly believed that a blanket policy of amnesia was what the country needed at the time to ensure a smooth transition. He further explained:

As we become new people, we are called to be constructive, progressive and forever forward-looking, for we cannot afford to be men of yesterday, backward-looking, retrogressive and destructive. Our new nation requires every one of us to be a new man, with a new mind, a new heart and a new spirit. Our new minds must have a new vision

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<sup>352</sup> Victor De Waal, *The Politics of Reconciliation: Zimbabwe's First Decade*, London: Hurst and Company, 1990.

<sup>353</sup> Kenny Flower, *Serving Secretly: An Intelligent Officer on Record*, p.9

Also see *The Guardian*, 15 August 1990 available at :<[www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,4481955-103677,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,4481955-103677,00.html)>. accessed 14/05/2014.

<sup>354</sup> Victor De Waal, *The Politics of Reconciliation*, p.15

and our hearts a new love that spurns hate, a new spirit that must unite and not divide. This to me is the essence that must form the core of our political change and national independence.<sup>355</sup>

Henceforth you and I must strive to adapt ourselves intellectually and spiritually to the reality of our political change and relate to each other as brothers bound one to another by a bond of national comradeship. If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and an ally with the same national interests, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that bound you to me and me to you. Is it not folly, therefore in these circumstances that anybody should seek to revive the wounds and grievances of the past? The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten. If ever we look to the past, let us do so for the lesson the past has taught us, namely that oppression and racism are inequalities that must never find scope in our political and social system.<sup>356</sup>

In the eyes of the new government it was considered “folly” for one to seek to revive the wounds and grievances of the past. By taking such a stance the new government was driving the pain of victimised families and individuals inward. Victims were not given a chance to talk about their pain, nor were the perpetrators given a chance to acknowledge their heinous acts and seek the forgiveness of their victims.

#### *3.4.1 Amnesties and Reconciliation*

An analysis of the amnesties and the national policy of reconciliation reveals that both approaches were actually stumbling blocks to reconciliation. The policy of amnesia does not create an enabling environment for reconciliation to take place. The 1979 and 1980 amnesties meant that the misdeeds and violations of all the protagonists, be the former members of the RFs, ZANLA, ZIPRA, militias and the youth, were overlooked and treated as equal wrongs. A veil was drawn over all the acts of violence and crimes committed during the liberation era. In other words no investigations were made, no stories were given room to be told, cattle or property stolen during the war were not to be returned. This also meant that the guilt of particular individuals was not established nor scrutinized. Liberation movements also appreciated the turn of events because it meant the closing of books on their violence against civilians in Rhodesia and against rivals in the training camps in Mozambique and Zambia. They were quite aware that information about their war crimes and atrocities could be used against them if no mechanisms were put in place to avoid such an eventuality. In the previous chapter I mentioned how CCJP had documented torture, resettlement and war in the protected

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid

Also see Brian Raftopolous and Tony Savage, eds., *Zimbabwe Injustices and Political Reconciliation*, p.x

<sup>356</sup> Victor De Waal, *The Politics of Reconciliation*, p.15

villages (PVs). Amnesty international had also published reports on war crimes in Rhodesia while female combatants had spoken about sexual assaults by their male companions in the camps.<sup>357</sup> Thus, amnesties were met with relief by both the White and Black perpetrators of violence. For Bikita amnesties meant that the RFs, Grey Scouts and DSAs, who had violated the rural populace were to go freely. In addition *mujibhas* who had also led to the victimization and in some cases death of many innocent citizens also remained unscathed among the very people they had victimized and violated. Instead of helping victims cope with these painful memories the new government insisted people embark on forced amnesia. The 1980 amnesties protected DSAs like Mabika, Tambawaguta, Chimedza and Mharadze who had looted people's cattle for personal enrichment. Former *mujibhas* like James Nzira, Amoni Jokonya, Gift Gumunyu and Tungamirai Chando benefitted from the amnesty for the atrocities they had committed during the war.<sup>358</sup> Many had been dehumanized and humiliated at *pungwes*, falsely labelled sell-outs, witches, yet the newly established government did not want to create space for truth telling to set the records straight. Family names had been tainted and the government simply urged them to forgive and forget. No attempts at truth telling were made to at least set the record straight about those falsely accused. Thus, the victims and/or their families' feelings of anger, resentment and hatred remained as a stumbling block towards reconciliation.

According to David Bloomfield, reconciliation is an over-arching process which includes the search for truth, justice, forgiveness, and healing. Reconciliation means finding a way to live alongside former enemies and to co-exist with them and develop a degree of co-operation.<sup>359</sup> For Wim Van Binsbergen:

Reconciliation is only possible if the conflict is clearly and publicly discussed by those involved and such discussion creates a clarity which may well have a beneficial impact on future relations, also because previously unexpressed contradictions have found an overt formulation which allows them to be taken into account much more readily in the social process.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> See report by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia, *A Report on the War in Rhodesia*, Salisbury: CCJP, 1976

<sup>358</sup> Interview with Mark Ngoro, Jeremiah Shoko, Chamburukira, Bikita, 16 September 2013.

<sup>359</sup> David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes and Luc Huyse, *Reconciliation after a Violent Conflict: A Handbook*, Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) 2003, p. 3

<sup>360</sup> Wim Van Binsbergen, *Reconciliation: A Major African Social Technology of shared and recognized humanity (Ubuntu)*. Available from: <http://www.shikanda.net/general/gen3.invoeg-15-mei-99/reconcil.htm> accessed 13 December 2014.

In the light of the foregoing, there was no way reconciliation could have taken place in Zimbabwe. Amnesties did not create space where wrongs of the past would be acknowledged or for people to forgive. Furthermore wrongs of the past can only be forgiven if truth about the past has been revealed or is known. Amnesties did not want truth revealed, the rationale being that truth would only “open old wounds”. Yet Wole Soyinka argues that reconciliation goes with truth.<sup>361</sup> Similarly, Mahmood Mamdani also emphasizes that truth is a prerequisite for justice which facilitates reconciliation and national healing.<sup>362</sup> According to Oswell Hapanyengwi - Chemhuru:

...it is only when people know the truth pertaining to us and the other that empathy is possible. It is also when we empathize with the other that the process of integration and national healing can be realized.<sup>363</sup>

Amnesties did not create social spaces to promote an encounter between victims and offenders as well as the open expression of the painful past. Social spaces and opportunity for truth and mercy to meet, where concerns for exposing what had happened and for letting go in favour of validating and embracing renewed relationships were never created. Thus, through amnesties chances of truth telling were blocked. Perpetrators were never brought to take responsibility for their actions or to recognize the effects or impact of their actions on their victims or society at large. As observed by Terrance Mashingaidze, Zimbabwe has never before comprehensively attempted to prosecute or compel perpetrators of politically motivated violence to acknowledge their transgressions because the national leadership exploited constitutional prerogative to pardon perpetrators.<sup>364</sup>

As such, this study shares Luc Huyse` s view that amnesia which found expression in the two amnesties of 1979 and 1980 was actually an obstacle to the much clamoured for reconciliation. This is because amnesties denied victims of conflict the public acknowledgement of their grief. Amnesties also encouraged offenders to follow the route of denial of their culpability. Finally, amnesties robbed future generations of the opportunity to

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<sup>361</sup> Wole Soyinka, Memory, ‘Truth and Healing’ in Ifi Amadiume and Abdullahi An-Na`im, eds., *The Politics of memory, :Truth, Healing and Social Justice*, London: Zed Books, 2000, p21-37.

<sup>362</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, “The Truth According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” in Amadiume Ifi and Abdullahi An-Na`im ,eds.,*The Politics of Memory*, pp.176-183.

<sup>363</sup> Oswell Hapanyengwi- Chemhuru, “Reconciliation, Conciliation, integration and National Healing in Zimbabwe,” in *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol13, no.1 (2013), p.85.

<sup>364</sup> Terrance. M Mashingaidze, “Zimbabwe`s Illusive National Healing and Reconciliation Processes: From Independence to the Inclusive Government 1980-2009,” *Conflict Trends*, vol, I (2009), p. 201

draw lessons from the past that would enable them to engage in reconstructing lasting reconciliation.<sup>365</sup>.

### 3.4.2 *The 1980 Policy of Reconciliation*

Historians like Terence Mashingaidze have critiqued the 1980 reconciliation policy pointing out that it failed to deliver reconciliation and healing because it was narrowly conceived since it paid attention only to the need for reconciliation between blacks and whites. It failed to see the need for black to black reconciliation. Mashingaidze highlighted that intra-black reconciliation was peripheral on the agenda of the policy yet black to black reconciliation at community and family levels was very much needed.<sup>366</sup> In the previous chapter I demonstrated that there had been so much infighting between individuals and families within rural communities during the liberation era. I also explained how, for the rural population, the war became an opportunity for settling old dispute predating the war. Norma Krieger also highlighted how the bulk of the black population within rural communities saw the war as an opportunity for various oppressed groups to challenge their oppressors.<sup>367</sup> It was in the process of settling old scores with perceived oppressors or enemies that the rural populace co-opted and manipulated both guerrillas and RFs to advance their personal agendas. The guerrillas or the RFs were drawn into these personal agendas once someone accused a neighbour or brother or anyone “for not supporting the war” or “for collaborating with terrorists” depending on where one’s sympathies lay. As observed by Krieger, to accuse people of not supporting the war became a nationalist disguise for a host of social and political struggles and many simple petty rivalries, a point Ranger also concedes.<sup>368</sup>

The Bikita case study in chapter two clearly underscored the fact that the violence unleashed by both the RFs on collaborators and guerrillas on sell-outs left many traumatized, violated and families divided, hence the need for black to black reconciliation. Unfortunately, Mugabe’s 1980 policy of reconciliation occlude this fact. Another flaw with the policy of reconciliation was that it failed to attend to the deep need for healing by victims. Determined “to draw a line through the past”, Mugabe’s policy chose to ‘forget’ the ordinary people’s

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<sup>365</sup> Luc Huyse, “Zimbabwe: Why Reconciliation Failed” in David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes and Luc Huyse, eds., *Reconciliation after a Violent Conflict*, p p.34-39.

<sup>366</sup>See Terence. M Mashingaidze, “Zimbabwe’s Illusive National Healing and Reconciliation Processes: From Independence to Inclusive Government 1980-2009” in *Conflict Trends*, vol.1 (2012), p. 22.

<sup>367</sup>Norma Krieger, *Peasant Voices in Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War*, p.320.

<sup>368</sup> Norma Krieger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War*, p.89; Terence. O Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla Warfare*, pp.285-7.

suffering at the hands of the warring forces.<sup>369</sup> Mrs Rose Chipika, widowed by the war explained that:

The government belittled our suffering, the pain of many grieving families was not acknowledged. I lost my husband because of the war. He was the breadwinner, now my children are orphaned. They could not pursue education like others because their father had been murdered. We had expected the government to do something about it. To put those people who killed my husband in prison. I heard that I was supposed to forgive and forget. Can one forget that one's husband was brutally murdered under false accusations? How can I forget when there is this constant pain? It happened in 1977 yet I still feel the pain. How can I forget when the grave is there for me to see what violence can do to individuals and families? Perhaps you can tell me how to go about it.<sup>370</sup>

Chief Mabika had this to say:

Considering the suffering we experienced and the losses we incurred during the war, how is it possible to ignore pain and forget the violence committed against you, your child or relative? We have shown and told you what the war did to us. How can one successfully disconnect from their feelings? After all that happened, do you really expect people to shake hands with those who have beaten them up or raped their daughters or killed their relatives? Is it practical really? Do people tell their pain to go because people in Harare said we should forget what was done to us? Did anyone from Harare come down here to inquire what went wrong and why? No! They did not care! They cared less, after all we had delivered the country to them.<sup>371</sup>

The above testimonies by informants made me realize that the policy of reconciliation was not the ideal approach to deal with war-time wounds. While the policy was intended to facilitate peace for the newly born country, it however failed to deal with the wounds, pain, emotions, and the deeply rooted perceptions of victimized individuals. Luc Huyse observed that:

It is next to impossible for victims to look at their enemy or abuser as a partner in search for a solution to conflict unless they undergo dramatic and painful inner changes. This transformation is possible only after the individual's or group's sense of victimhood is understood, respected and properly addressed- hardly a task for policies informed by amnesia..<sup>372</sup>

Thus the major flaw in the policy of reconciliation was that it underplayed the tragedy of wounded families and individuals. It appeared very insensitive to the victimized families and individuals. As observed by Oswell Hapanyengwi – Chemhuru, the policy failed to embrace

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<sup>369</sup> See Oswell Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, "Reconciliation, Conciliation, Integration and National Healing in Zimbabwe," in *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol 13, no.1 (2013), p90.

<sup>370</sup> Interview with Mrs Rose Chipika, Matsai, 13 December 2014.

<sup>371</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai 19 October 2013.

<sup>372</sup>Huyse, "Zimbabwe Why Reconciliation Failed, p.39

the common person.<sup>373</sup> In an interview, an emotional Mr Kasinamhumhu Nhare, who lost his only son in the war had this to say:

Mwanangu (meaning my child) let me tell you this for free and you go and tell the government that this is what I said. How does one forget that his only son was killed in a war? How do you forgive people who have not returned to you and say they are sorry? How then do you reconcile with a person who has not even acknowledged that what they did was wrong? Tell them that I said I do not want to be reconciled with murderers, all I want is justice. I for one am not in the mood to reconcile with anybody. You do not wake up and shake hands with your murderer just because a leader who never lost a child, or lost a home tells you to do so! Forgiveness is not preached or demanded from people, it comes from within. Hazvidaro! (meaning it does not work that way). Maybe it works for the whites but for the blacks that is a non-starter. We do things the proper way, we inquire about our neighbours' well-being or their predicaments then sympathize with them, amends are made by the offenders, they show remorse, then we can forgive each other and bury our grudges.<sup>374</sup>

Mr Morris Zanamwe asked me questions which left me wondering if the policy of reconciliation was properly thought of by its implementers:

How does one reconcile with someone who still holds on to cattle he unjustly grabbed during the war? How does one reconcile with an individual who accused you of being a witch and had you beaten publicly for that false accusation? Show me how to reconcile with somebody who cut off my leg but does not show remorse for it. Is it possible to forget that once upon a time I had two legs now I am left with one because so and so decided to chop it off? First of all the offender should say sorry, then we can take it from there. Chinokanganwa idemo rakatema, muti haukanganwi, meaning it is the perpetrator who forgets his offenses, the victim hardly forgets because he is in pain.<sup>375</sup>

In Rosenberg's opinion:

If victims in a society do not feel that their suffering has been acknowledged, then they.....are not ready to put the past behind them. If they know that the horrible crimes carried out in secret will always remain buried....then they are not ready for reconciliation.<sup>376</sup>

Informants expressed the sentiments that although the government directed them to reconcile, there was no basis for reconciliation because communities were still fractured by war-time conflicts. By deciding to draw the line through the past, the mutual distrust and suspicions harboured during the war were not dealt with. By insisting on forgetting, victims felt that their suffering was being dismissed. Many felt that they were not fully recognized and that their anger and passion for justice was misplaced, inadequate or illegal. Furthermore, the policy ignored the socio-psychological needs and concerns of victims. Commenting on why

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<sup>373</sup> Oswell Hapanyengwi - Chemhuru, *Reconciliation, Conciliation, Integration and National Healing*, p. 91

<sup>374</sup> Interview with Mr Kasinamhumhu Nhare, Ziki, 22 October 2013.

<sup>375</sup> Interview with MR Jairos Zanamwe, Ziki, 22 October 2013.

<sup>376</sup> Citation from Luc Huyse, *Zimbabwe: Why Reconciliation Failed*, p. 26

the 1980 policy of reconciliation failed to deliver, Luc Huyse said that the policy was from the very beginning built on sand. It was almost exclusively based on political and economic imperatives, weakened by the triple culture of amnesia, impunity, contentment, and imposed from above.<sup>377</sup>

Yet as Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru cautioned, healing, reconciliation, and integration cannot be achieved by burying our heads in the sand. Remembering the past is actually a prerequisite for reconciliation and healing. The past should be remembered for what it did to communities, individuals or families. It should also be remembered for purposes of history so that it can never be repeated again. Indeed, Zimbabweans should take heed of Santayana's warning that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.<sup>378</sup> By drawing a line through the past Mugabe was again blocking reconciliation by not making offenders accountable and taking responsibility for their actions. In David Bloomfield's opinion, reflecting on the past is as necessary as it is painful because a divided society can only build its shared future on its divided past. It is not possible to forget the past and start completely afresh as if nothing happened.<sup>379</sup> In its quest to draw a line through the past, the new government did not acknowledge or try to do anything about the violence experienced during the war. The extent to which this violence permeated individual psyche and how it has influenced individuals or peoples' character has never been assessed. War-time violence created resentment and hatred, with possibilities of revenge by victims of such violence.<sup>380</sup> As the Bikita case study showed, victims failed to internalize the need to forgive and forget. Instead, imposed reconciliation accentuated rather than eased the unresolved grudges, pain, hatred and bitterness of victims. Whilst the ANC in South Africa allowed some investigation of the violence that was experienced in their camps during their war of liberation, the same cannot be said for Zimbabwe. In its limited way, the Truth commission of South Africa has acknowledged its liberation era violence and even went an extra mile in addressing the apartheid era violence.

Lastly, the 1980 policy of reconciliation was not successful because it was elitist in nature and assumed a top down approach. The wider society, that is the ordinary people,

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<sup>377</sup>Ibid.

<sup>378</sup> Santayana quoted in Luc Huyse, *Zimbabwe : Why Reconciliation Failed*, p.27.

<sup>379</sup> David Bloomfield, "Reconciliation: An Introduction," in David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes and Luc Huyse, *Reconciliation After a Violent Conflict*, p. 15

<sup>380</sup> David Kaulem, "The Culture of Party Politics and The Concept of the State," in Harold-Barry, ed., *Zimbabwe: The Past is the Future*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2004, p. 128



religious leaders and civil society was not consulted or involved in the crafting of the policy as was the case in South Africa where religious values and the human rights discourse converged.<sup>381</sup> Furthermore, many people failed to identify with the policy because it did not target the family. The family might be the smallest unity in a nation but it is the most severely affected unit in a civil war. Failure to involve the family made the policy appear distant and far removed from the people. Policies or approaches of reconciliation and healing should be informed by people's lived experiences and embedded in their culture. Social and political space should be created for ordinary people, together with religious leaders and civil society to have an input on what is to be done to victims and perpetrators. In Pamela Machakanja's opinion, justice can only be achieved if those who have been injured and those that were directly involved and affected have the opportunity to participate fully in the response programmes.<sup>382</sup> Olga Botcharova also cautions that the elite see people as passive recipients rather than active resources in peace building. Yet reconciliation can only occur if the indigenous people develop a sense of ownership over the peace initiatives.<sup>383</sup> By not involving the wider society in the formulation and implementation of the policy, communities failed to nurture the policy and work towards its success. Many in Bikita deliberately decided to defy the policy, after all it was the government's policy not their idea. In addition, the policy failed to create opportunities for victims and survivors, offenders and community members to meet and discuss their personal experiences and the effects of violence in their lives and society. Bringing up such an issue was considered 'folly' under the policy of reconciliation. Silence about the past was what the government wanted but that silence could not bring about reconciliation.

### *3.4.3 Demobilization and the Compensation of Guerrillas*

The newly elected ZANU PF government did pay reparations to make amends with the consequences of political violence. Unfortunately, whether the move was deliberate or not, reparations were selective as they concentrated or targeted ex- guerrillas despite the fact that the liberation struggle had involved a wide range of civilians in their different capacities. Brandon Hamber defines reparations as acts of restoring that which has been lost or giving back something that is equivalent to a loss to the person who has undergone the loss or making amends, whether symbolic or material. Reparations may also entail gestures such

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<sup>381</sup> Richard Wilson, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South-Africa*, p.151.

<sup>382</sup> Pamela Machakanja, *National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe: Challenges and Opportunities*, Wynberg: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2010.

<sup>383</sup> Olga Botcharova, *The Role of Track-Two Diplomacy*, p.6

as an apology.<sup>384</sup> For Doxtader and Charles Villa-Vicencio reparations are understood as the effort to restore something or someone to the state they (or it) were in before the harm was done. They further argue that reparations generally imply a structural and procedural way of trying to redress or compensate for harm.<sup>385</sup> From the above definitions, one can simply define reparations as things done or given as an attempt to deal with the consequences of political violence.

Guerrillas were first given \$Z100.00/\$ US140.00 whilst they were in assembly points. By this time they were already treated as Rhodesian soldiers, albeit African soldiers on salaries.<sup>386</sup> Oral testimonies by ex-guerrillas like Cde Chombo, Hondo and Mabhunu Muchaparara among others confirm the above point. From their testimonies it also emerged that the government went on to pay demobilization money under two schemes. The first one was a once off lump sum of Z\$4 440.00 or US\$6 216.00 to willing guerrillas or Z\$185.00/US\$259.00 demobilization monthly allowance.<sup>387</sup> The lump sums or demobilization allowances were quite high considering the fact that the estimated Poverty Datum Line (PDL) in 1980 was Z\$128.00 per month.<sup>388</sup> Although Muchaparara Musemwa argues that demobilization payments fell short of the PDL income because ex-combatants did not have decent housing and other basics which the PDL assumes, this does not change the argument of guerrilla privilege when compared to others in Zimbabwe.<sup>389</sup> In 1980, the minimum wage in Zimbabwe stood at Z\$30.00 per month for domestic and farm workers and Z\$ 70.00 for industrial workers.<sup>390</sup> Added to these monetary privileges were housing and training for employment, making guerrillas a privileged group. In addition, the government also helped employ guerrillas as security guards and as local government promotion officers. All these things were done to prepare and equip the guerrillas for civilian life. For some, the monthly allowances were adequate for their needs that they saw no reason for furthering their

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<sup>384</sup>Brandon Hamber, "Repairing the Irreparable- Challenges Facing Compensation and Reparation in Societies in Transition", Paper Presented at the Cain Seminar Series hosted by INCORE and ARK, Londonderry: University of Ulster, 8 October 2009, p. 1.

<sup>385</sup>Erik Doxtader and Charles Villa-Vicencio, eds., *To Repair the Irreparable: Reparations and Reconstruction in South Africa*, Cape Town: David Phillip, 2004b, p. 13.

<sup>386</sup>Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe*, p. 98.

<sup>387</sup>Interviews with Cdes Oliver Chombo, Hondo and Mabhunu Muchaparara, Gweru, 2 October 2013. Also see Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe*, p. 98.

<sup>388</sup>See Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe*, p. 98.

<sup>389</sup>Muchaparara Musemwa, "The Ambiguities of Democracy: The Demobilization of the Zimbabwean Ex-Combatants and the Ordeal of Retribution, 1980-1993", Paper Presented at the History Workshop, University of Witwatersrand, 1994, p. 2.

<sup>390</sup>House of Assembly (HAD) Debates 29 September, 1981, vol.4, no.13, p. 899.

Also see Ministry of Labour, House of Assembly Debates (HAD), Sept 29, vol.4, on.13 (1981) p. 899.

education or enhancing their skills to make themselves marketable in civilian life. Commenting on the allowances, one staff member of the Zimbabwe Projects (ZP) echoed his worry that the Z\$ 185 .00 monthly allowance was relatively a large amount of cash in hand and would act as a disincentive rather than as a stimulus to the undertaking of training.<sup>391</sup> The War- Victims Compensation Act No.22 of 1980 provided, in principle, for a monthly pension for dependents of those who had died fighting, or supporting the liberation struggle, as well as for the disabled war victims.<sup>392</sup> The Zimbabwean government did not end with demobilization allowances only. In 1997, arguing that the Rhodesian government had awarded fat cheques, farms, life pensions and other relevant incentives for its World War II Rhodesian white soldiers, awarded guerrillas Z\$50 000. In 1997 again a War Victims' Compensation Fund of 1997 was also availed to pay war disabled pensions to guerrillas and civilians.

However, many others who had also participated in the war such as peasants, the rural elite, political prisoners and detainees did not receive any compensation such as the ones extended to former guerrillas. Consequently, these groups felt aggrieved. Mr Crispen Nhara, a political prisoner and detainee, had this to say:

Those in government seem to have forgotten that there were many political prisoners and detainees who had also suffered at the hands of Rhodesian government. We might have not fought the war in the military sense of the word, but we too fought the war in our own way. We were imprisoned for long periods, we lost all the wealth we had and even the chance to work for our families. I think the role we played warrants us the same recognition accorded to the guerrillas. We also deserved a start-off to cushion us and start reconstructing our lives that were shattered by the war.<sup>393</sup>

A Mr.Simbarashe Mhudzi bitterly pointed out that:

ZANU PF did not see us as combatants. They have chosen to forget that we were imprisoned for the cause of aiding in the liberation of our country. Our goal too was to see Zimbabwe liberated. I was imprisoned and detained because I had assisted guerrillas to steal cattle from Devuli ranch. I did that to assist guerrillas and also because I believed in what we were fighting for. But today, the government is busy selecting us, deciding who played a more important role than the other. Alone, the guerrillas would not have liberated the country, our efforts also counted.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>391</sup> ZIM Project, Notes on Demobilization, September 1, 1987, ZP Files.

<sup>392</sup> Norma Kriger, "The Politics of Creating National Heroes", in Ngwabi Bhebe and Terrance Ranger, eds., *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1995 p., 149.

<sup>393</sup> Interview with Mr Crispen Nhara, ex-political prisoner and detainee, Bikita, 14 July 2013.

<sup>394</sup> Interview with Mr Simbarashe Mhudzi, Chiremwaremwa, 3 August 2013.

Thus whilst the government was preaching about reconciliation, its selective approach with regard to reparations actually created a wedge between ex-guerrillas and those who had provided for them during the war. Selective reparations also caused tensions between guerrillas and freedom fighters. Freedom fighters were those who had left the country intending to train as guerrillas in Mozambique and Zambia. Unfortunately a large percentage ended up in refugee camps. There in the camps they became refugee teachers teaching children in refugee camps. However, upon arrival in Zimbabwe at independence, they too did not receive any reparations to prepare them for civilian life or to compensate them for the harm caused during the war. In her study Norma Kriger noted how one Member of Parliament had emphasized how the teachers had left to join the liberation struggle but the war-time leadership:

Found it fit to push them out of the armed struggle and put them into positions which they thought were ideal and to the interest of the nation, which is to educate and bring up the students who are today perhaps the technocrats of the state today. When we came back, those who were in authority seem to have overlooked the fact that these people did not volunteer to be teachers but they volunteered to go out of the country and liberate their country. It was felt that educating the youngsters was also a struggle which went as part and parcel like one carrying a gun.<sup>395</sup>

Another group which also failed to get reparation were most of the female fighters. Many of the female fighters were brought back into the country as refugees who did not qualify for demobilization payments. X, an ex- female fighter explained that:

Most of us women were integrated into the army much later. The process of integration was long and cumbersome such that the majority of these female fighters returned to their rural homes. Some returned with new born babies, an extra burden for the parents at home. It was difficult for most women to get back to town on time for demobilization and to get their allowances. This problem was also faced by some male guerrillas who were not in camps at the time of demobilization. As such very few women benefitted and this pained us very much. The party was reluctant to recognize our efforts towards the liberation of this country. It focused mainly on men.<sup>396</sup>

From these testimonies Zimbabwe's reparation policy also intensified war-time conflicts and tensions in communities, creating fresh faulty lines at a time when the state was calling for reconciliation. That reparations created fresh faulty lines in communities is evidenced by bitterness exhibited by peasants. From the oral testimonies given many peasants were bitter that they did not receive any compensation from the government whilst everybody else did. Teachers and business people too were disgruntled by the government's failure to

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<sup>395</sup> Quoted from Norma Kriger, *Guerrillas Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe*, p 99.

<sup>396</sup> Interview with X (not real name), Chaplin High school Gweru, 10 December 2013.

pay them reparations. Many explained that the government had stipulated that food aid and rehabilitation programs should give priority to returning refugees and displaced people. By displaced, they meant those returning from neighbouring countries or those who had been placed in protected villages or had fled the rural areas to live in towns as squatters. Peasants and teachers who had stayed behind felt they ought to have been given priority over refugees and the displaced whom they regarded as fortunate at having avoided war contributions and suffering at the hands of the warring forces.

Teachers and those employed, when told that they were ineligible for food rations because they were employed were furious and pointed out that guerrillas had not distinguished between employed and unemployed when they had demanded contributions. Mr Max Masaya, a retired teacher, had this to say:

We contributed more than the average peasant. A quarter of our salaries went to the war committees as part of our war contributions which the refugees and displaced did not pay. We even lost our salaries for three months after it was discovered that we were contributing towards the upkeep of guerrillas. To starve the guerrillas and punish us for not telling the RFs of such developments our salaries were withheld. So, were we not eligible for aid after all this?<sup>397</sup>

This issue of food aid created tensions in Bikita. As it emerged even those committees responsible for the distribution of food aid were against the government policy of aiding refugees and the displaced without assisting those who had stood by the guerrillas during the war. Mr Jeremiah Chinhengo, one of the committee members, explained how distributors defied government policy and actually spread the word that aid was a reward for those who had contributed to the guerrillas. In some cases distributors would share the aid among themselves. Others gave the aid to the peasants and excluded refugees and the displaced<sup>398</sup>. When asked what the government's response to this was, he explained that the government had failed to acknowledge the ordinary person's suffering by not rewarding them with even small things like food:

As such people took matters in their hands to see that justice prevailed. What we wanted was justice. Who wanted to be reconciled with people who had deserted the country when things were bad? People were angry with the government for siding with people who had never helped guerrillas during the liberation era. Yes, people diverted food meant for refugees and displaced persons and there was nothing the government could do because it was in Harare and we were on the ground.<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Interview with Mr Max Masiya, retired teacher, Mashoko, 16 June 2013.

<sup>398</sup> Interview with Mr Jeremiah Chinhengo, ex-Committee member- Food Aid 16 June 2013.

<sup>399</sup> Interview with Mr Amos Zvirikuzhe, Bikita 16 September 2014..

Mr James Zvirikuzhe explained that government refused to compensate them for their property losses and suffering during the war. The 1980 War Victims Compensation Act did not benefit the civilians. The dependents of those who died fighting or supporting the liberation struggle found it practically impossible to meet the Act's stringent eligibility requirements. Applicants were required to submit death and medical certificates stating the cause of death yet most guerrillas died outside the country in Mozambique or in Zambia where no one took certificates on their behalf. To the ordinary civilian this was a deliberate move by the government to restrict compensation payment. The 1997 War Victim's Compensation Fund was put in place. It stipulated that widows, widowers, the disabled and the orphans were to be eligible for compensation. Among the seventeen war-time widows interviewed none had received any compensation from the government. Mrs Ruvarashe Murozvi explained that when she went to Bikita office a death certificate was required of which she did not have.<sup>400</sup> Of the 13 disabled interviewed by the researcher only B had received money for compensation under the War Victim fund. B was able to do so because his uncle was a top chef in the army so he assisted him with the processing of papers.<sup>401</sup> Indeed for one to be eligible for compensation death and medical certificates were a requirement. For many widows, widowers, orphans and the disabled in rural Bikita these requirements were difficult to access. They did not have these documents, they also did not have the money for transport to go to the relevant offices. For some, they were not even aware or lacked the information or how to go about these claims.

The *mijibhas* too felt marginalized at independence. Although most youth had not expected rewards for their war efforts many wondered why no attempts were made to employ or empower them economically when they saw guerrillas being rewarded. At the end of the war, many youths were no longer so young. Many had had their schooling disrupted by the war and at independence not all had returned to further their education. They were uneducated, unskilled and their future looked bleak. From their perspective guerrillas had been rewarded by the government and they had been left out, their efforts not appreciated. According to Bob Badza:

The youths were devastated, all that show off of power during the war only to be dumped at the end by the government. They were the ones who made the war a success, carrying messages, weapons and mobilizing food and clothing. Their job was very dangerous. They were the main targets of regime forces violence, often picked up

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<sup>400</sup> Interview with Mrs Ruvarashe Murozvi, widow, Matsai, 17 June 2013.

<sup>401</sup> Interview with B, (not real name), Matsai, 10 April 2013.

and beaten. But what did they get for all this? Nothing! Comrades are now chefs in the army, others were offered money to start businesses and co-operatives! Theirs was national service, they did it for Zimbabwe, *kushandira nyika!*<sup>402</sup>

Failure to come up with projects for the youth at independence only resulted in feelings of isolation, and marginalisation which only served to undermine individuals' sense of belonging to the society as well as the destruction of individual, community and institutional bonds. Lack of education and unemployment among the black youth after independence provided a breeding ground for political gangs and agents for politicians aspiring to get into power in the future. Amos Chirandu, a former mujibha, bitterly explained how:

All the sell-outs were compensated and given recognition after the war. We were confused. The refugees and sell-outs who had fled to town where they had it nice and cozy were given aid. We were supposed to be nice to them. Chiefs and headmen were getting huge salaries, agricultural extension officers were given back their jobs, and guerrillas too got jobs in the army. Nothing was done for us. Only a few mujibhas like Taru, Wiseman, Tendai, Garikai among others who had been placed in camps as guerrillas were fortunate enough to be demobilized as guerrillas and they got demobilization money and jobs. The rest of us remained poor<sup>403</sup>

Amos Chirandu's testimony drew my attention to two things. Firstly the issue of chiefs. Indeed many had not expected chiefs to bounce back again in the new government but under Mugabe's policy of reconciliation chiefs and headmen continued getting salaries. Those chiefs and headmen with over 500 subjects received allowances of \$178.00 per month and Z\$46.00 per month respectively, making them better paid than village court officials and district councillors who were getting Z\$50.00 and Z\$30.00 per month respectively.<sup>404</sup> Oral testimonies by guerrillas also revealed that there were some *mujibhas* who benefitted as guerrillas and received demobilization allowances because they had agreed to go and pose as guerrillas during cease fire. As such the demobilization process was riddled with a number of irregularities. Earlier on another oral testimony by X showed that guerrillas who had remained outside the camps failed to be registered and did not get the allowances because they had missed the registration process.

#### 3.4.4 Effects of Selective Reparations on Reconciliation

Contrary to John Elster's argument that compensation or reparations do not bring back the dead nor do they guarantee the alleviation of all the pain suffered, the Bikita case

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<sup>402</sup> Interview with Bob Badza, Matsai, 24 August, 2013.

<sup>403</sup> Interview with Amos Chirandu former Mujibha, Mashoko, 17 July 2013

<sup>404</sup> Ministry of Local Government and Housing, Memorandum on Chiefs and Headman prepared for the Minister by J.D White, 17 March 1982, File Ref CHK/14, p. 2.

study has shown us that indeed reparations do matter in the reconciliation and healing discourse.<sup>405</sup> While reparations cannot wholly or completely close the gap by redressing the impact of political violence, they are significant in healing and reconciliation as they have both the physical and psychological potential to heal victimized individuals and communities. Explaining the potential of reparations in healing the victim's psyche, Brandon Hamber highlights the nexus between reparations and reparation.<sup>406</sup> For Brandon Hamber, the term "reparation" describes what is sought through the granting of reparations. In his opinion reparation is a psychological state in which victims of political violence feel that adequate amends have been made for the wrongs committed against them. As such the aim of reparations is about making reparation.<sup>407</sup> Similarly, Melanie Klein also concurs with Hamber by notes that the purpose of reparations is to make good psychologically what has been damaged, lost and destroyed physically.<sup>408</sup>

The major weakness with the reparations made by the ZANU PF government after the liberation struggle was that they were selective and paid a blind eye to the needs and suffering of the greater percentage of its population. This approach actually blocked healing and reconciliation as most victims felt that the necessary amends had not been made for the wrongs committed against them. Failure by the government to grant reparations across the wider society ended up creating fresh tensions and internal struggles within communities as illustrated by the Bikita case study. According to Nomfundo Walaza, reparations symbolize an acknowledgement of the pain or loss of what victims went through. It symbolizes an admission of guilt, benevolence and care for citizens by society and or the willingness to pay back what has been lost.<sup>409</sup> By not making reparations to the rural populace who had lost breadwinners, property, cattle and livelihoods during the war, the ZANU PF government failed to redress, recognize and even acknowledge the loss and violence that had rocked rural areas during the war. As observed by Sharon Lean, financial reparations have the potential to play an important role in any process of healing, coping with bereavement and addressing the

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<sup>405</sup>John Elster, *Closing the Books: Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 167.

<sup>406</sup>Brandon Hamber *Repairing the Irreparable*, p. 3.

Also see Brandon Hamber, "Reparations as Symbol: Narratives of Resistance, Reticence, and Possibility in South Africa," in Jon Miller and Rahul Kumar eds., *Reparations: Interdisciplinary Inquiries*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 35.

<sup>407</sup>Brandon Hamber, "Repairing the Irreparable," p. 2.

<sup>408</sup>Melanie Klein and Joan Riviere, *Love, Hate and Reparation*, New York: W.W Norton and Company, 1964, p. 8.

<sup>409</sup>Nomfundo Walaza, 'Insufficient Healing and Reparation,' in Charles Villa-Vicencio and W Verwoerd eds., *Looking Back, Reaching Forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa*, Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2000, p. 250-255.



impact of violence for victims.<sup>410</sup> Furthermore, reparations can serve as a focal point in the grieving process and be a physical or visual representation of what was lost, allowing individuals the space to channel their emotions and address them in a focused or specific way. Nomfundo Walaza is of the opinion that this can aid recovery by allowing individuals to focus exclusively on their grief or loss through a symbol. He further argues that restitutions paid by perpetrators to the victims can also help symbolize the perpetrators' commitment to apologizing, making amends and taking responsibility for their actions.<sup>411</sup>

Informants in Bikita explained their disappointment with the government's failure to 'come and explain things to us.' To apologize on behalf of the regime forces and the guerrillas for what they did to the victims during the war, assuring the nation that such violent episodes were never going to occur again in the country. According to the informants, this approach could have indicated that the government recognizes their loss and pain. By not saying anything and expecting people to just forget and move on, the government's stance actually became a vehicle for re-invoking inner pain and suffering. Mr Dudzai Mhere typifies this as his shop was burnt down by guerrillas on allegations that he was a sell-out during the 1970s war.<sup>412</sup> He further explained that a mere apology could have helped to bridge and externalize suffering at the same time convincing victims that the outer society was a safe and caring place in which victims have a place. By keeping quiet, the government psychologically drove the suffering of the masses inward.<sup>413</sup>

In his research, Carrie Petrucci observed that in some instances victims of violence want reparations in the form of a simple, sincere apology from the offender and promises not to re-offend again.<sup>414</sup> In Chile President Patricio Aylwin offered a public apology for the victims of the violence under Pinochet's regime. He then went a step further by sending a delivery report of the Truth Commission to the house of each victim with a card from the President of the Republic attached. To the victims, this was comforting, the gestures symbolized a state's recognition and concern for its citizens' pain. While the reparations were

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<sup>410</sup>Sharon Lean, "Is Truth Enough? Reparations and Reconciliation in Latin America", in J Torpey, ed., *Politics and the past: On Repairing Historical Injustices*, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003, pp.169-192.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

<sup>412</sup> Interview with Dudzai Mhere, Bikita, 15 May 2013.

<sup>413</sup> Interview with Dudzai Mhere, Bikita, 15 May 2013.

<sup>414</sup> Carrie J Petrucci, "Research Evidence: What we Know about Apology," *Behavioural Science and the Law*, 20 (2002) p. 338.

not in monetary value, victims cherished the kind thoughts behind the sincere apologies. This was seen as healing to a degree and symbolically meaningful.

The same cannot be said for Zimbabwe since amnesia informed most of the approaches taken by the new government. An apology would have meant re-opening old wounds. Paying of reparations again would have meant that the government was willing to have victims tell their stories thus opening a can of worms, which to the new leaders was not good for the newly born country. Unfortunately, there was no way victims could have healed and reconciled when psychologically they felt that no attempts had been made to amend the wrongs committed against them. As the Bikita case study showed, victims completely failed to connect to the government's policy of reconciliation. By not granting all the deserving victims reparations, the ZANU PF government missed an opportunity to integrate, recognize and accept responsibility for actions by the perpetrators. Feelings of isolation common with victims of political violence were actually intensified. Again, a chance where victims could have broken the silence surrounding what happened to them and their loved ones was missed by this failure to grant reparations to all deserving victims. Pablo De Greiff observed that great feelings of recognition by the state are rekindled through reparations, a vital move in countering the consequences of extreme political traumatization.<sup>415</sup> By not offering a simple apology or financial reparations to the victims, the ZANU PF government represented a society not willing to deal with and acknowledge the hurts of the past. According to Elizabeth Lean, failure to grant reparations can result in great feelings of unrecognition by the state and increased levels of civic distrust. In turn this undermines an individuals' sense of belonging to society and the destruction of individual, community and institutional bonds<sup>416</sup>.

#### *3.4.5 An Inadequate Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration Programme.*

As indicated above, the ZANU PF government embarked on a demobilization and disarmament programme of the ex-combatants. A successful demobilization programme is foundational for social repair, healing and peace. However, an analysis of Zimbabwe's demobilization programme shows that it had other faulty lines. Again it focused on the guerrillas only and yet a guerrilla warfare encompasses everyone, one way or the other, meaning to say the masses too had been affected by the war and they too required

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<sup>415</sup> Pablo De Greiff, "Justice and Reparations" in P De Greiff ed., *The Handbook of Reparations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 452.

<sup>416</sup> Elizabeth Lira, "Violence, Fear, and Impunity: Reflections on Subjective and Political Obstacles for Peace," in *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 7 (2), (2001) p.110.

rehabilitation. Unfortunately, the official process of demobilization did not stretch to encompass the civilians and other categories of people who participated in the war in their different capacities. The demobilization programme was too narrow even for the combatants since it only catered for the physical process of registering, counting and the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life. According to the United Nations (UN) report, demobilization must be both a physical and mental process including not just ex-combatants but other unrecognized but affected categories.<sup>417</sup> The policy ignored the mental or psychological disengagement processes of purging the war mentality from both ex-combatants and civilians necessary for socio-political repair.<sup>418</sup> If Zimbabwe had handled the demobilization and rehabilitation process well, this could have given the country a chance to disengage from the violence, cruelty, hurt, resentment and violent cultural practices that had been learnt, acquired and developed during the war. As it is, the language of war, institutions of war, memories of war, experiences, skills, and personalities acquired during the war continued to shape and influence people's responses in post-independence Zimbabwe. All these unresolved legacies of the war were to create problems for Bikita in future.

The war-disabled, both guerrillas and civilians, who after the war were estimated to be around fifteen thousand, were not effectively rehabilitated.<sup>419</sup> Unfortunately no attempt was made to assimilate the war disabled "into industries or into the public sector. MP Simela in 1988 complained that Zimbabwe did not have a Ministry of Disabled Affairs, yet they had established a Ministry of Women's Affairs."<sup>420</sup> After the war, the Ruwa Rehabilitation Centre was established for the rehabilitation of ex-guerrillas. Again one notices that civilians were sidelined despite the fact that many had been maimed during the war. Still the guerrillas were not adequately rehabilitated because of problems that they encountered at the centre. It is alleged that the government had spent \$60 000 million on the centre, set up specifically to cater for disabled ex-combatants. Although well-equipped and employing about seventy instructors, in 1988 there were only 15 inmates. It was also alleged that the Minister of Labour, Manpower Planning and Social Welfare had dismissed the

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<sup>417</sup> United Nations UN, Demobilization Report, 2006, p.g 20, <http://www.unddr.org>, accessed 30 April 2014.

<sup>418</sup> Ireen Mudeka, Dorothy Goredema and Treda Mkhuthlani, "Socio-Political Repair and National Healing in Zimbabwe in the context of a Failed Demobilization and a Perpetual War Mentality", in *Southern Peace Review Journal*, vol.3, Number 1,( 2014) p. 14.

<sup>419</sup> Report on the *National Disability Survey of Zimbabwe*, Harare: Ministry of Labour and Social Services, 1983, p.26.

<sup>420</sup> Zimbabwe, Parliamentary Debates, House of Assembly, Fourth Session, Second Parliament, Comprising periods 28 June 1988-17 August 1988, p. 156.

disabled ex-combatants from the rehabilitation Centre due to lack of funds to look after a large number of the ex-combatants. Mr Nzarayebani, quoted in Kriger, reminded the government that:

I have seen a number of these ex-combatants, they are living untold hazardous lives and it is not in the national interest that the fighters, the heroes of the struggle, should live in that manner. I have already pointed out that that is a national issue....We do not want to talk about NGOs, wealthy organizations. It is our problem. Those people have to be looked after by us. It is their inalienable right, not a privilege that the nation should look after them.<sup>421</sup>

In addition of failure to adequately rehabilitate the war-disabled, the government also failed to compensate them financially.

### *3.4.6 Disappearances*

The pain of surviving relatives of those who disappeared during the war and never returned was not attended to either through the policy of healing and reconciliation. According to the United Nations, “disappeared” refers to those known to have been abducted but were never seen again afterwards. During the war many had died outside the country in Nyadzonya, Tembwe, Doroï, Freedom camp and in many other places away from home. Others had died from sickness and suicide, while others had been devoured by wild animals or drowned in flooded rivers. In short many did not return home after the war and their whereabouts were not known by their relatives. In Bikita many relatives of the victims were not even given explanations as to what had happened to their relatives. To cater for those who had died in foreign lands, the government erected the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the national Heroes Acre. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier refers to a monument in dedication to the services of unknown soldiers. It also refers to the common memories of all soldiers in any war. As observed by Kriger, Zimbabwean artists, renowned internationally for their sculptures, were not commissioned to design the statue which was part of a monument to national identity.<sup>422</sup> North- Koreans were commissioned by the government to design the statue. Consequently the government incurred the resentment of local artists by this move. Following the First World War (WW 1), a movement arose to commemorate fallen soldiers with a single tomb, containing the body of one such unidentified soldier.<sup>423</sup> The remains that were placed in the tomb should be considered impossible to be identified and so serve as a

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<sup>421</sup> Zimbabwe, Parliamentary Debates, House of Assembly, Fourth Session, Second Parliament, comprising periods 28 June -17 August 1988, 24 January 1989- 8 February 1989, XV, 13 July 1988, 584-5

<sup>422</sup> Norma Kriger, *The Politics of Creating National Heroes*, p. 145.

<sup>423</sup> Ken Heonik, *Ghosts of War in Vietnam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p 45.

symbol of all the country's unknown dead wherever they fell in the war, being remembered. According to Henry Allingharm, the anonymity of the entombed soldier is the key symbolism of the monument, it could be the tomb of anyone who fell in service of the nation and therefore serves as a monument symbolizing all of the sacrifices.<sup>424</sup> The Zimbabwean tomb, however does not contain any remains of an unidentified soldier.

Among the Shona the absence of a body to mourn during a funeral causes a lot of psychological distress to the relatives of the deceased. Thus, for many in Bikita whose sons and daughters had not returned after the war, the presence of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier failed to console and heal them. According to Mrs Ruzai Mukanga whose son Chandimhara never made it home, as a family they were left with many heartbreaking and unanswered questions in their minds:

I had many questions. I constantly asked myself if my son was really dead? If so at what point did he die? Did he suffer a great deal of pain? Where was his body? We did not know what to do or who to go to. We did not know at what point the family was supposed to accept that our son was never coming back and how we were supposed to express this acceptance.<sup>425</sup>

Mrs Mukanga asked the researcher how one mourns when there was no body to weep over? My findings in Bikita indicate that lack of a body to mourn and lack of a funeral cause psychological distress to surviving relatives of the victim. Failure by the government to redress such a desperately unacceptable situation seriously disturbed relatives of the victims. This approach, according to the Bikita respondents, allowed both the spirit of the deceased and their families no peace. According to the Karanga, death is a journey where success depends so much on the living members. The Karanga of Bikita believe that it is the desire of every spirit of the deceased to reach its place of rest. To reach such a place of rest, the deceased's spirit looks up to the members of the family to perform on its behalf the necessary rituals for its admission in the world of the ancestors. If such rituals are not performed, the ancestors refuse to receive the spirit of the deceased.<sup>426</sup> Thus, the spirit of the deceased will be said to be wondering in the veldt (*mweya wake unodzungaira urimusango*) until rituals are done properly to bring him or her into the group of all his or her ancestors through a home-bringing ceremony. If the bringing home ceremony (*kudzosa mufi mumusha*) is not

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<sup>424</sup>Henry Allingharm . *Kitchener's Last Volunteer: The Life of Henry Allingharm, The Oldest Surviving Veteran of the Great War*, London: Dennis Goodwin Books 1976, p. 132.

<sup>425</sup> Interview with Mrs Ruzai Mukanga, Matsai, 11 August 2013.

<sup>426</sup> Also see Canisius Mwandayi, *Death and After- Death Rituals in the Eyes of the Shona*, p. 112.

done, the dead person is believed to sulk because the living would have failed to show concern for him or her. In turn, the spirit has a way of manifesting itself to the living to make its demands known and this could be in the form of sickness of one of the family members, or endless dreams about the deceased telling his or relatives about his or her death.

Thus, failure to create opportunities at a national level to tackle issues of the disappeared caused a lot of fear and anxiety among surviving relatives as relatives feared the possibilities of the deceased coming back and causing havoc in their lives. Furthermore, the surviving relatives were burdened with the guilty of not being able to give their relative a decent burial and befitting rituals in order to make him or her part of the family ancestors. Thus, the approach taken by the government towards those who had perished in the war failed to bring closure to the anguish and suffering of surviving relatives. It also emerged that the majority of Zimbabweans failed to draw comfort from what the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier represented because it was a Western or foreign concept. The concept of the Unknown Soldier was far removed from their lived traditions and culture. Indeed this concept originated from Britain after Reverend David Railton had seen a grave inscribed, “An Unknown British Soldier” while serving as a Chaplain in the British army on the Western Front during the WW 1. Reverend Railton suggested the creation of a symbolic funeral and burial of an “Unknown Soldier” at a national level, proposing that the grave should in Britain include a national monument.<sup>427</sup> The idea received the support of the Dean of Westminster, Prime Minister David Lloyd George and later from King George V. The public also supported the idea. At the same time France also took a similar undertaking after the idea had won approval in the French Parliament.<sup>428</sup>

Britain and France conducted services connected with their monumental graves on Armistice Day 1920. In Britain the “Tomb of the Unknown Warrior but Known to God” was created at the Westminster Abbey while in France *La Tombe du Soldat Inconnu* was placed at the *Arc de Triomphe*.<sup>429</sup> The idea of the symbolic Tomb of the Unknown Soldier then spread to other countries with United States, Portugal and Italy creating their own tombs in 1921. Thereafter other nations followed too. Thus as the above narration shows, in Zimbabwe the concept was a foreign one. Whilst Britain and France proposed the idea and discussed it at

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<sup>427</sup> Henry Allingharm . *Kitchener's Last Volunteer: The Life of Henry Allingharm, the Oldest Surviving Veteran of the Great War*, p. 132.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid

<sup>429</sup> Ken Heonik, *Ghosts of War in Vietnam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 46.

parliamentary level, the public was also consulted, the same cannot be said of Zimbabwe. The idea was a top-bottom decision made on behalf of the people without consulting or soliciting for their views and opinions. The British and French accepted the idea, and drew comfort from the symbolic tomb because they had a sense of ownership as far as the implementation of the concept was concerned. For Zimbabwe, whilst this was a commendable gesture of remembrance, it was not in line with the Africans' lived traditions. For the Mukanga, Mashavira, Matumba and Chingarande families of Bikita, whose sons and daughters did not return from the war, this gesture was meaningless. The Tomb failed to fill the void left behind nor did it process the pain felt by the relatives left behind. As observed by Alexander Kanengoni, according to the Shona people, every individual has a name, every individual belongs to a family and clan.<sup>430</sup> To that extent, every person is entitled to a grave, and, should be accorded a decent burial with proper burial rites among his or her kin. This was the only way the deceased could rest in peace and contribute to the family as an ancestral spirit or *mudzimu*. Without a grave burial rites cannot be performed and so the disappeared or deceased was considered as being "outside the home"- *kunze kwemusha* .<sup>431</sup> Zimbabwe's independence therefore failed to deal with the painful legacies of the war.

Failure of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to heal the pain and sorrow of surviving relatives was also observed by Alexander Kanengoni who commented that former guerrillas in other parts of the country wondered how a soldier could be "unknown". They wanted to know who he was, where he was from. In their opinion, they government ought to have known its soldiers, both the deceased and living. They wondered what purpose a single Tomb for all the fallen soldiers could possibly serve. In their opinion, the substitution of the Unknown Soldier for the many hoped-for historical figures included the silences of still controversial aspects of the nation's memory.

### 3.4.7 Drug Therapy and The Verbalizing of Trauma.

In dealing with issues of violence, torture and trauma the ZANU PF government employed counselling and drug therapy as mechanisms geared at facilitating the healing that was required by the victims. How the Bikita populace was exposed to regime forces and

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<sup>430</sup> Alexander Kanengoni, *Echoing Silences*,

<sup>431</sup> See Alexander Kanengoni, *Echoing Silences*; Conisius Mwandayi, *Death and After-Death Life Rituals in the Eyes of the Shona*, University of Bamberg Press, 2011, p. 54; Ephraim.M Gwavaranda, "Philosophical Principles in the Shona Tradition court System," *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies* Vol.2 (5),(2011) pp.148-155.

guerrilla violence has already been discussed in previous chapters. In the years following independence, both the youth and the ex-combatants experienced illnesses that Western medical approaches considered as symptoms of mental illness. Some had nightmares, whilst others had nightmares about the trauma and attacks experienced during the war. According to Mrs Moyo, a retired nurse at Mashoko mission hospital, many families in Bikita had to contend with sons and daughters suffering from some form of neurosis, mental derangement, mood swings and depression. To the Karanga of Bikita these were *ngozi* spirits.

In academic circles, articles and books published after independence all point to the fact that *ngozi* spirits were a reality amongst the returning combatants and the *mujibhas*. The book *Echoing Silences* by Alexander Kanengoni exposes the full wrath of *ngozi* avenging spirits to perpetrators of violence in the liberation war.<sup>432</sup> In 1995, an article by Jeremy Brickhill entitled “Making peace with the Past” explains how local non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), attempted to help ex-combatants trace relatives of those whom they feared they might have killed in the war.<sup>433</sup> Richard Webner’s *Tears of the Dead* also captures how *sangoma* cults spring up claiming to have powers to heal the psychic trauma caused by the war.<sup>434</sup> Diana Jeater also observed that during the 1990s in Zimbabwe there was a brief flowering of *ngozi* literature in the magazines *Parade* and *Horizon*. Short stories returned again and again to the theme of hauntings experienced by the ex-combatants.

In Bikita too, it was noted that after the war guerrillas, ex-regime forces as well as the youth suffered from *ngozi* spirits. Haunted by the spirits of those whom they had brutally murdered in the war, regime forces, ex-guerrillas and *mujibhas* suffered mental disorders or exhibited some strange behaviour. The spirits of those whom they had murdered were believed to be hanging around them causing illnesses and bad luck. Still the government turned a blind eye to these issues and insisted on counselling and drug therapy.

According to Mrs Flower Moyo:

Western approaches of drug therapy, social workers or verbalizing traumatic experiences failed to heal these troubled young men. I was a nurse, I witnessed many incidents whereby a person was said to be ill but upon diagnosis one would find that

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<sup>432</sup> Alexander Kanengoni, *Echoing Silences*, p 15 (Indicate in your methodology that you use “war novels” and state why you use them?)

<sup>433</sup> Jeremy Brickhill, “Making Peace with the Past: War Victims and the Work of the Mafela Trust” in Ngwabi Bhebe and Terrence.O Ranger, eds., *Soldiers in Zimbabwe’s Liberation War*, pp. 165-75.

<sup>434</sup> Richard Webner, *Tears of the Dead*, Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 1991.



there was nothing physically wrong with the person. Drug therapy to control stress symptoms failed to heal the ex-combatants.<sup>435</sup>

Mr Mufudzi Chisi who had also served at Silveira hospital said that many ex-combatants would come to Silveira mission suffering from mental illnesses and nightmares about corpses of men, women and children lying all about them. Others exhibited fear, anxiety, depression and even shame of what they did during the war.<sup>436</sup> Among its findings, the study concluded that drug therapy and counselling prescribed by the state was on paper, not in reality. The mission hospitals of Silveira, Mashoko, St. Antony's and Gava were incapacitated to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression. Failure by the new government to mould out conventional health and human program with the aim of assisting survivors of torture and organized violence spelt problems for the relatives of the victims. This approach, as perceived by Bikita respondents, was meaningless since Mashoko, Musiso and Silveira mission did not have qualified personnel to deal with post-traumatic stress, disorder, anxiety and depression.

There was little understanding of the counselling of psychological distress in the rural health set up. Primary health care workers lacked the skills to counsel. It also emerged that none of the victims of trauma, violence and torture went to Mukanga or Mashoko clinics with the hope of receiving psychological help but went to the clinic to try and get help for somatic disorders such as sleeplessness, aches and pains. Consequently they were given painkillers for pain and aches and sleeping tablets that is if they were available. As a result, thousands of assaults and torture victims continued suffering from low-grade pain. Since the pain associated with their sickness prevented them from travelling or undertaking long walks or long bus rides to town, many therefore suffered in silence. What emerges from the above sentiments is that these issues were not adequately dealt with by the government. Furthermore, post-independence Zimbabwe failed to establish programs, or to provide time, access to mental and physical healthcare and other resources, to rehabilitate the victims and perpetrators of violence.

Although in 1997 the government made pay-outs to war victims under the War Victims Compensation Act, the general public did not benefit from the fund. For civilians

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<sup>435</sup>Interview with Mrs Flower Moyo, Bikita 17 September 2013.

<sup>436</sup> Interview with Mufudzi Chisi, Bikita, 17 September 2013.

suffering from invisible injuries such as backaches, headaches or Post traumatic Disorders (PTSD) years after the war it was difficult to prove to any medical board that they had sustained injuries due to the 1970s war. As Amos Makore, a war victim explained:

Proving that one was a war victim was problematic. They required eye witnesses to the event that took place during the liberation era, some twenty years later. Even if the eye witness was there many were not willing to testify, other witnesses have since passed on while others have relocated so what do you do? The comrades were the only people who benefitted from the fund not us<sup>437</sup>

Indeed as observed by Sheri Eppel, under the fund victimhood was difficult if not impossible to prove. As she rightfully observed, how does a villager prove in 1997 that she lost her husband in the war or that as a result of the war, cattle disappeared because there was no one to take care of them? How does a family prove their homestead was burnt down in 1977 resulting in total loss of their possessions?<sup>438</sup> Indeed, there is no medical record which can irrefutably prove and state that an unending backache is a consequence of being beaten by soldiers or guerrillas decades ago during the war. Measuring the economic impact of failure to farm effectively for twenty years due to loss of cattle during the war proved problematic. In short many victims failed to prove their victimhood to access the funds under the War Victim Fund.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter critiqued the approaches and mechanisms put in place by the 1980 ZANU PF government to deal with the effects of the liberation struggle. These approaches which included amnesties, selective reparations, national policy of reconciliation among others, were embedded and informed by the policy of amnesia and so they failed to heal and reconcile the nation at large. The chapter argues that the approaches were not victim centred and failed to pay attention to the lived perceptions of violated individuals and communities. Furthermore, the approaches were top-bottom, foreign and insensitive to acknowledge and process the victims` pain and suffering. The next chapter examines how communities in Bikita took the initiative outside official sanctioning, to promote healing and reconciliation through the application of indigenous approaches.

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<sup>437</sup> Interview with Amos Makore, Ziki, 19 August 2013.

<sup>438</sup>Shari Eppel, "Repairing a Fractured Nation: Challenges and Opportunities in Post GPA Zimbabwe", in *The Hard Road to Reform*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2013, p. 224.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 Beyond State Intervention: Healing and Reconciliation through Indigenous Approaches in Bikita.

*The African view of justice is aimed at the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships. This kind of justice seeks to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he or she has injured by his or her offense.*<sup>439</sup>

#### 4.1 Introduction

The chapter highlights that while official attempts at dealing with the legacies of conflict and violence looked bleak, people in Bikita took the initiative to cope with past violence, to promote healing and reconciliation at grassroots level through the application of indigenous approaches such as *kugeza ropa* (cleansing ceremonies at individual, family or community levels), *kuripa ngozi* (repayment / appeasement of avenging spirits), *kurova guva* and *kudzosa mweya yevafi mumusha*, (conducting burial rites for those who died away from home or when the whereabouts of the deceased's remains are not known), *kugeza mweya yetsvina/ yerima* (exorcism of evil spirits) among others. In Bikita, these approaches promoted healing and reconciliation to an extent as they were local, grounded in the people's culture and acknowledged the pain of victims. I argue that traditional approaches, particularly rituals, when employed to deal with the effects of violence and trauma, created social spaces where people expressed and construed their suffering locally as compared to models of counselling or drug therapy adopted by the state as discussed in the foregoing chapter. Rituals that were conducted effectively repaired the emotional and psychological aspects of the conflicts. Recovery was gained by helping people to come to terms with the trauma, that is, by externalizing it in some way. Traditional approaches such as rituals have therefore a holistic approach as they deal with the physical, psychological and social dimensions of conflicts and their effects.

#### 4.2 Healing and Reconciliation through Indigenous Approaches

Soon after independence Bikita district suffered from successive droughts. Droughts were experienced in 1982-1983, 1985-1986, 1991-1992 and in 1994-1995. These droughts were attributed to the anger of the spirits of the land who had withdrawn the rains because the war had contaminated the land. The Karanga believe that the senseless killing of people and the shedding of innocent blood is frowned upon in the spirit world. To show their anger, spirits of the land (mhondoros) can decide to withhold the rains, or can send diseases

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<sup>439</sup> Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, London: Rider Books, 1999, p.51

or locusts as punishment to the living. The living are expected to ask the forgiveness of the spirits of the land through rituals or cleansing ceremonies. In turn the spirits will heal the land and restore the strained relationship between the living and the spiritual world. Now, no such ceremonies had taken place in Bikita soon after the war and the droughts that affected the district were seen in the light of the above discussion. Besides these problems, informants pointed out that there were also socio-psychological problems emanating from the effects of the war at individual, familial and community level. Returning ex-combatants and former *mujibhas* were suffering from mental illness. There was also a general atmosphere of fear from the civilians, fear of evil spirits and ngozi spirits emanating from watching many people being killed or taking part in the killings. Some families were deeply troubled by the non-return of their children who had joined the liberation struggle. Furthermore, stories of ghosts, of restless spirits harassing civilians at various places within the district were common that people feared travelling at night. Another disturbing feature were the graves of guerrillas that lay scattered in many unacceptable areas such as in playing grounds, by the wayside, in fields and on anthills. The quest to understand the recurring droughts and the search for remedies of these social and psychological problems by local leaders such as chiefs and headmen, spirit mediums and *n`angas* as well as civilians and ex-combatants in Bikita revived the use of indigenous approaches.

For the purposes of this study, indigenous conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation approaches refer to those conflict management practices that have been practiced for an extended period and have evolved within an African society rather than being the result of external importation.<sup>440</sup> It should be noted that indigenous approaches of healing and reconciliation vary considerably from society to society and from community to community. As such there are as many different indigenous healing approaches as there are different societies and communities. While in Bikita *kuripa ngozi*, *kugeza mweya yetsvina*, *kurova guva* are indigenous approaches aimed at healing and reconciliation, for Rwanda the *Gacaca*<sup>441</sup> approach is an indigenous mechanism, for Burundi, *Bashingantahe*<sup>442</sup> is also an indigenous approach of resolving conflicts and a tool of reconciliation. Generally, scholars

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3. Willian. I Zwartman, 'Introduction: African Traditional Conflict "Medicine," in William.I Zwartman, ed., *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflict*, Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner, 2000a, pp 1-11.

<sup>441</sup> Gacaca was and is an indigenous court in pre-colonial Rwanda comprising of locally elected judges called inyangamugayo who are chosen on the basis of their integrity. The *gacaca* courts were reincarnated in post – genocide Rwanda and mandated by the government to try cases of crimes committed during the 1994 genocide.

<sup>442</sup> *Bashingantahe* is again an indigenous institution of conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation. It comprised of a body of local people vested with social, political and judicial powers to restore conflicts.

and researchers in the peace and conflict field have been reluctant to recognize or integrate indigenous approaches to healing and reconciliation in post-conflict societies for being context specific and not universally applicable. This has resulted in these approaches being ignored. As a result, states, heads of governments and peace practitioners, are paying more attention or reverting to the use of Western approaches exemplified by Zimbabwe.

Realizing the inability of top-down, western approaches to deal with the socio-psychological effects of political violence on victimized individuals, families and communities, the Bikita community decided to fall back on indigenous approaches which they had always relied on from time immemorial to resolve day to day conflicts. The resolution of conflicts through these approaches ensured the healing and reconciliation needed in divided communities. Furthermore, “ngozi” as a social mechanism of healing and reconciliation was able to heal breaches, restore imbalances and broken relationships. What is more, the approach was able to create social spaces for victims and perpetrators to meet, for victims to tell their stories and for the rehabilitation and reintegration of perpetrators to take place, processes which amnesties, reparations and the national policy of reconciliation had failed to deliver.

The initiatives taken by the Bikita community to promote healing and reconciliation on their own proved that it was not always necessary to wait for the official post-conflict resolution accord in order to undertake peace-building initiatives. Through approaches such as *as kuripa ngozi*, burial rites for those who died away from home, individual and community cleansing processes undertaken by the community in the 1990s, it was noted that community members proved capable of creating new relationships at moments in history when there was no hope of resolving the traumatic legacies of the war. Another finding was that the community proved capable of re-negotiating and reclaiming their past when the nation as a whole was in a state of repression. In its findings the study also concluded that it was of primary importance that those involved in violence worked on the problems that the survivors themselves identified. This echoed John Paul Lederach’s assertion that peace-building efforts need to engage ordinary people and not representational leadership if new relational patterns and structures are to be generated in an authentic and sustainable way.<sup>443</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997, p. 15; also see Paul Mc Cold, “What is the Role of the Community in Restorative Justice? Theory and Practice,” in Howard Zehr and B Teows, eds., *Critical Issues in Restorative Justice*, Boulder CO: Lynne Rinner Publishers, 2010, p.156; Eghosa Osaghae, “Applying Traditional Methods to Modern Conflicts: Possibilities and Limits,” in C Henyns and K Stefiszyn, eds., *Human Rights, Peace and*

The effectiveness of the approaches applied in healing and reconciliation, outside official post-accord space, resulted in the respondents indicating their confidence in indigenous approaches and the need to officially grant them a central role in conflict resolution.

### **4.3 Treatment or Management of “Ngozi” as a social Mechanism of Healing and Reconciliation.**

The Karanga believe that if a person's life is deliberately taken away through cold-blooded murder known as *kupondwa* in the local language, then the person's spirit will come back and fight for justice by haunting the offender (*mupari wemhosva*) or his family until reparations are made. Maxwell defines ngozi as a restless spirit of an innocent person, aggrieved and dangerous to the living. The spirit manifests by killing members of the offending family before revealing itself.<sup>444</sup> For Claude Mararike, human life is one of the most valuable assets in Shona society. “Ngozi” is an expression of disapproval when it comes to actions that result in the taking away of human life.<sup>445</sup> Oral testimonies revealed that besides killing members of the offending family, “ngozi” can also cause mental illnesses, misfortunes or unusual sickness. According to chief Mazungunye:

When someone is murdered in cold blood, it upsets both the physical and the supernatural world, where the ancestors reside. The spirit of the deceased fights back in order to restore moral sanity. The spirit achieves this by causing misfortunes, mental illnesses and even killing members of the offending family. The offender and his family lives in fear and anxiety until they make amends and pay restitution. Once relatives of the offender acknowledge the crime and compensation is paid the spirit of the deceased will allow the offender and his family to live in peace.<sup>446</sup>

After the war, many ex-combatants and *mujibhas* were reported to be suffering from mental illnesses which people attributed to have been caused by avenging spirits. According to Zangure Nyangasere, a traditional healer:

Many guerrillas and ex-security forces and mujibhas were brought to me by their parents and relatives. They had killed many people in war and were suffering from mental illnesses. Many confessed the evil deeds they were involved in during the war. I advised their relatives to seek the audience of the victims' family and pay compensation. Others wanted me to pacify the avenging spirit (*kutsipika ngozi*) but I

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*Justice in African: A Reader*, Pretoria: Pretoria University Law Press, 2006. These scholars concur that healing and reconciliation initiatives should engage and involve communities if they are to be successful.

<sup>444</sup> David Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People*, Westport: Praeger, 1999, p. 206

<sup>445</sup> Claude Mararike, “Dynamics of Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe's Eastern Communities,” Unpublished Paper University of Zimbabwe, 2007.

<sup>446</sup> Interview with chief Mukanganwi, Nyika, 4 September 2013.

refused. I explained to them that it was only proper for amends to be made and for truth to come out or we risked the anger of the ancestors.<sup>447</sup>

#### 4.3.1 Process Involved in Compensation of Ngozi Spirit.

The Bikita case study showed that processes involved with the compensation of the ‘ngozi’ spirit actually makes use of track-two diplomacy. Oral interviews revealed that compensation of “ngozi” spirit is done on two levels. Firstly, it involves the Family Group Conferencing (F.G.C) (*dare remhuri*) and Community Restorative Boards C.R.Bs or *dare remana*. Both processes involved dialogue between the relatives of the victim and the offending family. As observed by many, dialogue was aimed at cooling down tensions and bringing back normalcy.<sup>448</sup> Both the family and community court/ dares include other participants such as families and friends of the victims and families, neighbours and friends of the offender. At the family level plans are made, discussion and way forward is mapped. *Dare* at the family level is an inclusive and informal process including the victim or perpetrator’s immediate and extended family, friends and other informal ties. As observed by Finos Mangena, the model’s origins, legalization process, dissemination and outcome all reflect a culturally based approach to resolving interpersonal violence.<sup>449</sup> The chief plays a mediatory role between the two families.

A community restorative court/*dare remana* is composed of a small group of community members who conduct face-to-face meetings with the offending family. During these meetings, elders of the community who form a board discuss with the offender the nature of the offense and its negative impact on the families, individuals and the community at large. Community elders then develop a set of proposed restorative measures which they discussed with the offending family until a consensus is reached, specific actions to be taken by the offender are agreed upon and the specified period to make the reparation for the crime.<sup>450</sup> The elders expect the offender to fulfil the terms of the agreement. Usually restitution is in the form of money and cattle.

An analysis of the above process reveals that the restorative process is meant to mend relations between the offender and the offended party. The approach is all inclusive and takes

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<sup>447</sup> Interview with Zangure Nyangasere, traditional healer, Ziki, 4 August, 2013.

<sup>448</sup> See Olga Botcharova, “Implementation of Track-two diplomacy”, pp 269-294.

<sup>449</sup> Fainos Mangena, *On Ubuntu and Retributive Punishment in Kore-kore- Nyombwe Culture*, Best Practices Books, 2011, p. 84,

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.

cognizant of the fact that relationships strained by certain criminal acts can be mended through dialogue according to cultural ways- *pachivanhu*. During the conferences, a family atmosphere usually prevails, allowing tempers to cool down and allow dialogue to take place.

Soon after independence, families troubled by “ngozi” spirits sought relatives of those killed by their children to pay restitution on behalf of their children and relatives. The Mashavira, Jeke, Chigiya families among others explained how they were affected by spirits of ngozi.<sup>451</sup> According to Mr Jeke, his brother Tizirai had killed a woman in Zvishavane during the war after she was accused of witchcraft. With the help of the traditional healer, they were directed to the woman’s relatives in Zvishavane. Through a host, the woman’s spirit explained to its relative that it had been falsely accused. The spirit also gave the terms of compensation. In Bikita a number of families too paid reparations to ngozi spirits after the independence. The Chingweru and Chatunga families agreed to have received reparations from the Muneno and Chari families respectively for the murders of their sons during the liberation war.<sup>452</sup> Concerned families concurred that indeed the only remedy to a grievous spirit was repayment, *mushonga wengozi kuripa*. Mrs Dera whose son had been murdered by Wilson Chigiya during the war pointed out that after the Chigiyas had paid restitution a huge load was removed off her shoulders. She felt that her son’s ngozi had managed to set the record straight. She felt at peace knowing that the person who had killed her son had come out in the open and paid the price.<sup>453</sup>

#### 4.3.2 The Healing and Reconciliation Properties of the Ngozi Compensation

The ‘ngozi’ factor created social spaces for restorative justice to take place. Under amnesties and the national policy of reconciliation restorative justice had not taken place. The government had insisted on reconciliation without justice. Tutu defines restorative justice as:

a broad term, which encompasses a growing social movement of institutionalized peaceful approaches to harm, problem solving and violations of legal and human rights. These range from peace keeping tribunals to innovations within our criminal justice system, schools, social services and communities. Rather than privileging the law, professionals, the elite or the state, restorative resolutions engage those who are harmed, wrongdoers and their affected communities in search of solutions to promote, repair, reconcile and the rebuilding of relationships. Restorative justice seeks to build partnership to re-establish mutual responsibility for constructive responses to wrongdoing within our communities. Restorative justice

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<sup>451</sup> Interview with Aaron Jeke, Chimbwembwe, 12 August 2013

<sup>452</sup> Interviews with Philip Chingweru and Adam Chatunga, deceased’s relatives, 12 August 2013.

<sup>453</sup> Interview with Nyasha Dera, Chimbwembwe village Matsai, , 12 August, 2013



approaches seek the balanced approach to the needs of the victims, wrongdoers and community through processes that preserve the safety and dignity to all.<sup>454</sup>

Central to Tutu's definition is the fact that restorative justice is an all-inclusive, encompassing approach which benefits both the victim and his family as well as the offender and his family too, ensuring that the two parties continue to live together in peace and harmony. What Tutu is saying is that restorative justice does not overlook the fact that perpetrators too are in need of healing.<sup>455</sup> Tutu suggests that in a way, perpetrators are also victims and they need to be helped to get on with life. Joram Tarusarira observed that perpetrators live in paralyzing isolation and all-consuming fear, self-pity due to trauma and guilty conscience for having undertaken heinous acts.<sup>456</sup> Thus, justice is not meant to benefit the victim only but both the victim and the offender. Thus the strength of treatment of ngozi as a social mechanism for healing and reconciliation is that it heals breaches, redresses imbalances and restores broken relationships. In addition, the approach rehabilitates both the victim and the perpetrator. In essence, the perpetrator is given an opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he or she has injured by his or her offense.<sup>457</sup>

The people of Bikita believed that disputes and tensions which emanated from the killing of someone could only be resolved by payment (*mushonga wengozi kuripa*). That ngozi fought for justice was believed. It was also believed that the ngozi spirit created space for the full acceptance of one's responsibility for the crime committed. It is redemptive since the offenders admit of wrong doing and accept responsibility as well as seek the forgiveness of the offended family which opens the way for healing.

#### *4.4.3 The Deterrence Role played by the Compensation Process*

The compensation demanded by the ngozi and endorsed by the C.R.B was aimed at getting the offender to recognize his or her wrong doing. In addition, the requirement to pay compensation was viewed as positive since that was taken as the offender's willingness to show remorse and make apology to those whom they would have wronged. Compensation also opened social spaces for offenders to assume commitment to repair the harm in order to concretize the apology. According to Robin Anthony Duff, fines or compensation constitute a

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<sup>454</sup> Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, London: Rider Books, 1999, p55.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

<sup>456</sup> Joram Tarusarira, "Of Spirits and Healing: Cultural Values and Post-Conflict Reconciliation Agenda in Zimbabwe", *A Journal of African Politics, Development and International Affairs*, 40 (1), (2013), p. 2.

<sup>457</sup> Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, p. 51

punishment to the offender which was meaningful and was imposed with a purpose to achieve restoration and healing.<sup>458</sup> Thus, compensation is levied as a basis for reconciliation.

The aim is:

not to punish, an action which would be viewed as harming the group a second time. Re-establishing harmony implies reintegrating the deviant members...the ultimate matter is restoring good relations. Fines therefore were understood as a compensation for loss, not as retribution for offense.<sup>459</sup>

In addition, these punishments in the form of fines or compensation also functioned as deterrence to the general public in the sense that they make the offenders an example and give a warning to all other potential offenders that they will be punished likewise. According to Claude Mararike, ngozi has a regulatory function which is that of deterrence and not retributive. This is especially true when one considers the fact that the guilty family is given an option to either pay reparations or suffer the consequence through a series of misfortunes, death and illnesses.<sup>460</sup> Earlier on, I discussed how amnesties and the culture of impunity sent wrong signals to offenders as they were not made accountable for their crimes. However, under the community initiatives, it was also hoped that the fine or compensation would serve as a lesson to the offender not to commit another crime under the fear of the same fate. Fines and compensations played an important role in the process of healing and addressing the impact of conflict or violence for victims. Symbolically, they acknowledge and recognize the individual's loss, pain and suffering. Thus, compensation can serve as a focal point in the grieving process. In addition they are also visual representation of what was lost allowing individuals the space to channel their emotions and act on them in a focused and specific way. According to Magesa fines or compensation paid by the perpetrators to the victims can also help symbolize the perpetrators' commitment to apologizing, making amends and taking responsibility. That way, victims feel that society recognizes and acknowledges their loss and pain.<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>458</sup> Antony Robin Duff, "Restorative Punishments and Punitive Restoration," in L Welgrave, ed., *Restorative Justice and the Law*, William Publishing, p. 82-100.

<sup>459</sup> Guy.O Faure, "Traditional Conflict Management in Africa and China," in William Zaartman, ed., *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts: African Conflicts Medicine*, Boulder, Co : Lynne Rienner, 2000,p. 163

<sup>460</sup> Claude Mararike , "Dynamics of Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe's Eastern Communities," Unpublished Paper University of Zimbabwe,2007.

<sup>461</sup> Laurent Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, New York: Orbis Books, 1997. Also see Shari Eppel, "Healing the Dead to Transform the Living: Exhumations and Reburial in Zimbabwe," available at <http://www.icrc.org/themiss/nsf/3201b2800284e720/c12569dd0050ac6172889407ac24b246c1256b04004739f6115filehealing%20the%20dead-%20calif%202001.rtf>; Baines, E, "Spirits and Social Reconstruction after Mass Violence: Rethinking Transitional Justice," *African Affairs*, 109 (436), (2010), pp.409-30; M Block, "Death and the Concept of the Person," in S Cedenath, ed., *On the Meaning of Death*, Stockholm: AUU, 1988,p P.11-35. The scholars agree that compensation serves a focal point in the grieving process and is a

### 4.3.3 The Healing of Victims and Offenders

The ngozi spirit has an opportunity to explain how the crime was committed. The narration of how the victim was murdered puts an end to the psychological torment experienced by the victim's kinsmen as family members are able to receive answers to any lingering questions about the incident. In addition, family members of the victim are given an opportunity to participate in holding the offender accountable for his or her actions. The offender is also given the opportunity to off-load the burden of the crime which he had been carrying all along. The perpetrator can tell his story too, his part in the crime, why the crime occurred and how it has also affected his life and that of his family. Most importantly, perpetrators are given the opportunity to make things right with the victim and his family to a degree possible through the paying of compensation. In Fainos Mangena's opinion, compensation brings about a state of equilibrium and enables the victim to close his or her case.<sup>462</sup> So social space for closure of pain and suffering on the victim is created. For the perpetrator too, there is closure to his guilty conscience. That the ngozi factor facilitates the first steps towards healing is also evident. The bringing together of the two families is the first step towards healing and reconciliation.

An enabling environment for healing is also created since the offender or his family admit of wrongdoing and accept responsibility.<sup>463</sup> In the process, they seek the forgiveness of the deceased's kinsmen. The heavy penalty which usually accompanied the ngozi punishment was an act of condemnation for evil and the grossness of the act of murder.<sup>464</sup> The penalty was used as a reminder to the perpetrator and those around him that there is a price to be paid for violating the agreed rules of co-existence. In essence, compensation entailed a social future where both perpetrators and victims and their respective families would in future harmoniously live together in the same community.<sup>465</sup> It should also be underscored that compensation payment for ngozi was payable by the wider family members of the offender. The family members worked together to find the resources needed

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visual representation of what was lost allowing individuals the space to channel their emotions and act on them in a focused specific way.

<sup>462</sup> Fainos Mangena, Itai Muwati and Zifikile Gambahaya, "Echoing Silences as a Paradigm for Restorative Justice in Post-Conflict Zimbabwe: A Philosophical Discourse," *Zambezia*, vol.33, pp1-18.

<sup>463</sup> Also see Magesa, *African Traditional Religion*, p. 110.

<sup>464</sup> Joram Tarusarira, "Reconciliation and Reconstruction among churches and Faith-Based Organization in Zimbabwe", in L Marschem, ed., *Religion and Conflict Resolution*, Ashgate: Farnham, 2006, pp99-117.

<sup>465</sup> A.R Brawnlee Walker, "Compensation for Manslaughter or Murder, Notes from Gutu District," p. 10 Also see Macharangwanda, "Mudzimu, Shabe, Ngozi and Other Spirits", *NADA* vol 10, 1952, p. 18.

for the compensation payment. In so doing, the clan members created obligations owed to them by the offender.<sup>466</sup> He or she became responsible to them. The family members then had their own interest in making sure that the offender did not get into trouble again in future and so was brought under some form of social control enforced by the extended family.<sup>467</sup> Informants explained that this was a way of dealing with anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Chief Mabika explained that after the penalty was paid, the C.R.B insisted that the two families should reconcile. On behalf of the community the C.R.B asked for the forgiveness of the ancestors for the violation of rules of existence in their land. The elders also addressed the family members of the deceased to stop murmuring in private, to remove all grudges harboured within their hearts and to live in peace. The chief could ask the parties to offer snuff-tobacco to one another because a man will not accept snuff out of the hands of an enemy, or they are persuaded to eat together the meat of a fowl or goat.<sup>468</sup> This, too, was a sign of friendship because people that hate each other dare not eat together for fear of being poisoned. It is significant that such reconciliations were not confined to the parties alone. Every one present including the chief and his assessors were given a little snuff or meat. The reconciliation of former enemies in public was regarded as proof that the parties had overcome their mutual prejudice and were friends once again. The central point of reconciliation was to acknowledge divisive anger and resentment in one's heart and cast them away.

Here reconciliation can be seen in its backward-looking operation. In its backward-looking operation, reconciliation brings about personal healing of survivors, the reparation of past injustices, the building or rebuilding of non-violent relationships between individuals and communities and the acceptance by the former parties to a conflict of a common vision and understanding of the past. In its forward looking dimension, reconciliation means enabling victims and perpetrators to get on with life.<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> A.R Brawnlee Walker, "Compensation for Manslaughter or Murder, Notes from Gutu District, 'p. 10.

<sup>467</sup>Ibid .

<sup>468</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai ,12 July 2013.

<sup>469</sup> Luc Huyse and Mark Salter ,eds., *Traditional Justice and Reconciliation after a Violent Conflict :Learning from African Experiences*, Stockholm: Institute for Democracy and Electoral, 2003, p.g 19

#### 4.4 Community Cleansing Ceremonies

As observed by Volker Boege, conflict resolution and peace building is not only about negotiations, political solutions and material reconstruction, but also about reconciliation and mental and spiritual healing.<sup>470</sup> Indigenous approaches deal with the spiritual world, feelings and non-verbal communication. Cleansing, or purification ceremonies known as *bira* performed by chiefs, spirit mediums, healers and the ordinary people were of utmost importance for the mental and spiritual rehabilitation of victims and perpetrators.<sup>471</sup> The mental healing of victims deeply traumatized by the experiences of violent conflict is an aspect of healing and reconciliation that was as important as material reconstruction. Cleansing ceremonies took into account that conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation is not only an issue of reason, rationality and talk, but also of effects, emotions, imagination and of the spirit.

In Bikita cleansing ceremonies were mainly used to heal the effects of conflict and bring about reconciliation of the living and the dead. Mr Aaron Zindoga pointed out that community cleansing ceremonies were mostly used to cleanse the land and resolve conflicts between man and the ancestors of the land. He explained that the human being is an individual but he or she is also part of the wider community. As such, his or her individual actions may affect the wellbeing of the entire community by provoking the anger of ancestral spirits.<sup>472</sup> Actions which are said to provoke the anger of the ancestors of the land include such things like senseless bloodshed or killings, brutal violence, failure to respect or defiling sacred mountains, rivers and shrines. According to informants sexual intercourse in the bush was a major-wrong doing that required a very complex cleansing ceremony because such violations affected the community as a whole. It was believed that sexual relations in the bush annoyed the ancestral spirits leading to poor harvests.<sup>473</sup> During the war both guerrillas and

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<sup>470</sup> Volker Boege, "Potentials and Limits of traditional Approaches in Peace building," in Beatix Austin, Hans-Joachim Giessmann and Berghof Forschungszentrum für Konstruktive Konfliktbearbeitung, eds., *Advancing Conflict Transformation. The Berghof Handbook II*, Farmington Hills, MI, United States: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2011, pp431-457.

<sup>471</sup> Interview with Taruwanza Machonya, traditional healer, Matsai, 22 February 2013. Also see Baines Erin, "Spirits and Social Reconstruction after mass violence: Rethinking Transitional Justice," *African Affairs*, 109, (436), (2010), pp.409-430; Gombe Jairos, *Tsika Dzava Shona*, Harare: College Press; Alice Honwawa, "Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Rural Mozambique," *Mozambique Peace Process in Perspective*, 1998, p. 3; Joram Tarusarira, "Of Spirits and Healing: Cultural Values and Post-Conflict Reconciliation Agenda in Zimbabwe", *A Journal of African Politics, Development and International Affairs*, 40(1) (2013), p. 2; Tursunova Zulfiya, "The Role of Rituals in Healing Trauma and Reconciliation in Post-Accord Building", *Journal of Human Security*, vol4, Issue 3, (2008), p. 2.

<sup>472</sup> Interview with Aaron Zindoga, elder, Bikita 22 May 2012.

<sup>473</sup> Interview with Mrs Rudo Madzviti, Matsai, 19 June 2012.

the security forces had defiled the land by having sexual intercourse with young or married women in the bush or mountains. The mountains and forests were sacred and the Karangas believe that these actions angered the ancestors. Once the spirits were angered they permitted or even invited evil spirits to invade the community and bring harm to the community.<sup>474</sup> Informants pointed out that such activities left the community in fear of misfortunes and bad luck shown through crop failure in the whole community. Once the ancestors were angered, they withheld the rains, sent cattle diseases, famines or illnesses among other misfortunes.<sup>475</sup> Thus, the droughts experienced in the immediate years following independence were attributed to these acts which had defiled the land. The droughts were a sign of the displeasure by the spirit world at how the living had defiled the land. According to Chief Mabika:

After the war, there was need to cleanse the community from the bloodshed spilled wantonly during the war. Restless spirits of ex-combatants who lie buried in mass graves, fields, on pathways and other unacceptable places and whose relatives they did not know came back to haunt and terrorize many in the district. It was necessary to carry out cleansing rituals to dampen their restless spirits.<sup>476</sup>

On his part Chief Mazungunye remarked that:

Community cleansing was necessary to rid communities of witches' paraphernalia. While guerrillas had taken it upon themselves to rid communities of witches by killing those whom members of the community identified as witches, they however failed to kill the alleged witches' familiars. However, after the war, hyenas, snakes, crocodiles, owls and goblins which had belonged to witches roamed the communities stirring up evil. The cleansing ceremonies carried out by the community with the help of traditional healers killed these familiars or neutralized their powers.<sup>477</sup>

That community cleansing after the war was necessary to rid communities of witches' familiars was an observation also made by Mwandayi and Reynolds.<sup>478</sup> Community cleansing was also said to make right man's standing with the ancestors.

#### *4.4.1 Processes of Community Cleansing*

Desperate to be reconciled with the spirit world, community cleansing ceremonies were conducted to cleanse the land of the effects of political violence and the war. Community cleansing process is an all-inclusive process including chiefs, headmen, elders, spirit

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<sup>474</sup> Interview with Mr. Chengerai Chiwonyere, Bikita, 20 July 2012.

<sup>475</sup> Interview with Wadzanai Gava, Matsai, 19 August 2012.

<sup>476</sup> Interview with Chief Mabika, 19 June 2013, Matsa.

<sup>477</sup> Interview with chief Mazungunye, Bikita 2 August 2013.

<sup>478</sup> Canisius Mwandayi, *Death and after life Rituals in the Eyes of the Shona*, University of Bamberg Press, 2011, p. 254.

Pamela Reynolds, *Traditional Healers and Childhood in Zimbabwe*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1996, p.59

mediums and traditional healers. The chief's council met with the elders of the community and discussed the need for ceremonies. Upon reaching a consensus, the idea was publicized to the members of the community who agreed to the proposed ceremony. The organizers asked each family to donate half a bucket of rapoko for beer to be brewed for the ancestors and spirits of the land. In addition a sum of two dollars was also levied against each family unit to pay for the sacrificial bull needed at the ceremony.

In Matsai, the beer was brewed at the Mukanga spirit medium homestead by women past child-bearing stage. Beer was brewed at the home of the spirit medium because spirit mediums were considered to be the messengers of the God the Creator (Musikavanhu) and the spirits of the land. Whenever community members needed to communicate with "Musikavanhu" and the ancestors they went to the spirit mediums and should "Musikavanhu" want to communicate with the people the messages were facilitated and delivered by the spirit mediums. Women of past-child bearing age were considered clean of any sexual defilement and so could serve or handle things of the spiritual world.

People of the community arrive at the venue a night before the ceremony. These include the chief and other chiefs from surrounding areas, headmen, elders of the community, ex-combatants, women and the youth. People spend the whole night eating, singing and dancing. In the early hours of the morning the people through their chief seek audience with the spirit world through the medium:

We told the medium to tell Musikavanhu and the ancestors of the land that we had brewed beer for them to report back that the war had come to an end. We also thanked them for protecting the children who returned from the war. We explained that some had not returned, others were disabled while a number was mentally ill. We told the ancestors about the droughts, the misfortunes and the bloodshed that had occurred in the land and that as a community we were asking for their forgiveness for defiling the land. As a community we pleaded with the ancestors to cool the tensions and unsettled spirits of the departed, to accept our beer and apologies and for them to heal the land of all its social and economic problems. All this is done while the others will be clapping their hands.<sup>479</sup>

The medium will tell the people if the gesture had been accepted by the ancestors or not. In this case it was accepted. However, the ancestors through the medium berated the community for the criminal acts, the violence and the unnecessary deaths that had made the land unclean. The community is cautioned and warned. After this a pot of beer is poured onto the ground

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<sup>479</sup>Interview with Headman Mukanga, Matsai, 27 August 2012

for the ancestors to drink. This is followed by the sacrificing of the bull. The blood from the bull is allowed to flow into the ground to cool down tensions of the ancestors and even the unsettled spirits of those who had died during the war. After these rituals are performed people continue with the eating, drinking and singing.

Chief Mabika explained that among the Karanga, the spiritual provides men with an ultimate shield against terror, misfortunes or chaos. Karanga elders believed that to be in good standing with the ancestors of the sacred cosmos was to be protected from chaos, terror and misfortunes, while to be otherwise is to be abandoned on the edge of abyss of meaninglessness.<sup>480</sup> In such cases spirit mediums performed cleansing rituals designed to keep this terror at bay, restore social order and equilibrium. In Magesa's opinion rituals are the most practical and efficient ways to stimulate the safe healing required by both the individual and community.<sup>481</sup> In addition, rituals performed by mediums tied the community together in a close relationship. Chief Mabika explained that:

As the cultural custodians, we led our people in these ceremonies. Together we confronted our unpleasant past. The presence and involvement of the leadership at these ceremonies made the interactions legitimate and less controversial. The involvement and engagement of the whole community from the initial stages bound the community in a close relationship. These cleansing ceremonies decrease social divisions existing within the community, thereby strengthening unity and social cohesion. The dignity and worthiness of every member of the community was emphasized.<sup>482</sup>

Similarly, Chief Mukanganwi noted that:

our people had failed to draw comfort from the approaches put in place by the government and so they looked up to the local leadership as custodians of our culture to wipe their tears. Indeed the government had not done much about the social-psychological problems emanating from the effects of the liberation war. We had to intervene, for the healing purposes of our people and community. The government did not have sons which were troubled by evil spirits or *ngozi* spirits, we had sons who were pursued by spirits from the war. The government did not have sons and daughters laying in unmarked graves in foreign and unknown lands, our sons were out there, laying somewhere. All these things gave us sleepless nights not the government. We realized that these were our problems and as such it was up to us to resolve them in our own way, using approaches we knew and understood, approaches which were meaningful to us.<sup>483</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> Interview with Chief Mabika, Matsai, 27 August 2012

<sup>481</sup> Laurent Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, New York: Orbis Books, p.110.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid.

<sup>483</sup> Interview with chief Mukanganwi, Bikita, 5 August 2013



Deep down, we knew cleansing ceremonies had to be done to seek the forgiveness of our ancestors, the government knew it but it was still so excited by its newly found powers to conduct these *biras*. Now that they were in power they wanted to appear English and so they abandoned our indigenous ways of handling pain, grief or suffering. So we approached the district administrator and the party and told them we were doing these things because they had done nothing and they said go ahead. We had people like spirit mediums, chiefs, elders and many more who knew how these things had to be done. We initiated the move.<sup>484</sup>

The ceremonies involved all the members of the community, leaders, men and women, the young and the old, victims and perpetrators. As such these ceremonies were better attended than the heroes' commemorations at the national, provincial and district level. These ceremonies gave the community a chance to stand together and admit what was done to it, what the members did to each other, how they harmed their relations, neighbours and the community at large. They forgave each other because they were all victims and perpetrators of the war. Others were direct perpetrators who had caused pain by their criminal acts whilst some were indirect perpetrators who had watched silently when barbaric acts of violence were carried out in their midst. As headman Buruuru explained:

Through these ceremonies we were able to apologize to the living and departed victims, to the ancestors and to God for our timidity. We were strong enough to confront evilness for what it had done to us, and to our children and community, to process the pain and anger that had been caused by the effects of the war. Yes, we were able to face our history at a time when the whole nation was in a state of denial<sup>485</sup>

Chief Mazungunye said the whole community was involved in the cleansing process because:

the ceremonies were about the cleansing of our community, our people, our minds and our hands as a community. Community members had to be included because they were the victims and perpetrators. Perpetrators had to be there to show remorse for their crimes, to seek the forgiveness of the victims and the ancestors. They needed to see the impact of their actions on the community at large. They too needed the cleansing, to be made whole again and to be integrated into the same community which they had harmed by their wrong actions. The ceremonies gave us a chance to show the victims and perpetrators that the community recognizes their pain and cared for them, without them, there is no community. The young ones had to be there to learn and see the effects of violence on families and the community at large. They needed to see how we make peace with men and with God and ourselves, to learn about the importance of restoring strained relationships.<sup>486</sup>

Oral testimonies revealed that during the ceremonies wounds were re-opened, but they were opened for healing purposes and not for dividing the community. As we looked at the gaping wounds left by the war, we were reminded that violence amongst us should never be allowed

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<sup>484</sup>Interview with chief Mukanganwi, Bikita 5 August 2013.

<sup>485</sup> Interview with headman Buruuru, Matsai 11 August, 2013.

<sup>486</sup> Interview with chief Mazungunye, Bikita, 4 August 2013.

again. Through the ceremonies history was invoked for future lessons, yet this was done without tearing the community apart. We were all determined to start all over again.<sup>487</sup>

From these testimonies it emerged that cleansing ceremonies successfully enabled communities in Bikita to commemorate their victims, cleanse the land and community members from the effects of the war. In addition, perpetrators were also reconciled and reintegrated within the community.

#### **4.5 Rituals of Expurgation/Exorcism from Evil Spirits.**

According to Shona traditional belief, people who murder or see people being murdered become contaminated spiritually. It was believed that contamination originated from contact with death and bloodshed. In Chapter three I discussed how civilians were forced to watch dead bodies of guerrillas by the Rhodesian Forces as part of its psychological warfare. I also explained how civilians were exposed to death during *pungwe* raids. According to Mr Tenadi Manhondo:

Death was so common those days. People were killed like flies. All this seeing of dead bodies or seeing people being killed made us unclean. In Shona we believe that the spirits of the dead will be hovering over us bringing bad luck to the living.<sup>488</sup>

In another interview, Mr Mufudzi Gava pointed out that:

the war of liberation, guerrillas and the youth desecrated cultural values in many ways which angered the spirits of the land. Burial was denied to victims killed on allegations of being sell-outs or for being witches. Alleged sell-outs were burnt to death and left inside their huts with burial of their remains forbidden. Relatives or friends would not be given an opportunity to mourn the deceased because by so doing they would be labelled sell-outs too. Such activities left the individuals in fear of misfortunes and bad luck.<sup>489</sup>

It was within this background that after independence, many people in Bikita sought traditional healers to exorcise these evil spirits. According to Zangure Nyangasere, a traditional healer in Matsai:

Civilians, ex-combatants from the Smith regime and the ex-guerrillas approached me for exorcisms from evil spirits. This was really necessary because most of them had seen too many corpses of friends and foes during the war. Others had failed to assist

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<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

<sup>488</sup> Interview with Mr Tenadi Manhondo, Nyahunda, 11 June 2013.

<sup>489</sup> Interview with Mr Mufudzi Gava, Matsai 19 August 2012.

fellow comrades and they were afraid of what the spirits of the deceased comrades might do to them as punishment for failing to assist.<sup>490</sup>

On some occasions, others pointed out that they had sworn oaths to come and collect their friends and ensure they get a proper burial amongst their kin once the war was over. For one reason or the other collecting the remains of their comrades had not been possible and so, fearing attacks they went to traditional healers for exorcism from evil spirits.<sup>491</sup>

#### 4.5.1 *The Cleansing Process*

Oral testimonies from the traditional healers (*n`anga*) seem to suggest that there were four types of patients who sought cleansing after the war. The mediums of Nyangasere, Negondo and Nedowore all confirmed that they cleansed those who had witnessed bloodshed and killings due to war-time circumstances. Most civilians, children, refugees and some ex-combatants and the youth fell in this category. They had witnessed death, suffering and even killings at pungwes, camps, or at the battle front. Culturally these people were/ are spiritually contaminated. Contamination is said to have originated from contact with death and bloodshed. Such individuals keep reliving these experiences and have sleepless nights or nightmares. Some of them were mentally disturbed too from the war-time experiences.

The second group of people which sought cleansing were the ex-combatants and the youth who had actually killed people during the war because they had collaborated with guerrillas or because they were sell-outs or witches. These were now suffering from the *ngozi* of the people they had killed during the war. This group or their relatives approached *n`angas* on behalf of their relatives seeking to have them cleansed. The *n`anga* closely questioned the patients. Most of them admitted to have killed/ murdered people. Others explained that they had no choice given the conditions of the war. The patients were warned that unless they reveal the truth, the cleansing process will be ineffective. The third group consisted of innocent children attacked by *ngozi* seeking to revenge wrongful deaths committed by children`s relatives during the liberation era. In this case, the innocent child, unfortunately, is used as a pawn to make the offending family pay compensation. As Reynolds observed, in such cases, the child`s well-being depends upon the ability of the *n`anga* to reveal the true cause of the child`s trouble and upon the willingness of the family to

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<sup>490</sup> Interview with Zangure Nyangasere Traditional healer, Mastai, 19 August 2013.

<sup>491</sup> Interview with Zangure Nyangasere, Traditional healer, Matsai, 20 August 2013

tell the truth.<sup>492</sup> Nyangasere explained that in cases such as these, traditional healers are able to ‘chase’ the avenging spirit to another family member closely related to the murderer, or to the murderer himself if he is still alive- *kusundira ngozi kudzimba dzavamwe*.<sup>493</sup> Still the traditional healer will explain that the chasing away of the spirit was just but a temporary measure while family discussions were underway. The n`anga cleanses the child and protects it against future harm.

The last group consists of those who sought cleansing because it was culturally right to do so. Families like the Mukanga and Chingwaru carried out cleansing ceremonies for their returning children not because they were pursued by avenging spirits but because it has been a Karanga cultural practice to individualistically cleanse all warriors returning from battle. This was done to prevent all the restless war spirits from pursuing and tormenting the soldiers as they returned home to lead normal lives in society. Mutumwa Negondo, a traditional healer explained that:

I cleansed guerrillas, soldiers and mujibhas. First, I reported to the ancestors that their child or children were back from the war. I would then sprinkle them with blood from a slaughtered fowl. After that they washed with a concoction of herbs and this process was followed by rinsing. The washing process was meant to cleanse them from bad luck, evil spirits and from sickness. At war they had seen a lot of blood, people dying. All these things blocked their success and wellbeing after the war. The cleansing process was meant to open their way. We cleansed them and asked the ancestors to open their way, to forgive them because it was war. We also asked the guerrillas to tell their stories, what they did, what they saw, the pain they had caused others. They would ask forgiveness from their victims and the surviving relatives. We asked the ancestors to forgive them because it was war.<sup>494</sup>

#### 4.5.2 Process of Individual Cleansing

The patient is taken to a traditional healer by relatives. Relatives describe the symptoms in general terms to the healer who then throws his bones, *hakata*. On becoming possessed, the healer then explores and describes the possible cause of the sickness. The healer asks the patient probing questions, which he or the relatives can respond to. Here the patient or his relatives are encouraged to say the truth otherwise the cleansing process will not be effective. If the ngozi factor is seen as the source of the problem the healer advises his patient and family of the need for discussions between the family groups for compensation to be paid. If the source of the sickness is a result of contamination, cleansing is done by the

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<sup>492</sup> Pamela Reynolds,, *Traditional Healers and Childhood in Zimbabwe*, p. 12

<sup>493</sup> Interview with Nyangasere, traditional healer, Matsai, 5 August 2013.

<sup>494</sup> Interview with Mutumwa Negondo, traditional healer, Nyika, 7 August 2013.

healer. Some healers like Negondo cleanse their patients with water mixed with blood from a fowl. This is said to wash the blood in their hands away. After this they are rinsed with a wide range of plants and herbs. Some herbs are rubbed in incisions on the skin.<sup>495</sup> Other healers like Nedowore use snuff mixed with water. Patients are cleansed with the mixture for three days. Each day is dedicated for three different remedies. The first day the cleansing will be aimed at chasing the evil away, the second day is aimed at strengthening the mind whilst the third day is for security and protection from future harm.<sup>496</sup>

The strength of these rituals is that the individual together with his or her family are given a chance to come to terms with their past, no matter how ugly. Space for truth telling is also created which means that the perpetrator is also relieved of the burden of having a guilty conscience. These cleansing rituals healed both the body and the mind. Chenjerai, an ex-combatant explained that these rituals gave them peace and assurance that they were clean from the evil spirits of the people killed.<sup>497</sup> To an African, spiritual impurity is a threat. Consequently, returning combatants found relief in re-establishing harmony with other ex-soldiers, ancestors and members of the community through cleansing ceremonies. Individual cleansing, which was mostly facilitated by traditional healers offered protection and relief from fear of the unknown. Social spaces for truth telling were created since traditional healers listened and probed for the truth in the belief that a concealed truth makes the whole cleansing process ineffective. As observed by Pamela Reynolds, traditional healers were creative, flexible and caring in a manner that demonstrated their integrity within Karanga society. As far as their response to individual cleansing was concerned, healers were sensitive to individual and community needs because they too had experienced war and observed the range of response, activity and emotional play that war calls forth.<sup>498</sup>

Another traditional healer, Ngavaite Ngwena, had this to say:

Never fool yourself into thinking that the issue of evil spirits or the spirits of the dead haunting the living are false stories. They are real. And no pill or western medicine can cure that. In your churches that is why they would say one needs deliverance from evil spirits. It is an acknowledgement that the living should not constantly be around the dead. The government was only trying to be English by ignoring these issues and I do

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<sup>495</sup> Interview with Negondo, traditional healer, Nyika, 7 August 2013.

<sup>496</sup> Interview with Nedowore, traditional healer, Ziki, 10 August 2013.

<sup>497</sup> Interview with Max Chengerai, War-veteran, Matsai, 19 August 2013

<sup>498</sup> Pamela Reynolds, *Traditional Healers and Childhood in Zimbabwe*, p. 67.

not know why. We cleansed people for the sake of restoring their sanity and wholeness which had been tampered around with during the war.<sup>499</sup>

Similarly Cde Chombo explained that individual cleansing ceremonies:

helped us cleanse the blood from our hands and for not having dared to speak out when violence unfolded in our midst. We clapped hands, sang, and danced when people were being mutilated, tortured and killed. Through these rituals we were able to see ourselves for the violators we were, to confess our sins and ask for the forgiveness of the victims, their relatives, God and the ancestors.<sup>500</sup>

Cde Mabhunu Muchaparara had this to say concerning individual cleansing ceremonies:

After the cleansing ceremony, I felt for the first time that I had laid down my gun. It was all over. The spirit of heaviness that I had always carried around left. I felt relieved and prepared to start my life all-over again. Before the cleansing, I had nightmares, seeing myself carrying a gun, running, people getting killed, and corpses lying all around me. I was still at war. All this changed after the cleansing ceremony.<sup>501</sup>

#### **4.6 Rite of a Person Who Dies Away from Home.**

As already indicated, many did not return from the war. To heal surviving relatives of those who perished in unknown areas, families in Bikita conducted rite of a person who dies away from home. Some victims were known to have perished in certain areas, examples being those of Mushava, Tawanda, Chamunorwa, Kenny, Rose, Zivai, among others who perished at Nyadzonia, Tembwe, Mboroma, Chimoio and Freedom camp.<sup>502</sup> Ruzivo died at the front and his family knew that he was buried with four others in a mass grave in Chipinge. In this case where relatives knew where their son was buried, elders were sent *kunditora mweya wemufi*, to collect the spirit of the deceased.<sup>503</sup> According to Canisius Mwandayi, the motive behind the bringing of the spirit home was that the deceased's spirit is attached to his home where the umbilical cord lies buried.<sup>504</sup>

##### *4.6.1 Process of Collecting a Deceased's Spirit.*

The process of collecting the spirit of the deceased involved mainly the family members. On reaching the site where the deceased lies, the elders introduce themselves. Touching the grave, they inform the deceased's spirit that they have come to take him or her

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<sup>499</sup> Interview with sekuru Ngavaite Ngwena, traditional Healer, Nyika, 22 August 2013.

<sup>500</sup> Interview with Cde Chombo, Gweru, 2 September 2013.

<sup>501</sup> Interview with Cde Mabhunu Muchaparara, 2 September, 2013.

<sup>502</sup> Interviews with the deceased's families, Bikita, Nyika, 19 September 2013.

<sup>503</sup> Interview with Mrs Zvoma, Ruzivo's aunt, Bikita, Nyika, 19 September, 2013

<sup>504</sup> See Canisius Mwandayi, *Death and after life Rituals in the Eyes of the Shona*, University of Bamberg Press, 2011, p. 254; Pamela Reynolds, *Traditional Healers and Childhood in Zimbabwe*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1996, p.59; Gombe Michael, *Tsika DzavaShona*, Harare: College Press, 1998.

home. A little amount of soil is taken from the grave and wrapped in a piece of cloth and the delegates return home. Upon arrival, relatives, neighbours and the community gather and the soil is placed on the floor with people weeping as if at an actual funeral. Afterwards the soil is taken for burial in a new grave and as in other funerals the *kurova guva* rite ensues afterwards.

In cases where a person's burial place is not known, the *kurova guva* ceremony is done for him or her once the diviner establishes that the deceased wants the ceremony done. Such had been the case for Winfred Munyanyiwa, Rhoda Mukoki, Tichaonai Zviuya, Fadzai Mbambo, and James Kunaka who perished during the liberation struggle but with no information of the whereabouts of their remains.<sup>505</sup> While some daughters and sons of Bikita's bodies were exhumed or relatives knew where their remains were laid, some remained hidden in unknown bushes within and outside the country. During this ceremony, a goat of anger 'mbudzi yekudzora shungu' is slaughtered. The goat is killed for the sole purpose of trying to bring to an end any kind of animosity that could have existed between the living and the dead person. The Karanga believe that after death, the spirit acquires new spiritual powers as it passes to a completely new existence in the community of spirits. It is at this stage that the spirit is regarded as unpredictable for no one knows quite well how it will react to its new environment nor what secret grudges the deceased could have harboured before death. Aware of such unpredictability on the part of the spirit, elders slaughter for him or her the goat of anger. The forgiving of one another that is effected through this ritual is considered as healthy for the living members of the family and for the deceased too since he or she would now be enabled to rest in peace amongst his or her ancestors.

Traditional healers and at times spirit mediums carried out burial rites for these people even if there was nobody to mourn over and bury. These burial rites were intended to heal the grieving families. Munatsi Shoko, a spirit medium of Chavarika, explained that spirit mediums assisted many families whose children had disappeared by showing them how to mourn. The burial rites conducted by the traditional healers or spirit mediums created space for healing.<sup>506</sup> According to Tendai Chimhosva, the gathering of family and friends around a burial rite to recognize the dead is the first step towards healing<sup>507</sup>. Informants pointed out

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<sup>505</sup> Interviews with deceased's family members, Chiremwaremwa, 10 September 2013.

<sup>506</sup> Interview with Munatsi Shoko, Bikita, 28 September 2012.

<sup>507</sup> Interview with Tendai Chimhosva, Bikita, 28 September 2012.

that burial rites performed by traditional healers or spirit mediums gave families the opportunity to perform rituals for the dead and in the process relieve themselves of psychological guilt of not having done enough for their dead, thereby living outside the sacred canopy and fearing that they may rise in anger against them as avenging spirits. Thus, these traditional rites provided a practical response to the handling of pain and grief. At the same time these rites gave a framework within which problematic things that happened in people's lives were explained. Burial rites helped people to understand and cope with the misfortunes that befell them, giving them the psychological relief they needed. Through rites performed, people were able to adapt to difficult situations in their lives by making the burden of grief lighter.<sup>508</sup> In support of traditional rite, Pamela Machakanja advises on the importance of ceremonies and other ritual occasions aimed at contributing to the acknowledgement as well as the setting of a general ethos of healing<sup>509</sup>.

As observed by T.A Rando, burial rituals play a therapeutic role to those grieving. Rituals confirm the reality of death at the same time assisting in the expression of grief while simultaneously offering a structure that contains grief. In addition, rituals allow grievers to “do something”, offering structured activities at an otherwise disorganized time.<sup>510</sup> Thus, rituals offer possible meaning for the loss, allowing mourners to understand death within the context of their beliefs. On the same note, David Maxwell also observed that rituals bring about healing. He further explains that healing is the totality of activities and ideas which help both individuals and the wider community to come to terms with the experience of violence and bereavement caused by war in a manner which allows them to continue their daily existence.<sup>511</sup> For Malidoma Patrice Some, burial rites allow for the gathering of friends and family around the ritual. The gathering of friends and family around the ritual to recognize the dead triggers the beginning of healing. This also makes the healing of the dead as he or she begins the journey to the new world.<sup>512</sup> This was neatly summed up by Malidoma Some` who pointed out that the road towards healing is not in words but is paved in gestures, touch and sound.<sup>513</sup>

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<sup>508</sup>Ibid.

<sup>509</sup> Pamela Machakanja, *National healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe: challenges and opportunities*. P.14.

<sup>510</sup> T.A Rando cited in Conisius Mwandayi, *Death and After life Rituals in the Eyes of the Shona*, p. 57

<sup>511</sup> David Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A social History of the Hwesa people*, Westport, Conn: Praeger 1999, pp. 205-6

<sup>512</sup> Malidoma Patrice Some`, *The Healing Wisdom of Africa: Finding Life Purpose Through nature, ritual and community*, New York : J.P Tarcher/Putman, 1999, p. 11

<sup>513</sup> Ibid



These initiatives taken by the Bikita community clearly show that truth telling and peace building processes can take place even outside official post-peace accord space. These initiatives alone at a local level can serve as a starting point for healing and reconciliation at a national level. The Bikita case study showed that indigenous approaches, particularly rituals, understand trauma and grief. When these are employed to deal with the effects of violence and trauma, they create social space for people to express and construe their suffering locally rather than models of counselling or drug therapy imposed by the state. These Western models are foreign and are not necessarily appropriate to attend to the emotional and psychological effects of conflicts.

The Bikita case underscore the fact that traditional approaches such as rituals have a holistic approach since they deal with the physical, psychological and social dimensions of the conflicts and their effects. Rituals are used to repair the emotional and psychological aspects of the conflicts. This is opposed to Western approaches whereby pain and trauma are placed in the mind of the individuals, then people are treated individually on a one on one basis between patient, client and health experts. Recovery is gained by helping people to come to terms with the trauma that is by externalizing it in some way. Alcinda Honwawa argues that recent research carried out in Mozambique demonstrated that talking about trauma does not necessarily heal the patients. To that extent, Alcinda Honwawa suggests that carrying out rituals is more effective in these situations.<sup>514</sup>

In Paul Lederach's opinion, local people and indigenous approaches represent the greatest source that should be maximized in dealing with conflicts. Conflict should be understood through the nurturing of respectful relationships and seeking to understand the conflict and its modalities through the eyes of communities as a key prerequisite for the long term project of developing sustainable peace.<sup>515</sup> Like Lederach, and Guy Oliver Faure stress the importance of indigenous approaches in dealing with the effects of conflict. Grassroots approaches create an encounter of people with themselves and with the realities they experience and face. He argues that people are knowledgeable about, capable of naming,

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<sup>514</sup> Alcinda Honwawa, *Sealing the past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Rural Mozambique*, p. 45

<sup>515</sup> John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace :Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press,1997, p. 112

interacting with and responding to their own realities in dynamic ways<sup>516</sup>. Furthermore, Alcinda Honwawa observed that the Western healing approaches which some African governments adopted are likely to be expensive and beyond their reach. They demand training and are constrained by the number of people that can be treated.<sup>517</sup> On the other hand, indigenous approaches are cheap and can heal many people at a given time. Rituals actually exhibit and strengthen the family and community ways of caring whereas under Western approaches, it is the therapist and his client, family and community are not seen as important in making the client “come to terms with trauma.”

Whilst indigenous approaches do require some reform in order to make them more responsive to contemporary needs particularly in the context of gender and generational hierarchies and mass political and electoral atrocities, for Bikita they proved capable of delivering healing and reconciliation successfully. However, this is not to say they must be taken as a complete replacement of Western legal systems.

#### **4.7 Factors Contributing to the Effectiveness of Bikita`s Grassroots Mechanisms**

As the Bikita case study showed, Indigenous approaches involve the legitimate stakeholders to the crime. Indigenous approaches engage all the parties affected by the conflict, offenders, their respective family members and the members of the community. Furthermore, victims were given a chance to physically meet the offender in a safe environment to discuss about the crime, harm and the appropriate responses, thereby creating spaces which resolve the conflict. The inclusion and full involvement of all the stakeholders is, according to Michael Wenzel, an empowerment of the victims, at least symbolically. He argues that while committing the crime, the offenders take advantage of their victims, put themselves above others and assume a position of superiority, disrespect the victims and their rights, and express low regard for them. Consequently, victims feel humiliated and disempowered<sup>518</sup>. However, under approaches such as the *ngozi* factor offenders are mostly required to admit their wrong doing, to show remorse and to offer an apology and ask for forgiveness.

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<sup>516</sup>Guy Oliver Faure, “Traditional Conflict Management in Africa and China,” in William Zaartman, ed., *Traditional Cures*, p. 112.

<sup>517</sup> Alcinda Honwawa, *Sealing the Past, Facing the Future*, p. 46

<sup>518</sup> Michael Wenzel, “Retributive and Restorative Justice,” *Law Hum, Behave*, vol.32,( 2008), p. 19.

Michael Wenzel further notes that the offenders' admission of wrong doing indicates that their appropriation of power was illegitimate, their concession that they owe the victim an apology amounts to an acknowledgement of the victim's rights and an expression of respect for the victim, thereby restoring the victim's power or status relation.<sup>519</sup> Fritz Heider also argues that offenders' request for forgiveness subject them to the victim's will to grant the same, and by granting forgiveness, victims can assert a moral superiority and their magnanimity emphasizes the offenders' "inferiority," thereby restoring the power or status relation.<sup>520</sup> As such, indigenous approaches like *ngozi* and the payment of compensation empower the victim by allowing them to participate. In addition, victims are also given a chance to suggest ways of resolving the conflict and addressing the harm. Paul McCold plausibly stated that "what brings the most healing and the best way for individuals affected by the crime to readily meet their needs is the very act of participating in the process and in deciding what will happen."<sup>521</sup>

In the same vein, indigenous approaches also empower the offender by giving him or her the chance to be involved in the process, in the discussion with the victim and other members of the community and in the determination of his own punishment. The community's participation in *ngozi* or cleansing rituals is also a sign of their empowerment. The involvement enables them to identify and address the root causes of the conflict so as to prevent the commission of further crimes or the resurfacing of the same conflict. As observed by Howard Zehr, no one knows better than the community the root causes of the crime committed within a community.<sup>522</sup> Through the indigenous approaches, the community is given an opportunity to "own their conflict and its resolution"<sup>523</sup> Apart from giving victims and offenders a bigger role in the process of resolving conflicts, the indigenous approaches used in Bikita also recognized the community as victim of the crimes and its role in the justice making process by opening spaces for the community to freely express their opinions, feelings and determine the appropriate action to resolve conflict.

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<sup>519</sup>Ibid.

Also see Howard Zehr, *The little Book of Restorative Justice*, Good Books: Intercourse, 2002, p. 28

<sup>520</sup> Fritz Heider, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*, New York: Wiley, 1958.

<sup>521</sup> Paul McCold, "What is the role of the Community in Restorative Justice Theory and Practice," in Howard Zehr and Toews, B, eds., *Critical Issues in Restorative Justice*, Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 2010, p. 168.

<sup>522</sup>Robin Anthony Duff, "Alternative to Punishment/Alternate Punishments," in W Grass ,ed., *Retributivism and its Critics*, Stuttgart: Frame Steiner Verlas, p. 151.

Also see Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, p. 155

<sup>523</sup>Nil Christie, ' Conflict as Property', *The British Journal of Criminology*, vol.17,no.1 (1977), p. 4

In addition, conflicts in Bikita were successfully resolved because the indigenous approaches employed emphasized on processes that were flexible, collaborative and inclusive and actions that are mutually agreed upon rather than imposed.<sup>524</sup> This collaborative process helped parties to discover the whole truth about the wrong doing, including the causes, harms, community values and their future relationships.<sup>525</sup> The social spaces for collaborative and deliberative interaction created by indigenous approach processes such as *kuripa ngozi* and cleansing ceremonies gave a chance for the parties to vent their feelings, present their versions of the story and through the help of their community, to arrive at an engagement about the harm the crime has caused, the offender's responsibilities and what should be done to restore justice.

There is a time when offenders are reprimanded, scolded, and cautioned by chiefs, headman, parents, relatives and even by traditional healers and spirit mediums, for the crimes they committed. Offenders are also made to see the impact of their actions on the community. In the Western world this is called shaming. The shaming done under indigenous approaches is meant to build not to humiliate and embarrass as it is re-integrative in nature. In John Braithwaite's opinion, re-integrative shaming is superior to stigmatization as it minimizes risks of punishing those shamed into criminal sub-cultures.<sup>526</sup> Community members ensured that shaming was carefully designed in such a way that it had an integrative effect. Thus, in Bikita, shaming was done or conducted by those people whose disapproval had the greatest impact on the offender and whom the offender respected such as his or her family, elders of the community, uncles from the mother's sides, aunts, brothers or a close family friend, (madzisekuru, madzimbuya, madzitete and madzikoma or sahwira). John Braithwaite argues that the shame which matters most is not the shame of the remote judge or police officer but the shame of the people who care most about the offender<sup>527</sup>. This is because shaming by the people who care about the offender and whom the offender respects is more curative in a sense that the offender is forgiven and is still accepted by his or her community and they are by his or her side to provide him or her support to start life afresh.

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<sup>524</sup> Howard Zehr, *The Little Hand Book Restorative Justice*, 2002, p. 4

<sup>525</sup> Daniel Van Ness "Creating Resistance Systems," in *Restorative Justice and the Law*, Walgrave: William Publishing, p. 134-135.

<sup>526</sup> John Braithwaite, *Crime, Shame and Reintegration*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 15

<sup>527</sup> Ibid

Moreover, cultural rituals of apology and forgiveness are important instruments for ending stigmatization and play a significant role in making the shaming process right and reintegration. The rituals may make the offenders to internalize the shaming positively and re-integratively as intended by the shamers, namely family members, close friends and relatives, and elderly community members. Thus, customary rituals aim at restoring the prior relationship between the parties, ceremoniously reintegrating the deviant party into the community and avoiding the cultural practices of revenge by the victim's family. Informants in Bikita indicated that the strength of indigenous approaches lie in their ability to deal with small conflicts at the local level. Respondents indicated that the ability of indigenous approaches to resolve conflicts at the local level is of great significance for conflict prevention and management at the national level. Mr Fannison Gavi asked how one can manage to resolve conflicts at a national level if he cannot resolve them at the local level?<sup>528</sup> From the discussions, it emerged that conflicts usually start at the grassroots level, but failure to resolve them at this stage can see them escalating to greater heights, *Kamoto kamberevera kanopisa matanda mberi* as the local saying goes. The same observation was also made by Osaghae who cautioned that:

so-called simple conflicts can quickly degenerate to involve most groups in the community because of the organic character of traditional communities. So called large conflicts are a result of failure to control small and simpler conflicts.<sup>529</sup>

The resolution of smaller day to day conflicts is essential as it helps ensure the stability needed for the prevention or resolution of more serious, protracted and expansive crimes. Furthermore, the resolution of more serious conflicts at a national level is impossible without management and prevention of less serious conflicts at the community level. As such, it is wiser to deal with conflicts at the local level. Once conflicts are controlled at that level then the nation at large is peaceful, hence the need to empower chiefs and elders of communities in this area of conflict resolution and peace-building. That indigenous approaches fill this gap should be seen as something positive.<sup>530</sup> Insights from the study indicate that indigenous approaches can actually contribute to solutions in the sphere of modern politics since they can take effect from the local through the regional right up to the national in the same manner solutions at the national level can also be utilized and reinforced to offer solutions at the local level.

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<sup>528</sup> Interview with MR Fannison Gavi, Bikita 24 October 2014.

<sup>529</sup> Eghosa Osaghae, "Applying Traditional Methods to Modern Conflicts: Possibilities and Limits," in William. I Zartman, ed., *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts*, p. 201-218.

<sup>530</sup> Group discussions held at Mabika's homestead Bikita, 17 December 2013.

#### 4.7.1 *Consensus*

The community could effectively heal and reconcile conflicting parties because it had an unlimited capacity for consensus. Under the indigenous approaches, healing assumed a communal or group character. The community was there to assist and ensure that both victims and perpetrators are healed of the effects of political violence. The community acknowledged its people's pain and suffering and together with the victim and perpetrator assisted and even participated with them in rituals aimed at relieving them of that pain. The community or family groups believed in and held lengthy discussions on issues affecting its people as a means of creating an environment where tensions can de-escalate. In Bikita tensions amongst members of the same family or community, sickness, pain and suffering, anger and bitterness were viewed as things which upset the normal flow of the community. The killing of community members, violence against them, failure to compensate victims and reprimand perpetrators, threatened the peace and harmony of the community at large.<sup>531</sup> Thus, the community also felt that they were involved to amend past wrongs by virtue of being members of the same community.<sup>532</sup>

The search for consensus explains why the public was also involved in the resolution of conflicts. The members of the community had a right to voice their opinion over any matter once the case had been "thrown to the dogs to chew." In essence the public was allowed to come in now and again whenever they felt that they had something important to contribute to the ultimate good of the case. The public also came in every time the formal proceedings seemed to be at a deadlock. In some cases it was the public which led the chief or headman instead of being led by him.<sup>533</sup> It was still the community which decided the form of punishment as well as the compensation to be given. The data collected seemed to suggest that the common effort of the public was directed towards finding a satisfactory solution and everything else became subservient to this aim. It was the public again which insisted that public reconciliation should take place in public to show that the conflict has been resolved. By so doing, members of the public not only assumed responsibility to settle the conflict between the litigants but actually transformed the reconciliation into a general restoration of peace and harmony in the community.<sup>534</sup> It emerged that the discussions valued the hierarchy

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<sup>531</sup> Interview with sekuru Taona Muwi, Matsai, Bikita, 17 July 2012.

<sup>532</sup> Interview with sekuru Taona Muwi, Bikita, 17 July 2012.

<sup>533</sup> Interview with tembo elders of Bikita, Shupikai, Run'anga, Matavire and Mbizi, Chiremwaremwa, 7 March 2013.

<sup>534</sup> Group discussions held at Mabika's homestead Bikita, 17 December 2013.

of importance among the contributors to the discussions. Speakers were provided with an equal chance to speak up until a group consensus or agreement had been reached. The final agreement in the dispute solving process was signified by peace, togetherness and oneness. The community's desire to agree within a context of a group safeguarded the rights of opinion of individuals and minorities to enforce group or team solidarity. They believed that consensus brought lasting peace to disputes because it destroyed the barriers caused by polarization by enabling the warring parties to put community interests ahead of individual interests.<sup>535</sup>

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter highlighted that indigenous approaches initiated and employed by the Bikita community effectively healed the victims and perpetrators of violence. In essence, the reconciliation of the living and the dead was achieved as well as the re-integration of perpetrators into the community. However, these indigenous approaches failed to deliver justice and healing to victims of rape, and the many sexually abused women. Rapists were never made to account for their actions. Similarly, indigenous approaches failed to deliver financial reparations and economic justice to victimized families and individuals. Financial reparations to those who lost property, livelihood, cattle, detainees and prisoners could not be facilitated under the indigenous approaches; issues and victims of liberation era thefts could not be healed or comforted under these approaches. The bitterness, hatred and anger emanating from the failure by the government or community to deal with these effects of economic injustices and sexual abuse continue to haunt the victims. Indeed, for Bikita, the 21<sup>st</sup> century ushered in another chapter in the district's history and in the history of the nation at large as violence, emanating from the unresolved legacies of the war reared its head again.

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<sup>535</sup> Interview with chief Mazungunye, Bikita, 5 March 2013.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.1 The Recurrence of Politically Motivated Violence in Bikita at the Turn of the Millennium: 2001 and 2008 Elections.

*This thing called politics is not good at all. It leaves a trail of destruction behind, a lot of hatred and creates enemies for one. Look at the homes that were destroyed in the name of ZANU PF, MDC! People do not see eye to eye all because of politics. What politics! This politics has left suffering behind, has made people poor and has landed others in prison. When ngozi spirits came back to torment families, political leaders and their politics are not there, you are left all alone. Politics have left my people divided (chief Mabika, Matsai, 2014)<sup>536</sup>*

*A society that tolerates violence and collaborates with agents of violence in the way that ours has is in danger of self-destruction. Leaders who accept and use hateful language and rely on violence in their strategies in private, social and political campaign, as Zimbabwean leaders have done, are suicidal. Political violence has become prevalent in most....rural areas. This violence increases during local and national elections.<sup>537</sup>(D. Kaulem, 2011)*

#### 5.1.1 Introduction

This chapter examines yet another chapter of violence in the district's history. The incessant violence that marked the 21<sup>st</sup> century was more brutal than what had been witnessed during the 1970s war as many people were injured, murdered, property destroyed wantonly, families torn apart along political affiliations and the community divided once again. Within this backdrop it then becomes necessary for one to explain the recurrence of violence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, in this chapter, I argue that although the Bikita community had made efforts, through indigenous approaches to facilitate healing and reconciliation, there were a number of issues which needed to be dealt with at national level to curb the recurrence of violence in Zimbabwe. The approaches implemented by the ordinary people only healed the psychological and spiritual effects of political violence. Victims of rape, sexual abuse, the disabled, political prisoners and detainees as well as those who had lost property during the liberation era were left unattended to by both the state and local initiatives put in place in the years following independence. All these factors came to haunt the nation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The chapter argues that the emergence of multi-parties heightened the levels of violence during the period under review.

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<sup>536</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai 13 January 2014.

<sup>537</sup>David Kaulem, *Ending Violence in Zimbabwe*, Harare: Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), 2011, p. 79.



## 5.2 Explaining Electoral Violence at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century

The gross violence witnessed in Bikita in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a reflection of the failure of government policies of healing and reconciliation implemented in the immediate years after the 1970s war. Although Bikita had taken the initiative to heal victims and communities of the effects of violence, indigenous approaches implemented only attended to the spiritual and psychological effects of political violence and that was as far as these approaches could resolve. This meant that the financial, economic and physical effects of the war-time violence had remained unattended to. Indigenous approaches were not suited to cater for the effects of torture, rape and sexual abuse, nor could they bring relief to victims of war-induced poverty, political detainees or to thousands whose livelihoods had been destroyed by the liberation war. The indigenous approaches only succeeded in dealing with half of the district's problems. It was this problem of failing to come up with holistic approaches which attended to the economic, financial, social, psychological and spiritual dimensions of healing and reconciliation which triggered violence at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### 5.2.1 *The Need for Economic Reconciliation*

Economic deprivation in most societies is a cause of conflict and can also pose as a stumbling block to national reconciliation. As Erin Daly and Jeremy Sarkin rightfully observed, economic oppression divides populations and conduces to exhaustion, frustration and ultimately violence.<sup>538</sup> The failure of the 1980 policy of reconciliation to redress economic injustices at independence contributed to the violence witnessed in Bikita and in the whole of Zimbabwe at the turn of the millennium. According to Simon Zvinaiye Mawondo, in the years following independence, there was no basis for reconciliation since the economic relations that obtained during the colonial era remained intact even in the post-independence era. The land which had been the major cause of the conflict in Rhodesia and which many had died for during the liberation struggle remained in the hands of the few commercial white farmers.<sup>539</sup> Yet as Oswell Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru observed, among other things, justice in Zimbabwe required a radical redistribution of land to the previously dispossessed if reconciliation was to succeed.<sup>540</sup> These failed economic policies were responsible for the violent *jambanja* or land grabbing processes which occurred in the whole of Zimbabwe,

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<sup>538</sup> Erin Darly and Jeremy Sarkin, *Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007, p.229

<sup>539</sup> Saimon Zvinaiye Mawondo, "In Search for Social Justice: Reconciliation and the Land question in Zimbabwe," available at <http://www.crvp.org/books/series02/11-12/chapter1.htm>> accessed 15 January 2015.

<sup>540</sup> Oswell Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, "Justice and the land Question in Zimbabwe: The Historical Experience of Zimbabwe," *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Military Studies*, 2 (1) 2002, p.45.

Bikita included, from 1999. The Third Chimurenga as the process was referred to by the locals, was a desperate attempt by the rural populace, led by the war veterans, to correct a historical economic injustice which the 1980 policy of reconciliation had failed to resolve.

Had the new government carried out economic reform, this could have averted the violence witnessed in 2000. Furthermore, economic reforms could have promoted national reconciliation to a certain extent. For the ordinary person or one in the rural areas, economic reform is the most important basis for inclusion. The same observation was also made by Michael Gordon who asserts that a poor farmer is more likely to believe that she/ he is an integral part of the new nation when her standard of living is improved by government policies put in place.<sup>541</sup> Mr James Madondo explained that:

The government wanted us to reconcile, can the rich and the poor reconcile? How? I think reconciliation is only possible between equals. How can we reconcile when you have plenty and I have nothing, when I am humiliated by my poverty and I cannot even stand next to you. How can we reconcile when you stifle me, when you have taken all the wealth there is in the country and you impoverish me? If the government had wanted people to reconcile, it should have redistributed land, what we wanted were T  
The above sentiments were also buttressed by an Australian aboriginal man who explained that:

The reconciliation process can achieve nothing because it does not promise reparation for the taking away of our lives, our lands and our economic and political base. Unless it can return to us those very vital things, unless it can return to us an economic, a political and a viable land base, what have we? A hand shake? A symbolic dance? An exchange of leaves or feathers or something like that?<sup>542</sup>

For the Bikita residents, it was unfortunate that the majority did not benefit much from the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) because farms initially targeted for the programme were delisted.<sup>543</sup> Most of the farms in the district were part of the Save Valley Conservancy and so could not be earmarked for resettlement. Those who had settled in Agus, Chigwete and Mkwazi farms were also moved after outbreaks of foot and mouth diseases were reported as settler cattle came into contact with the Save Valley Conservancy buffalos.<sup>544</sup> As a result some of the newly settled farmers ended up

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<sup>541</sup> Michael Gordon, *Reconciliation: A Journey*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2001, p.47.

<sup>542</sup> K. Gilbert, "What are we to reconcile ourselves to?" In Irene. Moores, ed., *Voices of Aboriginal Australia: Past, Present, Future*, Springwood: Butterfly, 1994, p.5.

<sup>543</sup> See Utete Report, Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Charles M.B Utete, vol 1 and 2, Main Report to his Excellency the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, 2003, Harare: Presidential Land Review Committee; Charles Utete, Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee into the Implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme 2000-2002, Harare: Government Printers, 2003.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid.

returning to their communal homes and land holdings which they had not surrendered. Chiefs in Bikita also indicated that for most of the district, decongestion was minimal since the receiving chiefs of other neighbouring districts made sure that their subjects got first priority before attending to potential settlers from other districts. These chiefs made sure that their lists had been exhausted. In essence, there was also competition for resettlement between the rural and urban people making it difficult for the people of Bikita to benefit. Consequently, economic justice for Bikita had not been delivered under ZANU PF government of 1980. Many had remained landless and poor. They continued eking a living from tired, sandy and dry soils.

These harsh economic conditions were worsened by the frequent droughts of 1982- 1984, 1990-1992 and 2000-2002 experienced in the country. Whilst the droughts were outside the government's control, they had a negative impact on the already weakened economy and a deeply impoverished rural population. Food shortages became the order of the day for many in the rural areas. The few cattle that they had were wiped off by the droughts, undermining future agricultural activities. In addition, shortages of basic commodities and a very high rate of unemployment became characteristic of Zimbabwe. The prevailing socio-economic environment had a negative bearing on the electorate, not only in Bikita but also in the entire country. Informants explained that for many in Bikita, the 2000 elections were a golden opportunity to end the poverty and economic crisis tormenting them under ZANU PF. Consequently, in the 2000 Parliamentary elections, ZANU PF lost to MDC in Bikita West with Amos Mutongi becoming the Constituency's Member of Parliament (MP). It was this changed voting behaviour by the electorate which angered ZANU PF and triggered the violence that rocked Bikita in 2001 and 2008. Masvingo province and Bikita in particular had been ZANU PF's stronghold for the past twenty years. It came as a shock to ZANU PF that MDC had made inroads and had managed to snatch the Bikita West constituency. The main group blamed for this MDC infiltration in Bikita were the teachers.<sup>545</sup> A point to emphasise here is that the violence triggered and experienced at the turn of the new millennium had its roots in the failed 1980 policy of reconciliation

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<sup>545</sup>The common belief in Bikita was that teachers were the class that brought MDC to the district. They were the ones who travelled to town every month end, bought newspapers and could easily influence people to support the new party. In Bikita teacher interview explained that indeed they had wanted change because they had been hit hard by the economic collapse at the turn of the crime. They did not see a change in political affiliation as a crime.

which had neglected the need for economic justice. The FTLRP was the ordinary people's reaction to a denied justice. Frustrated, people decided to abandon ZANU PF. In the subsequent elections, violence was used as a tool to intimidate and "re-educate the people."

### 5.2.2 Multi-Partism: A Source of Political Violence.

The other factor behind the recurrence of violence in Bikita and Zimbabwe in general at the turn of the century was multi-partism. As already indicated, Zimbabwe entered the new millennium with a weakened economy. A weakened economy lessens opportunities which in turn give way to multi-partism. According to Lloyd Sachikonye, in 2000 Zimbabwe had an estimated 25 political parties all promising Zimbabweans better economic solutions and delivery from poverty should they be elected into office.<sup>546</sup> Commenting on multi-partism in Africa, Chabal is of the opinion that the move to competitive party system has frequently contributed to disturbances and civil strife.<sup>547</sup> For Zimbabwe, the coming of many political parties, the MDC in particular, has contributed to the violent clashes witnessed in the country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The rise of MDC was viewed as a challenge by ZANU PF forcing it to respond aggressively. Fear of losing power to the opposition induced ZANU PF to commit acts of violence and aggression against the opposition. The quest for power by the opposition also heightened the episodes of violence witnessed during the period under review.

Once someone gains power then they have access to and control of economic resources. As people competed to capture power, the stage was set for a brutal struggle between forces pressing for the opening of an all-inclusive and democratic system and those resisting reform by clinging on to their power and authority. Consequently, ZANU PF unleashed violence on the opposition to displace and intimidate the opposition's supporters. Once the electorate was intimidated, competition was removed, ensuring the victory of ZANU PF. The quest to capture power too saw the MDC abandoning their commitment to the democratic struggle by resorting to violence in the ensuing competition, making it difficult for the country to break the cycle of violence. Thus, the Zimbabwean scenario

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<sup>546</sup> Lloyd Sachikonye, *When a State turns on its Citizens*, p.79

<sup>547</sup>Patrick Chabal, "Violence, Power and Reality: A Political Analysis of Conflict in Contemporary Africa;" in Patrick Chabal, Ulf Engels and Anna Maria Gentili ,eds., *Is Violence Inevitable in Africa: Theories of Conflict and Approaches to Conflict Prevention*, Linden: Bull Acade, 2005,pp.98-103

confirms Chabal's observation that, where economic circumstances are worsening, there has developed a new type of politics of violence based on a twisted form of identity politics.<sup>548</sup>

### 5.2.3 Political Leaders as Instigators of Political Violence

The violence witnessed in Bikita and elsewhere in Zimbabwe during the 2001 and 2008 elections was fuelled by political leaders who incited and encouraged their supporters to carry out acts of violence against opponents. All these tactics were aimed at intimidating the opposition and displacing them or preventing them from supporting opposition parties. The Bikita case study showed that both MDC and ZANU PF leaders fanned political violence during the campaigning period, again showing how the Zimbabwean leadership celebrated violence. President Mugabe urged his supporters to hit back at the opposition, "Let those in the MDC and their friends listen to this message. We can unleash greater violence than them"<sup>549</sup> At another occasion President Mugabe is said to have declared that:

Hatingaregi nyika yakauya neropa ichitorwa nepenzura, tinoda kuona kuti chakasimba chii gidi kana penzura."(We cannot let go a country that we won through the barrel of a gun go by a simple vote. We will see which is stronger- the gun or the vote.<sup>550</sup>

Similarly, Minister Mumbengegwi had this to say:

ZANU PF would find out from the register how people would have voted. We will not be fooled. We will be able to find out who our enemies are and we will ruthlessly deal with them. We want to cleanse this area of all anti-ZANU PF elements.<sup>551</sup>

Phillip Chiyangwa told the youth in Chinhoyi that "if you get hold of MDC supporters beat them until they are dead. Burn their homes, then run away fast...Report to the police because they are ours"<sup>552</sup> Tsvangirai on his part warned Mugabe that "if you (Mugabe) do not want to go peacefully, we will remove you violently". In another incident, MDC faction leader, Arthur Mutambara promised that he was going to remove Mugabe with "every tool at my disposal. We are not going to rule out anything, the sky is the limit"<sup>553</sup>.

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<sup>548</sup> Patrick Chabal, "Violence, Power and Reality: A Political Analysis of Conflict in Contemporary Africa;" in Patrick Chabal, Ulf Engels and Anna Maria Gentili ,eds., *Is Violence Inevitable in Africa: Theories of Conflict and Approaches to Conflict Prevention*, Linden: Bull Acade, 2005,pp.98-103

<sup>549</sup> The Chronicle, 1 April 2000.

<sup>550</sup> ZHR Report, "Is a Ball Point Mightier than the Gun?," 2008, p. 8

<sup>551</sup> Martin Meredith, *Mugabe, Power and Plunder in Zimbabwe*, p. 215

<sup>552</sup> The Standard 9 September 2001.

Such statements by political and national leaders have contributed to make people at the grassroots or local level use violence, threats and intimidation because violence was condoned at the national level. Eldred Masunungure asserts that the reasons for attacking the opposition was largely meant to uproot and disenfranchise them. This would increase the support base of ZANU PF through displacement of opponents, thereby reducing the number of supporters and possible voters for the opposition.<sup>554</sup> In Bikita, supporters and local leaders of the rival party were displaced into towns where they remained until elections were over. To that extent they were denied the right to vote in their locality where they were registered voters. MDC polling agents were arrested and in some cases killed. As testimony to this, Clemency Makumba, a polling agent in Bikita West was murdered during the 2001 election by alleged ZANU PF youths. Peter Chihombori and several MDC polling officers in Bikita were arrested and detained at Bikita or Zaka police station.<sup>555</sup> Violence against MDC agents was intended to make sure that there would be a number of polling stations without MDC agents during the run-off elections.

#### *5.2.4 Individual Factors as Sources of political violence in the 2001 and 2008 elections.*

Personal and individual centred reactions were also behind the violence witnessed in Bikita during election time. Induced poverty due to unemployment and economic hardships created tensions in local communities. Feelings of jealousy and resentment were directed towards those who appeared to be doing well in the community. In this case teachers, and those with children working in towns or working for NGOs, or in the diaspora became the targets of the youth and some rural poor. Their crime was that their children could afford to send money back home which when changed at the black market fetched handsome amounts. Others in countries like South Africa, Botswana and Zambia could afford to send food to their relatives, when the majority of the people had no food because of the food shortages experienced in the country. Others had unfinished business with neighbours and relatives from the 1970s war. In Chapter four I explained how the 1980 policy of reconciliation was against the policy of demanding what had been stolen or taken during the war. A sizeable number knew the people or families who had harmed, injured and soiled their family names by falsely labelling their fathers and grandfathers as sell outs. The elections offered them a golden opportunity to settle old scores with enemies. Therefore had the ZANU PF

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<sup>554</sup> Eldred Masunungure and Beatrice Schlee eds., *Zimbabwe A Case of Resilient Authoritarianism: Citizens' Attitudes, Leaders' Opinions and Conjectures on Democratic transition*, Liban: International Centre for Human Science, 2007, p.17

<sup>555</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights Ngo Forum, "2008 Report on Bikita Constituency", p. 5

government dealt with these issues in the years following independence, the recurring violence witnessed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century would not have occurred with the intensity which it did. Taking advantage of the fact that party leadership actually encouraged locals to carry out acts of violence on “enemies of the party”, locals were able to carry out acts of violence on their personal enemies over issues outside party business. Under the guise of dealing with party enemies, many resorted to beating, torturing, abducting, killing and even destroying property of fellow villagers or relatives. Others even looted goods and even cattle from members of the community.

Thus, in Bikita most of the respondents indicated that individuals who engaged in such acts of atrocities wanted to settle old scores or settle family feuds. Just like in the 1970s liberation struggle, many of these scores to be settled had little connection with the politics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In Bikita, electoral violence was triggered by acts of jealousy especially of family members in town or with better status. Like in the 1970s liberation era, teachers, headmasters, nurses and business people and their relatives were found among the list of MDC supporters.

According to Mrs Maidei Muzondiwa, a teacher at Chinorumba School, students or former students at a school were also behind the violence meted against teachers in 2008.

Since some of the truant students had scores to settle with their teachers, issues outside politics were at the centre. Many a time they identified their teachers or former teachers as MDC supporters to the ZANU PF youth. Others were those who did not like school and would just decide to fix their teachers for no reason. Teachers also reported each other to the war-veterans or the youth.<sup>556</sup>

From the field work, it emerged that at schools teachers “reported” or sold each other to youths of either parties. In addition, if a headmaster was unpopular with his teachers or with the parents in the surrounding community, then that was enough to report him as an MDC supporter. Former Grey Scouts and DSAs (*madzakutsaku* or *mapuruvheyas*) failed to shake off the negative identity of the 1970s war. In many cases they were the first ones to be identified as supporters of the opposition.

Electoral violence also pitted brother against brother or cousin against cousin along political grounds or affiliation, further dividing families and the community. Cousins

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<sup>556</sup> Interview with Mrs Maidei Muzondiwa, Nyika, 15 August 2013

supporting different political parties clashed and sometimes masterminded the beating or torture of a cousin simply because of different political ideologies. Parents quarrelled with their children, both the youth and those from towns, over party affiliation. In many instances it would be said so and so's sons brought MDC in the area from town or are supporters of MDC. One's political affiliation also entailed danger for his family. The entire family could be punished for having a son who was an activist or supporter in the opposition. Conflicts between parents and their children over party affiliation disturbed the normal flow one expected to find in the home.

The above discussion was aimed at showing that the violence that resurfaced in Bikita at the turn of the century was not a result of failed indigenous approaches but of important issues that had been ignored at a national level. Factors such as lessened economic opportunities, the emergence of multi-partism and the instigation of violence by political leaders were new developments which the post-liberation local attempts at healing and reconciliation had not addressed. In the next section I look at the violence unleashed during the 2001 and 2008 elections for three reasons. Firstly, this serves as a backdrop to the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU). Secondly, substantiates the argument that after these elections the Zimbabwean government needed to re-think approaches to healing and reconciliation if sustainable peace building was to be achieved. Lastly, a discussion of the violence experienced and witnessed by the people of Bikita in the 2001 and 2008 elections is aimed at making the reader see the different types of victims that emerged from the violence of the two electoral exercises. It is hoped that the readers will appreciate and see the reason why the Bikita community has to resorted once again to the use of indigenous approaches of healing and reconciliation.

### **5.3 Politically Motivated Violence during the 2001 Parliamentary and the June 2008 Presidential Elections**

For Bikita, the 2001 Parliamentary and June 2008 Presidential elections witnessed unprecedented levels of violence being unleashed on civilians by youths, militia groups, war veterans and the police. The Following oral testimonies aptly captured the violence witnessed in the district during the 2001 elections.



## ***Oral Testimony 1***

Most voters in Bikita saw the 2000 elections as a way of ending the economic hardships prevailing under the ZANU PF leadership. Consequently people voted for MDC and Amos Mutongi became the MP for Bikita West, a move which angered ZANU PF. Unfortunately for us Amos Mutongi died in October 2000, and ZANU PF was determined to reclaim the constituency. Failure to reclaim the constituency would encourage other constituencies to vote for MDC, a situation not tolerated in ZANU PF circles. ZANU PF party officials and MPs like Shuvai Mahofa, Border Gezi, Josiah Hungwe, Samuel Mumbengegwi, the late Chenjerai Hunzvi, war veterans like Joseph Chinotimba and “Black Jesus” visited the constituency in droves making their presence visible. During that period Bikita-West was referred to as “Harare” because all the political heavy weights from Harare belonging to both ZANU PF and MDC had descended and were now residing in the district. The late Minister of Youth, Border Gezi deployed bus and truck loads of ZANU PF Youths and war-veterans in the constituency to assist with the campaigns. The large numbers of party supporters that both parties deployed in Bikita heightened the scale and ferocity of violence as war veterans and the youths conducted door-to door campaigns forcing people to attend pungwes at bases. Violent clashes between the youth ensued resulting in the death of many people, physical injuries and damage to property. For example, Benard Gara was stabbed to death by MDC supporters at a ZANU PF rally at Baradzanwa business center. There was also the incident at Nyika where Forty –four MDC supporters were arrested. The police then raided an MDC hideout in Bikita and detained ninety-seven party youths. Short stabbing spears, South African made butcher knives, axes and knobkerries were confiscated.’

### **Case 2**

Many things happened here during the 2001 elections. I want you to know that both ZANU PF and MDC youth committed a lot of crimes against us civilians. If you were suspected to be MDC, ZANU PF youths would beat you up. Again if you were suspected or known to be ZANU PF the MDC would beat you up. We would be marched from our homes to attend pungwes. Aaa we lived in fear, fear of having your home burnt down, of being beaten or even killed. We were at the middle, we did not know who to support because either way you were a sell-out.<sup>557</sup>

### **Case 3**

For me what MDC and ZANU PF were doing was a struggle for mastery. In these contestations for power the ordinary people suffer. Both parties unleashed violence on us and many innocent people got injured, lost their property and some were killed. I can still remember ZANU PF youths Richard Gara, Antony Somerai and Edward Magara who were killed by MDC youth during the 2001 elections. Again MDC activists Richard Maphosa and Richard Chatunga were marched from their respective homesteads and were assaulted by sticks in full view of about 140 ZANU PF youths. Maphosa collapsed and died at the scene of the assault. Chatunga died later on his way to the hospital. ZANU PF supporters William Nhongo and Shadreck Musoro were arrested and charged with the two murders.<sup>558</sup>

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<sup>557</sup> Interview with Ngonidzaishe Muchadehama, Bikita, 17 August 2013.

<sup>558</sup> Interview with Nhamoo Chatunga, Nyika, 17 August 2013. Also see appendices.

#### Case 4

We were abducted at night by MDC youth and taken to a base at Marima's homestead. There we were beaten with rifle butts, and had our testicles compressed or burnt with cigarettes. We were also made to grind whistles with our teeth. My trousers were pulled down and an itchy substance known as *uriri* was poured over my private parts. I was made to lie on my stomach following which generous amounts of *uriri* were poured between the buttocks and in my anus which they opened using a stick. I passed out and when I regained consciousness, I was warned against forcing people to support ZANU PF. At the base were also Borniface Chikumbirike and John who had been abducted and assaulted. Borniface sustained back injuries. John was assaulted and lost three teeth in the process. Charles Chenyika was beaten and broke his nose. After the warning we were released and we went to Silveira mission for treatment. Today I still suffer from trauma, pain, and headaches.<sup>559</sup>

Whilst the above testimonies clearly capture some of the forms of violence inflicted on the civilians, a number of informants made reference to cases of torture at the bases by both ZANU PF and MDC youth militias. Other forms of torture leaving marks on the body such as cuts, burns with hot melting plastics, cigarettes butts, iron rods and extraction or breaking of teeth were commonly used by the youth at the bases. Cases of destruction of property and thefts of victims' property were also reported.<sup>560</sup> Beatings of civilians by both parties were common. Victims also testified that they were forced to attend *pungwes* at bases and witnessed acts of violence against alleged sell-outs. ZANU PF and MDC youth destroyed property and burnt houses of suspected MDC or ZANU PF supporters, activists, and relatives. Abductions by both MDC and ZANU PF youth was again another form of violence indicated by the informants during the 2001 elections.

In the same elections, it also emerged that the police became increasingly involved in the violence that engulfed the district. Those arrested testified that they were subjected to torture at the hands of the police.<sup>561</sup> In some cases torture was accompanied by other forms of abuse such as unlawful arrests where no proper charges were made. Others were detained illegally, that is a situation whereby detention exceeded the statutory limit. The following life histories capture the violence and torture experienced by victims at the hands of police in Bikita.

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See ZHR NGO Forum, Teaching Them A Lesson: A Report on the Attack on Zimbabwean Teachers, September 2002, p. 5

<sup>559</sup> Interview with Sherpherd Zvoma, Bikita, 18 August 2013.

<sup>560</sup> Focus group discussion held on the 8 July 2013, Maregere school.

<sup>561</sup> Interviews with MR, PZ and GH, MDC supporters, Matsai 1 August 2013.

### **Oral testimony 1**

I am a youth member of MDC and went for campaign meetings in Maregere village, Bikita, on 22 December 2001. On 25 December we camped at Maregere Business centre and mobilized people for a rally without any hassles. I think kraal heads complained to ZANU PF that they were forced to attend MDC meetings. Hunzvi and his group pitched up and ordered every MDC supporter to leave but we did not. Chaos ensued. Armed police arrived and they ordered us into police trucks. There were 36 of us and the police started assaulting us for causing violence in Bikita. They called us names, thugs hired by Tsvangirai from Harare to come and cause chaos in rural areas. Button sticks were used to assault us. At the station we were also accused of murdering Gara, a ZANU PF activist. I was assaulted under the feet with gun butts. Shumba was the ring leader. We were illegally detained, only to be released on 9 January. We were not given any food for four days.<sup>562</sup>

### **Oral Testimony2**

This incident occurred in Madhege, chief Ziki`s village in Bikita on 04 January 2001. I was arrested at the shopping centre. The police told us that we were among the suspects who had instigated acts of violence at Nyika growth point against MDC supporters. My three friends Leornad, Zvidzai, Taurai and I were suspected of attacking and throwing petrol bombs at MDC vehicles and killing one Ropafadzo Manyame in the process. It was said that Ropafadzo had died from the injuries she sustained from the petrol bombs. We were taken to Bikita office and there, Shumba, a police officer, assaulted us with open hands and baton sticks. He also kicked me with booted feet. Leonard Chimhuka put my shoes into my mouth then my jacket was tied around my mouth. They threatened to dump me in Siya dam which is infested with crocodiles if I did not confess. I was refused food for four days. There is a court record for all these charges with the late Magistrate Zisengwe at Bikita court.<sup>563</sup>

### **Oral Testimony 3**

I was taken by the Support Unit to Bikita Police Station and later to Zaka Police Station where I was badly beaten. One officer held me down with his booted foot over my throat while another beat me on the soles of my feet. Meanwhile a dirty cloth, *chikorobho*, which they had used for mopping up was stuffed into my mouth. They pulled my private parts, asking me who had killed Richard Gara, a ZANU Pf youth, ,who was training us? When I said I did not know, Shumba , Chimhuka, Moyo and Gavakava took turns to beat me under my feet. They also used fists to hit me across my ribs and diaphragm. They took my diary and never returned it to me. On Monday 8 January we were taken to Bikita Magistrate court on charges of malicious injury to property, inciting violence and chaos. From court we were taken to Masvingo on remand. On 17 January we went back to court and were remanded on \$100.00 bail to 14 February.<sup>564</sup>

Victims of politically motivated violence also confirmed that police officers perpetrated violence and abuse on civilians. The three most common forms of violence

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<sup>562</sup> Interview with Mr Munatsi Tambarare, Matsai, 1 August 2013.

<sup>563</sup> Interview with PZ ZANU PF supporter, Mastai, 1 August 2013.

<sup>564</sup> Interview with GH, MDC supporter, Matsai, 1 August 2013

perpetrated by police officers, CID and CIO in Bikita against civilians during the 2001 elections were unlawful arrests mainly of youth or any suspect believed to instigate violence, be it ZANU PF or MDC supporters. Once arrested, torture in the form of beatings under the feet (falanga), followed. Almost all victims arrested experienced one or several forms of torture at the hands of the police, CID and CIO. Lastly, the police illegally detained victims.

Some of the ZANU PF youth perpetrators named in the 2001 elections included Timothy Zhanje, Bonnie Nerumedzo, Patrick Nyakunhuwa, Black Jesus, Raymond Moto, Shadreck Musoro, Tanyaradzwa Svondo, Amoni Gorosi, Eddie Gakanje and William Nhongo. From the MDC camp Taruona Mhere, Julius Chimanya, Tawanda Chindanya, Tawanda Marima, Nyasha Pakai, Job Sakhala, Aron Sikhala and Panashe Sikhala were also implicated among the 2001 perpetrators. Politicians like the late Gezi and Hunzvi were said to have incited the militia and youth to carry out acts of violence whilst Job Sikhala was said to have masterminded the violence from the MDC camp. Some of the perpetrators were unknown to victims such as Gassie, Tornado, Jorum, Courage, Garikai and Zivanai. These must have been bussed in by both parties from towns to come and unleash violence on behalf of the parties. Members of the CIO and ZRP were also implicated as perpetrators and these include Mandizvo, Mutikizizi and Murefu from Zaka police station. From Bikita police station, Cosmore Shumba, Leonard Chimhuka, Gavakava, Chipotereke, and Roy Moyo were implicated.<sup>565</sup> In the 2001 elections, a sizeable number of alleged perpetrators of violence testify to have been tortured at Bikita or Zaka Police station.

### *5.3.1 Violence in the 2008 Presidential Elections*

#### *5.3.2 Background to the June 2008 Presidential Run-off Elections*

In March 2008, for the first time, Zimbabwe held elections to choose leaders from local, legislative to the country's presidency. These elections were dubbed "The Harmonized Elections". Both parties (MDC and ZANU PF) failed to garner enough votes to capture the presidency resulting in a run-off as provided by the Electoral Act<sup>566</sup>. Thus the March 2008 election saw ZANU PF, a party that had dominated Zimbabwean politics since independence, losing out to a new party, MDC. With the announcement of the run-off date in June 2008, the atmosphere within the country changed as both parties geared up for the election campaign.

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<sup>565</sup> Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO, "Torture by State Agents, CIO and Army in Zimbabwe: January 2001 to August 2002," March 2003.

<sup>566</sup> Amani Trust, "Organised Violence, Torture in the 2008 Elections held in Zimbabwe," 2008, p. 12

In the run-up to the June 2008 elections, Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) units were deployed to Bikita district to campaign for ZANU PF.

In Bikita West, ward 32, the losing ZANU PF council candidate and businessman, Mr Mvuto, set up a base at his home from where he masterminded the assaults, threats and abductions of MDC supporters in his area.<sup>567</sup> Also in the fray of harassing people were ZANU PF's Elias Musakwa and Retired Colonel Makova. Makova was the former Bikita West MP who had been defeated by Musakwa in the Zanu PF 2008 primaries. However, Musakwa lost the Bikita West seat in the March Harmonized Elections to Heya Shoko of MDC in the March election. Mvuto, Makova and Musakwa unleashed a reign of terror against the people of Bikita for having voted for MDC in March. A 6pm curfew was imposed by which people were expected to be in their homes. Bikita populace was forced to attend rallies, some in the excess of 15km away. A register for every homestead was marked.<sup>568</sup> The violence that transpired in this election is captured in the following testimonies.

### **Case 1**

Many homesteads of people with children in town or in the diaspora were burnt down. It was said that MDC had flown these people abroad to train as soldiers so that they can come and topple ZANU PF. So, their parents' homesteads were burnt down. Business premises of known suspected MDC supporters were also burnt down. In Bikita East the home and lodges of MDC candidate Edmore Marima were burnt down by ZANU PF supporters. The entire homesteads of headman Muranganwa, Mr Zhandazha and Mrs Mabori, suspected MDC activists, were burnt to the ground. ( Please see Appendices 1) In addition there were numerous cases of house raids at night with youths and war veterans demolishing houses, breaking windows and asbestos roofing. Raids included victimization of whole families, including children, looting of food in the homes. Foodstuffs like mealie- meal and veterans looted these in people's houses.

### **Case 2**

Violence in Bikita was tense. Both MDC and ZANU PF youths perpetrated violence against civilians in four major ways, namely arson, intimidation, beatings and killings. People were threatened with death. The youths and soldiers asked us to surrender MDC and Simba Makoni cards and tee-shirts. Some surrendered. Those beaten up at the bases were fined food, goats, meali-meal to be consumed by the youth at the base. Some of the beatings resulted in deaths. For example Simbarashe Taru, a teacher died after these beatings. Houses and property were burnt to ashes. At Jerera MDC offices were burnt down. Matsilele and Nangwa, both MDC activists, were burnt to death with a petrol bomb. Both MDC and ZANU PF were burning each other's homes. This time both parties were really determined to outdo each other.<sup>569</sup>

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<sup>567</sup> Interview with G , Bikita, 17 August 2014

<sup>568</sup> Ibid.

<sup>569</sup> Interview with BS, headmen Bikita, 9 August 2013.

### Case 3

In Bikita, the election became heavily militarized as ZANU PF deployed both retired and active military personnel to campaign on its behalf. The youth from both parties, clad in jeans and tee-shirts and berets or caps also roamed the district menacingly. Even the MDC also burnt people's houses, beating, abducting ZANU PF activists. For the ZANU PF youth, the slogan "27 June ini nemhuri yangu tinovhotera va Mugabe chete!!" Became the national anthem. (On 27 June my family and I will vote for Mugabe only became the catch phrase at the bases.) Another slogan "Kumuda kana kusamuda ndiyeye, kumuvhotera kana kusamuvhotera ndiyeye, kurohwa kana kusarohwa ndiyeye!!" (Whether you like him (Mugabe) or not, he is the one, whether you vote him or not he is the one, whether you are beaten up by his supporters or not he is the one) were commonly echoed at the bases where we were forced to attend pungwes. Both parties are deadly when it comes to violence. Their youth do not care that they cause pain as long as they win the elections. It was like we were at war once again.<sup>570</sup>

### Case 4

Liberation songs like Maruza imi (Enemies you have Lost the war), Mukoma Joe Paita Mutengesi (Brother Joe, There is a Sell-out!) among others which were sung at the bases reminded us of the war in which we fought the whites. War veterans and the youth unleashed violence and terror on opposition members. I think the involvement of youth, war veterans, the army and politicians marked the escalation of violence as many people were beaten up or harassed. People were severely beaten. People are misled into thinking that only ZANU PF youths cut people's limbs, even MDC was in the same business of cutting off the hands of ZANU PF youths or supporters. Torture was common at the bases with the youth asking their victims whether they preferred a short or a long sleeve. This meant, "Should we cut your arm from the elbow –short sleeve or from the wrist-long sleeve" In most cases, schools or mountains were used as bases. Many civilians lost cattle, goats and chickens to the youth. Teachers fled to towns leaving behind their property which was looted by the marauding youth.

#### 5.3.3 Perpetrators in the 2008 Elections

Victims of the 2008 electoral violence identified perpetrators as war veterans, ZANU PF and MDC youth, unknowns, CID, CIO and a new development was the involvement of the army. One ZANU PF supporter, who insisted on anonymity, explained that:

Indeed the army, police, youth and war veterans worked together. In 2008 ZANU PF's strategy was called "Team-work". Under this strategy, the leaders insisted that there should be total co-operation between police, army, war vets and ZANU PF members at ward level to achieve the desired goal in the re-run. As such there were three policemen in each ward, and a war veteran referred to as the chief warden. The chief warden had a police uniform, and a temporary force number. Lastly there was the chief's messenger, chosen from the presiding traditional chief's neighbourhood watch force. He patrols the

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<sup>570</sup> Group Discussions held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August at headman Zero's Homestead, Bikita.

community, keeps his ear to the ground for any “MDC trouble causers” and can arrest citizens. After arrest, offenders were taken to the chief if they were ZANU PF who then decided whether the case should be referred to the police or be dealt with himself under his traditional leadership powers. In most cases those to do with MDC supporters were referred to the police whilst those to do with ZANU PF youth or war veterans were “dealt with by the chief at ward level. This way no official dockets would be opened, thus assuring and protecting the activists of no imprisonment even if they went about beating people or destroying people’s homes.”<sup>571</sup>

From the above one can understand why most perpetrators even after they were identified by the victims were not arrested. This testimony also provides insights into police responses during this period. The MDC supporters and activists were also implicated in the deaths, abductions and the burning of property belonging to ZANU PF supporters. Informants also explained that the MDC imported youth from Harare, Gweru and Bulawayo to wreak havoc in the district or to avenge acts of violence inflicted on MDC supporters earlier on by ZANU PF supporters. In Bikita, 56 houses were allegedly burnt down by MDC supporters. MDC was also implicated in the deaths of Richard Gara, Irvin Chiromo and Job Munengami.<sup>572</sup> By way of revenge, ZANU PF youths also stoned and looted stores belonging to MDC businessmen, examples being the complete destruction of Marima’s lodge and homestead. This retaliatory violence had the gross effect of feeding into cycles of violence as party supporters of either MDC or ZANU PF in turn used violence by the opposition as an excuse to escalate its own attacks against unarmed, and defenceless rural civilians.

Locals also took advantage of heightened tensions during elections to square up, as it were, with foes. Thus, community members and even family members were implicated in some of the violent acts witnessed and experienced in the district. Most of those interviewed testified that they knew people who burnt down their homesteads or assaulted them. Some of their assailants were neighbours, relatives or community members. As such elections and the accompanying violence shredded the community fabric as neighbour turned against neighbour. Interviews also indicated that some of the perpetrators were unknown to the victims. As already pointed out, both parties were in the habit of bussing in youth from other

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<sup>571</sup> Interview with PM Bikita, 11 June 2013.

<sup>572</sup> Interview with headman Maregere, Bikita 16 August 2014.

towns to go and work together with local youth and veterans in harassing or beating-up people. Many victims strongly believe that these ‘unknowns’ were in the habit of stealing and looting people’s goods and food items, vandalising shops and in some cases raping women.

#### *5.3.4 Victims In the 2008 Elections*

Political leadership figures, opinion makers, activists and supporters of ZANU PF or MDC were mainly targeted by youths. Unfortunately, family members, parents, children and relatives of position holders, aspiring candidates and youths of both parties were drawn into the web of political violence that rocked the district. Houses of candidates, councillors, and agents were burnt down as a way of intimidating and displacing them or as retaliatory violence. Teachers were also victims of electoral violence. About twenty-eight teachers testified to having experienced violence during the 2008 elections. School teachers were accused of bringing MDC to the rural areas and campaigning for the party in the March election. Many testified that they received severe beatings, assaults, torture and property loss at the hands of both the youth, war veterans and police. Intimidation and deaths threats also forced many to leave schools where they had been teaching. In some cases they were given ultimatums to vacate the schools or face death. These testimonies by teachers are also confirmed by a report from the Progressive Teachers’ Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ). The report details how teachers were targeted, assaulted, and lost property and fled to other parts of the country after receiving death threats. According to Peter, a school teacher and ZANU PF youth leader recalls:

As the campaign season wore on, lawlessness continued, the violence was also targeted at us school teachers. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2001, forty MDC youth came to our school at night, broke into our houses and force marched us. Other teachers who supported MDC had reported us to MDC youth as supporters of ZANU PF who were forcing people to vote for ZANU PF. The three of us, myself, Moyo and Chingweru are known ZANU PF supporters. They assaulted the three of us with heavy logs. We were accused of forcing people to vote for ZANU PF and the youth said they wanted to teach us a lesson. They assaulted us using clenched fists, sticks and electric cables. We had to leave Bikita, fleeing from death.<sup>573</sup>

According to R M:

At 4 pm, about 35 ZANU PF youths led by one Black Jesus, a war veteran, approached my homestead armed with chains, sticks and chanting slogans. I had returned home from an opening school meeting. They accused me of supporting the opposition MDC and possessing party regalia and cards. They tied me down, forcibly entered my house

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<sup>573</sup> Interview with Peter, ZANU PF victim of Political violence, 16 August 2014.



and searched for these items. Unfortunately they found them and brought the things outside. I was forced to lie down, all this happened in the eyes of my children and wife and my sister who had visited us. They started assaulting me, then my wife. Our home was petrol bombed and we were told to leave the school I was teaching at. I constantly suffer from chronic back aches and chest pains. A report was made at Bikita Station, with names of alleged perpetrators given on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2001 but no arrests were made.<sup>574</sup>

Informants testified that teachers at Gumunyu, Kushingira, Gwindingwi and Masarira were assaulted by youth and war veterans. The headmaster of Chitsanga Primary school was also assaulted by youth for chanting MDC slogans in class. The school was closed after the teachers had fled.

Children were also victims of electoral violence witnessed in the district. The emotional and physical welfare of children was severely compromised as a result of the violence that surrounded them. The shock and damage to a child's sense of the world that occurs when the child's homestead is burnt down or when its parent is publicly assaulted and or beaten in its presence cannot be adequately conveyed. Furthermore, the consequence of this violence is bound to live on as the child grows. In addition, most women were either direct or indirect victims of this violence. When their homesteads were gutted down by fire, they too were rendered poor by the political violence. Others had to endure the trauma of nursing husbands with broken and fractured limbs. Mothers and wives underwent the agony of burying beloved sons and husbands whose lives had been claimed by the violence. In some cases they too were caught in the cross-fire and assaulted together with their husbands or sons such that even today many still bear the marks of the 2008 violence. Others were raped and up until today fail to gather the strength to talk about their ordeal as they find it humiliating and degrading.

The 2008 election saw ZANU PF winning the elections with an 85% against Tsvangirai's 9.3%. SADC and AU argued that because of the gross acts of violence that had accompanied the elections there was need for a Global Political Agreement between ZANU PF and the two MDC formations to heal and reconcile the nation. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of September the GPA between ZANU PF and the two MDC formations was signed.

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<sup>574</sup> Interview with RM, 9 June 2013 Bikita East constituency.

#### **5.4 Government's Response to the 2001 and 2008 Elections.**

Despite filing reports and requesting post mortem reports from government dockets which indicated that people had died due to fractured skull or head injuries caused by heavy objects and gun shots. Most of the victims of politically motivated violence feel that the government, judiciary and police did not take appropriate action. In the hundreds of cases of abductions, rape, torture and murder in the pre and immediate post-election period, most of the victims strongly believe that the police failed to deliver justice. According to one MDC councillor, more than 20 MDC members had filed papers at Masvingo Magistrate Courts demanding compensation from known ZANU PF youth who stole their livestock during the run-up to the June 2008 election. The MDC supporters from Nyahunda purchase area, ward 29 in Bikita, said they took the matter to the courts in a bid to recover their livestock and some of the culprits had already been summoned to court.<sup>575</sup> The gang reportedly slaughtered livestock at nearby bases where they were torturing MDC activists. In papers filed at the courts, the MDC members said marauding ZANU PF militia youth went on a rampage, grabbing livestock including cattle, goats and sheep. Although they filed a report, the case remained unattended<sup>576</sup>. As violators gained confidence to continue perpetrating acts of violence, the general citizenry lost confidence in the law.

Commenting on beatings, illegal arrests and detentions by the police against the civilians, President Mugabe is quoted by the Zimbabwe Human Rights Ngo Forum to have said:

These things happen. It happens in war. If you challenge the police don't think they are going to be merciful with you. His (Tsvangirai) supporters had insulted and beaten a group of police. So the police had that grudge also. They too are human beings. Let us bear that in mind. If you dare challenge the police they will get more Tsvangirais beaten up.<sup>577</sup>

Concerning police brutality Minister Didymus Mutasa had this to say:

If any one provokes them (police) they should not complain when they are beaten. Indeed this is how we will respond to provocation...In Latin there is a saying which means that no one provokes me and goes unpunished. So, if they were beaten, then so be it. Police are not mad. I believe they are doing a very good job in that regard.<sup>578</sup>

These official narratives served to accentuate violence.

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<sup>575</sup> Interview with Bonnie, Gura, then MDC councillor, Nyahunda, 16 August 2013.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid

<sup>577</sup> ZHRO 2008 Report: 'Their Words Condemn them: The language of violence, intolerance and despotism in Zimbabwe, p.g .

<sup>578</sup> Ibid.

In October 2000 the President issued Clemency order No.1 of 2000, which granted general amnesty for all political crimes, including torture and kidnappings committed by ZANU PF youths, militia, war veterans, police and other state security forces. Only cases of rape, murder and fraud were exempted.<sup>579</sup> In 2008, another Clemency Order No. 1 of 2008 was issued in June. The Clemency Order protected all those arrested between March 29 and June 16 2008. In addition, the Clemency Order granted indemnity to all prisoners convicted of culpable homicide and given a determinate sentence as of June 16, 2008.<sup>580</sup> In effect this Order protected all those who were convicted of acts such as torture and abductions, excluding murder, rape and fraud. In essence the Order also meant that most abuses committed by both ZANU PF and MDC supporters, officials, police, soldiers and youth were pardoned. Human Rights Watch argues that these Orders were attempts by the government to make sure that none of its supporters would be held accountable under the law because there had been very few, if any, prosecutions for the serious crimes committed during this period.<sup>581</sup> Existing laws also entailed the continuation of violence. The Public Order and Security Act (POSA) allowed not only violence against the opposition but police arbitrary arrests of those perceived to be critical of the government.

The Bikita case study showed that the 1980 and 2000 amnesties had a negative impact on the political orientation of not only the Bikita populace but of Zimbabwe as a nation. No perpetrator of the 1970s war had been held accountable for acts of crimes that they committed against civilians or fellow comrades. War veterans, ministers, MPs, and former mujibhas exemplifying this. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the same perpetrators, again were in the forefront, committing yet more crimes. Many gloried in the knowledge and confidence that they had the full support of the government. They knew and had learnt from history that they were immune to prosecution. After all who would prosecute them when the government, its leadership and security and law enforcement agencies were also instigators or even participants in some of the violations or crimes? Civilians too had seen that wrong doers get away with murder under the ZANU PF government, while thieves and torturers are pardoned

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<sup>579</sup>Amnesty International, "The Toll of Impunity," accessed at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR46/034/2002>.

See also S heri Eppel, "Gukurahundi: The Need for Truth and Reparation," in Brian Raftopolous and Tony Savage, eds., *Zimbabwe: Justice and Political Reconciliation*, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004, pp. 45-6

<sup>580</sup>General Notice 85A/ 2008: Clemency Order No. 1.

<sup>581</sup> Report by the Human Rights Watch, 'Zimbabwe Perpetual Fear: Impunity and Cycles of Violence in Zimbabwe,' 2011, p. 11.

as long as these crimes were committed under the banner of nationalism. The manner in which the government had handled perpetrators of violence after the 1970s war and the post-independence era sent a wrong signal to both perpetrators and civilians. This resulted in many of the locals violating their neighbours and fellow community members. Indeed, as already discussed in the chapter the Clemency orders of 2001 and 2008 protected the perpetrators of acts of violence committed during this time.

Lacking the political will to bring perpetrators to book, many of the 2008 offenders were not prosecuted. Victims were sacrificed on the altar of protecting national security and sovereignty. Such impunity instilled a sense of perpetual fear and vulnerability among victims, eroding their rights to personal security and political freedom. This was worse since in Bikita some perpetrators continued to live in the same areas in which they committed crimes against humanity. Respondents indicated that perpetrators are people well known to the victims and they live in the same community with those whom they have violated. Not surprisingly, some perpetrators even threatened their victims with further violence.

### **5.5 Effects of Political Violence on individuals and the community.**

Political violence had had varying effects at individual, family and community level. At personal level, most of the respondents indicated that they suffered loss of property due to acts of arson. Others lost husbands, children or sons due to this violence. Thus many were widowed and orphaned whilst many sustained permanent injuries such as broken or extracted teeth and broken limbs. Of the respondents some indicated that some local perpetrators of violence suffered from the ngozi factor-haunted by the spirits of those whom they had murdered. Again such happenings caused a lot of anxiety to relatives of both the victim and the perpetrator. Political violence saw others getting rich through the looting of resources. At the same time others were rendered poor as their property was destroyed and domestic animals killed. Psychologically many were traumatized especially in cases of torture and rape. At community level, political violence resulted in the polarisation of communities. This has the effect of tearing the community apart. Different political affiliations create unnecessary vendettas within and between families. Consequently, respect and mutual trust in each other has been lost. According to Chief Mazungunye:

It's sad how people were left divided due to different political views. People or neighbours who once relied on each other, helping each other with farm implements, no

longer greet each other because of elections and party affiliations. After elections people would not even attend each others' funerals because they are ZANU PF or MDC. Even some of the projects such as the building of a school block at Gwindingwi came to a hold because of this MDC, ZANU PF business. I do not know what can be done honestly. Political leaders should be engaged with so that we can let them know what their politics is doing to our people. It is tearing communities apart.<sup>582</sup>

Respondents cited that schools like Kushinga, Chitsiga, Dungu and Chinyamapere were closed in 2001. Teachers from Gwindingwi, Chinyamapere, Chitsiga, Gumunyu, Nyika and Nerumedzo were forced to flee leading to the closure of some of the schools. Children were now forced to walk long distances to the next school leaving some schools to be manned by unqualified community members. Again at community level people have lost faith in multi-party politics. In their opinion, political parties fuel tensions in communities and fan violence. Many showed their displeasure in having their children being used by politicians to commit crimes, which families and relatives will be left to pay for the damages after the elections. Others indicated their pain at having their children killed for some to be in power.

What pains us most is having our children being used by these politicians from Harare. We do not see or hear that their children are/ were arrested. No! Our children do all the dirty work for them. They give them beer and make them drunkards, why not give them jobs or pay school fees for them? Our children are made to beat our neighbours, relatives or family friends, people we need in our day to day activities. After elections are left behind here in the rural areas to face the gruesome actions of our children. Politicians are gone! This business of using other people's children has to stop.<sup>583</sup>

Community leaders complained that multi-parties and the political violence they fuelled have negatively affected community projects. People find it difficult to work together after the back stabbing and selling-out of each other that have transpired during elections. Others have resolved not to have anything to do with party issues, *zvinhu zvemusangano*. This apathy according to informants, is not good for community development as they hinder the sharing of ideas. In addition many live in fear of their neighbors, local leadership, and being labelled negatively. Out of fear many cannot speak out their minds in public, for fear of reprisals from youth, war veterans or their headmen or chiefs. This fear was summarized by Mr Wirison Gadzema who said:

I do not want to talk about politics or these issues which you are discussing. No. I do not even know whether you are a CIO, MDC or ZANU PF. I have seen these things leaving many in trouble. You cannot trust anyone with these issues. I am afraid of my

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<sup>582</sup> Interview with chief Mazungunye, Bikita, 13 January 2014.

<sup>583</sup> Interview with Mrs Rhoda Mwedzi, Bikita 13 January 2014.

neighbours, my relatives, during the 1970s war many died because people close to them reported them to the comrades or Smith's soldiers. I keep my thoughts to myself, keep quiet and look at fools sending themselves to the guillotine. It's better to be a coward and be alive than to be a dead hero. So from me, you will get nothing my child. You also need to be careful lest you disappear like many others before you.<sup>584</sup>

At national level, the political violence has made many to lose faith in the police and the judiciary system. Many showed bitterness of having suffered at the hands of the police that should have protected them. Others complained that the police failed to protect them from violence. Furthermore, the police was accused of failing to arrest perpetrators and criminals.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

The violence witnessed in Bikita in the 21<sup>st</sup> century was a result of factors emanating from failed policies of healing and reconciliation implemented in the years following independence. Policies like amnesties only heightened youth and police brutality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So locals committed acts of violence knowing fully well that they would not be held accountable. Failure to facilitate black-to black reconciliation after the war only served to widen the rift in the 21<sup>st</sup> century amidst limited economic opportunities. The government's failure to deliver economic justice at independence heightened competition for economic resources in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, triggering violence. All these acts of violence were acknowledged under the 2008 Government of National Unity. The three principal members of the GPA, Mugabe, Tsvangirai and Mutambara pledged to put an end to the polarization, divisions, conflicts and intolerance that had characterized Zimbabwean politics in the recent time. To achieve this, the GPA gave consideration to the setting up of an Organ for National Healing and Integration to advise on the necessary mechanisms that can be used to achieve healing and reconciliation. How issues of healing and reconciliation have been tackled in Bikita under the auspices of ONHRI is the subject theme of the next chapter.

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<sup>584</sup>Interview with Mr Wirisoni Gadzema, Bikita 13 January 2014.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **6.1 Bikita in the Context of The Global Political Agreement (GPA): A New Step In Zimbabwe's Reconciliation Agenda?**

*The power-sharing deal and the possibility of a new constitution are processes of finding reconciliation. A retributive agenda would be counterproductive to such a process. Reconciliation is the only solution for that country (Zimbabwe) to have assured stability, peace and progress. (Morgan Tsvangirai, 2010).*

### **6.2 Introduction**

This chapter highlights additional indigenous approaches to healing and reconciliation utilised by communities in Bikita under Zimbabwe's 2008 Global Political Agreement. I argue that although the government established the Organ for Healing and Reconciliation, rural communities that were largely affected by the 2008 violence in Bikita failed to go through processes of healing and reconciliation. The Organ failed to carry out any official investigations on cases of political violence nor was accountability, justice or compensation of losses achieved during its tenure. Furthermore, due to frustrations with the GPA's failure to implement and sustain efforts on healing and reconciliation, the ordinary people once again took the initiative to promote healing and reconciliation through the use of indigenous approaches. Through the chief's courts, *dare ramambo*, repayments for cattle or small stock stolen during the election crisis were returned, repayments for ngozi were conducted and harmony was restored between the conflicting parties, community and individual cleansing. Rituals of expurgation were also conducted to wash off bad luck or the spirit of death (*kugeza mweya werufu*). The chapter shows that although the legal route was taken for cases of murder and rape with perpetrators brought to book, family members who remained behind went ahead and paid reparations to the victims' relatives indicating the significance and relevance of indigenous conflict resolution approaches. The work done by the Bikita communities reveal that communities have more expertise and viable approaches able to address and heal victims and perpetrators.

### **6.3 The GPA and Its Stances Towards Healing and Reconciliation.**

President Mugabe won the June 2008 elections against Morgan Tsvangirai of MDC. However, the large scale violence and the manner in which the 2008 violence had been publicized through the media locally, regionally and internationally made it difficult for both the Southern African Development Countries (SADC) and the African Union (AU)

organizations to endorse President Mugabe as the legitimate President of the country. The reluctance of these two organizations fed directly into the creation of a Global Political Agreement (GPA) as the only way forward. Thus, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2008, Zimbabwe's Political Agreement was signed between ZANU PF and the two MDC factions. In the preamble to the agreement, the parties agreed to end polarization, divisions, conflict and intolerance that had characterized Zimbabwean politics and society.<sup>585</sup> Article VII of the Agreement expressed the determination by the three parties to:

7.c) give consideration to the setting up of a mechanism to properly advise on what measures might be necessary and practicable to achieve national cohesion and unity in respect of victims of pre and post-independence political conflicts.

7. d) Will strive to create an environment of tolerance and respect among Zimbabweans and that all citizens are treated with dignity and decency irrespective of age, gender, race, ethnicity, place of origin and political affiliation.<sup>586</sup>

#### **6.4 An Analysis of the GPA's attitude Towards Issues of Healing and Reconciliation.**

To begin with, the GPA itself was an imposition by SADC and the AU, and not President Mugabe's initiative. As such even the items crafted into the Agreement were not from the three principals' parties but suggestions put across by the facilitators of the GPA. This argument is substantiated by Shari Eppel who maintains that it was Thabo Mbeki the facilitator of Zimbabwe's GPA who insisted on the need for a clause on dealing with past political violence rather than the three principals themselves.<sup>587</sup> Thus the three principals reluctantly accepted to add the clause. Even the language used in the crafting of Article VII of the GPA which deals with issues of healing and cohesion highlights the hesitancy with

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<sup>585</sup> For a nuanced discussion about the formation of the GPS see Agreement Between ZANU PF and the two MDC Formations, on resolving the challenges facing Zimbabwe, Sept 15, 2008, <http://www.kubatana.net/docs/zpf-agreement-08.09.15.pdf>; Gerald Mazarire, "ZANU PF and the Government of National Unity," Brian Raftopoulos, ed., *The Hard Road to Reform: The Politics of Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2013, p.72; Brian Raftopoulos, "Introduction," in Brian Raftopoulos, ed., *The Hard Road to Reform: The Politics of Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2013, p.xi-xix; Eldred Masunungure, *Defying the Winds of Change: Zimbabwe's 2008 Elections*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2010.

<sup>586</sup> See Article VII of the Agreement Between ZANU PF and the two MDC Formations on Resolving the Challenges Facing Zimbabwe, September 15, 2008, <http://www.kubatana.net/doc/zpf-agreement-08-09-15.pdf>.

<sup>587</sup> Shari Eppel, "Repairing a Fractured Nation: Challenges and Opportunities in the Post GPA Zimbabwe," in Brian Raftopoulos, ed., *The Hard Road to Reform: The Politics of Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement*, Harare: Weaver Press, 2013, p.211.



which the three principals approached issues of healing and reconciliation.<sup>588</sup> As testimony to this part, 7.1 a and b states that the new government ‘will ensure,’ implying that the government was willing but it was not committed. Part d of 7:1 states that the government “will strive,” suggesting that whilst the new government will make every effort to create an environment of tolerance, the use of the word “strive” suggests that although they might want to create an environment of tolerance and respect, they might fail. 7:1 of the Article says the new government shall give consideration to the setting up of a mechanism.<sup>589</sup> As observed by Machakanja, shall implies a sense of obligation, whilst the use of consideration implies that the new government will think about the proposed mechanism but will not be committed to fulfilling the obligations.<sup>590</sup> Furthermore, this section lumps together conflicts of different historical phases which according to Machakanja makes the job of national healing overwhelming as the process could take decades.<sup>591</sup>

Thus, the GPA and Article VII, was a flawed document from the very onset because in was state-driven and not people driven. Consequently, it failed to attend to more complex issues of healing and reconciliation because it had been essentially negotiated by political elites who drafted issues of healing and reconciliation in complex and very obscure terms. All this was done to protect the political elites themselves and their allies who had victimized many civilians in the past years. Commenting on Article VII Shari Eppel argues that the article was a response to socio-political issues at the national level and the restoration of national political challenges within a view to restoring national cohesion and unity.<sup>592</sup> Hence, it is the needs of the nation not individuals that were of paramount importance to the members of the GNU. What this entails is that the three principals were not so committed to issues of healing and reconciliation, hence the hesitance in committing themselves to the task.

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<sup>588</sup> See part 7.1 a and b of the Agreement Between ZANU PF and the two MDC formation on Resolving the challenges facing Zimbabwe, September 15, 2008, <http://www.kubatana.net/doc/zpf-agreement-accessed-08/09/15.pdf>; Pamela Machakanja, Zimbabwe’s National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe, p.15.

<sup>589</sup>See Part 7.1 c and d of The Agreement Between ZANU PF and the twoMDC formations on resolving the Challenges Facing Zimbabwe, September 15 2005, [http://www.kubatana.net/doc/zpf-agreement-accessed-08/09/15 .pdf](http://www.kubatana.net/doc/zpf-agreement-accessed-08/09/15.pdf).

<sup>590</sup> Pamela Machakanja, “National Healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe,” p.14.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid; also see Percy sledge Chigora and Tobias Guzura, “The politics of the Government of National Unity (GNU) and Power Sharing in Zimbabwe: Challenges and Prospects for Democracy,” in African Journal of History and Culture (AJHC), vol.3 (2), 2011, pp20-26.

<sup>592</sup>Shari Eppel, “Repairing a Fractured Nation: Challenges and Opportunities,” p.213; Pamela Machakanja, National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe,” p.16; Oswell Hapanyengw-Chemhuru, “ Reconciliation, Conciliation, Integration and National Healing in Zimbabwe,”pp.95-97. These scholars agree that the GPA was a response by politicians to socio-political issues and not a solution to promoting issues of healing and reconciliation hence the hesitance by the concerned politicians in committing themselves to issues of peace building.

If anything all the parties were not so keen on the idea of accountability and justice, issues which could not be avoided under healing and reconciliation. ZANU PF feared an investigation into its grim history of violence. The MDC was also aware of its own violence and was not prepared to have its people exposed. While the existence of political violence by MDC from 2000 remains an issue that civics in Zimbabwe are hesitant to accept, it is a reality. In fact Civics need to accept the fact if another cycle of impunity under an MDC government is to be avoided.<sup>593</sup> The Bikita case study has shown the MDC as perpetrators of violence. In Bikita the MDC had a hit and run squad comprising of local youth and many others imported from towns known as DRCs –Democratic Resistance Committees, whose duties were to carry out acts of violence against ZANU PF supporters.<sup>594</sup> Unfortunately, within MDC and civic circles, violence against ZANU PF supporters was seen as victims hitting back not as perpetrators committing acts of violence. In addition, inter-party violence was also rampant between members of the MDC-T and MDC-N. Internal violence between MDC-T was the major contributory factor to the split in the party. Beatings and torture of MDC`s own activists have taken place at Harvest House, the party Headquarters.<sup>595</sup> Violence within and by MDC has been downplayed by civics because ZANU PF victims hardly approach civic organizations for help. This explains why the two MDCs were also hesitant to commit themselves on issues to do with healing and reconciliation which enshrined accountability, truth telling and justice.

In addition, MDC`s apparent prioritizing of the survival of the power-sharing government over all else severely inhibited the party`s ability to push for accountability and justice. The desire for power saw MDC not forcefully insisting on justice and accountability for human rights abuses nor has it attempted to bring the perpetrators of those abuses to account. As testimony to this, Prime Minister Tsvangirai ruled out any criminal prosecution of Robert Mugabe and allies of ZANU PF after they left office. At a press conference in Johannesburg on 16 September 2010, Tsvangirai told journalists that the power sharing deal and the possibility of a new constitution were processes of finding reconciliation and that a

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<sup>593</sup> MDC has made inquiry into its own violence and has not made these general public .e.g Report of the commission of inquiry into the disruption of the Harare Province Congress, MDC, Harare, 7 November 2001, Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances at party Headquarters, MDC, Harare, 14 December 2004, Inquiry into violence against Trudy Stevenson 2005, Violence around the country running up to 2011 among others.

<sup>594</sup> That DRCs existed is also confirmed by Brian Raftopolous in *Zimbabwe the Hard Road to Reform*.

<sup>595</sup> MDC has made inquiry into its own violence and has not made these general public .e.g Report of the commission of inquiry into the disruption of the Harare Province Congress, MDC, Harare, 7 November 2001, Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances at party Headquarters, MDC, Harare, 14 December 2004, Inquiry into violence against Trudy Stevenson 2005, Violence around the country running up to 2011 among others.

retributive agenda would be counterproductive to such a process.<sup>596</sup> He further stated that reconciliation was the only solution for Zimbabwe to have assured stability, peace and progress.<sup>597</sup> This sudden shift by the MDC was aimed at protecting itself and its interest. Raftopolous commented that:

Tsvangirai was not likely to push for any process of national accountability at this stage. He has remained vague on the issue of amnesties and prosecutions and has reiterated several times that ZANU PF should not fear MDC having the Ministry of Home Affairs, including the police, as they would not use this to seek vengeance.<sup>598</sup>

To derail the process of healing and accountability, issues of healing, equality, cohesion and unity were crafted in ambiguous and vague terms which ultimately created confusion as far as the implementation of the document policy was concerned. In essence Article VII was silent on issues of timeframe and steps to be taken for the necessary reforms and processes of healing and reconciliation. Critical key words such as justice and reconciliation were consciously or unconsciously omitted in the Article.

## **6.5 The Organ for National Healing and Reconciliation**

In accordance with the GPA provisions to promote issues of concern to the general public, the GNU set up the ONHRI. The purpose of the organ was to properly “advise on measures necessary and practical to achieve national healing, cohesion and unity with respect to victims of pre and post-independence violence.” Honorable John Landa Nkomo, was appointed chairman of the organ, with Ms Sekai Holland and Gibson Sibanda each representing ZANU PF, MDC-T and MDC-N respectively. These ministers were to lay the foundation for a society characterized by mutual respect, tolerance and developments where individuals would enjoy freedoms enshrined in the constitution.<sup>599</sup>

### *6.5.1 Ambiguity and Vagueness over the Mandate of ONHRI*

The organ’s mandate as articulated in Section 8 of the ONHRI’s concept paper of 2009 stipulates that:

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<sup>596</sup> “Tsvangirai dabbling in peripheral Issues, [www.zimonline.co.za](http://www.zimonline.co.za) november 2008, accessed 15 January 2015.

<sup>597</sup> “Tsvangirai dabbling in Pheripheral issues,” [www.zimonline.co.za](http://www.zimonline.co.za) 4november 2008, accessed 15 January 2015.

<sup>598</sup> “Tsvangirai dabbling in Peripheral Issues,” [www.zimonline.co.za](http://www.zimonline.co.za) 4november 2008, accessed 13 December 2014.

<sup>599</sup> See ONHRI Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Intergration Concept paper, Harare: Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Intergration, 2009.

...it shall be the role of the organ to oversee the healing process and to promote dialogue among parties, and to diffuse tensions and threats that may lead to incidents of violence through engaging all parties. 600

However, this provision contradicts with what John Nkomo stipulated to be ONHRI's mandate. The late Vice-president explained that the organ's role was an advisory one as opposed to that of implementation which is alluded to by section 8 of the organ's concept paper. This confusion over the role of the organ is also substantiated by Goodwill Shana who pointed out that:

We always felt that ONHRI was to provide a facilitative political and legal role for healing to take place and to allow people to carry on, especially in civil society, to carry on as best as they could to assist the inclusive government in the healing process. But in many cases it has appeared as if the Organ is actually going to do the healing itself.....It is important for us to clarify what role the Organ is going to play in enabling national healing to take place in Zimbabwe.601

The ONHRI ministers themselves publicly acknowledged that the GPA was a document of political compromise and has left unresolved issues which undermine their power to act.602 This is because the three ministers had no powers to effect change.

Furthermore, the GPA failed to elaborate the functions of ONHRI. Clearly, from the onset the organ was shrouded in confusion with regard to its mandate. Now, if the organ was not so clear about what it was that it was supposed to do, it is an uphill task to expect it to deliver anything.603 All this confusion should be attributed to the principal parties' lack of political will and interest in issues to do with healing and reconciliation. This ambiguity and lack of clarity was certainly constrained and stalled the work of the organ. As Ms Sekai Holland commented, they also observed that the mandate of the organ was not even clear to the principal ministers themselves. "When we were appointed we thought that the three principals had an idea of what they wanted us to do... They didn't. They were relying on

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<sup>600</sup> To appreciate that issues of healing, equality and reconciliation were crafted in ambiguous terms creating a lot of confusion see, "Agreement Between ZANU PF and the two MDC Formations, on resolving the challenges facing Zimbabwe, Sept 15, 2008," <http://www.Kubatana.net/docs/zpf-agreement-08.09.15.pdf>, accessed 13 December 2014; Shari Eppel, "Repairing a Fractured Nation,,"; Dorothy Goredema, "Lessons from Zimbabwe, Gweru; Mambo Press, 2013, Pamela Machakanja, "National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe."

<sup>601</sup> Citation From SW Radio Africa Transcript, "Is Zimbabwe's National Healing A Fake?," Transcript- Hot Seat part1 2011 by Violet Gonda, 19.05.2010, accessed 15 January 2015.

<sup>602</sup> Shari Eppel, "Repairing a Fractured Nation," p.214.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid.

us as leaders to advise them....<sup>604</sup> This study concurs with Moreblessing Mbire's analysis that indeed, when the ONHRI was set up, there was that realization that an organ of healing was relevant and needed but the GPA was not clear on what exactly it was that the organ needed to work on as evidenced by the failure of the principal officers to craft or spell out the mandate of the organ.<sup>605</sup> This lack of clarity on the organ's mandate has resulted in people perceiving the organ as having failed to fulfil its mandate. Commenting on the organ's lack of clarity Shana said:

I think it's a reality that what we have here is a flawed situation, or an inconvenient situation for all people, it's a compromise situation. We understand in compromises there are things that don't always work from the ideal point of view. The political will to bring national healing does not seem to have been carried through by putting legislative facilitation on the ground, by giving resources to the Organ, by even prioritizing it in national activity or even worse still, a clear strategy of how to engage the nation in national healing.<sup>606</sup>

Another factor which hindered the effectiveness of the organ to deliver healing and reconciliation was the fact that ONHRI lacked legal backing either in the form of an Act of parliament or an elaborate clause in the country's constitution. Yet as Murray warns, a clear legal foundation is critical to the effectiveness of National Human Rights Instruments. Provisions for such bodies should be entrenched in the constitution or clearly stipulated in an enabling legislature'<sup>607</sup>

As Mr Ngwenya, a political analyst commented:

The fact that the organ was not backed by any legal instrument makes it a monumental document of compromise. It has no legitimacy. These guys (Nkomo, Sibanda and Holland) have no powers to subpoena, they have no judiciary powers, and they cannot even enforce any thing. They are just

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<sup>604</sup> W Zhangazha, National Healing has no clear Mandate-Holland, Zimbabwe Independent <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/local/26405-national-healing-has-no-clear-mandate-holland-html> accessed 3 January 2015; also see SW Radio Africa Transcript-Hot Seat (part 1) 2011 by Violet Gonda, "Is Zimbabwe's National Healing Programme a Fake?" accessed 3 January 2015.

<sup>605</sup> See More Blessing Mbire, *Seeking Reconciliation and National Healing in Zimbabwe: A Case of the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Intergration (ONHRI)*, The Hague: International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), 2011.

<sup>606</sup> Citation from SW Radio Africa Transcript-Hot Seat (part 1), 2011 by Violet Gonda, "Is Zimbabwe's National Healing A Fake?"

<sup>607</sup> Rachel Murray, "National Human Rights Institutions: Criteria for Assessing their Effectiveness in Netherlands," *Quarterly of Human Rights*, vol.25 (2), Netherlands: Netherlands Institute of Human Rights, 2007.

three individuals who are going around with a so called mandate to instigate and instil a sense of national healing.<sup>608</sup>

Ngwenya further pointed out that since the organ had no constitutional body, it wielded less powers and had very little room to manoeuvre. Explaining the weaknesses and ineffectiveness of the organ in delivering healing and reconciliation, Ngwenya told Holland point blank in a talk show that:

Your Organ has no teeth because you do not have the judicial powers, you do not have any arresting powers. You cannot summon the perpetrators. What's more the Organ itself is composed of perpetrators and victims. You need a neutral force, you need people that have no interests in reparations and psycho- social healing, and these are the people that can have legitimacy on the ground. You guys are the victims while Nkomo and ZANU PF are the perpetrators, so how do perpetrators and victims instigate the process of national healing? It does not work like that you need to restart.<sup>609</sup>

Shari Eppel is of the opinion that governments and politicians should not take a leading role in the implementation of programmes on past human rights abuses.<sup>610</sup> On his part Ngwenya strongly believes that the role of the politicians should be that of putting a policy framework in place so that civil society and independent and neutral individuals can carry the way forward, theirs should be a legislative and not a leading role in the healing and reconciliation project.<sup>611</sup> Indeed critics like Sheri Eppel and Pamela Machakanja among others have questioned the involvement of politicians and security members in the national healing and reconciliation project given the politics of partisanship that have characterized the Zimbabwean political landscape.<sup>612</sup> Informants pointed out that politicians do not have the moral integrity to remain neutral and or separate national issues from party political agendas. The staff which was given to the Organ was that from the President's office, who were members of the Central Intelligence Organization, who previously as seen in chapter six have also been perpetrators of violence in the past. These were the kind of people expected to

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<sup>608</sup>Citation from SW Radio Africa Transcript –Hot –Seat (part1) ,2011, by Violet Gonda, “Is Zimbabwe`s National Healing Programme a Fake?”

<sup>609</sup>Ibid.

<sup>610</sup> Shari Eppel, “Repairing a Fractured Nation; Olga Botcharova , “Implementation of track-two diplomacy: Developing a model of Forgiveness in Forgiveness and Reconciliation,” in Raymond, G Helmick ,S.J and Rodney, L, *Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation*, Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001.

<sup>611</sup><sup>611</sup>Citation from SW Radion Africa Transcript –Hot –Seat (part1) ,2011, by Violet Gonda, “Is Zimbabwe`s National Healing Programme a Fake?”

<sup>612</sup> See Shari Eppel, “Repairing a Fractured Nation,” Pamela Machakanja, “National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe, p. 16.”

carry out much of the bureaucratic work of the Organ. Thus, from the onset the duties of the organ and its staff were compromised. 613

This lack of power hindered the Organ from performing or achieving tangible results. In addition the Organ itself has done little to raise awareness of its work as well as seek advice from people. If anything the ONHRI has been conspicuous by its almost total invisibility particularly in the rural areas. In Bikita most of the respondents had never heard of the Organ while the few that have heard about the Organ rated it negatively saying that it was performing very badly. These questions on the work of the Organ were asked in order to determine the effectiveness of the GNU in addressing victims of post political violence since the Organ was specifically created to help the nation to move towards healing, reconciliation and integration.

The relative anonymity of the Organ was not only conspicuous in Bikita but in many other provinces of the country as affirmed by the ZHR NGO forum's Transitional Justice National Survey of 2011 which revealed that 74% of the 3189 individuals interviewed on perceptions on transitional justice were not aware of the existence of OHRI.<sup>614</sup> The few people who were aware of ONHRI's existence were of the understanding that the institution implements healing and reconciliation program as opposed to the advisory. As an institution, ONHRI was made visible in the public eye during its launch as well as proclamation on the 24-26 July 2009, days of national dedication. The relative anonymity of the Organ was not only conspicuous in Bikita but in many other provinces of the country. In one of its outreach programs the ZHR NGO Forum asked a seventy one year old man if he was aware of the existence of the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration. His reply was "I may lie to you about the Organ. I was not yet born when it was formed"<sup>615</sup>, suggesting the need for the Organ to make itself more visible to the communities if it is to advise on a credible framework for national healing.

Another task of the Organ was to engage political parties to ensure an end to politically motivated violence. ONHRI was expected to enter into dialogue with political

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<sup>613</sup> "What is the Organ for National Healing and Reconciliation in the Office of the President?" Harare: Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration; ONHRI Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration Concept Paper, Harare: Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration, 2009.

<sup>614</sup> Human Rights NGO Forum, *Transitional Justice National Survey: A Report on the People's Perceptions and Recommendations*, Harare: Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2011.

<sup>615</sup> *Ibid*, p42.

parties in 2010, sensitizing the political leaders on their roles and responsibilities in terms of Article VII of the GPA.<sup>616</sup> However, it can be argued that the engagement of political parties have not been successful because even after the setting up of the Organ and 2010 meeting with leaders of political parties, cases of political violence by political party supporters continued. The Organ's inability to control political violence clearly shows that Zimbabwe is not yet ready to engage in restorative justice mainly because those who commit atrocities have neither stopped nor are they willing to acknowledge the harm they inflicted upon people.

### *6.5.2 Political Obstacles.*

As mentioned earlier ONHRI was led by three state ministers from Zimbabwe's three main political parties signatory to the GPA of 2008. This mere involvement and inclusion of politicians has rendered the work of ONHRI vulnerable to political interference. Furthermore, the appointment to leadership of the three ministers was on the basis of political affiliation as opposed to merit. Consequently, observers of the three felt that the ONHRI leadership was not inclusive and representing all the ethnic groups of Zimbabwe. Mr Ngwenya pointed out that there was nothing national about it. In Mr Ngwenya's opinion:

What the government did was to pick three Ndebeles. They have simply taken three Ndebeles and thrust them into the epicentre of so-called national healing. I say three Ndebeles because there is Nkomo, Sibanda and Holland running the Organ of National healing...So it does not make sense to me. The true and value-adding national healing must represent all ethnic groups. We do not have a single white man in that group, no colored or a single Indian. We want the Organ that is representative of all the ethnic groups in Zimbabwe not just a couple of Ndebele guys who have just simply been given jobs to do. That is not national healing to me. It's a fake, it is very fake and these things need to be reconstructed.<sup>617</sup>

What hindered the performance of the Organ was that the three state ministers in ONHRI have different ideological stand points that from time to time had to be harmonized for progress.<sup>618</sup> These differences also slowed down the work of the Organ as the three

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<sup>616</sup> See Article VII of the Agreement Between ZANU PF and the two MDC Formations on Resolving the Challenges facing Zimbabwe; See Shari Eppel, "Repairing a Fractured Nation,"; The Standard, 2009 GNU crafts bill to guide "National Healing," 18 July 2009.

<sup>617</sup> Citation from SW Radio Africa Transcript, "Is Zimbabwe's National Healing Programme a Fake?" accessed 3 January 2015.

<sup>618</sup> How different political ideological stand points by the three ministers affected the progress of the ONHRI is discussed at length by scholars such as Chigora and Guzura, Pamela Machakanja, Goredema Dorothy and Shari Eppel. See Percy sledge Chigora and Tobias Guzura "The Politics of the Government of National Unity (GNU) and Power Sharing in Zimbabwe, Shari Eppel, "Repairing a Fractured Nation,"; Dorothy Goredema, "Lessons



normally had to be consulted on all critical decisions. The issue of having three state ministers for the institution also poses administrative challenges in that schedules had to be adjusted to a time that accommodated all the three ministers which on its own was a challenge.

The extreme polarization characterising Organ contributed to making reconciliation and national healing efforts difficult to accomplish. That the three ministers were not united themselves was evidenced in 2011 when one of the ONHRI ministers, Moses Mzila Ndlovu of MDC, was arrested after he attended a rural prayer service for Gukurahundi victims.<sup>619</sup> The lack of support for minister Ndlovu by his fellow ONHRI ministers in the wake of his arrest drove a wedge between the ministers, such that by the end of 2011 the three ministers were seldom undertaking public activities together. Mzila's arrest was shocking considering that he was a minister for an Organ that was designed to heal and promote national cohesion.<sup>620</sup> The incident of Mzila's arrest in April 2011 makes clear the point that national healing has not been interpreted by the GNU to mean justice, accountability, truth telling and reparations for victims of political justice. In Eppel's opinion, for ZANU PF the ONHRI existed as a pragmatic mechanism that could be gestured to whenever the issue of accountability was raised. Others such as Raftopoulos are of the opinion that the Organ's primary reason for existing has been to prevent any meaningful, official developments towards accountability.

Furthermore, progress in implementing the duties of ONHRI were slow following the appointment of John Nkomo as Zimbabwe's Vice-President after the death of Joseph Msika in August 2009. The late Cde Nkomo retained his position in the Organ until the time of his death. Thus, the demands of balancing multiple commitments combined with his own failing health meant less time for the ONHRI. The MDC-T minister Sekai Holland also stepped back from her once vocal position in the Organ in 2009 after she incurred the wrath

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from Zimbabwe, Gweru :Mambo Press, 2013, Pamela Machakanja, "National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe," ; More Blessing Mbire, *Seeking Reconciliation and National Healing in Zimbabwe: A Case of the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI)*, The Hague: International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), 2011. These scholars argue that the three ministers sought to fulfil their parties' political agendas and failed to harmonize their ideas from time to time to promote the healing and reconciliation agenda.

<sup>619</sup>In April, 2011 deputy Minister of Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe, Minister Mzila Ndlovu was arrested for referring to the 1983 Gukurahundi disturbances in Matebelaland and the Midlands Provinces of Zimbabwe in a church service. After his arrest Mzila did not get support from his colleagues in the Organ and had to report for hearings at Hwange magistrate court for a year. The case against Mzila was finally dismissed in May 2012 for lack of evidence.

<sup>620</sup> See Shari Eppel, "Repairing a Fractured Nation," p.214.

of activists in Matebeleland. At a workshop Mrs Holland stated that Mzilikazi and the Ndebeles introduced torture in Zimbabwe in the 19th century.<sup>621</sup> After these utterances Holland lost the trust of most activists in Matebeleland who now regarded her with suspicion and distrust.

### *6.5.3 Lack of Action*

As a result of the above constraints many are of the opinion that ONHRI has not done anything tangible as far as the actual process of healing and reconciliation is concerned, particularly in the rural areas the Organ's existence was not even known about. In the urban areas the Organ also failed to meet people's expectations. The people's disappointments are captured in the following statements:

If ONHRI was about delivering healing and national reconciliation why is it that perpetrators themselves have not come out? We want to see names written down. We want to see people sitting down, confessing to their crimes so that justice can come with forgiving. We want to see the courts incriminating people, ZANU PF activists that had been murdering and maiming people since 2000, are all walking around loose and Sekai Holland is moving around the country, claiming to be healing Zimbabweans. We want to hear names. If this Organ was serious we should be seeing a database of individuals that committed crimes, they should be brought to justice!<sup>622</sup>

Who was healed under the Organ? The Organ even failed to reconcile Mugabe and Tsvangirai! Aaah we heard stories that those two were forever fighting. So why did these ONHRI people fail to tell them about peace? We know of chiefs who brought youths to come face to face with their victims. Chiefs and elders assisted the youth to ask the forgiveness of those they had wronged, not ONHRI. Those who had stolen people's cattle during elections were made to pay by the chiefs not ONHRI. Do they even want to come to the rural areas that ONHRI of yours? We are beneath them, they just come when they want our votes.<sup>623</sup>

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<sup>621</sup> Sekai Holland at a workshop in Bulawayo stated that, "Mzilikazi's mobs were professionals at meting out violence and there have been no new torture methodologies in Zimbabwe since then. Also see Shari Eppel "Repairing a Fractured Nation," p.217; Zimbabwean Minister Holland Speaks from Harare," available from <http://article.wv.com/view/2009/02/22/> accessed 3 January 2015.

<sup>622</sup> Interview with Misheck Dzoro, Matsai, 20 December 2013.

<sup>623</sup> Interview with Onismus Maroveke, Matsai, 20 December 2013.

Thus, the Organ's efforts never translated into action on the ground. In academic and political circles the Organ became known for its grand and numerous workshops, talk-shops and conferences. This bookish approach opened the Organ to academic and political criticism. Ngwenya, criticised the Organ of:

Posturing around in grand meetings in well-lit conference centres, wasting resources. Instead the Organ should have gone back to the basics, go into the qualitative analysis of hundreds and thousands of research documents that have been carried out by civil society organizations, by churches, where cases of rape and human rights abuse and plunder of life had been articulated, documented. The Organ need not to have re-invented the wheel, all they needed to do was to go into the documentation, go into the archives and simply pull out the record that date back to the periods they wanted to investigate. The problem is they tried to reinvent the wheel and they are not going to make a single headway.<sup>624</sup>

In Bikita respondents told the researcher of their stories of continued harassment, intimidation and threats at the hands of ZANU PF supporters even after the formation of GNU and an Organ that was supposed to put an end to all political tensions. In essence, respondents in Bikita also complained about the partisan application of the law. Many respondents bitterly expressed that there was no difference between the GNU and what had been there before GNU because perpetrators of violence were not held accountable. Cases that had been reported to the police continued not to be attended to under the new government. Offenders were not prosecuted and justice was not delivered through the courts. Cases such as that of Gara, Richard Chatunga among others were cited. It emerged that the ZANU PF murderers of Richard were arrested and later acquitted due to lack of evidence. However, justice was only delivered after the ngozi spirits of the two wreaked havoc to Ishmael and Joseph's families prompting them to pay compensation to the aggrieved families. Respondents also cited the cases concerning their livestock which had been stolen by ZANU PF youths during the 2008 elections which they had filed with the late Magistrate Zisengwe which were never dealt with. It was only after they filed complaints with headman Nyahunda that they recovered their cattle.

Outside Bikita, many cases remained unattended to even under the GNU and whilst the Organ preached about its mandate to heal and reconcile Zimbabwe. As observed by Eppel

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<sup>624</sup> Citation from SW Radio Africa Transcript, "Is Zimbabwe's National Healing Programme a Fake?" accessed 3 January 2015.

and Machakanja among others, the GNU lacked the political will hold accountable perpetrators of past violence. In Bikita this was worse since most perpetrators lived in the same areas with those whom they had victimized. Not surprising, some perpetrators have continued to threaten or boast to victims about their being above the law. Informants in Bikita explained that cases reported at the courts take time, and the victim will be waiting for justice all this time. Even if judgement is in favour of the victims the victim is not compensated. Furthermore, many cases of torture by the state or various ZANU PF groupings cannot meet the criteria of proof needed by the courts. In some cases, forensic proof may be hard to achieve at this point for the majority of the cases. Lastly, legal processes are also costly and time consuming. At the courts justice may well prove to be unachievable as a result of amnesties and court-based justice also come many years later that is if one is lucky. This is because ZANU PF has compromised the independence and impartiality of the judiciary judges, magistrates and prosecutors and transformed the police. Consequently, this stance whereby the justice system was rendered partisan has rendered efforts by victims of violence to get justice futile. As observed by Olga Botcharova, indeed the challenges for countries in transition is that in some instances, perpetrators are often in positions of authority<sup>625</sup>.

The 2008 GPA Article 18 in particular placed responsibility on political parties to ensure that there is no return to violence. Article 18.5b urges political parties to renounce and desist from the promotion and use of violence under whatever name as a means of attaining political ends.<sup>626</sup> Although ONHRI has involved the three political parties in its outreach work to ensure this provision was adhered to, it seems the efforts have brought little results as incidents of violence continued to be reported.<sup>627</sup> In 2012 the executive council of the political parties met and agreed that the three political principals should address rallies of their supporters calling for an end to political violence. However, by the end of 2012 when the GNU was dissolved no such rally had taken place. If anything by the end of 2012 the ONHRI was conspicuous by its almost total invisibility.<sup>628</sup> Thus, the political environment

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<sup>625</sup>Olga Botcharova, "implementation of Track-two diplomacy: Developing a model of Forgiveness in Forgiveness and Reconciliation," p.g 269.

<sup>626</sup> See Article 18 of the Global Political Agreement between ZANU PF and the two MDC formation. 18.5 b urges political parties to renounce and desist from the promotion and use of violence.

<sup>627</sup>See Shari Eppel "Repairing a Fractured Nation," p.214; The Standard 2009, GNU crafts Bill to guide "National Healing", 18 July 2009.

<sup>628</sup>Reports by Church and Civil Society Forum (CCSF) from November 2009 to 2010 indicate the failure of ONHRI in promoting peace. In November 2011 Tsvangirai submitted a dossier to the SADC mediation team and President Zuma detailing that the GPA was failing to promote peace. He cited incidents of political violence that were contributing to this.

impacted negatively on ONHRI's ability to establish effective healing and reconciliation policies and programs. As observed by Chigora and Guzura, political transitions comprising negotiated agreements between conflicting parties are inevitably involved in a host of uncomfortable social and legal compromises especially in relation to reconciliation.<sup>629</sup> In this case Zimbabwe is not an exception since 2008-2013 the country was run by an inclusive government which was in many ways compromised.

## **6.6. Implementation Challenges within the Government**

### *6.6.1 Financial Constrains*

The economic meltdown in Zimbabwe discussed in Chapter 5 resulted in the collapse of the economy such that although the economy politically recovered from 2010 under the Government of National Unity, the government continued experiencing extreme challenges to meet people's expectations. Consequently, reconciliation and healing issues were less prioritized from the time the GPA was signed. This was echoed by Minister W in an interview:

You see, we had more pressing issues to attend to. Bread and butter issues not these trivial issues of people beating each other after a beer drink and then they go to Heal Zimbabwe Trust and say ndakarohwa neZANU –I was beaten by ZANU PF. Such issues were the least of our worries. <sup>630</sup>

Minister W explained that after the signing of the GPA the government had to grapple with socio-economic challenges.

There was need to resuscitate the health and education sectors that had collapsed. Industry was operating at below capacity, there were shortages of basic commodities and there was need to rebuild the economy. Strategies had to be found, well-wishers engaged just to ensure that people survived. Yes issues of healing and reconciliation could have been important but these could wait. The best we could do was to set up ONHRI as a reminder to the people that as a government we were aware of the need to heal and reconcile. This is why the

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<sup>629</sup> See Chigora Percy sledge and Tobias Guzura, "The Politics of the Government of National Unity," pp.20-26.

<sup>630</sup> Interview with W, Minister, Harare, 6 January 2015.

government set aside three days to commemorate and ensure an end to violence. That was a good gesture, wasn't it?<sup>631</sup>

Thus, financial constraints hampered the efforts by ONHRI to implement the healing process. Following the signing of the GPA and despite the use of multi-currency under the GPA the coffers of the national treasury were empty. Issues of salaries had to be confronted:

In essence a lot of money was needed to rebuild the economy. This explains why the Organ had no budget allocated to it. Furthermore, budgets are allocated to ministries not to Organs. ONHRI is an Organ of National Healing not a Ministry of National Healing and those three ministers headed an Organ that is why they did not attend cabinet meetings.<sup>632</sup>

In an informal interview at the Midlands State University with officials working for ONHRI it emerged that the UNDP also assisted with the funding of the Organ and it was this money which ONHRI used to fund activities such as the "History Project" which it was foreseeing, workshops and other activities that had to be carried out:

The Organ had even made plans to engage with the grassroots communities but such plans had to be cancelled due to lack of finances. Even the History project also suffered setbacks due to financial challenges. Indeed the financial help from the UNDP has been immense as it has enabled the Organ to conduct workshops, engaging experts on healing and reconciliation and other activities. <sup>633</sup>

However, other observers are of the opinion that even the resources that were availed to the Organ by funders should have been utilized well. As it is, nothing much was derived from them because of the Organ's misdirected priorities and partly because the Organ did not know what it was that was expected of it. Thus, most of the resources were wasted on grand conferences in expensive hotels, flying in and out of experts. The three ministers also flew around the globe, attending conferences to equip them with and sharpen their skills to heal and reconcile Zimbabweans. Mr Gilbert Tarugarira indicated that such things could be done at home at a cheaper price if they had simply engaged grassroots communities. It was this

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<sup>631</sup>Ibid.

<sup>632</sup>Ibid.

<sup>633</sup> Interview with Mr Ngwenya, official of ORGAN, Midlands State University, Gweru, 6 March 2014.

search for Western approaches from far away countries that wasted the limited funds or resources which the Organ had.<sup>634</sup>

Indeed, ONHRI's work has largely revolved around consultations with the church, civil society organisations and chiefs in the country's eight provinces to collect information on perceptions on healing and reconciliation. The outreach meetings were also taken to Zimbabweans living in the diaspora that is in South Africa, United States of America, New Zealand, United Kingdom and European Union. Whilst this was commendable since the Organ sought to sensitize other stakeholders on its work as well as gathering their view on reconciliation and national healing processes, the approach was flawed in the sense that it left out the ordinary people, the direct and indirect victims of political violence, people had who lived, experienced and bore the scars of the violence. To that extent ONHRI's approach towards healing and reconciliation remained elite driven and bookish with little engagement of the grassroots. Yet history has shown that elite driven approaches often suffer legitimacy and ownership challenges as the ordinary people fail to embrace them thereby rendering these approaches ineffective. In Mr Hebert Chivaura's opinion:

The Organ is about stakeholder meetings, bringing in consultants, meetings with experts in the field of national healing, then conferences with politicians, academics, it has been the same mantra over and over again. There is no action on the ground. One wonders when the actual implementation of the healing process will start considering that this is 2015, seven years after the formation of the Organ. I strongly feel that all this dragging is a deliberate move to delay the process so that some cases will eventually lose substance with the passage of time.<sup>635</sup>

#### *6.6.2 Lack of Legal Mandate*

The lack of a legal mandate has affected the Organ's work even with other ministries in government. As Minister W explained, in most cases the Organ struggled to get attention or to have its issues prioritized by other government departments because it lacked the power to enforce changes. This is because it is an Organ and not a Ministry. Consequently, since the three ministers headed an Organ they did not attend cabinet and they could not demand funds to be budgeted for their Organ.<sup>636</sup> Whilst the South African Truth Commission had a clearly constituted legal mandate, Zimbabwe's ONHRI did not have legal provisions that clearly set its mandate as well as parameters. It did not have time lines. The three ministers were and

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<sup>634</sup> Interview with Mr. Gilbert Tarugarira, Lecturer Midlands State University, Gweru, 6 March 2014.

<sup>635</sup> Interview with Mr Hebert Chivaura, Midlands State University, Gweru, 6 March 2014.

<sup>636</sup> Interview with Minister W, Harare, 6 January 2015. Also see Percy sledge Chigora and Tobias Guzura, "The Politics of the Government of National Unity,; Shari Eppel, "Repairing a Fractured Nation."

are still not aware of the short, medium and long term strategies of the Organ which they headed. As observed by Shana:

No one knew the time lines set for the Organ. I am sure this is where we have this multiple dilemma of saying is there really any intention to execute national healing or is it paying lip service to keep the inclusive government limping until the next elections.<sup>637</sup>

### *6.6.3 A Hesitant Attitude towards Engaging CSOs*

According to Machakanja, a successful national healing and reconciliation process requires meaningful engagement of civil society and the public at large. This is because a process aimed at responding to people's needs must necessarily involve the people affected by the conflict, especially at grassroots level.<sup>638</sup> In this context, civil society organizations can play a vital role in monitoring the implementation of the healing and reconciliation process. In this way, the work by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) can give greater legitimacy to the healing process. Secondly, such a process also reinforces the principle of bottom-up approaches, thereby guaranteeing sustainable and transformative peace. Thus, the Organ agreed to work with a number of non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).<sup>639</sup> These NGOs such as the ZHR Ngo Forum and the church were given a green light to conduct a series of country-wide consultations from 2009-2010 which have culminated into reports that summarized ideas by the grassroots people in Zimbabwe about how the healing process should be handled. In Bikita the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum conducted outreach meetings and met with people from Bikita East, Bikita South, Bikita central and Bikita West. In neighbouring Zaka district workshops were conducted in Zaka Central and Zaka West.<sup>640</sup> Workshops, mostly held at schools were conducted with women, youth, the elderly, church leaders, traditional leaders, teachers and police officers. According to chief Mabika:

These people NGOs came here and asked us our opinion about issues of conflict and violence. They also asked us how we wanted perpetrators to be dealt with. They told us how other people who have undergone episodes of violence have survived, how they have dealt with violence. We were given many examples and they told us we can learn from those examples. We told them that we did not need anyone to teach us about conflict resolution

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<sup>637</sup> Citation by Goodwill Shana from SW Radio Africa Transcript, "Is Zimbabwe's Healing and Reconciliation Programme a Fake?"

<sup>638</sup> Pamela Machakanja, "National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe," p.12.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid.

<sup>640</sup> ZHR NGO Taking Transitional Justice To the People, 2009 Report, p.g 21.



because from time immemorial we had our ways which the whites and the government have ignored, approaches which are very effective.<sup>641</sup>

Mr Aaron Nyakunhuwa a teacher had this to say:

NGOs taught people about truth commissions like the one held by South Africa, amnesties and prosecutions. Whilst we appreciated the fact that for the first time we the public were engaged in discussions to do with healing and reconciliation we nevertheless pointed out to them that these discussions do not translate to actual action at the end of the day. What people wanted was justice or a recognition by government of their suffering and pain and the government was delaying that. People are tired of workshops, we want to see perpetrators brought to book.<sup>642</sup>

And again:

Yes these workshops gave us a chance, and created a platform to participate in debates about conflicts and the effects of political violence, issues which affected us directly. But these were just debates, the debates did not rebuild our burnt houses, the debates did not bring back our relatives who were murdered in cold blood. Debates do not wipe away one's tears or lessen the pain in one's heart. It was just talk, talk and talk. Yes, we talk and then what? What was needed was action or the way forward.<sup>643</sup>

Although the Organ gave NGOs a green light to carry out workshops and consultations with traditional leaders such as chiefs and headmen and the church, ONHRI has not incorporated the recommendations made by the CSOs. In addition, there are no publications of any results of the consultations made in the eight provinces of the country. Most CSOs like Heal Zimbabwe Trust, Crisis Coalition and Zimbabwe Human Rights Doctors' Association and Human Rights Lawyers among others have complained that ONHRI was uncomfortable to put its name on the document the CCSF was publishing. Despite the hesitancy by ONHRI CCSF went ahead and published the report entitled "Towards Development and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe". My argument here is that although the grassroots were engaged in debates on healing and reconciliation it was of no use because their contributions were not taken aboard by the Organ. As observed by Mbire:

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<sup>641</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai, 20 December 2014.

<sup>642</sup> Interview with Aaron Nyakunhuwa, Matsai, 20 December 2014.

<sup>643</sup> Interview with Tapera Svondo, Matsai, 20 December 2014.

From the surface level, it may appear as if ONHRI values input from CSOs, as revealed by its provincial consultants. A further analysis on how the CSOs recommendations were adopted into future reconciliation and healing programmes tells a different story. Whilst the CCSF recommended that mechanisms for reconciliation and healing should factor in issues of justice and truth telling ONHRI has not included these in its proposed framework....It is evident that a number of recommendations from CCSF have not been incorporated in ONHRI's work or its future programmes.<sup>644</sup>

The church also complained about ONHRI's attitude towards its contributions in the healing and reconciliation implementation process. Shana stated that:

We certainly are not happy with the work that has been done so far. The pace at which the Organ is operating, the clarity of itself, its proceedings and what's going on. That is where the biggest problem is because we have made every effort to work with the Organ. We submitted our Kariba paper that we put together as a civic society and the churches but it has been the follow-up thereafter that has been the problem. We don't seem to have momentum and traction on the ground to carry out a clearly thought out strategy of engaging the nation. For us that is frustrating to the extent that people on the ground are not seeing any action.<sup>645</sup>

Shana also explained that the church had offered itself to the Organ to help facilitate the healing and reconciliation process:

We came together with NANGO to draft a national healing document which we presented to the Organ to say this is how we think we can help you facilitate this process. We offered ourselves as their secretariat. They were to provide the political and legislative context and we will do the rest for you but we had very little feed-back coming from them. We had to pressure again and again. I think we are justified in saying that we are feeling a sense of frustration and stagnation in the process.<sup>646</sup>

The above discussion clearly shows that even under the GPA the political will to promote genuine reconciliation and healing processes was lacking. To buy time, an Organ was put in place to give an impression that the GPA was doing something about issues of healing and reconciliation when in actual fact the Organ was blocking justice and truth telling. This can be explained by lack of funds to implement the healing process, hesitancy in fully engaging

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<sup>644</sup> Moreblessing Mbire, *Seeking Reconciliation and national healing in Zimbabwe: A Case of the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration*, p.40.

<sup>645</sup> Citation by Goodwill Shana from SA Radio African Transcript-Hot Seat, "Is Zimbabwe's National Healing Programme a Fake?".

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*

CSOs, failure to come up with a clearly spelt out role for the Organ, reluctance to factor in findings made by CSOs and above all the Organ's conspicuous invisibility in the rural areas. Due to frustrations with the government's delayed justice and its failure to implement healing and reconciliation, individuals, families and communities in Bikita once more reverted back to engaging traditional approaches to try and repair the social fabric and deliver justice, healing and reconciliation between victims and perpetrators.

## **6.7 Community attempts at Truth-Telling, Justice, Compensation, Healing and Reconciliation through Indigenous Mechanisms.**

A remarkable phenomenon of the 2008 violence is that the majority of victims in Bikita were able to name at least some of their perpetrators, most of whom were neighbours and even family members. These had been responsible for horrendous assaults, murders and the destruction of property within rural communities. In such cases victims were able to seek justice at the headmen or chiefs' court known to the locals as dare ramambo. Chiefs Mabika, Mukanganwi and Mazungunye confirmed that cases to do with arson, beatings, destruction of property, murder and stock thefts were brought to their courts after the 2008 elections for resolution. In this section I look at the indigenous approaches instituted by the Bikita populace in an attempt to deal with the effects of political violence experienced by the community before and during the 2008 elections. Some of the approaches such as kuyanana, kunyaradza, kuyambira, and kuraira were rooted in indigenous peace and reconciliation approaches that had been used in pre-colonial times and have effectively promoted peace and reconciliation.

### *6.7.1 The Dare/ Traditional Court System approach.*

As observed by Martha Mutisi the dare was and still is in use in rural Zimbabwe.<sup>647</sup> In Gelfand's opinion, the main objective of the dare/ traditional court system was and is to ensure social order and harmony within the community.<sup>648</sup> In Martha Mutisi's opinion, among the Shona the dare is seen both as a mechanism designed to resolve conflicts and as an institution with authority to manage and resolve conflicts.<sup>649</sup> It is an endogenous

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<sup>647</sup> See Martha Mutisi, "The Abunzi Mediation in Rwanda: Opportunities for Engaging with Traditional Institutions of Conflict Resolution," *The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)*."

<sup>648</sup> Michael Gelfand, *Ukama. Reflections on Shona and Western Cultures in Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1981.

<sup>649</sup> Martha Mutisi, "The Abunzi Mediation in Rwanda: Opportunities for Engaging with Traditional Institutions of Conflict Resolution."

mechanism, embodying and enshrining thoughts of wise men and women in rural communities aimed at achieving equilibrium, restoring social order and solidarity among the Shona.<sup>650</sup> Chiefs in Bikita confirmed that they made use of the dare approach to resolve some of the conflicts emanating from both the 2001 and 2008 elections in their communities.

According to Chief Mabika:

Most people in our communities prefer having their cases resolved at our local courts because our courts are cheap, they understand suffering and pain and justice is instant, a different scenario from what happens at the magistrate courts. The most important factor is that our courts deliver justice to victims. As such our courts received cases of arson, beatings, murder and thefts which were resolved within the framework of community jurisprudence and legality.<sup>651</sup>

Chief Chiduku of Makoni explained that the chief's court has the authority and power to deal with any conflicts in his area through the Traditional Leaders Act Chapter 29:17 and the Customary Law and Local Courts Act. However, criminal cases such as the malicious injury to property, thefts, arson and murder are reported to the police and are heard at the magistrate courts. He explained that whilst this is the case, perpetrators of violence if they happen to be members of their communities and if they had committed the crimes in the chiefs' chiefdoms still had a case to answer to the local leadership:

After a crime was reported to the police the perpetrator also had to answer to my court and its council for the same offense. For cases of arson, my court charged offenders with the crime of "kutungidza nyika yangu- setting my country alight with fire. For murder, my court charged offenders with the crime of shedding blood in my chiefdom, kuteura ropa munyika mangu and for fuelling violence in my chiefdom my court charged offenders with the crime of kukonzeresa nyongano, mvongamupopoto nekusagadzikana munyika mangu. You will be surprised how this move has promoted peace in our communities. The punishments served as deterrence during the 2013 elections as people knew the punishments that followed wanton or reckless behavior in their communities.<sup>652</sup>

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<sup>650</sup> See Ephraim Taurai Gwavaranda, "Philosophical Principles in the Shona Traditional Court System," *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies* vol2 (5), (2011), and p.148.

<sup>651</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai 20 December 2014.

<sup>652</sup> Interview with Chief Chiduku, Leopard Rock Hotel, 24 February 2015.

Similarly, Chief Mabika explained that:

Through the dare system, those who had destroyed homes, as long as they were known or were local residence of Bikita, were ordered to rebuild homes and to make other material reparations at the local level including returning livestock that had been stolen. In cases where the offender owns no property he is punished and is given community service. We order them to fill pot holes on our local roads or to cut grass or trees along our roads. These forms of punishments have helped in restraining our youths from getting involved in political violence. The stigma of being labelled a violent person in the community and the shame of being seen serving the community sentence has acted as a strong deterrence for many. Thus in the 2013 elections cases of political violence were very minimal.<sup>653</sup>

Headman, chiefs and the ordinary people unanimously agreed that the dare approach that was used by the chief to deal with the effects of political violence delivered truth, justice, healing and reconciliation in Bikita's rural communities. Chief Chiduku explained that dare has three phases. The reporting of the case initiated the process of justice on the part of the offended. During the reporting phase, the nature of the crime was described, dates together with the extent of the damage was given. In addition, the moral principle of truth telling was highly valued. Thus, the verification of fact was made to establish the truth of the claim. In addition, verification of facts gave first-hand information enabling the chief and his council to observe the nature, extent and gravity of the offense beyond mere statements. Witnesses were also called in to confirm and to give further evidence. Verification of facts was also done to establish the truth of the claim and to set the record straight. During the reporting phase, the dare insisted on the moral principle of truth telling.<sup>654</sup> Among the Shona reconciliation and peace cannot occur when truth about what transpired was not told. Even during the early phases of resolving the conflict, it was also believed that affording a victim an opportunity to narrate his or her story to a supportive audience was of immense value in the healing process. After verification, chiefs and the panel of elders consulted each other on the merits of the case. Serious probing was done by the chiefs and elders to sharpen the reasoning process before the actual court case. The panel was highly inquisitive. According to Chief Mabika:

this was done to unearth the details of the case under consideration. The elders engaged in intensive dialogue to get a wider scope of views as they exchanged ideas with each other. During the trial process the parties involved are brought before the actual court session. The

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<sup>653</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai, 20 December 2014.

<sup>654</sup> Interview with chief Chiduku, Leopard Rock Hotel, 25 February 2015, Vumba.

offended spoke first, followed by the accused who also gave his or her side of the story, commenting on the details given by the offended. The most important feature which comes out during this process was that both the offender and the offended were treated fairly and with respect.

This collaborative process helped parties to discover the whole truth about the wrong doing, including the causes, harms, community values and their future relationships. The social spaces for collaborative and deliberative interaction created by indigenous approach processes such as dare gave a chance for the parties to vent their feelings, present their versions of the story and through the help of their community, to arrive at an engagement with the harm the crime has caused, the offender's responsibilities and what should be done to restore justice.<sup>655</sup> This confirmed Gwavaranda's argument that in traditional Shona thought, there is a careful distinction between the offender as a person and the offender's deeds, that is a distinction between being and doing. The offender was viewed as an otherwise good person who has made a mistake and who has the potential to be corrected.<sup>656</sup> In some cases warning penalties accompanied judgement as a deterrent of similar offences in future. As observed by Hamdesa Tuso, in traditional African institutions, a penalty is not necessarily aimed at isolating individuals from the community but to restore social value so as to avoid feelings of anger, bitterness or revenge.<sup>657</sup> The payment of a penalty was also seen as an act of showing remorse on the part of the offender, creating an environment for forgiveness and reintegration. According to Chief Mukanganwi, the major aims of the Chief and the council of elders when resolving conflicts were and still are to restore the good relations as before and to reconcile the conflicting parties.<sup>658</sup> Mr Farai Mvura, an elder, explained that even after the conflict was resolved the elders met with the conflicting parties separately warning them that if one of them or both started another misunderstanding based on the judgment given, another stiffer penalty would be administered.<sup>659</sup> This was and is still being done as a deterrent tactic which helps to avoid future conflicts.

Chief Mazungunye pointed out that elders used their wisdom to provide some kind of counselling to the parties so that peace and harmony prevailed in the community. Despite the

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<sup>655</sup> Ibid.

<sup>656</sup> Ephraim Taurai Gwavaranda, "Philosophical principles in the Shona," p.153

<sup>657</sup> Hamdesa Tuso, Indigenous process of conflict resolution in Oromo society in C. Henyns and K. Stenfsizyn, (eds.) *Human rights, peace and justice in Africa: A reader*, Pretoria: Pretoria University Law Press, 2006, p.13

<sup>658</sup> Interview with Chief Mukanganwi, Bikita, 17 May 2013.

<sup>659</sup> Interview with Mr Farai Mamvura, Bikita 17 May 2013.

penalties imposed, the parties were encouraged to forgive each other since they belonged to the same community. Forgiveness is valued as a necessary condition to peace and harmony.<sup>660</sup> For Mrs Emma Chivasa the dare was and is a handy mechanism used to resolve day-to-day conflicts, disputes or misunderstandings. The mechanisms operated within parameters and guidelines familiar to the public. The dare was not aimed at punishing the offender for it did not have a custodial sentence, whereby the offender is locked away in isolation.<sup>661</sup> I observed that indeed, the dare system was based on consultations, counterfactual investigations and negotiating solutions to problems and consensus. Chiefs and elders within the community played special roles as mediators and counsellors to break deep rooted mistrust between the parties in conflict. Chiefs and elders bridged the gap of rivalry and posed as peace emissaries, built confidence by encouraging talks while discouraging hostilities. After the 2008 electoral violence the dare approach created an environment which allowed both victims and perpetrators to continue with daily existence. Dare as an indigenous approach was and still is effective in the sense that the mechanism involved/s the legitimate stakeholders to the crime in the process. The approaches gave significant roles in the justice process by engaging all the parties affected by the conflict; offenders, their respective family members and the members of the community. Furthermore, victims were given a chance to physically meet the offender in a safe environment to discuss the crime, harm and the appropriate responses, thereby creating spaces which resolved the conflict. The inclusion and full involvement of all the stake holders according to Wenzel, empowers the victims, at least symbolically.<sup>662</sup> In Wenzel's opinion, while committing the crime, the offenders take advantage of their victims, put themselves above others and assume a position of superiority, disrespect of the victims and their rights, express low regard for them. Consequently, victims feel humiliated and disempowered.<sup>663</sup> However, under approaches such as the dare offenders are mostly required to admit their wrongdoing to show remorse and to offer an apology and ask for forgiveness.

Wenzel further points out that the offenders' admission of wrong doing indicates that their appropriation of power was illegitimate, their concession that they owe the victim an apology amounts to an acknowledgement of their rights and an expression of respect for them, thereby

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<sup>660</sup> Interview with chief Mazungunye, Bikita, 18 May 2013.

<sup>661</sup> Interview with Mrs Emma Chivasa, Matsai, 17 June 2012.

<sup>662</sup> Michael Wenzel, "Retributive and Restorative Justice," *Law Hum, Behave*, vol.32,( 2008), p. 19

<sup>663</sup> Ibid.

restoring their power or status relation<sup>664</sup>. Fritz Heider is also of the opinion that offenders' request for forgiveness subject them to the victim's will to grant the same, and by granting forgiveness, victims can assert a moral superiority and their magnanimity emphasizes the offenders' "inferiority", thereby restoring the power or status relation.<sup>665</sup> As such, dare empowers the victim by allowing them to participate in the resolution of conflict and reconciliation processes. In addition, victims are also given a chance to suggest ways of resolving the conflict and addressing the harm. Paul McCold plausibly stated that "what brings the most healing and the best way for individuals affected by the crime to readily meet their needs is the very act of participating in the process and in deciding what will happen."<sup>666</sup>

Similarly, indigenous approaches also empower the offender by giving him or her the chance to be involved in the process, in the discussion with the victim and other members of the community and in the determination of his own punishment. The community's participation in the dare is also a sign of their empowerment. The involvement enables them to identify and address the root causes of the conflict so as to prevent the commission of further crimes or the resurfacing of the same conflict. As observed by Howard Zehr, no one knows better than the community the root causes of the crime committed within a community.<sup>667</sup> Through the dare approach, the community is given an opportunity to "own their conflict and its resolution"<sup>668</sup> In addition to giving victims and offenders a bigger role in the process of resolving conflicts, the indigenous approaches used in Bikita also recognize the community as victims of the crimes and their role in the justice making process by opening spaces for the community to freely express their opinions, feelings and determine the appropriate action to resolve conflict.

### 6.7.2 *The Kunyaradza/ Consolation Approach*

Chiefs Chiduku, Mabika, Mazungunye and Mukanganwi explained that in cases where a victim was beaten up by unknown offenders or where one's property or homestead was burnt

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<sup>664</sup> Ibid.

<sup>665</sup> Heider Fritz, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*, New York: Wiley, 1958.

<sup>666</sup> Paul Mc Cold, "What is the role of the Community in Restorative Justice, Theory and Practice?", in Howard Zehr and Toews B, eds., *Critical Issues in Restorative Justice*, Boulder, Co: Lynne Rinner Publishers, 2010, p.156. 124, p. 168.

<sup>667</sup> Robin Anthony Duff, "Alternative to Punishment/Altanate Punishments" in W Grass, ed., *Retributivism and its Critics*, Stuttgart: Frame Steiner Verlas, p. 15.1

Also see Howard Zehr, *The Little Hand Book of Restorative Justice*, Intercourse: GoodBooks, 2002, p.40.

<sup>668</sup> Nil Christie, "Conflict as Property", *The British Journal of Criminology*, vol.17,no.1 (1977), p. 4



down by unknown offenders the traditional local leadership consoled victims. Victims often approached the chief's court in tears and helplessness. In such cases:

We allowed victims to cry or pour out their hearts to us. In the process, the victims' lived experiences were revealed as well as the depth and breadth of atrocities committed against them. It is important to let victims pour out to the community how they feel about their betrayal at the hands of family members, or neighbours or any other offender. This gives the community a chance to hear and to acknowledge its failure to protect its people. It gives us the chance to apologize to the victims for failing to protect them. In such cases, attention was given to the experiences of the victims<sup>669</sup>.

They offered words of hope and encouragement to victims of political violence:

In cases where the offenders were not known all we could do was to console the victims, kunyaradza vatadzirwa. As the local leadership we identified ourselves with our people's pain and acknowledged their suffering. Our words of comforting attempted to make them realize that at a time of elections or chaos such things happen and that unfortunately some people emerge from the chaos as victims. Taivanyaradza tichitaura kuti zvinhu zvakadaro zvinowanikwa muhondo kana munguva dzakaita sedzesarudzo. We comforted victims by showing them that they were not alone in their suffering, but the whole community also suffered their pain with them or has been tortured, victimized and traumatized by the political violence that was experienced by the community.<sup>670</sup>

As observed by Erin Daly and Jeremy Sarkin, it is in the willingness to embrace pain of betrayal and of being betrayed that the victims' heart begins to let go of the desire to revenge.<sup>671</sup> Daly and Sarkin further assert that victims should be allowed to be angry or to display their anger because they had been violated as human beings. Society or the community leaders should then acknowledge that the victims' anger is/was justified because their humanity was violated.<sup>672</sup> According to Kumar Krishna it is necessary to acknowledge the victim's anger instead of marginalising it. If not positively redirected, anger can negatively

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<sup>669</sup>Interview with chiefs Mabika, 20 December 2014; Chief Mukanganwi 5 January 2015.

<sup>670</sup> Interview with chief Chiduku, Leopard Rock Hotel, Vumba, February 2015.

<sup>671</sup> See Erin Daly and Jeremy Sakin, *Reconciliation in Divided Societies: Finding Common Ground*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007; Sarkin Jeremy, "Dealing with Past Human Rights Abuse: Promoting Reconciliation in a Future Democratic Burma," *Legal Issues on Burma Journal*, 7, 2000.

<sup>672</sup> Erin Daly and Jeremy Sakin, *Reconciliation in Divided Societies: Finding Common Ground*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007

affect the personal, social and spiritual well-being of the survivors. As the anger can be directed towards spouses, children and church or even the local leadership.<sup>673</sup>

According to chief Chiduku, the kunyaradza/ consolation approach helped victims in relieving them of their pain and suffering because the community and its traditional leadership had shown care and concern for victims.<sup>674</sup> Chief Mabika pointed out that victims often stress the singularity and specificity of their suffering in a way that excluded the wider community.<sup>675</sup> In contrast the Kunyaradza approach comforted and consoled victims making them realize that their suffering was shared by others. By taking the stance that an injury to a member of the community was an injury to the whole community, the approach constructed a new political identity, that of a national victim. In this sense, individual suffering was brought into the public space where it was collectivized and shared by all the members of the Bikita community and merged into the wider narrative of communal redemption. Chief Chiduku stated that:

We were and still are of the opinion that if the healing process is to be effective, there was need to allow people to tell their story to a loving, concerned, caring, empathetic and non-judgmental audience. This way, we allowed victims to name their grief.<sup>676</sup>

In Chip Dobbs- Allsop's opinion, when grief is named, grief itself becomes owned, valorised and thus consolable and healable.<sup>677</sup> The kunyaradza approach therefore lifted pain and suffering out of the mundane world of individuals and their profane everyday pain to the sacred image of the community. In chief Mukanganwi's opinion this approach started the healing approach because first of all the victim was afforded an opportunity to tell their story to a caring audience. This on its own is therapeutic. <sup>678</sup>. Secondly, the fact that the offender was not known did not mean that the victim's pain should be left unattended. Kunyaradza attended to the victim's inner pain by offering words of comfort and hope. Words of comfort and hope coming from neighbours buttress the victims' dignity and worthiness within the community. As observed by headman Mukanga, usually after these discussions it was common to find victims prepared to forget about their nasty experiences, forgive the

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<sup>673</sup> Kumar Krishna ,” Promoting Social Reconciliation in Post Conflict Societies: Selected Lessons From USAID's Experience,” *US Aid Program and Operations Assessment Report 24* ,U.S Agency for International Development: , Centre for Development Information and Evaluation, 1999

<sup>674</sup> Interview with chief Chiduku, Leopard Rock, Vumba, 25 February 2015.

<sup>675</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai, 2 March 2015

<sup>676</sup> Interview with chief Chiduku, 25 February 2015, Leopard Rock Hotel, Vumba.

<sup>677</sup> Citation by Dobbs- Allsop From Richard Wilson, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State*, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 37

<sup>678</sup> Interview with chief Mukanganwi, Bikita 10 January 2015.

offenders, pick up the pieces of their lives and move on. The headman explained that neighbours would also continue making follow-ups on how the victim was faring after the painful ordeal, “just to make sure that they were coping”.<sup>679</sup> With a supportive community to fall back on a number of political victims were able to start the healing process. Their trust and confidence in the wider community was again restored, thereby reconciling them with the wider community.

### *6.7.3 The Kubatsirana/ Help Offering Approach*

In Shona culture, people are not seen as isolated individuals but as profoundly interdependent. As a result community members as church groups or villagers assisted each other materially and emotionally to cope with the effects of political violence. It emerged that in some cases political violence resulted in the destruction of entire homesteads and a family's belongings and property, so much that the victimized families will not have anything to fall back on. In Matsai, chief Mabika cited the cases of the Munyoro, Damba, Gavhure and Makamure families whose homesteads together with property were gutted down by fire just before the 2008 presidential run-off elections. In addition, a case of granny Jaheni was also cited. Granny Jaheni's grandson, Munyaradzi was involved in politics, campaigning for a local party. The opposition gutted down the old lady's homestead that she too was left with nothing. Chiefs confirmed that cases where people's homes and belongings were gutted down by fire had become common just before the election.

In such cases, as the leadership of the people we urged neighbors to assist the victims. Each villager was called upon to help in the form of thatching grass, poles, and bricks. Known builders within the villages were tasked to help with their labor and expertise. The community or village would come together to assist fellow villagers. In shona we say “Kutsva kwendebvu varume tinodzimirana- when one of us is in trouble we all chip in and assist.”<sup>680</sup>

Asked whether many people were for the idea of assisting the victims the chiefs explained that in rural communities people help or assist each other, even strangers are offered food. They explained that the manner in which people assist each other at funerals is the same way they assisted each other in dealing with the effects of political violence. At funerals people

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<sup>679</sup> Interview with headman Morris Mukanga, Matsai 7 January 2015.

<sup>680</sup> Interview with chief chiduku, Leopard Rock Hotel, 25 February 2015, Vumba.

bring mealie-meal, cabbages, firewood, others assist with the cooking or washing of dishes. So even in these cases, women would cook for the men building the houses, some brought relish, or mealie-meal, others fetched the water needed, and people come together in times of crisis-tinoita chirwirangwe.

Again this approach was effective in healing and reconciling victims. Kubatsira is actually a tenet of Shona culture, secondly, the compensation although it was done by the community on behalf of the offenders, facilitated the first steps towards healing. Furthermore, this approach shows that healing and reconciliation should move beyond the individual to embrace the wider community. The wider community should harness its resources to assist victims to heal. According to chief Chiduku, this approach addressed the victims' despair, insecurity and worthiness. Through the help offered by the community, victims were reconnected to the collective society. This way feelings of isolation, insecurity and resultant helplessness were shattered.<sup>681</sup> In agreement with the above view is Chief Mazungunye who also observed that approaches such as kubatsirana enabled people to overcome crippling or destructive emotions and behaviours and therefore lead to fuller, more satisfying and socially constructive lives.<sup>682</sup> Most respondents indicated that these indigenous community activities and interventions were a success because they were directed by the community itself. The interventions were not applied outside the community or people's cultural and normative moral understanding. The same observation was made by Mogobe Ramose<sup>683</sup> and Eghosa Osaghae<sup>684</sup> who stated that healing and reconciliation of torn relationships can only be fully understood in the context of community processes. Thus, chief Chiduku warns that in communities, healing and reconciliation is unlikely to happen without some form of community support and involvement. One should know that whilst healing is often sought at individual level, it is dependent upon the social context.<sup>685</sup> In support, Brandon Hamber argues that there is no healing and reconciliation process, but what is called for is a blend of transforming activities at community level, while attending to individual and community needs.<sup>686</sup>

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<sup>681</sup>Ibid.

<sup>682</sup> Interview with chief Mazungunye, Bikita, 3 May 2015.

<sup>683</sup>Mogobe. B Ramose M.B, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, Harare: Mond Books, 1999.

<sup>684</sup>Osaghae Eghosa, "Applying Traditional Methods to Modern Conflicts: Possibilities and Limits," in William Zartman, ed., *Traditional Cures for Modern Medicines*, pp.201-218.

<sup>685</sup>Interview with chief Chiduku, 25 February 2015, Leopard Rock., Vumba.

<sup>686</sup> See Brandon Hamber, "Reparations and Paying for the Past," in Brandon Hamber, ed., *Transforming Societies after Political Violence: Truth, Reconciliation and Mental Health*, New York: Springer, 2009, pp96-116.

#### 6.7.4 Kutaurirana / Sustained Dialogue Approach

Respondents in Bikita explained that some conflicts emanating from post-independence electoral violence were resolved through sustained dialogue- kutaurirana. In Laurent Magesa's opinion, dialogue processes should be viewed as 'systematic and open-ended processes aimed at transforming conflictual relationships within communities over a period of time based on the assumption that misunderstandings are part of a society's well-being.<sup>687</sup>

According to Mrs Emma Nzira:

After elections many elders in Nyika took cases of youth and others who had taken advantage of electoral chaos to steal from neighbours to the headmen or chief for compensation. Angry victims in most cases made demands which in most cases were beyond the reach of the offenders' parents or relatives. Thus the community leadership and elders engaged in dialogue with the conflicting parties in an attempt to try and find a solution that was sustainable and agreeable to both parties. Through kutaurirana or sustained dialogue these cases were amicably resolved. Offenders accepted responsibility for their wrong actions and they were told to compensate victims. Through the kutaurirana approach, broken relationships that had been damaged by mistrust and hurtful experiences were restored.<sup>688</sup>

Respondents explained that most of the conflicts resolved after the 2008 elections lasted because of the effectiveness of dialogue as an approach. Dialogue becomes restorative when the parties involved come together and agree to put their differences aside,(kutadzirana kurimuvanhu, kuregererana ndokukuru) meaning to err is human, to forgive is divine. In cases of arson, destruction of property or theft, the aggrieved party must come up with reasonable compensatory demands and the guilty party must agree unconditionally to pay the compensation. Against this background, dialogue enabled the people of Bikita to restore strained relationships.<sup>689</sup> In addition, the community recognized the power intrinsic to the capacity for dialogue, especially restorative dialogue. Dialogue was important in that it allowed the two parties to build bridges with the ultimate objective to repair the social fabric and bring peace in the community. Thus, it was and still is believed that dialogue had the intrinsic power to bring restoration to strained relationships.<sup>690</sup>

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<sup>687</sup>See Laurent Magesa, *African Religion: Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, New York: Orbis Books, 1997; also see John Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophies*, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1970.

<sup>688</sup> Interview with Mrs Emma Nzira, Nyika, Bikita 15 February 2015.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid.

<sup>690</sup>Interview with chief Mukanganwi, Bikita, 5 March, 2013. Also see Olga Botcharova, "Implementation of track-two diplomacy: Developing a model of Forgiveness," Montiville John, *The Healing Function in Political*

### 6.7.5 Mediation

Chiefs in Bikita confirmed that they mediated in ngozi cases that were brought to them. Some of the cases involved locals within their areas of jurisprudence whilst some cases were of outsiders who had murdered someone from their chiefdoms and as such sought the chiefs' assistance in approaching the victim's family or to act as a mediator between the families. Thus, mediation can be defined as an attempt to settle disputes through active participation of a third party. According to Olga Botcharova, mediation is an act of reconciliation that is trying to unite and reach an agreement between conflicting parties.<sup>691</sup> After 2008 chiefs in Bikita confirmed that they acted as mediators. In line with track-two diplomacy, the task of chiefs, headmen and family friends (mediators) was to find points of agreement and make conflicting parties agree on a fair result.<sup>692</sup>

After the 2001 and 2008 electoral violence some youths and their families were troubled by ngozi spirits of those whom they had murdered. As such the offender's family sought the assistance of chiefs to mediate on behalf of their family with the victims' families. Chief Mazungunye recalled how he mediated the ngozi cases between the Mushava and Gumunyu families, the Murombo and Kachingwe families and the Kunyatura and Mukakurirei families among others after the 2008 elections. The mediator's role was to cool down tempers. The process and concept of mediation was guided by the principles of our lived culture and our perception of kupara mhosva. Pachivanhu, culturally, hunhu or the personhood of an individual was derived from one's historicity and rootedness in an on-going community.<sup>693</sup> Hunhu was concerned with tolerance, accommodativeness, forgiveness, understanding, unity, oneness and solidarity.<sup>694</sup> The principle of hunhu was applied in the mediation and resolution of conflicts to ensure that both the offender and the offended are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. Mediators made a clear distinction between the offender as a person and the offender's deeds, between being and doing when they mediated. What this meant was that it was the duty of the mediator to convince and make the victim's

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*Conflict Resolution*, p.115 and Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, Intercourse: Good books, 2002, p.40.

<sup>691</sup>See The Harvard Journal of Conflict Resolution,2009 (Cite the specific article)

<sup>692</sup>See What Olga Botcharova says about mediation in "Implementation of Track-two diplomacy."

<sup>693</sup> Ifeanyi. A.Menkit, *African Philosophy*, London, University Press, 1986, p34.Also Desmond Tutu of South African stresses the significance of Ubuntu in healing and reconciliation. He strongly believes that "you are because I am and as such a person with Ubuntu easily forgives others and respects others because they are humane.

<sup>694</sup> See Ephrain Taurai Gwavaranda, "Philosophical Principles in the Shona Traditional Court System," *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies* vol.2 (5), 2011; Mogobe Ramose, *African Philosophy Through Ubuntu*, Harare: Mond Books, 1999

family agree that the offender is an otherwise good person who has made a mistake and who has the potential to be corrected, forgiven and accepted back within the community. Because of the metaphysical assumption of the intrinsic worthiness of a person, (munhu, unhu), the offender was treated with respect even when found guilty.<sup>695</sup>

Once compensation was paid, relations were restored and the healing process would also begin for the victim's family. Traditional leaders have been acknowledged as trust-worthy mediators and peace builders. This relates to building and restoring relationships where they have been damaged by conflicts or disagreements. The fact that the ordinary people still refer to traditional leaders when they encounter conflicts or when seeking justice or when an offender seeks to engage a victim of his violent acts bears testimony to the effectiveness of traditional leadership and their approaches in terms of conflict transformation. According to Zartman, indigenous mechanisms of justice, rooted in local community customs gain their preference in responding to local conflicts because they evolve and are practiced for extended periods rather than being imposed or imported into societies.<sup>696</sup>

#### *6.7.6 Chiefly Meetings to Resolve Burning Issues within the Community.*

It also emerged that locals in Bikita requested through their local headmen and made use of meetings with chiefs to discuss burning issues within their communities. In 2009, chiefs Mabika and Chiduku recalled how headmen in their chiefdoms sought an audience with them to discuss the prevalence of political violence in their areas of jurisdiction during election times. As observed by chief Mabika:

These meetings were very essential in addressing issues of violence and conflict resolution. They opened a forum at the local level of issues which could not be openly discussed at national level. These meetings, facilitated by our headmen brought together groups of concerned men, women and community leaders to explore, as a united community, the root

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<sup>695</sup> According to African Philosophy, even if a person does wrong, he is still believed to be a good person otherwise and as such he or she is treated with respect. The offender is made to realise the effect of his actions on the community. In turn, the offender must or is expected to show genuine remorse for his actions, and then he/she must ask for forgiveness. A person with Ubuntu will grant others forgiveness bearing in mind that to err is human but to forgive is divine.

<sup>696</sup> Zartman, "Introduction," "African Traditional Conflicts, 'Medicine'" in William Zartman ed., *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts Medicine*, Boulder Co: Lynne Rienner, 2000.

causes of conflicts in their midst. In addition, during these meetings, strategies were developed to solve conflicts and improve relationships.<sup>697</sup>

In Chief Chiduku's opinion:

The most important achievement derived from these meetings was that both victims and perpetrators were engaged and contributed in the discussions that took place at such meetings. Through these meetings, community leaders and the ordinary person was made aware of certain conflicts and how they negatively impacted on individuals, families and the community at large. It emerged that everyone wanted peace and the community agreed on the nature of punishments or penalties to be given to offenders in future.<sup>698</sup>

Headmen Negovano and Mukanga explained how at these meetings headmen together with the local chiefs as facilitators. Chiefs and their headmen suggested approaches, forms of punishments or the penalty based on ground rules that are set by the community.<sup>699</sup> It is the duty of everyone who had attended the meetings to convey the decisions made at such meeting to members of their families and community. Parents warned their children against committing violence. The youth too had to think twice before committing crimes as they were fully aware of the penalties or punishments that accompanied acts of violence within their communities. At these meetings speakers were provided with an equal chance to speak up until a group consensus or agreement had been reached. The final agreement in the dispute solving process was signified by peace, togetherness and oneness. The community's desire to agree within a context of a group safeguarded the rights of opinion of individuals and minorities to enforce group or team solidarity. They believed that consensus brought lasting peace to disputes because it afforded community members ownership of reconciliation policy. In addition, group consensus also destroyed the barriers caused by polarization.<sup>700</sup>

#### *6.7.7 The meetings called by the chief.*

In Bikita chiefs also tried to engage their communities in discussing their views and opinions about how they feel about the culture of violence in their communities through meetings which they called. These meetings called for by chiefs were traditional approaches to conflict resolution. According to Chief Chiduku, when the Organ for National Healing approached

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<sup>697</sup>Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai, 20 December 2014.

<sup>698</sup> Interview with chief Chiduku, Leopard Rock Hotel, Vumba, 24 February 2015.

<sup>699</sup>Interview with Headmen Negovano and Mukanga, Matsai, 20 December 2015.

<sup>700</sup> Interview with chief Mazungunye, Bikita, 5 March 2013.



our communities inquiring about political violence we ordered them to stop, for that was not the procedure. The proper channel was and is to go through the chief, who would use his authority to call a meeting. You find that whenever a chief calls for a meeting everyone in the community attends as compared to a meeting called by an unknown organization.<sup>701</sup>

Our approach at these meetings was not to fan violence or trigger the desire for revenge as what most of these NGOs do by blatantly reminding a victim of what they went through. We provided a platform for people to air their views and determine the best solution. They decided on what action is to be taken so that when traditional leaders pass a judgment in future, the whole village, ward or community is expected to consent with the judgment passed<sup>702</sup>.

People explained that at these meetings chiefs toned down their language as it was no longer inflammatory or insensitive to victims nor was it judgmental and condemning to perpetrators. The language used is aimed at uniting people within communities. According to chief Marozva:

We have made use of the chiefs' meetings to discourage our people from engaging in acts of political violence. Drawing from examples they know of, and from their lived experiences within our communities, we make them realize how violence has resulted in the death of so and so, people known to them, or how violence has led to the destruction of Moyo or Musengi's property. We explained how politicians fan divisions and conflicts amongst us and disappear after elections leaving us divided and with blood on our hands. Through these engagements people were able to make serious reflections about issues of violence and many concluded that it was a vice that needed to be avoided.<sup>703</sup>

The approach enabled the local leadership and not the outsiders, in this case the Organ for National Healing, to initiate, engage the community and lead in conflict resolution and reconciliation. The outcome, according to the respondents was that the decisions, jointly developed and made at these meetings proved to be effective and long lasting as cases of political violence became minimal in 2013. What was agreed upon at these meetings was affirmed as a social contract, creating confidence in chiefs, headmen and the ordinary people to look to a future with improved relations, not only between the conflicting parties but also in the whole community involved. These approaches made great contributions to the

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<sup>701</sup>Interview with chief Chiduku, 25 February 2015 Leopard Rock, Vumba .

<sup>702</sup>Interview with Chief Chiduku, Vumba, Leopard Rock Hotel, 24 February 2015.

<sup>703</sup> Interview with Chief Marozva, Bikita, 19 November 2013.

development and stability of communities in Bikita. This is because meetings called by chiefs or headmen are grassroots approaches which engage the members of communities to discuss issues that have affected them and will continue harming them if not addressed. Traditional leaders are well positioned or placed to address matters of conflict resolution, community building, healing and reconciliation. They are also able to initiate change in an environment riddled with hostilities, anger, bitterness and hatred. In Richard Wilson's opinion, traditional leaders can effectively address issues of healing and reconciliation because they are positioned within rural communities which in most cases are the theatres of political violence. This places traditional leaders in proximity with each individual which builds trust, respect and confidence between those directly involved in the conflict.<sup>704</sup> As testimony to this argument, in the rural provinces of Rwanda, volunteer conflict transformation projects succeeded chiefly because traditional leaders were integrated into the local planning processes which catered for the development needs of the community.<sup>705</sup>

On the same note, Hugo Van De Merwe argues that processes of conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation led by traditional leaders comprising of chiefs, headmen and elders of the community largely succeed because traditional leaders are able to influence rural communities. Consequently, chiefs and headmen can change the perceptions of their followers and hostilities through their positions in the socio-political hierarchy.<sup>706</sup>

Thus, it can be argued that the meetings approaches initiated by traditional leaders in Bikita after the 2008 electoral violence were important in the transformation of communities in Bikita as they fostered harmony, a consensus common goal of peace, harmony and a consensus based approach to future conflicts. This clearly shows that healing and reconciliation is not attained or achieved automatically by mere public pronouncements through the public media but should be purposefully worked for, nurtured and should include all the stakeholders in a community if positive results are to be yielded. The community could effectively resolve its disputes because it had an unlimited capacity for consensus. In the opinion of the people of Bikita, conflict between the two parties not only disturbed the social

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<sup>704</sup> Richard Wilson, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimising the Post-Apartheid State*, New York NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p56

<sup>705</sup>See Martha Mutisi, "The Abunzi Mediation in Rwanda: Opportunities for Engaging with Traditional Institutions of Conflict Resolution," *ACCORD*, 2011.

<sup>706</sup> Hugo Van De Merwe, "National and Community Reconciliation: Competing Agendas in South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission," in Nigel Biggar, *Burying the Past: Making Peace and Doing Justice After Civil Conflict*, Washington DC: George Town University Press, 2003, pp.101-124.

harmony of the parties' families by the rift between the two parties in the same community but their daily economic and social activities within the community too. Thus, the community also felt that they were involved by virtue of being members of the same community to have a say concerning conflict and the violence that accompanied it. This explains the presence and role played by the public in the meetings called by the local traditional leadership. To the people of Bikita, conflicts not resolved were and still are regarded as festering wound which threaten the peace, harmony and social interest of the community. Hence the community felt it had to react against this danger in order to protect its vital interest of peace and harmony amongst its members.<sup>707</sup>

The search for consensus explains why the public was also involved in issues to do with conflict and its resolution as well as the proposed punishments or penalties to be meted out on offenders in future. The members of the community had a right to voice their opinion over any matter once the case had been "thrown to the dogs to chew." In essence the public was allowed to come in now and again whenever they felt that they had something important to contribute to the ultimate good of the community. The public also came in every time the formal proceedings seemed to be at a deadlock. In some cases it was the public which initiated the meetings and lead the chief or headman in the discussion that followed instead of being led by him.<sup>708</sup> It was still the community which decided the form of punishment to offenders as well as the compensation to be given to victims.

#### *6.7.8 The Chief's Month End Meetings.*

Chief Mabika also explained that chiefs in Bikita have made use of *misangano yepfiga mwedzi*, month ending meetings to discuss, warn youth and encourage parents to warn their children about committing acts of violence:

We tell women that they are the first teachers of the children and that every child hears its mother's voice. As such at these meetings we urge mothers to discuss the negative impact of violence with their children. The sorrow, shame and evil that a violent child brings to the family and how such behaviour creates tensions between the perpetrator's family and the wider community are issue which women as mothers should emphasize when teaching their children at home.<sup>709</sup>

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<sup>707</sup>Ibid.

<sup>708</sup> Interview with Tembo elders of Bikita, Shupikai, Run'anga, Matavire and Mbizi, Chiremwaremwa, 7 March 2013.

<sup>709</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai 4 May 2015.

These meetings have been used also to inform or update the community if there are any NGOs or civil society organizations in the community who intent to discuss issues of healing and reconciliation. According to pastor Mashoko of the Church of Christ in Bikita:

Churches offered group therapy and preached forgiveness and reconciliation. The prayers were offered and assured our congregants of God's forgiveness, self-worthy and gave victims hope. At church social spaces for confessions were created<sup>710</sup>.

### **6.8 Community Churches as agents of healing and Reconciliation.**

Churches as religious institutions are viewed as significant agents of healing and reconciliation. According to respondents community churches such as Church of Christ, the Roman Catholic Church at Silveira Mission, the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) in Bikita among others have also played an important role as far as the healing and reconciliation of victims and perpetrators of the post-independence era was concerned within the district.

According to Father D:

In 2008, the Catholic Church among other denominations assisted many people who were in anguish. Dating from the liberation struggle of this country, the Catholic Church has saved as a vehicle and advocate for those in spiritual and emotional distress. At this mission (Silveira) we offered shelter, food, spiritual solace and free medication to victims of political violence. We were their pillar of strength to move on with life while accepting what had happened to them.<sup>711</sup>

The Bikita case study showed that the church attended to the spiritual and psychological needs of both victims and perpetrators. This was confirmed by pastor Mashoko of Church of Christ in Bikita. He explained that political victims sought refuge at the church during elections while some with destroyed property or who had been beaten also approached the church for protection:

As religious institutions we helped survivors manage these difficult moments by finding healthy ways to manage internal and external reactions. We consoled and counselled them urging them to forgive those who had violated them. Even in our church services we preached the forgiveness of our enemies as demonstrated by Joseph in Genesis 45 verse 17-

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<sup>710</sup> Interview with Pastor Mashoko, Church of Christ Mukanga Assembly 3 May 2015.

<sup>711</sup> Interview with Father D, Silveira Mission Bikita 5 May 2015.

20. We also preached that understanding God`s forgiveness should make us more willing to forgive.<sup>712</sup>

For Bishop K of ZCC in Bikita, their church contributed a lot in the healing and reconciliation process after the 2008 electoral violence:

We worked with the chiefs who also encouraged and urged us to assist in helping victims of political violence. At church we often told our congregants that forgiveness brings freedom and dignity. Leviticus 26:13 says “we too can walk with dignity because God has forgiven us and forgotten them”. We also explain that God will not forgive those who do not forgive others Mat 6: 14-15 so we urged victims not to withhold forgiveness from others in accordance with Romans Matt 18:35.<sup>713</sup>

Many of those victimized were willing to let go of bitterness and anger after our counselling sessions or even after our teachings. People were able to forgive and move on with their lives. As such our interventions were successful. Forgiveness is the first step in restoring relationships, Matt 5:32. It changes bitterness to joy according to Luke 15:30. Furthermore, Luke 23:34 shows that Jesus forgave his murderers<sup>714</sup>.

Mrs Makanaka Kashiri, a victim whose husband Tonderai Kashiri died due to injuries sustained during beatings in 2008 had this to say:

The pastor and church members helped me to cope with the pain and anger that I felt against my husband`s attackers whom I did not even know. I was taught to pray instead of seeking revenge. Pastor JK explained that David never took revenge on Soul, 2 Sam 3: 26-29. I was taught that revenge must be left to God, Genesis 34:30-31. Through the help and support that I got from the church, I have moved on, I have forgiven those people and I am at peace. I think I have healed, thanks to the church. The love, support and care they showed me enabled me to pull through.<sup>715</sup>

According to Pastor Pius Jekero the church discouraged individual victims and families to take revenge or even to entertain thoughts of revenge:

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<sup>712</sup>Interview with pastor Mashoko, Bikita, 4 May 2015.

<sup>713</sup>Interview with pastor K of ZCC Bikita, 5 May 2015.

<sup>714</sup> Interview with elder Mukhavi of ZCC Bikita, 5 May 2015.

<sup>715</sup> Interview with Mrs Makanaka Kashiri, Bikita 5 May 2015.

We taught or counselled that revenge is an uncontrolled monster. Each act of retaliation brings another. It is a boomerang that cannot be thrown without costs to the thrower. The revenge cycle can be halted only by forgiveness<sup>716</sup>.

Thus, the church's usage of Biblical material to combat anxiety and arouse hope had therapeutic effects. The church's messages of forgiveness, revenge, justice and acceptance were important and central principles that promoted healing and reconciliation. In essence, these messages awakened in people a restoration of trust and enabled positive transformation. Through forgiveness, the perpetrator is released by the survivor which also releases the survivor from feelings of bitterness, anger and the desire to revenge. Christian groups offered group therapy as social spaces for victims to narrate their lived and experienced ordeals at the hands of offenders were created. This way their fears, anger and anxieties were expressed and emptied. For many, speaking out is therapeutic and can be the first step towards healing. In David Maxwell's opinion, healing is a totality of activities and ideas which help both individuals and the wider community to come to terms with the experience of violence and bereavement caused by the war in a manner which allows them to continue their daily existence.<sup>717</sup>

In addition, the Bikita case study showed that the church also assisted victims as well as perpetrators. Chief Mabika also confirmed that some perpetrators, the youth in particular, were also delivered from destructive activities after peace crusades that were conducted by some churches in the district.<sup>718</sup> On the same note Father M said:

We believe that anyone should be given an opportunity to transform, no matter how heinous their acts might have been. Perpetrators too need to be redeemed, liberated and accepted back into the community. After the 2008 violence, our church provided space to the perpetrators who were remorseful and desired to be forgiven and reconciled with those whom they had deliberately offended. The church supported them in their desire to change and to act differently.<sup>719</sup>

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<sup>716</sup> Interview with Pastor Pius Jekero AFM Assembly Matsai, 4 May 2015.

<sup>717</sup> David Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe: A Social History of the Hwesa People, c.1870s-1990s*, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1999

<sup>718</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, 3 May 2015, Matsai.

<sup>719</sup> Interview with Father M Silveira Mission, Bikita 4 May 2015.

It emerged that consumed with feelings of guilt, remorse, sadness, self-condemnation and distress perpetrators as individuals or with the help of family or friends, approached religious institutions for help. Here, they were encouraged to confess or confide to pastors what was troubling them, what role they played and why. Confessions relieved perpetrators of the burden of guilty which they would have been carrying. Thus, it also emerged that the church provided a healing setting that allowed victims and perpetrators to tell their story, a setting that was safe. Church premises provided a secure place where empathy and compassion was possible. According to Pastor Pius Jekero, this setting offered perpetrators an opportunity to “empty” their inner thoughts and feelings in an open spiritual atmosphere devoid of judgment.<sup>720</sup>

For both victims and perpetrators, God was and is seen not only as a vast impersonal consciousness but as a divine presence in control of human fate and the answer to human issues. To many, developing an inner personal relationship with this divine presence helped both victims and perpetrators to overcome the effects of violence and traumatic experiences. Father M explained that chiefs are happy and can testify to the fact that after our interventions their people are attending to each other’s funerals and helping each other in moments of needs or crisis.<sup>721</sup>

## **6.9 Conclusion**

The above approaches carried out by families and individuals amid community leadership at grassroots level bear testimony to the fact that indigenous approaches which involve the ordinary public at the same time engaging victims and perpetrators, were successful in healing and reconciling the community after the post –independence era.

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<sup>720</sup> Interview with pastor Pius Jekero AFM Matsai, Mukanga Assembly, 4 May 2015.

<sup>721</sup> Interview with Father M, Silveira Mission, Bikita , 4 May 2015.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### 7.1 Conclusion

This thesis is a context –sensitive interrogation of conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation processes and practises adopted by the Zimbabwean state and communities in trying to deal with the legacies of conflict and violence. The study argues that Zimbabwe’s diverse temporal phases namely the colonial interlude, the liberation milieu and the post-colonial dispensation were largely littered with violence and conflicts. In addition, the study further unpacks how the country’s different political transaction from 1980 right up to 2015 was littered by violence. The colonial period provoked conflicts and violence whilst the liberation era was also a theatre of violence as the Rhodesian settler government brutality provoked African nationalist counter-violence. The brutality perpetrated on the Africans by the settler regime had far-reaching implications for human rights issues. The study also argues that nationalist liberation was also affected by what Masipula Sithole called “struggles within the struggle.”<sup>722</sup> In the process of liberating the country, the liberation movements and guerrillas unleashed violence on the civilians. The post colonial dispensation saw Zimbabwe plunged into yet fresh waves of violence. Ndlovu-Gatsheni is of the opinion that incomplete decolonisation provoked the Third Chimurenga/Hondo Yeminda.<sup>723</sup> Post 2000 political struggles included bitter contestations for political power between the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU –PF) against the opposition Movement for Democratic Change MDC formations. These political contestations provoked election related violence.<sup>724</sup> As such, election times have not been peaceful in Zimbabwe where belonging to different political formations provoked hatred and violence. As a result of these realities, conflict and violence continue to be a major challenge in Zimbabwe.<sup>725</sup>

Within this backdrop, the study goes on to examine the policies and measures put in place by the state in an attempt to deal with challenges of healing and reconciliation. It

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<sup>722</sup> M.Sithole, *Struggles within the Struggle*, Zimbabwe:Struggles within the struggle, Harare, Rujeko Publishers, 1979, vii.

<sup>723</sup> S.Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Benyera .E.Towards a Framework for resolving the justice and reconciliation Question in Zimbabwe, in *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol.15, no.2, 2015, pg9-33.Post-

<sup>724</sup>See Sadomba.Z.W.War-Veterans in Zimbabwe’s Revolution: Challenging Neo-Colonialism, Settler and International Capital, Harare, Weaver Press, pg229.

<sup>725</sup> Sachikonye, I.M.The Nation-State Project and Conflict in Zimbabwe.In: Olukoshi Adebayo. O and Liisa Laarso (eds).Challenges to the Nation-State in Africa.Uppsala, Nordic Africa Institute, pp136-153.



emerged that amnesties, presidential pardons and amnesia are among the common policies adopted by the Zimbabwean government to deal with legacies of conflict and violence. These amnesties and ordinances gave unfettered immunity from prosecution and accountability to all those accused of perpetrating violence and gross violation of human rights during the war 1970s or election times in the post-2000 era. These amnesties gave blanket immunity thereby stifling the process of truth telling, truth recovery, healing and reconciliation. Amnesia also became the Zimbabwean state's official position with regard to past human rights abuses. According to Tendi, amnesia is a policy which entails the conscious decision by the government not to investigate past atrocities on the grounds that such investigations will jeopardise prevailing peacebuilding efforts.<sup>726</sup> Thus Zimbabwe's first policy of reconciliation was informed and embedded in amnesia. This policy implored Zimbabweans to "forgive and forget" and let "bygones be bygones" as far as past human rights atrocities were concerned. In Nyarota's opinion, this approach marked the death of statist justice and reconciliation mechanism.<sup>727</sup> Mashingaidze argues that although the policy was internationally acclaimed and appropriate for the time, it was elitist in outlook and failed to attend to the wounds, feelings and cultural nuances of the victims. He further argues that the other weakness of the policy was that while it focused mainly on reconciliation and forgiveness between blacks and whites, the policy ignored intra-black forgiveness and reconciliation.<sup>728</sup> In addition, the study also posits that on its part, the 2008 Organ for National Healing and Reconciliation (ONHRI) failed to achieve healing and reconciliation given the lack of political will on the part of the Zimbabwean government.<sup>729</sup> The same observation was also made by Machakanja who noted how continued impunity during the tenure of the 2008 Government of National Unity (GNU) undermined the concept of social cohesion, national healing and reconciliation.<sup>730</sup>

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<sup>726</sup> Tendi, B. *Making History in Mugabe's Zimbabwe: Politics, Intellectuals, and the Media*. vol.4. New York, Peter Lang, 2010, pg. 218.

<sup>727</sup> Nyarota, G. *Against the grain: Memoirs of a Zimbabwean newsman*. Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2006, pg.145.

<sup>728</sup> Mashingaidze, T.M. *Zimbabwe's Elusive National Healing and Reconciliation Processes: From Independence to the Inclusive Government 1980-2009*. *Conflict Trends*, 2010 (1), pp19-28.

<sup>729</sup> In a Public Lecture delivered at the Department of Political Sciences, at the University of Zimbabwe in October 2008, Jonathan Moyo cites the lack of political will to implement government policies and decisions as one of the shortcomings of healing and reconciliation mechanisms in Zimbabwe. He referred to this lack of political will as *implementesis*. *He attributes implementesis to the employing of state organs to prosecute the state, which in itself is a major perpetrator of gross violations of human rights. He is of the opinion that this explains the state's perennial proclivity towards amnesia.*

<sup>730</sup> Machakanja, P. *National Healing and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe: Challenges and Opportunities*. Zimbabwe Monograph Series No.1. Cape Town, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2010, pg.5.

In tandem with the above , the thesis` central agument is: State-centric approaches may not be effective to attend to the challenges faced by communities emerging from conflict and violence unless they are coordinated and harmonized with indigenous approaches of healing and reconciliation.As such the thesis has taken the view that state-driven Western approaches to conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation have a plethora of challenges that constrain them from sustainably resolving complex conflicts, revitalize the eroded social values and integrate the divided parties in a community. As the Bikita case study has shown, state-driven Western approaches proved to be inadequate in promoting healing and reconciliation. Amnesties, national policies of healing and reconciliation, the erection of the tomb of the unknown soldier and selective reparations did very little in resolving the socio-psychological aspects of conflicts. In addition, the frustrations, animosities and anger that developed and became deep-rooted among the conflicting parties remained unattended. As the study has shown, these approaches failed to expedite the delivery of justice in ways that the majority of the people understood and culturally identified with.

The thesis argued that understanding the limits of what state-driven Western approaches can achieve is the only way to understand why the national policy of reconciliation or the Organ of National Healing Reconciliation and Integration for example,was not considered as legitimate by most Zimbabweans. As such there is need for peace experts, politicians, state leaders, historians and scholars to be more cautious of what state-driven Western approaches can accomplish, and give greater attention to a realist investigation of what the ordinary victimized individuals, families and communities benefit from such policies and what level of legitimacy such approaches have at grassroots level. Furthermore, this critical attitude requires us to consider closely the motivation of the state leadership in putting in place some of the policies such as the issuing of presidential amnesties and pardons, proclamation of national policies of reconciliation and blanket amnesties and the sociological consequences such policies create. The Bikita case study has shown that the government does not exalt approaches like blanket amnesties and presidential pardons to offenders solely because such approaches enable it to preserve the fragile peace of the country but also because such approaches allow the leadership to protect many of its elites who have been perpetrators of political crimes and violence over the years.

This thesis argued that conflict resolution, justice, healing and reconciliation are a set of complex tasks that deserve to be approached through multi-faceted, multi-layered and multi-sectorial strategies. As the Bikita case study has shown, indigenous approaches of conflict resolution such as the *dare* approach, rituals and burial rites as well as cleansing ceremonies and individual compensation at community level effectively resolved most conflicts, making healing and reconciliation possible. The case has shown that indigenous approaches are instrumental tools for realizing the essential elements of conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation, namely truth, reparations and accountability. Views from the case study strongly indicate the need to formally accommodate community driven indigenous approaches of conflict resolution to compliment state-driven formal approaches or mechanisms. Through the formal adoption of indigenous approaches, what could have not been accomplished by state-driven approaches can be supplemented by community home-grown mechanisms. In this way the major role of grassroots, indigenous approaches would be that of filling up gaps that would not have been filled by state-driven formal approaches.

The thesis argued that peace experts, scholars in the field of peace, historians and policy makers must reflect on the added advantages of adopting a multi-faceted approach to conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation through the co-option of indigenous approaches. The accommodation of indigenous approaches to issues of healing and reconciliation addresses the problem of legitimacy and ownership of peace projects. In most rural areas, perceptions about state-driven formal approaches such as the criminal prosecutions through the courts of law or amnesties view such initiatives as the Western ways of doing things. Such approaches of doing things are not in sync with the socio-cultural habits of the population in their daily activities. Since such approaches are perceived as Western, they are accused of being far removed from the ordinary people's customs and cultural values and norms. To that extent, the thesis argued that the adoption of indigenous approaches enhances the capacity of local communities to take ownership over justice initiatives. Furthermore, such approaches create room for local communities to develop the required self-confidence for partnership with state apparatus which are widely seen as oppressive machineries given the involvement of the state in political violence. The Bikita case study has highlighted a great deal of scepticism towards the entire state apparatus because of the leading role played by state organs as perpetrators of political violence.

The study also revealed that healing and reconciliation has to be localized if they are to be effectively achieved. The study indicated that communities themselves prefer taking primary ownership over the establishment of programs, deciding the type of an approach or intervention suitable for victims or perpetrators or for a particular nature of violation. Ownership over the healing and reconciliation programs enable local communities to decide actors to be involved and the values which will guide their work. Such approaches enable communities to devise their own benchmarks as part of a broader “legitimate process.” The involvement of the community, victims and perpetrators in finding solutions to conflict adds transparency, accountability, legitimacy and most importantly minimizes the risk of renewed conflict.

The study observed that the essential elements of conflict resolution are truth, accountability, reparation, healing and reconciliation, elements that indigenous approaches reinforce. As such it would be unwise for policy makers or those in the field of peace and reconciliation to dismiss such approaches as trivial and archaic. Whilst the thesis has highlighted the ineffectiveness of state-driven approaches, exposing the efficacy of indigenous approaches in the process, it is argued in the study that indigenous approaches do have limitations. In most cases women are excluded from community decision making processes. Furthermore, indigenous approaches neglect the youth who are the main actors in conflict. The youth, as the case study has shown is the core group in initiating and escalating conflicts yet they are not included or represented in the council of elders who mediate or resolve conflicts. Thus, indigenous approaches mainly suffer from representational problems. As such there is need either to reform or supplement these approaches by distributive justice. Indigenous approaches can be complimented with other mechanisms that are responsive to contemporary challenges. In this case the reform agenda can best serve its purposes if the limitations of indigenous approaches are supplemented by principles of distributive justice. Reform may also include approaches that include women and youth in conflict resolution and reconciliation processes.

Overall, my study has made contributions to debates on peace building, conflict resolution and transitional justices in Zimbabwe. Research on transitional justice in Zimbabwe critique state-centric and top-down approaches such as clemency orders and amnesties without giving a realistic alternative of how these top-down state-centric approaches can be enhanced by approaches that involve the grassroots. Leading scholars and

exponents of the liberal peace paradigm such as Brian Raftopoulos, Lloyd Sachikonye, and Sheri Eppel among others underscore the need for institutional reforms and transformation. These scholars argue for transitional justice mechanisms centered on institutional arrangements that are most likely to maintain peace such as the establishment of professional and non-partisan judiciary, army, police and intelligence services as well as the liberalization of the economy. The thrust of their argument is that entrenched political, socio-economic and institutional inequalities have to be restructured and made much more inclusive and merit based. Noble and sensible as their approaches to issues of healing and reconciliation may sound, this perspective, however, does not pay much attention to the history, cultural norms, wounds ,feelings and deeply rooted perceptions of the victimized individuals and communities.

My approach attempts to recast bottom-up indigenous approaches to conflict resolution, revealing the agency of “ordinary people” in the process. Such focus reveals everyday practices, local level perspectives of justice and culturally sensitive methods of resolving harmful and fragmenting differences in communities. This is the thesis` seminal contribution to discourses on conflict resolution both within Zimbabwe and outside. In addition, my thesis also compliments literature on endogenous approaches to healing and reconciliation such as Rwanda`s much celebrated *gacaca* courts.

There are, however a number of themes discussed in the thesis that require further inquiry. Practitioners of peace and policy makers often concentrate on military and police reform, institutional development and security and lose sight of women, children and youth. Women are the major victims of political violence. Contrastively, the youth are the major participants in initiating, escalating and perpetuating violence. Thus, a post-conflict recovery program that ignores women and youth has no deep foundations. To this extent the role of women and youth in terms of conflict and their potential within post-conflict recovery is another area that still needs research.

In addition to the above, the role of the international community in processes of healing and reconciliation is also another area that needs research. How the international community can support or create favourable conditions for conciliatory processes and the effectiveness of such interventions needs to be researched on. Finally, Civil Society Organizations champion the role of human rights in reconciliation processes. Civil Society

Organizations treat human rights as full-blown political mechanisms necessary in the delivery of justice and reconciliation. Thus, the role that human rights can play in establishing accountability and the rule of law is another area that needs further research.

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Interview with X (not real name), Chaplin High school Gweru, 10 December 2013.

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Interview with Mr Jeremiah Chinhengo, ex-Committee member- Food Aid 16 June 2013.

Interview with Mr Amos Zvirikuzhe, Bikita 16 September 2014..

Interview with Mrs Ruvarashe Murozvi, widow, Matsai, 17 June 2013.

Interview with B, (not real name), Matsai, 10 April 2013.

Interview with Bob Badza, Matsai, 24 August, 2013.

Interview with Amos Chirandu former Mujibha, Mashoko, 17 July 2013

Interview with Dudzai Mhere, Bikita, 15 May 2013.

Interview with Dudzai Mhere, Bikita, 15 May 2013.

Interview with Mrs Flower Moyo, Bikita 17 September 2013.

Interview with Mufudzi Chisi, Bikita, 17 September 2013.

Interview with Amos Makore, Ziki, 19 August 2013.

Interview with chief Mukanganwi, Nyika, 4 September 2013.

Interview with Zangure Nyangasere, traditional healer, Ziki, 4 August, 2013.

Interview with Aaron Jeke, Chimbwembwe, 12 August 2013

Interviews with Philip Chingweru and Adam Chatunga, deceased's relatives, 12 August 2013.

Interview with Nyasha Dera, Chimbwembwe village Matsai, , 12 August, 2013

Interview with Mark Ngoro, Jeremaih Shoko, Chamburukira, Bikita, 16 September 2013.

Interview with Mrs Ruzai Mukanga, Matsai, 11 August 2013.

Interview with Taruwanza Machonya, traditional healer, Matsai, 22 February 2013

Interview with Aaron Zindoga, elder, Bikita 22 May 2012.

Interview with Mrs Rudo Madzviti, Matsai, 19 June 2012.

Interview with Mr. Chengerai Chiwonyere, Bikita, 20 July 2012.

Interview with Wadzanai Gava, Matsai, 19 August 2012.

Interview with Chief Mabika, 19 June 2013,Matsa.

Interview ith chief Mazungunye, Bikita 2 August 2013.

Interview with Headman Mukanga, Matsai, 27 August 2012

Interview with Chief Mabika, Matsai, 27 August 2012

Interview with chief Mukanganwi, Bikita , 5 August 2013

Interview with chief Mukanganwi, Bikita 5 August 2013.

Interview with headman Buruuru, Matsai 11 August, 2013.

Interview with chief Mazungunye, Bikita, 4 August 2013.

Interview with MrTenadi Manhondo, Nyahunda, 11 June 2013.

Interview with Mr Mufudzi Gava, Matsai 19 August 2012.

Interview with Zangure Nyangasere Traditional healer, Mastai, 19 August 2013.

Interview with Mutumwa Negondo, traditional healer, Nyika, 7 August 2013.

Interview with Negondo, traditional healer, Nyika, 7 August 2013.

Interview with Nedowore, traditional healer, Ziki, 10 August 2013.

Interview with Max Chengerai, War-veteran, Matsai, 19 August 2013

Interview with Ngavaite Ngwena, traditional Healer, Nyika, 22 August 2013.

Interview with Cde Chombo, Gweru, 2 September 2013.

Interview with Cde Mabhunu Muchaparara, 2 September, 2013.

Interviews with the deceased's families, Bikita, Nyika, 19 September 2013.

Interview with Mrs Zvoma, Ruzivo`, Bikita, Nyika, 19 September, 2013

Interviews with deceased's family members, Chiremwaremwa, 10 September 2013.

Interview with Munatsi Shoko, Bikita, 28 September 2012.

Interview with Tendai Chimhosva, Bikita, 28 September 2012.

Interview with sekuru Taona Muwi, Matsai, Bikita, 17 July 2012.

Interview with sekuru Taona Muwi, Bikita, 17 July 2012.

Interview with tembo elders of Bikita, Shupikai, Run`anga, Matavire and Mbizi, Chiremwaremwa, 7 March 2013.

Interview with MR Fannison Gavi, Bikita 24 October 2014.

Interview with Mr James Madondo, Bikita, Nyika, 10 January 2014.

Interview with Mrs Maidei Muzvondiwa, Nyika, 15 August 2013

Interview with Ngonidzaishe Muchadehama, Bikita, 17 August 2013.

Interview with Nhamoo Chatunga, Nyika, 17 August 2013

Interview with Sherpherd Zvoma, Bikita, 18 August 2013.

Interviews with MR, PZ and GH, MDC supporters, Matsai 1 August 2013.

Interview with Mr Munatsi Tambarare, Matsai, 1 August 2013.

Interview with PZ ZANU PF supporter, Mastai, 1 August 2013.

Interview with GH, MDC supporter, Matsai, 1 August 2013

Interview with G, Bikita, 17 August 2014

<sup>1</sup>Interview with BS, headmen Bikita, 9 August 2013.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with PM Bikita, 11 June 2013.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with headman Maregere, Bikita 16 August 2014.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Peter, ZANU PF victim of Political violence, 16 August 2014.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with RM, 9 June 2013 Bikita East constituency.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Bonnie, Gura, then MDC councillor, Nyahunda, 16 August 2013.

,<sup>1</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai, 10 January 2014.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with chief Mazungunye, Bikita, 13 January 2014.

<sup>1</sup>Interview with Mrs Rhoda Mwedzi, Bikita 13 January 2014.

<sup>1</sup>Interview with Mr Wirisoni Gadzema, Bikita 13 January 2014.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Misheck Dzoro, Matsai, 20 December 2013.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Onismus Maroveke, Matsai, 20 December 2013.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with W, Minister, Harare, 6 January 2015.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mr Ngwenya, official of ORGAN, Midlands State University, Gweru, 6 March 2014.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mr. Gilbert Tarugarira, Lecturer Midlands State University, Gweru, 6 March 2014.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mr Hebert Chivaura, Midlands State University, Gweru, 6 March 2014.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Minister W, Harare, 6 January 2015

<sup>1</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai, 20 December 2014.

<sup>1</sup>Interview with Aaron Nyakunhuwa, Matsai, 20 December 2014.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Tapera Svondo, Matsai, 20 December 2014.

,<sup>1</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai 20 December 2014.

<sup>1</sup>Interview with Chief Chiduku, Leopard Rock Hotel, 24 February 2015.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai, 20 December 2014.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with chief Chiduku, Leopard Rock Hotel, 25 February 2015, Vumba.

- <sup>1</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai, 20 December 2014.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with Chief Mukanganwi, Bikita, 17 May 2013.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with Mr Farai Mamvura, Bikita 17 May 2013.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with chief Mazungunye, Bikita, 18 May 2013.
- <sup>1</sup>Interview with Mrs Emma Chivasa, Matsai, 17 June 2012.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with chief Chiduku, Leopard Rock Hotel, Vumba, February 2015.
- <sup>11</sup> Interview with chief Chiduku, Leopard Rock, Vumba, 25 February 2015.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai, 2 March 2015
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with chief Chiduku, 25 February 2015, Leopard Rock Hotel, Vumba.
- <sup>1</sup>Interview with chief Mukanganwi, Bikita 10 January 2015.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with headman Morris Mukanga, Matsai 7 January 2015.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with chief chiduku, Leopard Rock Hotel, 25 February 2015, Vumba.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with chief Mazungunye, Bikita, 3 May 2015.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with Mrs Emma Nzira, Nyika, Bikita 15 February 2015.
- <sup>1</sup>Interview with Headmen Negovano and Mukanga, Matsai, 20 December 2015.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with Tembo elders of Bikita, Shupikai, Run`anga, Matavire and Mbizi, Chiremwaremwa, 7 March 2013.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with chief Mabika, Matsai 4 May 2015.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with Pastor Mashoko, Church of Christ Mukanga Assembly 3 May 2015.
- <sup>1</sup>Interview with Father D, Silveira Mission Bikita 5 May 2015.
- <sup>1</sup>Interview with pastor Mashoko, Bikita, 4 May 2015.
- <sup>1</sup>Interview with pastor K of ZCC Bikita, 5 May 2015.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with elder Mukhavi of ZCC Bikita, 5 May 2015.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with Mrs Makanaka Kashiri, Bikita 5 May 2015.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with Pastor Pius Jekero AFM Assembly Matsai, 4 May 2015.
- <sup>1</sup>Interview with chief Mabika, 3 May 2015, Matsai.
- <sup>1</sup> Interview with Father M Silveira Mission, Bikita 4 May 2015.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with pastor Pius Jekero AFM Matsai, Mukanga Assembly, 4 May 2015.

Focus group Discussion held in Nyahunda, 12 April 2013.

Focus Group Discussion Held at Svike-Svike and Makondo with villagers, 19 March 2013

Focus group discussion held at Chief Mazungunye`s homestead, Nyika, Bikita, 17 June 2013.

Focus Group Discussion held in at Nyika, Bikita, 17 June 2013.

Focus Group discussions held at Mabika`s homestead Bikita, 17 December 2013.

Focus Group discussions held at Mabika`s homestead Bikita, 17 December 2013.

Focus group discussion held on the 8 .July 2013, Maregere school.

Focus Group Discussions held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August at headman Zero`s Homestead, Bikita.



**APENDIX A: Men burnt with molten plastic**





*Photo3. Centurion and his 88 year old wife, headman Muranganwa looks on at their gutted hut in Bikita (Photos taken from Community Toleranc Reconciliation and Development (COTRAD) Report on 2008 Elections in Bikita, 2012, p.g 6)*