

# **The Role of Education in National Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe**

**Submitted by Philip Bhebhe to the  
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## Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DFID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education for all
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
EU	European Union
Frelimo	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IG	Inclusive Government
INEE	Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
JOC	Joint Operations Command
LCHR	Lawyers Committee for Human Rights
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-M	Movement for Democratic Change - Mutambara
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change - Tsvangirai
MED	Ministry of Education and Culture
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MNR	Mozambique National Resistance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PFZAPU	Patriot Front Zimbabwe African People's Union
Renamo	Mozambique National Resistance
RPA	Rwandan Patriot Army
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDF	Social Development Fund
TEMPUS	Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies
TDP	Transitional Development Plan
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU (PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZINTEC	Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course.
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZTV	Zimbabwe Television

## **Abstract**

This study is a contribution to the growing literature on the subject of the role of education in national reconstruction and reconciliation in countries that have experienced conflict and severe dislocation. It takes as its focus the case of Zimbabwe during the period 1980-2010 but related to experiences of conflict in countries such as Angola, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan and Rwanda in Africa and, elsewhere, in Bosnia, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon and Northern Ireland. The field is a relatively young, dynamic and immensely complex area of study and interpretation.

The origins of my interest in this topic are as a witness to the spiral of decline and subsequent political violence in Zimbabwe since its independence in April 1980 during my tenure as, successively, Head teacher, Lecturer, Administrator, College Principal and Regional Director in the country between 1980 and 2005, and research work undertaken by me in Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe during these years.

Chapter One provides an introduction to this personal and national context. In Chapter Two there is a detailed account of Zimbabwean politics and educational provision between Independence and the onset of the fieldwork in 2008. This comprises mainly a documentary literature review but where respondents in my subsequent fieldwork placed on record important episodes in relation to these parallel narratives, such accounts are included here.

Chapter Three describes the design considerations that underpinned the empirical aspects of the project. Three separate field visits were made to Zimbabwe, in June to July, 2008, April to May 2009 and December 2009 to January 2010. In total the respondent sample comprised

encounters with 200 individuals in the field (through interviews and *via* participant and non-participant observation), supplemented by 90 semi-structured telephone interviews undertaken from the UK. In addition, at the commencement of fieldwork 41 postal questionnaires were administered in order to frame the main themes to be examined and to reach respondents in 'no go' areas and overseas (details are in section 3.3).

As fieldwork conditions were, at times, extremely difficult and dangerous (especially in 2008) data collection procedures often had to be improvised and there were many difficult ethical decisions to be made about responsible forms of field research in such circumstances. These procedures and considerations are set in out detail in sections 3.3.4 and 3.4 and in Chapter Four.

Chapter Five presents the findings of the empirical part of the project in the context of a wider scholarly literature. Eight key themes are indentified from the Zimbabwean empirical: 1 data (section 5.2) and these are related to eight broad principles identified in the wider international literature (section 5.3).

In Chapter Six conclusions are drawn, including the specific insights that can be derived from the Zimbabwean case.

## **Prologue**

Zimbabwe attained its independence on April 18 1980. During the period from the elections to the date set for the country's formal independence from Britain, midnight on 17 April 1980, an estimated 40,000 celebrants streamed in from across the world. In Salisbury (now Harare), centre of activities, the fact of Zimbabwe's birth was highlighted by the almost unbelievable sight, after Rhodesia's long years of quarantine, of ninety-six heads of state or their representatives. Paper hats, posters and flags all over town flashed the bold, bright colours of the new Zimbabwe: black representing the majority of people; green the land; gold the mineral resources; white for peace; and the little Zimbabwe bird perched against a red star symbolising hope for the future.

The joyous atmosphere of change and hope was palpable in Rufaro Stadium, venue of the independence ceremony, and strikingly illustrated by a joint choir from two leading schools, Girl's High and Prince Edward. The choir assembled solemnly in front of Prince Charles, there to lower Britain's Union Jack and to raise the new Zimbabwe flag. In the first of two verses the choir launched into a eulogy of Rhodesia. There were subdued groans from the whites in the semi-VIP section of the stadium, whispers of 'how unfortunate' and a profound silence from the rest of the crowd. Then came the second verse, and the white children, in faultless Shona, soared into a eulogy of Zimbabwe, at which the tens of thousands of their black compatriots went wild with joyful acclaim. What a spectacle it was!

Later that day the new prime minister hosted a huge lunch party to celebrate Zimbabwe's independence. One of those who had come from abroad to witness the birth of this brand new state was Frank Ferrari of the African-American Institute, to whom so many Zimbabweans owed so much. He had helped many people during the War of Liberation both black and white. He took me with him to the lunch, where friends were practically falling over each other in the loud joy of reunion. One of them, Shridath Ramphal, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, sent me that afternoon a lasting memento of the magic time: a copy of his latest book, inscribed: 'For Philip Bhebhe - on a very special day and with good wishes for the future it promises. Sonny Ramphal. Salisbury, 18 April 1980'.

There were, of course, moments of sadness and regret, remembering those who deserved to be there but were not. When Josiah Tungamirai, the ZANLA (Zimbabwe National Liberation Army) High Command's political commissar, saw me, he took me aside and walked me round the garden, mournfully relating details of Josiah Tongogara's death in Mozambique on the night of 26 December 1979. He had fought for the unification of the two parties – ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) and ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union) – and his death shattered the whole nation. Many people in Zimbabwe believed Tongogara had been murdered.

There were naturally fears from the whites that the new government would call for reprisals. But before long these displays of trauma disappeared. On the whole, whites had been bowled over by Robert Mugabe's address to the nation on the eve of independence.

‘Let us deepen our sense of belonging and engender a common interest that knows no race, colour or creed’, he said. ‘Let us truly become Zimbabweans with a single loyalty. Long live our freedom’. Many heaved a sigh of relief – Hasn’t he changed? – and stopped packing. The most disaffected were leaving anyway, if they could.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION, ORIENTATION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

#### 1.1 Introduction

*Everything is born of woman*

*And nothing shall be done*

*To harm the children*

Native American prayer

This research study is conceived as a conceptual and practical resource document for use by those working in the complex environments requiring the regeneration of educational capacity following a crisis. It is based on a search for a way in which education can make a positive and progressive contribution to societies that are undergoing conflict. In large measure, the reason for thinking about this issue arises from my own experience of growing up in Zimbabwe and working in the Matabeleland region during the most destructive and violent part of its history (the Gukurahundi).

The study addresses two forms of crisis: war and extreme political and economical upheaval. Zimbabwe has been selected but, sadly, many other countries could have been chosen. Reference will be made to Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda and Sierra Leone in Africa and, elsewhere, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Israel and Palestine, countries which have recently suffered a similar fate to Zimbabwe.

The study proposes that children who are subjected to violence are compelled to 'survive' psychologically-sometimes to their great cost. It argues that in adapting to their loss of

family and loved ones and in their exposure to refugee environments, children unconsciously construct a ‘Strategic Survival Personality,’ which becomes counter-productive in adult life. It offers some suggestions for reversing these effects by means of the development of self-awareness and psychotherapeutic help.

I am carrying out this study because I am keen to contribute to the work of colleagues in Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique from varied intellectual traditions designed to develop and disseminate new insights relating to the role of education in national reconstruction and reconciliation. The central theme of my work is best summarized by its proposed title: ‘The Role of Education in National Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe.’ Necessarily, the future practice of Zimbabwean education will need to deploy insights from social science in order to describe, explain and understand the problems that will be encountered. Local knowledge of the environment and livelihood strategies will play an important part in defining problems and feasible solutions. If, in the past, mass education systems helped to secure the priorities and conditions of mass industrial society (Donald, 1985), how have they responded to conflict situations today? This is the question that provides the basis for the rest of this study.

I also aim to bring to the study many years of working in educational environments, more than five years working in educational administration, and a life time’s thinking and talking about the subject, along with experience of field research in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique and Zambia that integrates insight from the natural and social sciences (Bhebhe: 2005, 2002a, 2002b). Meanwhile, I have been working as a

psychotherapist with 'traumatised violence survivors,' as I call them, male and female, for over two decades. For about the same period, with the help of colleagues, I have been running therapeutic workshops for 'genocide and violence survivors.' I have received many hundreds of letters from people describing their experiences at 'kraals' (ezibayeni) where people were herded for interrogation, torture and sometimes death, and how they think they were affected.

I have also had the experience of being a father and choosing how to protect my children from the violence in the country. In the early 1980s my choice meant exposing my three children and wife to life in violence-prone Matabeleland. When I had the choice of leaving my senior government job for another in a violence-free environment, I chose to remain in Matabeleland. I did not believe that running from the violence was good for me or my family. But I cannot argue that the option I selected was good for them either. The experience they had to endure was 'uncontrolled jungle.'

These things are very complex and interest from the media has, in the past, put me on the spot and forced me to try to make my ideas clear and relevant across a wide spectrum, including through interviews for national 'heavyweight' papers, local radio documentaries, news hungry magazine programmes, foreign gazettes and psychological journals.

As such, I place on record here (especially in chapter two) many statements which come from personal experience and derive from my position as an eye-witness of events not

published or reported elsewhere. In part, I justify this on the basis that we live and exist in a world of narrative: people tell stories; it is our way of life. But it is important also that hidden suffering is recorded accurately in studies such as this.

A second reason for telling some of my own story, which is far less dramatic than many of those told to me, is to give specific examples to support the generalisations that are inevitable in a country where news is heavily censored and critical accounts of political affairs are more or less impossible. Using my own experience also helps limit the exposure of my clients and workshop participants who sacrificed their lives by such exposure. As discussed in detail in chapter four, there are acute ethical conundrums here. To all those people, as well as my colleagues, I owe enormous thanks, for without them everything in this study and its conclusions would be much more speculative. But most importantly, they have been my greatest teachers, by showing me, again and again, the resilience of the human spirit, and the capacity for healing inherent in the human soul.

Many of my respondents come from the Matabeleland region. This is because the first violence – in which more than 20,000 people died – occurred in this region in the early 1980s and it is a place and events about which I have written a lengthy account (thus far unpublishable in safety). Schools were disrupted and many teachers and students were killed. Moreover, it is my home area and I lost many relatives and friends in the violence that ensued. Thus, in part, my study is that of an exile returning to his roots.

## **1.2 Background of the researcher**

My engagement with inter-disciplinary research on the implementation of education in reconstruction and reconciliation was first sparked by my initial post-graduate appointment. I went into teaching and taught Geography and Sociology at A' Level at various Secondary schools and Colleges. This gave me an insight into action research, a method that became useful when I joined the Ministry of Higher Education as lecturer at the Masvingo ZINTEC College. This was in January 1981 when the Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC) was introduced in the country. This was a primary in-service type of teacher training. It was the first of its kind in the region and country, so much research was needed to make it a success. I was one among the fourteen lecturers who started this programme and played a major part in the writing of the modules used in the programme. Three of the four years of training were devoted to practical classroom teaching, while the other year was devoted to theoretical work at college. The rationale of the ZINTEC programme was to facilitate the extension of educational opportunities to the thousands of young people who had been unable to obtain educational opportunities prior to independence.

After ZINTEC I joined the Ministry of Local Government Rural and Urban Development as District Commissioner (District Administrator). In March 1984, I was promoted to the position of Provincial Commissioner (Provincial Administrator), a position I held until December 1989. It was during this period that I acted as Governor for Matabeleland South Province. The Matabeleland atrocities perpetrated by the current government occurred at this time. I officiated at 157 funerals of murdered victims and it was during

this period that I wrote an account (Bhebhe, 2002a) of the Matabeleland atrocities which were to result in the death of between 25,000 and 30,000 people. After joining the Ministry of Local Government in 1981, I witnessed at first hand the worst of the ZANU P.F. government in power in terms of its human rights record. In the first six years of majority rule, the government of the then Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe, made remarkable progress in destroying the colonial machinery of racism, through a policy of reconciliation which was applauded the world over. However, the Machinery of State Security was maintained. In addition to the army, the police and the Central Intelligence Organisation, the Legal State of Emergency, which paved the way for large-scale abuses of human rights during the last days of white rule, was re-enacted by the new Parliament in 1980 and has been extended at six-month intervals ever since.

I gained further experience when I sat on the Board of the World Bank which looked at viable development projects in the Third World. I advised then, and I still advise now, that we can have millions of viable projects but in the absence of peace nothing will work. My work as Regional Director for the Lutheran World Federation, an NGO based in Switzerland, helped me to understand fully that the road to reconstruction and reconciliation is a bumpy one. It is with this realisation that I take on this study.

In my academic career and in my work in the country, I often struggled to understand why the international community failed and continues to fail to stop the violence in Zimbabwe. Some of my written accounts prior to the present study (containing eye-witness reports and assessments that remain too dangerous to be published in Zimbabwe)

bring conscience to bear on politics and seek not to indulge in outrage or rushing to judgment. Rather, they seek understanding and forgiveness. However, to achieve understanding and forgiveness requires a faithful record of the past and sound analysis of its bases: this is what I also seek through this PhD research.

### **1.3 Choosing this research topic**

The German Sociologist Max Weber pointed out that social research is always stimulated and guided by a subjective judgment about what is important and what is valuable. Everybody has their own ideas about whether and why any given research topic should be pursued, and Weber insisted that research is always grounded in some moral agenda which some people will endorse and others reject (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008). So what was my motivation in choosing this topic? There were three:

#### *i) Personal interest*

Since independence in April 1980, I and my fellow Zimbabweans have lived through three decades of chaos, corruption, cronyism and violence. We have got used to the lack of health services and education facilities. Fifteen per cent of children are in school today.

#### *ii) Desmond Tutu's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*

Living very close to South Africa, I have been influenced by Desmond Tutu's Truth and Reconciliation Commission which, it seems, has produced wonders in that country.

Zimbabweans are calling for such a commission to be set up in their country. It had been feared that there would be a bloodbath in South Africa after the formation of a black majority government in 1994 because of the apartheid system. But because of the intervention of Desmond Tutu and others, this was averted (Meredith, 2005). Retraining of educational personnel at every level of the education system played a major part in the process of ideological reconstruction. This was done in various ways – for example, through in-service training courses for key teachers who could then retrain other teachers in the 'cascade' model of training. The Novalis Institute which trains South African teachers in the methods of the Waldorf Schools incorporates in its training programme the teacher's vital role in contributing to the healing and reconstruction of the racist past in schools and wider communities. Whereas the apartheid system managed to keep different communities apart, the Novalis Institute has been most successful in bringing these communities together and in helping to develop new joint realities, preparing the groundwork for a new integrated community. This Institute was extensively used to retrain teachers for a new South Africa (Phillips 1998).

Could Zimbabwe emulate South Africa?

*iii) Salience and urgency of the problem*

The topic is very current and urgent. Many countries are in one crisis or another and there exist powerful examples of reconstruction and/or reconciliation in Africa other than South Africa. Mozambique is a case in point. Within two years of coming to power, Samora Machel, the first black President of Mozambique had all but destroyed his

country's economy. As with ZANU's internal struggle Machel's Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) Party's problems were tribal-based (Hill, 2003). When Samora Machel died in 1986, after two decades of civil war in the country, his successor, Joaquim Chissano realised that he could never win militarily, and began searching for ways to accommodate the rebels and thereby end the war. In 1988 he asked that the Zimbabwe defence forces, which had been fighting the rebels side by side with the Mozambique army, be withdrawn from the country. The adventure had cost Zimbabwe more than Z\$1 billion (*ibid.*) Four years later, Chissano accepted Mozambique National Resistance's (Renamo) demands and held 'free' and 'fair' elections which saw the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) returned to power and Alfonso Dhlakama, the leader of the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) installed as leader of the opposition. Samora Machel's Marxist doctrines were discarded in favour of a free market system. Peace returned to the country and today Mozambique is one of the power houses in Africa.

The causes of socio-political turbulence, economic difficulties and their cultural dislocation have been documented (Auret, 1992; Bhebhe and Ranger, 1995; Buckle, 2001 and Bhebhe 2002a). But, so far, action to redress these problems has not produced the desired results in Zimbabwe. There is now an urgent need in the country to bridge the gap between political pronouncements and deeds if future generations are to live in peace and enjoy violence free lives with access to good educational opportunities.

#### **1.4 Motivation to carry out the research and its overall orientation**

Zimbabwe is in a 'crisis'. Nobody seems to care. There have been mass killings in Matabeleland (Gukurahundi) on grounds of state security in which an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 people died in the early 1980s (see Bhebhe, 1995; Stiff, 2000; Meredith, 2002; and Hill, 2003). There have been cases of violent demolition of slums in towns and cities in 2005 (Murambatsvina) on grounds of cleaning up the 'environment' in which more than 10,000 people were killed and more than 700,000 left homeless and without food (Tibaijuka, 2005). There have been mass killings during elections in 1995, 2002 and 2008 on grounds that the opposition parties were stooges of the West who wanted to return the country back to the whites. More than 15,000 people are estimated to have died. Many more lost their homes and are still homeless (see: Auret, 1992; Bhebhe, 1995; Stiff, 2000; Buckle, 2001; Meredith, 2002; Hill, 2003). Overcoming resistance to change involves counselling, education and communication, participation by the affected people, and giving support by introducing change gradually to give people time to negotiate and adjust.

I have alluded to the word 'crisis' above with reference to Zimbabwe. For the purpose of this study I have defined 'crisis' in terms of:

- war; and
- extreme political and economic upheaval.

Meanwhile, in his important study of the place of education in such traumatic situations, David Phillips and his colleagues define 'crisis' in terms of:

- war;

- natural disaster; and
- extreme political and economic upheaval (1998, p. 9)

These conditions are very common in many African and Third World countries such as Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Zimbabwe. Here, according to Phillips, it is often the case that revolution results in economic collapse which, in turn, may cause rapid political change. Educational provision will, in most such circumstances, suffer severe uncertainty and pass through transitional processes which may be very complex and of variable duration (Birzea, 1994).

This study is oriented towards ‘qualitative research’ because I was more interested in the quality of particular activities than in how often they occurred. Research activities such as this one that investigated the quality of relationships, activities, situations or materials are frequently referred to as of a qualitative nature. My project differs from ‘quantitative research’ in that there is a greater emphasis on holistic description – that is, on describing in detail all of what went on in particular activities or situations rather than on comparing the effects of a particular treatment (experimental research).

## **1.5 Research Questions**

In this section of the introduction, I discuss the idea of a researchable question and why some questions are researchable whereas others are not. Usually the first task in the research process is to decide on some aspect of a research problem to investigate. Research problems are often stated as questions. In order to be researchable, these

questions should not imply value judgment; notions of good and bad that do not have empirical referents are to be avoided.

Research questions should also be answerable. There would be no point wasting time, energy and valuable resources researching questions that are not answerable. A question like: Are the descriptions of people in the Matabeleland region biased in any way? is unanswerable until consideration of the nature of bias is included. Similarly, What is the least effective way to teach history in Zimbabwe? is not a researchable question until considerations of the nature of effectiveness have been included.

Moreover, research questions should be feasible. They should allow the researcher to collect enough information to provide at least a partial answer. Research questions should be formulated in such a way as to allow purposeful collection of data rather than simply compiling data from existing records. In addition to feasibility, a good research question possesses the following characteristics.

- The question is clear (i.e., most people would agree as to what the key terms in the question mean). The nature of a research investigation needs to be as clear as possible to all concerned. What exactly is being investigated in this PhD research? The role of education for national reconstruction and reconciliation? ‘What is to be reconciled?’
- The question is significant (i.e., it is worth investigating because it will contribute important knowledge about the human condition). Is the question worth expending time and energy (and often money) to try to answer? In the present study, what, I

asked, was the value of investigating that particular question? In what ways would it contribute to knowledge about the role of education for national reconstruction and reconciliation in Zimbabwe? Was such knowledge important in some way? If so, how was it important?

- The question is ethical (i.e., it will not involve physical or psychological harm or damage to human beings or to the natural or social environment of which they are a part).
- The question indicates a relationship of some sort (i.e., two or more qualities are suggested as being connected or related to each other in some way).

I discussed the notion of feasibility earlier, but it is important to stress again that the restraints imposed by reality must be considered early in the planning process. A feasible question is one that can be investigated within the limits of available amounts of time, space money or other resources. In the present study, security issues and physical distance were other issues for consideration as they were likely to play a major role in its success. My organizational focus was to plan an investigation that was feasible and focused on a question requiring subjects from whom data could be collected with a relatively modest expenditure of time, money and energy.

In the light of the foregoing, the PhD study was organised around three key questions:

- 1) In the light of literature on the role of education in countries, which have suffered periods of crisis and trauma, what are the key priorities for reconstructing a nation's system of education?

- 2) What role can education play in reconciliation in Zimbabwe, once a change in political circumstances makes this possible?
- 3) How can the International Community and Aid Agencies help in the reconstruction and reconciliation process?

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CONTEXT AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Context**

Zimbabwe lives inside me. Sometimes I find this lingering obsession bewildering, almost as unexplainable as the violence itself. Why, for instance, has Zimbabwe adopted this culture of violence? Media headlines from ten years ago are only too familiar still: 'Harare terrorised' (Daily News, 2002a); '16 die in ZANU P. F. terror campaign. MDC supporters flee terror in Mberengwa' (Daily News, 2002a); 'War Veterans attack nurses' (Daily News, 2002b); and 'MDC deplors Chegutu Violence' (Daily News, 2002c). Dr. John Makumbe, Chairman of Transparency International, a human rights watchdog said at that time:

We feel that there is no better time to raise the issue of the atrocities than now when the same players have embarked on yet another violent campaign. As civic society we do not believe that anyone can commit crimes and get away with it. People should account for human rights violations, even twenty years later. (Daily News, 2002d).

Today, the line of violence is still going on and the same people are involved. The Zimbabwe that now dwells inside me is not a geographical territory. Rather, it is a metaphysical space - a space that changes with time and experience but ultimately is defined by a profound sense of loss. Many lives were lost and very little about the violence in Zimbabwe is easily comprehensible. The ZANU P.F. elite came to believe that ZANU P.F. salvation necessitated opposition extermination, a conspiracy that was

enacted with startling efficiency. The violence was often executed with a brutality and sadism that defied imagination. Eyewitnesses were often in denial. They believed that the high-pitched screams they were hearing were wind gusts, that the packs of dogs at the roadside were feeding on animal remains and not dismembered corpses, that the smells enveloping them emanated from spoiled food and not decomposing bodies. One is reminded of Primo Levi's observation about the Holocaust: 'Things whose existence is not morally comprehensible cannot exist' (Levi, 1987: 14). But violence of this kind has existed in Zimbabwe for decades. Why?

Almost as inexplicable is the reaction of the International Community. Just as in Rwanda. What sets the Zimbabwean violence apart from other violences is that the international community could have intervened at a relatively low cost before the effects were fully realized and this fact of willful indifference continues to amaze. The Zimbabwean violence is not only about the evil that is possible; it is also about the complacency exhibited by those who have the responsibility to confront that evil. The United Nations' languid response to the violence in Zimbabwe has produced countless studies, reports, and commissions that have attempted to piece together what happened and, ultimately, to determine whom to blame for the cowardly abandonment. Many of the early investigations effected a diplomatic version of racial profiling, using circumstantial evidence to create a simplistic story that implicated the United States (LCHR, 1986; Hill, 2003). More recent studies show that since the end of the Cold War, America has had little interest in Africa and no longer fears the influence of China and Russia in Africa (Stiff, 2000).

## 2.2. Socio-Economic and Political Profile



Zimbabwe is a land - locked country with a population of about 12 million (CSO, 2002). The population of males and females is 47.82% and 52.18% respectively. The population growth rate of 3.13% per annum is one of the highest in the world and is exerting pressure on the general economy (*ibid.*).

The total surface area is 390,757 square Kilometers and, in the early 1990s, there was a population density of 30.7 per square kilometer. The average literacy rate for the 15-year-old age group at that time was 80.83 percent (86.06 percent males and 75.12 percent

females) (CSO, 1994). English, Ndebele and Shona are the three official languages. Various mother tongues can be used as a medium of instruction in schools between grades 1 and 3 (ages 6 to 8) and Ndebele and Shona are taught as subjects where each language is dominant. Ndebele is taught in Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands while Shona is taught in Mashonaland, Manicaland, Masvingo and parts of the Midlands.

Zimbabwe is a multi-party democracy on paper and according to the Constitution. It has a very large opposition in parliament. It is politically very unstable and political violence has been the order of the day since the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change in 2000. Many people have lost their lives due to this violence.

In 1980 ZANU (PF) became the ruling party and remains the ruling party to this day. It had Marxist Leninist principles and sought to develop a socialist State. Its original election manifesto included the following goals:

- a. abolition of racial education and the development of a common national identity and common locality.
- b. establishment of free and compulsory primary education and the provision of secondary education to all children who could afford it, regardless of race, colour or creed.
- c. education to be a human right for every child and adult.
- d. education to be used as a major instrument for social transformation

(ZANU (PF), 2000).

The 1987 Education Act as amended in 1991 was similar in letter and spirit to the ZANU (PF) election manifesto. The responsibility to provide education became a large partnership between local authorities, church organisations, industrial and commercial enterprises, farmers, parents and individuals who were able to build, register and run schools. It remains, in theory, the responsibility of everyone in Zimbabwe today to provide education at whatever level.

On December 22 1987 P.F. ZAPU, through its leader Dr Joshua Nkomo, signed a Unity Accord with ZANU (P.F.). From this date there was no opposition party. The violence also stopped and there was peace in the country for a period of 13 years. Then, in 2000, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Party was formed and with it came even worse violence, which left thousands of people dead and many unaccounted for. Since this time there has never been peace in the country. The nation is, as a result, divided and polarised.

As part of the contextual research for this proposal, I put it to one Executive Member of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC): How can unity and trust lost because of violence in the country, be restored? This what he said:

It will be very difficult to establish any trust and unity in the country as long as Mugabe is leading this country because by nature he is a violent man. He is on record that he has degrees in violence and enjoys seeing people suffer. We cannot have unity when the President of the country is preaching division. As I speak to you just now there is violence taking place in certain parts of the country. Mugabe preaches reconciliation during the day but at night he

preaches violence. How can such a man be trusted? Many MDC Parliamentarians are being arrested on trumped up charges. Three have already been sentenced in court to eight months imprisonment which means that they have already lost their Parliamentary seats because, according to our Constitution, once a member of Parliament serves a jail sentence of more than six months he/she loses his/her seat. Nobody trusts Mugabe in this country. Farm seizures are still going on and farm owners are being harassed on a daily basis and their families are living in fear. How does one trust a Government which does such things? Mugabe, the Attorney General, the Reserve Bank Governor and the Five Generals in the army must go then there will be trust and unity in the country. Farm seizures must stop then there will be peace and unity in the country. (Harare: 12, April, 2009)

Many hard-liners from the Matabeleland region want Mugabe to go. They even go to the extent of demanding a separate Ndebele State. Mugabe says that the two-state solution is not the answer to Zimbabwe's problems (Bhebhe and Ranger, 1995; LCHR, 1986) – and he may be correct: the experience in South Africa suggests that Zimbabweans need to find a way of speaking together for the sake of posterity.

However, very few Zimbabwean leaders have realised that there can be no peace and sustainable development where the culturally diverse people of a nation have not evolved unity in diversity. In conclusion to his paper 'Citizenship, Identity and Social Inclusion: Lessons from Northern Ireland' Ken Wylie writes (2004, p. 246):

It is now recognised that schools are important socialising agencies (Bartlett, Burton and Peim, 2001). They provide vehicles for the transmission of values, attitudes and beliefs as well as knowledge. The introduction of citizenship education in an increasingly global context is a

recognition of this. But the impact of schooling goes beyond what is taught or how it is taught. Schools are communities which can model some of the democratic ideals embraced by citizenship education programmes. They can be inclusive and tolerant, encouraging open dialogue between different groups, or they can be authoritarian and intolerant. They can embrace different races, religions and cultures as part of their community or be exclusive to one race, religion or culture. In Northern Ireland, the Agreement (1998) suggests that we can best honour those who have died or been injured in the conflict through 'a fresh start' in which we firmly dedicate ourselves to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust...' (Declaration of Support, p1). The Department of Education has recognised the important role which education will play in this 'fresh start' by declaring that:

A strategic approach to the promotion of a culture of tolerance as referred to in the Belfast Agreement must embrace all schools, both formally integrated schools and other schools. It is only with the commitment of all schools that the principles outlined above will be given effect (DENI, 1998, section 8).

A second example comes from the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, cited earlier. A third instance is that of Rwanda where one of the first decisions that had to be taken by the new Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in 1995 was the suspension of teaching subjects which were divisive such as history, political education or civics because of their biased perspective. Another important step in ideological reconstruction in that country was the eradication of obstacles on the path towards reconciliation, through the suspension of a most controversial selection process for secondary places. The frustration was heightened by a

biased quota system for secondary and further education. Only 6% of children could enter secondary education (Phillips *et al.*, 1998).

In these recent examples it seems clear that education has a key role to play in reconstruction and reconciliation. Cases in point from further in the past are those of Germany after the Second World War and South Africa after independence in 1994. The problems in Zimbabwe are a blessing to South Africa as the best qualified teachers from Zimbabwe are now teaching in that country.

In Zimbabwe, the key factors behind the apparent lack of realisation among leaders are that there can be no peace and sustainable development without specific processes designed to foster unity, appear to ethnic and/or tribal, and racial considerations in the method of governance and social relationships. The evidence from other countries which have suffered similar degrees of extreme political and economic upheaval suggests that this outlook has to change if unity and trust are to be restored. It also seems clear that education has a key role to play.

Ethnicity, tribalism and/or racialism are held to have been largely responsible for political mayhem in Zimbabwe where repression and civil conflicts are inspired by ethnicity or racialism rather than by ideological differences. In turn, this is seen to have led to economic mismanagement and failure to evolve able and committed political leadership. This was confirmed by another of the interviewees whom I questioned as part of this study (a senior lecturer at a university in Zimbabwe):

Radical reform in our value system, method of governance and practices, is the only way forward which will bring trust and unity in this country. The people of Matabeleland have been marginalised for far too long and this cannot be allowed to continue. Our leader, Dr Joshua Nkomo, by signing the Unity Accord in 1987 was trying to bring unity in the country but the ruling Party refused his hand of reconciliation. ZANU (P.F.) through its leader, Robert Mugabe, thinks it has the licence to suppress and subjugate the people of Matabeleland. One has to come to the national University of Science and Technology to understand the problem. At this University, being in Matabeleland, one would expect the bulk of the lecturers and students to be from the region, but no. Almost 95 percent of the students are from outside the region and more than 80 percent of the lecturers are also from outside the region. The same cannot be said of institutions outside the Matabeleland region. Where should we work and where should our children go? (Bulawayo: 14 April, 2009)

A lack of confidence in the people of Matabeleland region may thus be a factor policy-makers must address before unity can be restored in the country. Asked whether schools, colleges and universities could be used to bring about reconciliation and reconstruction in the country, this interviewee went on to say:

Schools, Colleges and Universities could help bring about unity and reconciliation if they were run and managed properly. Primary schools are run by teachers imported from Mashonaland who do not know the languages of the pupils they teach. They do not know the local culture and they are sent to the region to teach these pupils foreign languages by telling the pupils that their language Ndebele is inferior to their Shona. There are fewer Ndebele teachers in Matabeleland than the Shona teachers. This will not take us far. We have enough Ndebele teachers and these are the ones who can bring about unity and trust in the classroom.

The school and the home should work together in bringing reconciliation in this country. We should also offer places in our Colleges and Universities to local students. The current situation is totally unacceptable where the bulk of our students come from outside the region. Education is better placed to bring about understanding and reconciliation than any other discipline. The only problem is that it is misused. It is its manipulation and politicisation within a given social order for selfish ends that has been the problem in this country. (Bulawayo: 14 April, 2009)

Professor A. Mazrui (1986), when analyzing the root of African underdevelopment crisis and socio-political turbulence two decades ago, recognised this hard fact when he asserted that ‘A more systematic investigation into cultural pre-conditions of the success of each project, of each piece of legislation, of each system of government is required.’ He went further to state that ‘feasibility studies should be much more sensitive to the issue of ‘cultural “feasibility” than has been the case in the past’ (p. 121). Compounding the situation is the widespread existence of militarism competing with civilian supremacy which has made Zimbabwe tyrannical and anarchist. In this context another of my interviewees, a former Vice-Chancellor, pondered the question of whether Zimbabwe’s military can be the guardian of the environment and sustainable development and whether they can protect democracy? His considered view was as follows:

Zimbabwe has become notorious for security forces that wield too much power to the detriment of the national image. The repressive military which litter the country retard the country’s development, shatter people’s morale and quite often promote crime and terrorism instead of curbing them. The country is tearing itself apart under militarism because state

violence has bred societal violence. Merchants of death are usually armed to the teeth and believe in Maoist contention that power comes from the barrel of the gun not from the ballot box. This is the cause of the persistent tension between soldiers on the one hand, and politicians and civilians on the other. Their pre-occupation is how to hold on to power not how to serve the people. (Bulawayo: 14 April, 2009)

The brutal behaviour of Zimbabwe's militarists, which is a legacy of the Cold War strategies between the West and East, has contributed directly and indirectly to environmental destruction, pollution, biodiversity loss and worsened the already unsustainable development (Laird, 1991; Buckle, 2001; Tibaijuka, 2005). The fear in the country is that of a military coup d'etat, for whenever the military stage a coup d'etat or armed force is used in ethnic conflict, as is the case in Zimbabwe today, the direct effects include destruction of human and animal life, destruction of the natural environment and large refugee influxes. Indirect impact includes death due to famine and diseases, overcrowding in 'safe havens', overgrazing, environmental pollution due to poor sanitation and deforestation of areas where refugees with their livestock are camped (*ibid*). Many African countries are just like Zimbabwe in terms of their armed forces. My former Vice-Chancellor interviewee noted regretfully:

Thus when former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Herman Cohen talks about African militaries having the responsibility to protect democracy let us be very clear about the type of militaries we have in mind. Certainly everything must be done by Africa to rid itself of the bully-boy syndrome which has made some dictators build anti-civilian armies ranging from 100,000 to 250,000 soldiers using international and bilateral aid meant for

development projects. The armies which have in many countries maimed, killed, intimidated, and put in prison hundreds of thousands of African lives, while they have displaced others both internally and externally, are a liability to mother Africa. The litany of their misdeeds on the continent is well known. (Bulawayo: 15 April, 2009)

Asked what kind of armed forces he wanted to see in Zimbabwe, he went on:

Zimbabwe requires armed forces which during peace time are helpful to the nation in such areas like reconstruction of infrastructures, protection of resources and helping civilians during natural catastrophes and other emergencies. In short, armies by their training have no business running a country; theirs is to provide protection to the nation and its people. To use the phrase of Charles Snyder, a former infantry/trainer and chief political/military adviser in the State Department's African Bureau, only after African armed forces are converted from being 'Praetorian' to 'Constitutional' guards who protect the constitution and territory of the nation can we regard them as defenders of democracy. Defending democracy leads to defending the environment, biodiversity and sustainable development for these can only be done when there is peace, stability and individual creativity in a free society. (Bulawayo: 15 April, 2009)

From what is being said here, if Zimbabwe is to improve the quality of life of its people, if the country is to protect its environment and biodiversity and if it is to establish sustainable development, the first step is to have armed forces that are not technicians of violence. One has only to look at violence in Somalia (food shortages, malnutrition, malaria, desertification, no health and education facilities, sea piracy and disease) and the

Sudan (food shortages, malnutrition, environmental destruction, diseases due to lack of health facilities, lack of education facilities ) to appreciate the magnitude of the problem.

The impact of this violence, in terms of losses of human life, destruction of the environment and pollution among other evils, creates huge suffering and creates an indelible stain on the long-term reputation of any country. Under such circumstances, environmental protection and sustainable development are not on any priority list. In fact today, in the view of many, the government of Zimbabwe has become the pillar of environmental and human destruction because it has abandoned its role as the facilitator of improved standards of living, social order and promotion of sustainable development.

## **2.3 Zimbabwe politics since Independence to 2008**

### *2.3.1 Overview: descent into lawlessness*

The political landscape has been dominated and driven by ZANU (PF) power and plunder since Independence in 1980. Zimbabwe formally became an independent state from Britain at midnight on April 17 1980.

This followed the elections which according to Robin Renwick, political adviser to Lord Soames (the last Governor of Rhodesia, appointed by the Thatcher government to oversee the election process), were 'free and fair': 'We said that we had promised free and fair elections - there has been an election which broadly speaking, was free and fair, and we are going to help the government which emerged from it in every way we can' (Renwick quoted in Meredith, 2002, p. 13).

The election results were announced on the morning of March 4. Robert Mugabe's victory was so overwhelming that arguments over the effect of intimidation before voting became largely irrelevant. With 63 per cent of the national vote, ZANU gained fifty-seven of the eighty black seats in parliament. More than anything else, it was a vote for peace. As most blacks well knew, any other result would almost certainly have led to a resumption of war (Bhebhe, 2002a; Meredith, 2002).

Joshua Nkomo's (the leader of ZAPU) first reaction to the independence election results was shock. He had confidently expected victory - if only a shared one with the parties of Bishop Abel-Muzorewa and Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole - but victory nevertheless. Instead, the newly enfranchised and savagely intimidated black electorate had voted overwhelmingly for their tribal roots. Robert Mugabe and his Mashona - based ZANU-PF had virtually swept the board. Joshua Nkomo, the father of Zimbabwe nationalism and once revered by the whole black population, had been rejected by all but the Ndebele ethnic grouping. He picked up a few votes in Mashonaland. Muzorewa, Sithole and their lesser Mashona allies had been ignored by the voters, if not as 'sellouts' to the whites, then certainly as irrelevant who were powerless to halt the war. People were simply tired of war, which had been raging for seven years and had caused mayhem and misery in the country (Bhebhe, 2002a). Nkomo and his lieutenants believed they had been cheated, but 'felt there was nothing for it but to swallow the result and trust the alleged victors would use their triumph generously and in good faith' (Nkomo, 1984, pp. 209-211).

How had it happened? The polling began on 27 February and lasted for five days. At 09:00 on 4 March 1980, The Registrar of Elections, Eric Pope-Symonds, announced the election results. Twenty seats had been reserved for whites, so only 80 of the 120

parliamentary seats were in contention. Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF had won 57 seats (63% of the poll) in Mashonaland, Manicaland, Victoria and parts of the Midlands. Joshua Nkomo's Patriotic Front (ZAPU) had captured 20 seats (24% of the poll) in Matabeleland and in the Midlands. The Ndebele were estimated at 20% of the population, so the Mashona votes drawn by PF-ZAPU were miniscule. Bishop Muzorewa won three seats, but the other contenders, Ndabaningi Sithole, James Chikerema and Chief Kayisa Ndiweni failed to win a seat.

Rhodesia was history, but how did the former white Rhodesians feel? The shock for the whites was all the more profound because they had been convinced, until the last minute, either that Muzorewa would win or at least that an anti-Mugabe coalition would be possible. A black Marxist government had been their greatest dread all along; yet suddenly, so it seemed, one was upon them. Within hours, Civil Service resignations poured in; husbands phoned wives telling them to pack a bag and leave for South Africa; children had been sent to school that morning carrying bags packed for flight in case rumours about the election results were true.

Less than twelve hours later, the panic began to subside. That evening Mugabe appeared on television and, far from being the Marxist ogre the whites feared, he impressed them as a model of moderation. He called for stability, national unity, and law and order, promised that Civil Service pensions would be guaranteed; and pledged that private property would be protected. 'There is no intention on our part to use our majority to victimise the minority. We will ensure there is a place for everyone in this country. Let us deepen our sense of belonging and engender a common interest that knows no race, colour or creed' (Bhebhe, 2002a; Stiff, 2000).

To most whites, who had never seen him before, Mugabe appeared articulate, thoughtful and conciliatory. What further mollified them was his decision to retain General Peter Walls as the overall commander of the security forces. The emphasis that Mugabe placed on his intention to build on existing institutions of State and to transform the capitalist system gradually, and his assurances that there would be no nationalisation of farms, mines or industry, were not entirely trusted, but in view of what had been expected, the future of the whites seemed not as bleak as it had on the morning of March 4. Even Ian Smith, who only a few weeks before had denounced Mugabe as ‘the apostle of Satan’, now found him ‘sober and responsible’ (*ibid.*, p. 427).

In the hours before midnight on April 17, 1980, political leaders and dignitaries from around the world gathered in a football stadium (Rufaro) in Salisbury to witness the birth of Zimbabwe. Mugabe marked the occasion with a speech pledging reconciliation: ‘If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interest, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you’. He said he would ‘draw a line through the past’ to achieve reconciliation.

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. It could never be a correct justification that because the whites oppressed us yesterday when they had power, the blacks must oppress them today because they have power. An evil remains, and evil whether practised by white against black, or black against white (Meredith, 2002, p. 15).

He called for a new vision and a new spirit.

Zimbabwe, it seemed, was on the threshold of an era of great promise, born out of civil war but now bursting with new ambition. Mugabe himself at the time, was widely acclaimed a hero: the revolutionary leader who had embraced the cause of reconciliation, and who now sought a pragmatic way forward. Western governments lined up with offers of aid. Amid the jubilation, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania advised Mugabe: ‘You have inherited a jewel. Keep it that way’ (Meredith, 2002, p. 15). How did Mugabe respond to Nyerere's advice? The next few pages will show Mugabe's response.

Father Dieter Scholz returned to Zimbabwe in 1990 to work at Mary Mount Mission in a remote rural parish in Rushinga district, close to the border with Mozambique. The area had suffered heavily during the war of liberation of 1964-79. Father Scholz had first worked there as a missionary in the early 1960s and again in the early 1970s, just before the war began. He was shocked by what he found on his return:

The price this remote district paid for the liberation of Zimbabwe was staggering. Four out of every five young men I had taught twenty years earlier and who had joined the struggle, had not come back and no-one knew where they had fallen and been buried. A whole generation seemed to be missing in Rushinga (*ibid.*, 16).

Equally shocking was the indifference of Mugabe's government to the area's plight. During the war of liberation the Rhodesian Security Forces had destroyed virtually all cattle, deliberately infecting them with anthrax as a communal punishment of the local population for supporting the guerrillas and to deny the guerrillas' food. Ten years after independence, there was not a single head of cattle in the whole of eastern Rushinga. ‘Despite many promises, by 1990 the government had still not given the people a single cow or ox’, Scholz recalled. Peasants tried to plough their fields with small homemade

hoes, harvesting barely enough to survive.

Each year, during the rains, we found skeletons of Zanla fighters - sometimes in the bush, often in the fields and, on one occasion, crouching in a cave - but it was not until the 1990s that a cemetery was set up near Rushinga to give them a decent burial... Party officials came and went. They promised to match every coffin which the Mission would donate with one of their own. With funds from abroad, we paid skilled wood workers to make coffins. They were extremely well crafted. But when the time of the solemn re-burial came, only half the bodies could be laid to rest because the coffins promised by the party had not materialised. (*ibid.*)

In the capital, renamed Harare, the elite scrambled for property, farms and businesses. Mugabe himself joined the fray, but his real obsession was not with personal wealth but with power. Obsession with personal wealth only came after the death of his first wife, Sally. Year after year, he acquired ever greater power, ruling the country through a vast system of patronage, favouring loyal aides and cronies with government positions and contracts, and ignoring the spreading blight of corruption. 'I am rich because I belong to ZANU-PF' boasted one of Mugabe's proteges, Philip Chiyangwa, a millionaire businessman. 'If you want to be rich, you must join ZANU-PF' (*ibid.*, p. 17). One by one, state corporations and funding organisations were plundered. In the most notorious case, a state fund set up to provide compensation for war victims was looted so thoroughly by Mugabe's colleagues that nothing was left for genuine war victims. An official inquiry into the scandal named prominent politicians, including cabinet ministers, among the culprits. Mugabe's relatives were also named in the scandal. But to the surprise of the whole nation, no action was taken against them. It was as if Mugabe and his inner circle had come to regard Zimbabwe as the spoils of war, for their own use (*ibid.*).

Ordinary people meanwhile, suffered the brunt of government mismanagement. By 2000, Zimbabweans were generally worse off than they had been at independence: average wages were lower, unemployment had trebled, public services were crumbling and life expectancy was falling rapidly, owing to HIV/AIDS.

As opposition to his rule mounted, Mugabe struck back with increasing ruthlessness, determined to stay in power whatever the cost, just as Ian Smith before him had done. 'I do not want to be overthrown and I will try to overthrow those who want to overthrow me', he declared at a State banquet in Harare, in 2000 (*ibid.*, see also Bhebhe, 2002a). Reverting to the role of guerrilla leader, he claimed his 'revolution' was under attack from his old enemies: the whites, the British, and the West. It was the whites who were responsible for Zimbabwe's economic plight, including fuel and food shortages, he told a party congress in Matabeleland South. 'They are trying to sabotage the economy in their fight against the government'. He urged his supporters to 'strike fear in the hearts of the white man, our real enemy' (Bhebhe, 2002a, p. 137).

In an attempt to bolster his popularity, Mugabe sent gangs of party activists – 'war veterans', as they were called - to rural areas to seize control of hundreds of white-owned farms for redistribution to peasant farmers. When the courts ruled that land seizures were illegal, Mugabe turned to vilifying judges: 'No judicial decision will stand in our way', he declared. A Catholic archbishop who criticised his conduct of government received death threats from the secret police. All black opponents he denounced as mere dupes of the whites, and he gave 'war veterans', ZANU-PF militia and thugs licence to attack and terrorise opposition supporters at will. The police were instructed not to intervene and often stood by watching violence and beatings take place. The campaign of intimidation by

‘war veterans and ZANU-PF thugs’ spread to factories, businesses, offices and private homes; even Foreign Embassies and Aid Agencies whom Mugabe accused of supporting the opposition were caught up in the mayhem.

‘This is no longer a free country’, protested the Conference of Religious Superiors of the Catholic Church after a meeting in March 2001. ‘People now live in abject fear of violence, crime and threats. The rule of law is no longer respected; terror and intimidation go unpunished’ (Meredith, 2002, p. 18).

Father Scholz recalled the time when Zimbabwe offered great hope for the future, when it was feted by the international community and lavished with promises of aid. And he asked: ‘Whatever happened, in just twenty years, to make this country and its extraordinarily resourceful and courageous people the pariah of the same international community - despised, ridiculed and isolated?’ (*ibid.*). Julius Nyerere's advice to keep the jewel Mugabe had inherited was not heeded. The economy was on the verge of collapse.

### 2.3.2 *Robert Mugabe and the 5th Brigade to 1987*

What made Zimbabwe a pariah state, which is despised, ridiculed and isolated? There is no one single answer to this question. One has to go back to 1976 when Robert Mugabe, in a radio broadcast from Mozambique during the Rhodesian war, summed up his view of electoral democracy:

Our votes must go together with our guns. After all, any vote we shall have, shall have been the product of the gun. The gun which produces the vote should remain its security officer - its guarantor. The people's votes and the people's guns are always inseparable twins (Mugabe, 1983, p. 17).

Mugabe has held fast to this creed. Whatever challenge his regime has faced, he has always been prepared to overcome it by resorting to the gun. So proud was he of his record, that in 2000 he boasted about having ‘a degree in violence’. His ministers followed suit. ‘The area of violence is an area where ZANU-PF has a very strong, long and successful history’, Nathan Shamuyarira, one of Mugabe's ministers and closest colleagues, declared (Meredith, 2002, p. 225).

What propelled Mugabe to use violence so readily was his obsession with power. Power for Mugabe was not a means to an end, but the end itself. His overriding ambition, he once admitted, was to achieve total control, and this was evident from an early age. Making few friends, he devoted his time to studying, encouraged by Jesuit teachers at Kutama who had recognised his intellectual ability and his aptitude for self-discipline. His Jesuit upbringing instilled in him a self-belief that he never lost. But teaching rather than politics seemed to be his destiny. Only by chance, during what was supposed to be a brief return visit to Rhodesia from Ghana where he was teaching, in 1960, did Mugabe abruptly change course. Caught up unexpectedly in the turmoil of African protest against white rule, he threw himself into the nationalist cause with the same dedication he had hitherto devoted to teaching. He was among the first nationalists to advocate armed struggle, convinced that nothing else would overcome white intransigence (*ibid.*, p. 226).

The colonial regime under which Mugabe grew up, however, engendered in him an abiding sense of bitterness. Rhodesia's whites were generally contemptuous of the African population, treating them as an inferior race, demanding unfailing obedience to white rule. ‘We feared the white man’, Mugabe recalled. ‘He was power. He had

guns'. Fear and distrust of white society were part of everyday life, deeply ingrained (*ibid.*).

Eleven years of imprisonment hardened his resolve. Whereas Nelson Mandela used his prison years to open a dialogue with South Africa's white rulers, Mugabe emerged from prison adamantly opposed to any idea of negotiation, as he made clear to African presidents at the Lusaka summit in 1974. His aim was to overthrow white society by force and to replace it with a one-party Marxist regime. In 1979, after seven years of civil war in which at least 36,000 people had died and an equal number were injured, when a negotiated settlement was within reach at Lancaster House in London, Mugabe still hankered for military victory, 'the ultimate joy' (Mugabe, 1983; Stiff, 2000).

That he was denied the chance of a military victory was always something of a disappointment to him. And although the Lancaster House agreement which was signed in London in December 1979 paved the way to independence and to Mugabe's route to election as head of Zimbabwe's new government, he still aspired to the kind of power that military victory would have given him. The advent of democracy for Mugabe was not the final goal but a stepping stone towards achieving greater control through the establishment of a one-party state. To that end, in the early 1980s, he unleashed a campaign of mass murder and brutality on the Ndebele, Kalanga, Venda, Sotho and Tonga people in the Matabeleland and parts of the Midland's regions which left an estimated 30,000 people dead. This was meant to destroy their support for his main rival ZAPU and did indeed pave way for a one-party state in the country. Mugabe used the pretext of dissidents in order to unleash this campaign (Bhebhe, 2002a, p. 142).

By the end of 1982 he was ready to unleash his new army brigade, 5 Brigade as it was called, trained by the North Koreans. It was different from any other army unit in the country. Its troops wore different uniforms, with distinctive red berets. It used different equipment, transport and weaponry. Its codes and radios were incompatible with other army units. It was drawn almost entirely from Shona-speaking ex-Zanla forces loyal to Mugabe. Its chain of command bypassed the intermediate levels observed by the rest of the army, answering directly to Mugabe's army commanders. Mugabe was explicit about its purpose. 'They were trained by the North Koreans because we wanted one arm of the army to have a political orientation which stems from our philosophy as ZANU-PF', he said. He called the new brigade Gukurahundi, a Shona word defined as meaning 'the rain that blows away chaff before the spring rains'. Mugabe had used the term during the war, naming 1979 as Gore reGukurahundi, 'the year of the People's Storm' signifying the culmination of the people's struggle against white rule. In Matabeleland, however, Gukurahundi acquired a more sinister meaning; there it was interpreted as 'the sweeping away of rubbish' (Meredith, 2002; Stiff, 2000).

In December 1982 Mugabe attended 5 Brigade's Passing Out parade, presenting the brigade's colours, a flag emblazoned with the word Gukurahundi, to its Commander, Colonel Perence Shiri, a former Zanla guerrilla commander. 'From today onwards', Colonel Shiri told his troops: 'I want you to start dealing with dissidents' and dealing with dissidents indeed they did (Meredith, 2002 p. 66).

From the time it was deployed in Matabeleland North, at the end of January 1983, 5 Brigade waged a campaign of beatings, arson and mass murder deliberately targeted at the civilian population. Villagers were rounded up and marched long distances to a

central location, such as a school, where they were harangued and beaten for hours on end. The beatings were often followed by public executions. The main targets initially were former Zipra soldiers or Zapu officials whose names were read out from lists, but often victims were chosen at random and included women and children. Villagers were then forced to sing songs in the Shona language praising ZANU-PF and Mugabe while dancing on the mass graves of their families and fellow villagers killed and buried minutes earlier (see Bhebhe, 2002a, Meredith, 2002, Stiff, 2000). Statements by Mugabe and his ministers further inflamed the situation resulting in more arrests and deaths.

On 4 March 1983 Minister of State for Security, Emmerson Mnangagwa, told a ZANU-PF rally that the government still had an option left. They could burn 'all the villages infested with dissidents! The campaign against dissidents' he continued, 'can only succeed if the infrastructure that nurtures them is destroyed'. He called dissidents 'cockroaches' and 5 Brigade the 'DDT' used to eradicate them. One of Prime Minister Mugabe's ministers told a ZANU P.F. rally on 4 April that the army had entered Matabeleland 'like fire'... while 'in the process of cleansing the area of the dissident menace, they had also wiped out their supporters.' In a parody of the Scriptures, he added: 'Blessed are they who follow the path of the government laws, for their days on earth shall be increased. But woe to those who will choose the path of collaboration with dissidents for we will certainly shorten their stay on earth' (CCJP, 1994, p. 54; *The Chronicle*, 1983, 5 April). Mugabe himself said on 17 April, 1983: 'Obviously it cannot ever be a sane policy to mete out blanket punishment to innocent people, although in areas where banditry and dissident activity are rampant,

civilian sympathy is a common feature and it may not be possible to distinguish innocent from guilty' (CCJP, 1997, p. 54; *The Chronicle*, 1983, 10 March).

Later in the month at a political rally in rural Nkayi district where there was little chance of an overseas audience eavesdropping (although they did by using locally employed journalists) Mugabe said: 'Where men and women provide food for the dissidents, when we get there we eradicate them. We do not differentiate when we fight, because we can't tell who is dissident and who is not' (LCHR, 1986, p. 38). What choice did these villages have? The dissidents had guns and they demanded food in the same way Zanla forces had during the war of liberation. Those who refused with their food were killed.

The government showed no understanding or sympathy for the plight of innocent civilians, who were in a particularly unenviable position. Dissidents often ordered villagers at gunpoint to feed them and shot them if they refused. But if 5 Brigade discovered villagers had fed them, even under duress, they also shot them (CCJP, 1997, p. 44). Pseudo dissidents were also tasked to find out whether villagers sympathised with the dissidents, fed them or gave them shelter. It was an area where they achieved real successes. The unfortunate villagers were caught in a cleft stick. Even when they suspected 'dissidents' were 5 Brigade troops in disguise, they had little option but to greet them and look after them. If the visitors turned out to be true dissidents, a lack of hospitality could cost the villagers their lives. Conversely, if they turned out to be a pseudo gang, it brought the villagers death at the hands of 5 Brigade the next day. No matter what they did, the villagers always lost (Bhebhe, 2002a; Stiff, 2000).

In 1984 Matabeleland South became the focus of the Gukurahundi campaign, following an upsurge of dissident activity in the area in which several white farmers were killed. Although no more than 200 dissidents were active in the area, the government deployed some 15,000 troops and police, including 5 Brigade, and imposed harsh curfew measures on the civilian population. The area was already suffering from a third year of drought. The local population there, numbering more than 600,000 (Central Statistical Office - CSO, 1982), was heavily dependent on relief deliveries and food supplies from local stores. In a move that was bound to lead to widespread starvation, the government: closed all stores; halted all food deliveries to the area, including drought relief; and enforced a blanket curfew, restricting all movement in and out of curfew zones. Hundreds of thousands of ordinary civilians were quickly reduced to a desperate state. Churchmen pleaded with Mugabe to lift the measures. 'Starvation is imminent', they warned. But for two months the measures were kept in place. An officer in 5 Brigade, explaining the army's food policy at a meeting with local people at Maphisa Growth point said: 'First you will eat your chickens, then your goats, then your cattle, then your donkeys, then you will eat your children and finally you will eat the dissidents' (Meredith, 2002, pp. 69-70). Troops pillaged the land of what food remained and stole the cattle, sneering that they were the cattle the Ndebele had stolen during raids against the Shona in the nineteenth century. When Chief Ngugana Bango of Sanzukwi in the Matobo district protested publicly about 5 Brigade's brutality, he was force-marched to their base at Brunapeg Mission, accused of helping dissidents, and beaten so badly that he died. The government, as was usual in such cases, claimed he had been killed by dissidents. Many villagers were reduced to eating insects and grass seeds to stay alive. Untold numbers died (*ibid.*).

When the Bishop of Bulawayo charged the government with employing a policy of systematic starvation, Mugabe retorted that the bishop was more interested in worshipping Nkomo than God. The security forces, he claimed had performed 'a wonderful duty'. Priests should stay out of politics. 'It is not when the bishop sneezes that we all catch a cold. No, we are a government and we run our affairs as we see fit...The fact that bishops speak should not get us running around. What for?' (*ibid.* p. 70). As well as enforcing the food embargo, 5 Brigade and the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) rounded up thousands of men, women and children, even the elderly and infirm, taking them to interrogations centres (ezibayeni) where they were held sometimes for weeks on end. Army camps such as Bhalagwe near Kezi District Administrator's Office became notorious as places of torture and brutality. As many as 2000 Ndebeles were held there at any one time, trucked in from all over Matabeleland South Province. Inmates of Bhalagwe spoke of daily deaths from beating and torture; for survivors, digging graves was a daily chore. Bodies were also taken away by the truckload and dumped in local mine shafts. During a period of four months in 1984, an estimated 12,000 people passed through Bhalagwe. At Stops Police Camp in Bulawayo, detainees were held in 'cages' open to all weather and spattered with blood and faeces from previous occupants. The cages were close to interrogation cells, which meant that detainees could hear the screams and moans of those being interrogated day and night. Hundreds of people died here too (Bhebhe, 2002a; Meredith, 2002; Stiff, 2000).

However, dissident activity had given Mugabe just the opportunity he needed to unleash repression across the whole of Matabeleland and to eliminate PF ZAPU in the process. This, essentially, was the objective of Gukurahundi and the specific task given to 5

Brigade when it was deployed in Matabeleland in January 1983. There was no disguising the ferocity of its attacks on civilians. In broad daylight, 5 Brigade troops descended on one village after another, rounding up the entire population, women, men and children alike, beating them en masse and executing select groups. The terror they created was deliberate. It was intended to destroy all traces of political support for PF-ZAPU. To this end, over a four year period, more than 20,000 civilians were murdered, many thousands more were beaten and tortured, and an entire people were victimised (Bhebhe, 2002a; Meredith, 2002).

The author of this terror was Mugabe. His own speeches licensed it. Only when evidence of the results was presented to him did he balk at accepting responsibility. The principal instrument of terror - 5 Brigade - was his own creation. Once its function had been fulfilled, it was disbanded. For Mugabe, none of this was an aberration. During the Rhodesian war, violence had become his stock in trade. Given Ian Smith's intransigence, it was ultimately the only method of gaining majority rule. But once in power, Mugabe continued to use violence to achieve his objectives. In the case of Matabeleland, the purpose was to crush opposition from PF-ZAPU. But subsequently when other opponents challenged his rule, he resorted to the use of violence time and again. Indeed, he was later to boast that he had 'a degree in violence' (*ibid.*, p. 76).

### 2.3.3 *Mugabe's rule of terror, 1987-2008*

To avoid any further violence and repression, Joshua Nkomo capitulated. On December 22, 1987, Mugabe and Nkomo signed a Unity Accord. It merged PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF into a single party, thereafter known as ZANU-PF, offered an amnesty and the remaining

122 dissidents handed themselves over to the authorities at Gwanda, the provincial capital of Matabeleland South Province. An amnesty was also granted to all members of the security forces. An era of political madness had come to an end.

On 2 July 2000, President Mugabe, speaking at a memorial service in Bulawayo for the late Joshua Nkomo, admitted that atrocities had occurred in Matabeleland in the 1980s and that thousands of civilians had been killed. He admitted this was wrong, but he refused to take the blame:

It was an act of madness, we killed each other and destroyed each other's property. It was wrong and both sides were to blame. We have had a difference, a quarrel. We engaged ourselves in a reckless and unprincipled fight (Ziana, 2000).

The one-party system that Mugabe developed, following the demise of PF-ZAPU in 1987, lasted for twelve years. He accumulated huge personal power, ensuring that ZANU-PF's grip on power extended into every corner of the government's apparatus. One by one, the state media, parastatal organisations, the police, the civil service and, eventually, the courts, were subordinated to Mugabe's will, giving him control of a vast system of patronage (Bhebhe, 2002a).

Whatever good intentions he started out with - plans for improved education and health facilities - soon diminished in importance. For all his talk of striving for socialism and egalitarianism, Mugabe never displayed much concern for the welfare of common people. Just before the 1980 elections, veteran Aaron Mutiti warned:

What Mugabe himself has done to his fellow Zimbabweans in exile during the last three years, deprives his hollow assurances of any credibility. Unless the people of this country are

vigilant, they are in for a rude shock. Family life, religious life and economic life as we know it will progressively disappear if Mugabe gets to power. We must not close our eyes to this threat. He rates his communist ideology higher than people (Todd, 2007, p. 427).

What has happened and is happening in Zimbabwe proves him right. The main beneficiaries of independence all too clearly, are ZANU-PF's ruling elite, who engaged in a relentless scramble for jobs, contracts, farms and businesses that Mugabe was content to condone as a means of fortifying his own power base. Under his one party system, the scramble became ever more frenetic, spawning corruption on a massive scale. His self-belief grew into a monstrous ego. Surrounded by sycophants, he knows few restraints. Only his first wife, Sally, managed to exert a calming influence on his ambition and anger. After her death in 1992, he became increasingly detached from reality. His destiny, he believed, was to rule Zimbabwe for as long as he wanted (Bhebhe, 2002a).

The shock of his defeat in the referendum held in 2000 was thus all the more profound. His reaction was to resort to the methods that had served him so well in the past: violence and intimidation. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) which had just been formed and white farmers became his immediate target, subjected to months of terror tactics. In a bid to whip up popular support, he also unleashed a torrent of racist abuse against the entire white community, displaying an innate fear and loathing of whites in general. Although most blacks ignored such incitement, Mugabe's followers took their cue from it, confident that acting in a hostile and aggressive manner towards white victims was part of official policy. Many farms were vandalised, property destroyed and farmers killed. All commercial farming, the backbone of food security in the country and

region collapsed. More than 450,000 farm workers lost their jobs (see Bhebhe, 2002a; Buckle, 2001).

Mugabe's ultimate objective, however, was to destroy all opposition to his regime. Determined to remain in power, he used all the resources of the government to attack his opponents, rig elections, sanctioning murder, torture and lawlessness of every kind. 'No matter what force you have, this is my territory and that which is mine, I cling (to) unto death', he told me in 2001.

The cost of this strategy has been enormous. Zimbabwe has been reduced to a bankrupt and impoverished state. By 2008 the economy had collapsed and the country faced catastrophic food shortages. The education and health systems had collapsed. There was no law and order in the country because the judicial system had collapsed. Opposition leaders railed against such a ruinous course. Morgan Tsvangirai described Mugabe as 'a deranged despot', Edgar Tekere called him 'an insane head of state' (Meredith, 2002; Stiff, 2000, 228).

At the beginning of June 2005, Peter Mackay wrote from Marondera about a section of the community that was already under the hammer, although he did not know this at the time.

I am evolving a theory that Zimbabwe is a practising democracy, with the people - the 'povo' - running the country efficiently by means of informal trading, cross border trading, the black market, the parallel market, transporting their maize grown on ad hoc patches to the grinding mills by wheelbarrow and generally making do, while what is called the government goes its own way, that is in circles (*Marondera Times*, 08 June, 2005).

The informal sector of the economy Mackay was describing was simultaneously being smashed by the government. President Mugabe had started preparing for this further act of state terror months before by denouncing impoverished urban dwellers as being totemless, saying this in such a way as to demonstrate that people with no totems were beings devoid of humanity. He also called them 'povo' a derogatory term meaning 'people of various opinions'. Now he was galvanised into action by the belief everyone shared that the majority of urban dwellers had voted for the opposition MDC in the elections of March 2008 which he lost (Todd, 2007).

Operation Murambatsvina, which has been translated in various ways, but which basically means 'remove the shit', was launched on Tuesday 17 May, 2005 in the Harare area and spread fast throughout the country. While most sectors of the economy at the time, suffered crippling fuel shortages, bulldozers and other vehicles moved unimpeded through all parts of Zimbabwe in their destruction of thousands of concrete houses, informal settlements and trading centres. Police, army and youth militia used sledgehammers and fire to destroy homes and businesses, and when they tired they ordered the victims to destroy their own properties. Those who refused were shot on the spot. Even the flower sellers outside the Meikles Hotel in Central Harare had their structures destroyed (*ibid.*).

Emails poured out of Zimbabwe. One from 'Tapera' (trans.: 'we are finished') in Harare said his gardener had come to work late in a state of shock, and reported that the army had threatened to whip anyone who resisted the demolition of their homes or businesses.

I have seen it now with my own eyes, the destruction and the hate. There is no hope for this country now. It is finished. My own relatives have nowhere to go. If only we had guns. (email: Tichona Moyo to the author, Chicago, 11 June, 2005).

By Monday 13 June, 2005 nothing had been written about Operation Murambatsvina in the South African press, save for a letter from K. Rennie in the *Sunday Independent* of June 12, re-published the next day in the *Cape Times* under the heading: 'Why the deafening silence on Robert Mugabe's purge on the poor?'

The ANC government, it seems, is so supportive of Mugabe's current 'clean up' that it kindly supplied spare parts which will enable Mugabe's armed forces to continue their intimidation of would-be protestors by hovering overhead in military helicopters - as they did last week. Perhaps most shocking of all is our media's response. Almost overnight 250,000 people are made homeless and large numbers income-less in a neighbouring country. At best, our newspapers have offered us a story from the wire services, or syndicated from one of the international newspapers ...(and) on television, virtual silence. Once again our neighbours, the workers and the poorest of the poor, have been made homeless, without income, without assistance, in mid-winter. These are real people. Four have already died. Many more will die of cold and hunger alone. But where will it end? It is perhaps timely to recall the tens of thousands of dissenting voices that Mugabe silenced in Matabeleland, who 'disappeared' in the early 1980s. We must not let these people disappear. We must speak out. Or by our silence we are surely complicit (*Cape Times*, 13 June, 2005).

At the same time, MN wrote to me from a devastated Bulawayo:

When I said that after the election there would be greater repression I could not possibly have imagined what is happening in Zimbabwe now, first in Harare and now coming to us.

The police started yesterday evening and continued today with the result that all the fruit and vegetable stalls on Fifth Avenue, all the stalls of every sort in Lobengula Street Mall, the whole of Entumbane informal market, the furniture and mattress makers in Makokoba and all the food and clothing sellers and service - providers at Renkini are now history. There are piles of rubble everywhere lying in chaos.

Later this morning, the police attacked the sellers along Lobengula Street, dumping their wares into police trucks and burning the stalls. Smoke was wafting everywhere. (email: MN to the author, Bulawayo, 21 June, 2005).

On Thursday 30 June, 2005, South African radio announced that President Mugabe had said Operation Murambatsvina had been a campaign planned well in advance and was 'a long cherished desire'. Didymus Mutasa whom Mugabe had put in charge of both state security and all matters to do with land, had said as early as August 2002, when it was estimated that Zimbabwe had a population of thirteen million: 'We would be better off with only six million people, with our own people who support the liberation struggle. We don't want all these extra people'. According to Mutasa, 'supporting the liberation struggle' was synonymous with voting for Mugabe. All those people who did not vote for Mugabe did not support the liberation struggle. When Operation Murambatsvina was launched, the people targeted had already been described by the head of police Augustine Chihuri as a 'crawling mass of maggots' who were destroying the economy (*ibid.*, 417).

Commenting on what happened when Murambatsvina came to Bulawayo, this is what one bishop interviewed for one of my previous studies said:

There are no words to describe what this means to hundreds of thousands of people who eke out a living selling on the streets, trying to get by when the formal economy has collapsed. If ever any government has behaved like this I do not know where or when it existed. They have not just openly stolen people's goods, but their entire livelihoods. Our brains are evidently not equipped to absorb or give meaning to the destruction that has been perpetrated. We are not, as far as we know, at war, but that is what appears to be happening. Our government is making war on the nation. We cannot attempt to explain it and everyone is in a state of shock. We cannot adjust anymore to our fate, but as a people we are paralysed by fear and desperation. There will be prayer meetings of the faithful, all night vigils, but when the Amen is said, nothing will have changed. Hopelessness in the face of unspeakable evil and violence is our future (Bulawayo 11 July, 2005).

Indeed, violence was to continue a while longer with Operation Chikorokoza Chapera in 2006/2007 which was aimed at destroying all informal mine settlements.

To conclude this section on politics since independence, I need to clarify what the Global Political Agreement is and how it came about. The Global Political Agreement (GPA) of September 2008 was essentially an uneasy compromise between the two MDCs and ZANU-PF, and resulted from: the weakening of the former single ruling party, ZANU-PF, and the opposition, the weakening of the support base - civil society and trades unions - of the MDCS; the rapid spiralling down of the economy allied to a disastrous humanitarian situation; pressure from the South African Development Community (SADC), especially after the flawed presidential election second round of June 2008; and growing international isolation of the Mugabe regime (HoCIDC, 2010). The GPA provided an opportunity for ZANU-PF to maintain its repressive, kleptocratic and economically bankrupt rule and attempt through the MDC to reverse economic decline

and normalise its international relations. The MDC, by contrast, entered the agreement as their only possible viable route to power, and to begin a process of national, political and economic revival, but also, no doubt, for some a chance to enjoy the rewards of office (*ibid.*). The answer to the question: 'What has to be reconciled?' is all evident in this section. The reasons for reconstruction are also very clear. The weakness of ZANU-PF as shown above made the situation conducive to begin to carry out the fieldwork underpinning this study.

#### **2.4. Contexts for understanding education in Zimbabwe**

The question of education is always bound up with historical, social, economic and political questions which, although not intrinsic to the concept of education, have been closely interconnected with it. In Zimbabwe these issues are grounded in the divisiveness and inadequacy of educational provision during the colonial era (Moyana, 1989; Chung and Ngara, 1985).

In the pre-independence era education in Zimbabwe was used as an instrument of oppression, domination and discrimination against the black majority. This was achieved through several means:

- a. Withholding and underfunding black education, particularly academic secondary school education.
- b. Providing inferior i.e. manual education for blacks so that they could not compete with whites for white-collar jobs but would instead provide cheap black labour for factories and agrobusiness.

- c. Allowing access to academic education to some blacks in order to create an elite black bourgeoisie which could absorb the ambitions of black intellectuals, act as a buffer between white rule and black aspirations and thus be co-opted by capital. It is ironic that this policy is currently attacked by the new black bourgeoisie which it helped to create and which has, indeed, been co-opted by capital.
- d. Apart from being the sole route to white-collar employment and lifestyle, educational qualifications formed one of the bases of political franchise during the Colonial era.  
(Pearce, 1991)

Given the well known fact that the war of liberation of 1964-1979 was fought as much for the right to education as the right to land, the twin routes to economic self-improvement and political participation, a large part of state expenditure in the post-war state has been directed towards fulfilling educational aspirations. The State has attempted to use its educational policy as a key factor in legitimating its own government.

The next set of contextual issues concern the relationship between education and employment. This is centred on the problems of certification and of the relevance of the curriculum.

Just as education is inextricably linked into the wider political sphere, so is the problem of employment. The demand for certification has increased substantially since independence, partly because of the increase in numbers of young people passing through school because of an exponential population growth, weighed towards 0-15 year old age

group (Central Statistics Office Harare, 1986) and partly because of the declining economic and industrial base. Certification is of course, a convenient and legitimate way of eliminating large numbers of job seekers.

The growing unavailability of jobs and the demand for certification begin to highlight to the need for vocational training. Zimbabweans seem convinced that secondary schools are a suitable place for solving the problems of employment both through vocational training and certification and also job creation. One exception to this view is that of Raftopolous (1987), who argues that government policy on general education is paramount to what will come out of the system as a whole. The Ministry of Education through its Minister has constantly argued that such goals can and will be achieved within the education system.

The notion of 'relevance' in education is always politically charged, involving value-judgements as to the kind of political organisation that is desired in a society. It also involves a realistic appraisal of the kind of society which we can rationally hope to bring about, given the limitations of the economic and human resources at our disposal. A both the normative and factual question is whether the economic and educational systems, taken together, are capable of improving employment opportunities (Pearce, 1991).

Thus, in Zimbabwe as elsewhere, a further context is the quality of educational provision in relation to the flowering of the individual human personality, talents, moral sense, social capacity and cognitive development. Philosophers such as O'Hear (1981) tend to

argue for the priority of qualitative considerations in the educative process. They suggest that the connections between the national economy, social well being and vocational training are peripheral to and parasitic upon larger questions which are integral to education as a whole. For a good education has the power to transform the individual and to elevate and expand human potential, both intellectual, moral and practical, allowing the individual to adjust flexibly to the demands of a situation as well as to innovate and transform it.

The question of quality embraces the idea that properly to educate the young is both to enrich their capacities and to emancipate them from the narrow and rigid restrictions which characterise our own truncated adult lives (*ibid.*)

Alongside these broad considerations is a view of the state of education in Zimbabwe which has appeared both in newspapers controlled by the Zimbabwean state as well as by external independent agencies. In the former case there are claims that Zimbabwe still has the second highest literacy rate in Africa, second only to Tunisia (*The Sunday News*, 2010). From the latter kind of source comes the assessment that ‘in the past, Zimbabwe had a very high standard of education and a very high standard of teaching. Quite rightly, it was proud of it’ (HoCIDC, 2010: Vol. I, p. 44), whereas the situation now is that ‘some of the best education in the countries surrounding Zimbabwe is provided in schools where there are Zimbabwe exiled teachers’ (*ibid.*)

The official view may be summarized as follows.

- a. The agenda is set in terms of the superiority of Zimbabwean educational provision over that in Rhodesia. The superiority is seen purely in quantitative terms, i.e. the expansion of provision. The notion that educational provision is in equalitarian is not addressed.
- b. By an undescribed mechanism, quantitative educational provision will ultimately turn into a qualitative improvement. All that is required is sufficient expenditure – although no extra money is expected to be allocated to schooling for many years to come.
- c. Education will in the near future develop into a route to employment and particularly self-employment by providing a variety of vocational training courses. The instrument of change will be a curriculum which is economically and politically relevant.

An early example of this latter argument is Nangati (1985) who displays standard Leninist hostility to the private sector. He believes that private industries in Zimbabwe hold government to ransom over the question of youth unemployment and seek to prevent social transformation. Their strategy, he believes, is to demand free market concessions from government for high returns on investments, especially with respect to the repatriation (sic) of profits and reduced taxation levels. The industrial sector does not, however, reciprocate by extending employment opportunities to youth.

It is to be noted that there is no public official policy on the quality of education as far as individual flowering is concerned.

## **2.5 Education Provision in Zimbabwe since 1980.**

### *2.5.1 The first decade after independence*

During the first decade of its independence Zimbabwe made spectacular achievements in the expansion of its primary and secondary school system. The huge increase of primary school provision was due in part to the fact that there was high demand for it and partly due to the fact that tuition in this sector was free during this period. Early post-independence policy on education stressed that education was a basic human right and that the state would ensure equal educational opportunities for all. In its First Five Year National Development Plan (1985 - 1990) the Government stressed its adherence to the principle of free and compulsory education for all children. The principle was enacted into the Education Act (1987) which reaffirmed that ‘every child in Zimbabwe shall have the right to school education’ and restated the Government’s objective to provide free primary education (Mackenzie, 1988; Chivore, 1988; MEC, 1995).

To give meaning and substance to its commitment to the principle of education as every child’s birth-right and to its being free and compulsory, the government abolished school fees at the primary school level in 1980 so that all children regardless of their social status could enjoy their right to receive education (ZANU(PF), 2000).

The spirit of independence and abolition of fees at the primary school level released enormous energy in Zimbabwe for schools building programmes, leading to the reconstruction of those schools that had been destroyed during the war of liberation and to the building of new ones. In fact, one of the most impressive achievements of

Zimbabwe's first decade of independence was the dramatic expansion of its education system, at both primary and secondary school levels. For example, during 1979 to 1992 the number of primary schools in the country increased by 190% and the number of teachers in the system grew from 28,455 to 59,874, an increase of 210% (Ministry of Education and Culture - MEC, 1993).

The 1982-85 Transitional Development Plan set out to restructure the Zimbabwean economy along socialist lines, to reform the capitalist structures established during colonial rule and achieve equitable distribution of wealth. Educational policy, too, was designed to place skills in the hands of the black majority by extending education and training to all people. Under this plan, the education system was widely expanded, but not fully reformed (TDP, 1982).

The objectives of the Transitional National Development Plan were consolidated and intensified under the 1985-90 First Five-Year National Development Plan. The Plan set out to reactivate the economy through a number of strategies. These were: the introduction of mass education; land reform; reconciliation and the raising of the standard of living for the entire population, in particular the peasant population. Also important was the creation of employment opportunities, manpower development, the development of science and technology; and maintenance of correct balance between the environment and development (TDP, 1982).

The contribution of education towards the fulfillment of the broad objectives of the Transitional Development Plan was to be realised through the achievement of a number of goals of the education and manpower development sector. From the standpoint of the socio-political needs of Zimbabwe, the education system was intended to promote national unity, socialism, egalitarianism, patriotism and national reconciliation and reconstruction (Zvobgo, 1993). The cultural goals were set at reviving the largely neglected languages and other cultural values, and at developing a distinct Zimbabwean way of life out of the mutual recognition and enrichment of diverse regional cultures. Education was intended to contribute to national development, particularly economic development, through the supply of adequate cadres of trained and skilled personnel. Positions in many skilled occupations were at this time held and filled by whites and expatriates. The extension of services to the majority of the people and the expansion of the economy required a great number of recently skilled local people. As in Zambia and Botswana, education was regarded as a basic human right and was expanded partly to redress inherited colonial inequalities in provision and also to satisfy a great national thirst (Zvobgo, 1993). Under the Transitional National Development Plan education was not seen as the sole agent of development but as one of a set of the strategies promoting development, reconciliation and national reconstruction. While recognising that sound educational planning and policy were central to development, policy makers recognised that proper and efficient organisation of the economy was also pivotal to national development (TDP, 1982).

Zimbabwe proceeded to reform education with these considerations in mind. The

Zimbabwean approach to the educational reform programme was more radical and ambitious than the Zambian and Botswana programmes. Whereas Zambia and Botswana began by giving much priority to the development of secondary and post - secondary education in their bid to reform the economy, Zimbabwe's goal was to universalise both primary and secondary education (Zvobgo, 1993).

As a result of this universalisation of education, Zimbabwe experienced an educational explosion not seen in Zambia and Botswana. Primary school enrolment increased from 819,580 in 1979 to 2,281,595 in 1990. At secondary level, enrolments increased significantly from 66,215 in 1979 to 708,080 in 1990, while the number of schools rose from 197 to 1512 in the same period. At tertiary level, enrolments in technical and vocational institutions rose from 3,469 to 9,261. In teacher's colleges, students numbers rose from 2,824 to 16,576, while at University level enrolments jumped from 2,200 in 1980 to 9,017 (Lind, 1994). The picture that emerges is one of phenomenal expansion of education at all levels as part of the crusade to transform education in post - colonial Zimbabwe. However, expansion at this rate had serious economic repercussions. Funding of education became increasingly difficult and, consequently, the government was forced to institute cost recovery measures (Muringi, 1985)

The decision by the Zimbabwe government to make education a basic human right set the tone and direction for the future development of education in the country. And although, by the simple stroke of the legislative pen, the education system was democratised, several elements of racism continued to characterise the system. Firstly, white attitudes

against racial integration were as strong as they were prior to independence. Whites adopted a number of strategies to prevent racial integration in schools. For example, some withdrew their children from Zimbabwean schools and sent them to South Africa. This was the case mostly at secondary and tertiary levels. In fact, tertiary institutions such as teachers' colleges, nursing schools and agricultural colleges experienced the highest drain. Within two years of independence, tertiary institutions were characterised by an almost total absence of white students, a feature which has remained constant to the present. Secondly, some whites began to set up private schools with very high fee structures. The objective was to exclude as many blacks as possible. This was a very effective method of preventing racial integration and reconciliation. Thirdly, a large number of white teachers left formerly privileged 'Group A' white schools either for South Africa or for local private schools, thus seriously disrupting learning in such schools. The whole purpose of these strategies was to resist changes introduced in education by the new post-colonial state (Zvogbo, 1999). This resistance never died down and finally found a new lease of life and support in the privatisation of education under the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP – see below).

A second major development in education was the adoption of a mass policy as a basic socialist strategy. The government was determined, through such a policy, to promote the interests of the majority of the people. In a policy statement in 1980, the then Education Minister, Dr. Dzingai Barnabas Mutumbuka, defined the role of education in a socialist society such as that intended for Zimbabwe thus:

In a socialist state, education is man-centred. It does not serve narrow and parochial interests.

It transcends racial, class, ethnic and sectoral considerations. In fact it negates the whole

concept of interest groups...Its major concern is the development of socialist consciousness (Policy Statement No. 4, p.2, in Zvogbo, 1999: p. 126).

The mass education policy resulted in an educational expansion that was unparalleled in the region. In 1984, Minister Mutumbuka noted:

Primary education has been made free. Schools at both primary and secondary levels have more than trebled. The process is still afoot. Our socialist commitment to the removal of all forms of injustice has found expression in the removal of all barriers on the road to knowledge from Primary to Higher Education, and abolishing all social restrictions in admission to educational establishment (Press Statement Policy No. 280/84/5/N/DB, p. 2, in Zvogbo, 1999: p. 126).

The result was that schools were inundated with children and the system was quickly expanded to create room for all children of school-going age (ages 5-7)

The implementation of this socialist policy raised several problems. First, forged in the heat of the liberation war, the policy pronouncements were over-ambitious in the nature and range of reforms they intended to cover. The resources at the disposal of government were not adequate to finance the party's ambitious socialist ideological agenda. Secondly, the lack of adequate funds meant that civil servants had great difficulty and tremendous frustration in implementing the reforms. A highly excited and expectant black population flooded the education system until pressure on resources grew to the extent that, as in the case of Zambia and Botswana, the government was forced to borrow from donor

countries. Unfortunately, the Zimbabwe government at that time did not fully invest in the development of quality planning or the institution of systems which could enhance the socio-economic situation of the country. In such circumstances, borrowing from donor countries was a soft option with hidden negative consequences, which were reflected in rising international debt and loss of political autonomy. There were threats of cuts in aid should recipients fail to follow the terms and conditionalities of the aid. Zambia and Zimbabwe experienced such threats and resultant cuts (MEC, 1993; Bhebhe, 2002b).

The political mood in the early years of independence did not give policy formulators and implementors much room to examine and debate rationally the policies of the ruling party that were imposed on national government. Consequently, many aspects of the educational policy were hurriedly implemented as government grappled with an ever-changing plethora of problems. Meanwhile, some aspects of the education agenda were resisted by some civil servants who opposed change: most had served under the colonial regime and were apprehensive of new revolutionary policies (Zvobgo, 1999).

### *2.5.2 Education provision in Zimbabwe, 1990 to 2008*

Annual Reports of the Zimbabwe Secretary of Education for the decade immediately following independence in 1980 indicate that the country's achievements in the expansion of both the primary and secondary school sectors in as short a period were quite remarkable by any world standards. Since 1990, however, Zimbabwe has

experienced fundamental changes in its socio-economic environment impacting negatively on the original policy thrust of education for all.

Specifically, a new policy environment was created by the adoption of policies linked to an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) imposed by the International Monetary fund in 1989 in return for financial assistance. Under ESAP conditions, the economy was poised to move away from public sector initiatives in development to those led by market forces, including the reintroduction of fees in schools and hospitals. The role of Government during this period was that of facilitating the operations of the productive forces of the private investor. The intent of ESAP was to reduce the government deficit through reduced spending, especially in the social sectors of the economy. The resources so saved would be channelled to private sector investment. It was expected that economic growth, incomes generation and increased employment opportunities would be stimulated by the new policy actions that were emerging from ESAP. The resulting wealth, it was hoped, would lead to an increased Government revenue base and the redirection of welfare activities by Government to a smaller needy portion of society (*ibid.*)

However, it was also recognised that in the medium term ESAP would adversely affect the welfare of the poor. Cost recovery measures in Education and Health were likely to impact negatively on the ability of the most vulnerable to participate in education and health services. To ameliorate their suffering the Government put in place a set of safety nets (comprising a series of exemptions and other financial arrangements) to assist the

very poor. Rural primary schools were exempt from the reintroduction of school-fees. Poor urban children could apply for assistance with the payment of tuition and examination fees to the Social Development Fund (SDF) which was administered by the Department of Social Welfare in the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. Following the lifting of subsidies on maize-meal (the staple food), the government allowed those who qualified for assistance through the Public Assistance Fund to receive cash benefits from Social Welfare (MEC, 1995; Zvobgo, 1999).

Another development which had a fundamental impact on educational programmes, in the short to medium term, was the 1991/92 drought. The adoption of the new economic policy of ESAP aimed at increasing economic growth and prosperity was immediately followed in its wake by the most severe drought the country had faced in living memory. This drought devastated the national wealth and led to reduced agricultural production, the decline of agro-business activities and lay-offs in these sectors, as well as reduced employment opportunities in other areas and increased famine and starvation (MEC, 1995).

All these developments had an impact on the pace at which the Zimbabwean Declaration on education for all by the year 2000 could be implemented, but they did not lead to its abandonment (Mugabe, 1983). On the contrary the country persisted in seeking the most cost-effective ways to implement the terms of the Declaration.

As such, the Second Five-Year National Development plan (1991 -1995) shifted emphasis from accessibility of schooling to quality and relevance of the educational experience. This Plan coincided with the adoption of ESAP and reinforced the government's intention to reduce its net spending on the social sectors of education and health through the tightening of expenditure and adjustment to new fiscal realities and objectives, while at the same time protecting the impressive social gains made since the attainment of independence. Both sectors were to have some reductions in their share of the budget and were therefore called upon to devise new strategies for maintaining their existing activities, to be highly selective about any new areas or items of expenditure and to recover a high proportion of costs from beneficiaries. It was observed that over the first decade of independence the trend growth rate of expenditure on Education had been 10.3 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually or about 18.5 percent of central Government expenditure. It was projected then, that beginning in the fiscal year 1990/91, Government expenditure on the education sector (higher education included) would be reduced progressively by 0.5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually to about 9.0 percent of GDP (or 16.7 percent of Government expenditure) by the fiscal year 1994/95 (*ibid.*).

To ameliorate the suffering of the poor, which in the short- to medium-term would be inevitable, the Government put in place a set of safety nets to cushion low income and poor families and other traditionally vulnerable and disadvantaged groups against the negative effects of ESAP, so that they could continue to have equal educational opportunity and to enjoy their birth right to education. In line with this commitment, the

Government also formulated and implemented a policy which positively discriminated in favour of:

- a. all traditionally vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (e.g. woman and girls, the poor generally).
- b. disadvantaged areas (e.g. communal areas, mining areas and commercial farming areas), and
- c. rural and commercial farming schools.

Under this policy, fees were charged on a sliding scale which favoured the poorer sectors of society. In this way, the Government attempted to remain true to its commitment to the principle of universal access to education and the promotion of equity (*ibid.*).

The new environment created by the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) required that educational management should be guided by the need for productivity and equity under conditions of deteriorating financial resources. This called for educational managers, administrators and planners to learn to make better use of the existing resources both with respect to effectiveness and efficiency. But with rampant corruption, cronyism and nepotism increasing every level of the political system it became totally impossible to be effective and efficient. Moreover, since 1990 spending on education had been stagnating. In a funding proposal the Ministry of Education and Culture had this to say in 1993:

The broad context within which the education sector operates has, however, deteriorated since the introduction of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). Of course, the education budget has continued to rise in nominal terms over the years. However, in real terms

the nation's financial resources set aside for the education sector has been steadily declining since 1980 till 1984. Thereafter, it experienced an upturn, reaching a peak in 1989/90 (which nevertheless remained below the 1980 mark). In 1990/91 it fell to the 1988/89 level. It rose marginally in 1991/92 (but never reached the 1990/91 level), and in 1992/93 it fell again below the 1989/90 level (MEC, 1993, p. 48).

Lack of democracy and mismanagement or poor management of resources has been cited as a cause of the growing financial crisis in the education sector (Zvogbo, 1999: 120-21). Structural transformation was hard to achieve and the continuance of colonial state structures, such as boarding schools, after independence encouraged poor governance and misuse of funds which made the situation worse. By the mid-1990s the country was increasingly fragile and marked by eroded state legitimacy and capacity (Mkandawira, 1988; Vieira, Martin and Wallerstein 1992).

Initially, the Education budget had grown along with expansion of the system. As the country faced a shrinking national budget, resources for education became increasingly squeezed, a situation that has got progressively worse. For example, the Gukurahundi (1981-1987), Farm Invasions (2000-2008) and Operation Murambatsvina (2005) absorbed all resources, leaving precious little for social services such as education. As foreign debt mounted, the government withdrew from investment in areas such as education and health leaving children vulnerable. As poverty and unemployment grew, both access to and quality of education suffered (Zvogbo, 1999).

Such was the context of education in Zimbabwe prior to the point at which, during 2007-2008, the present research study was devised.

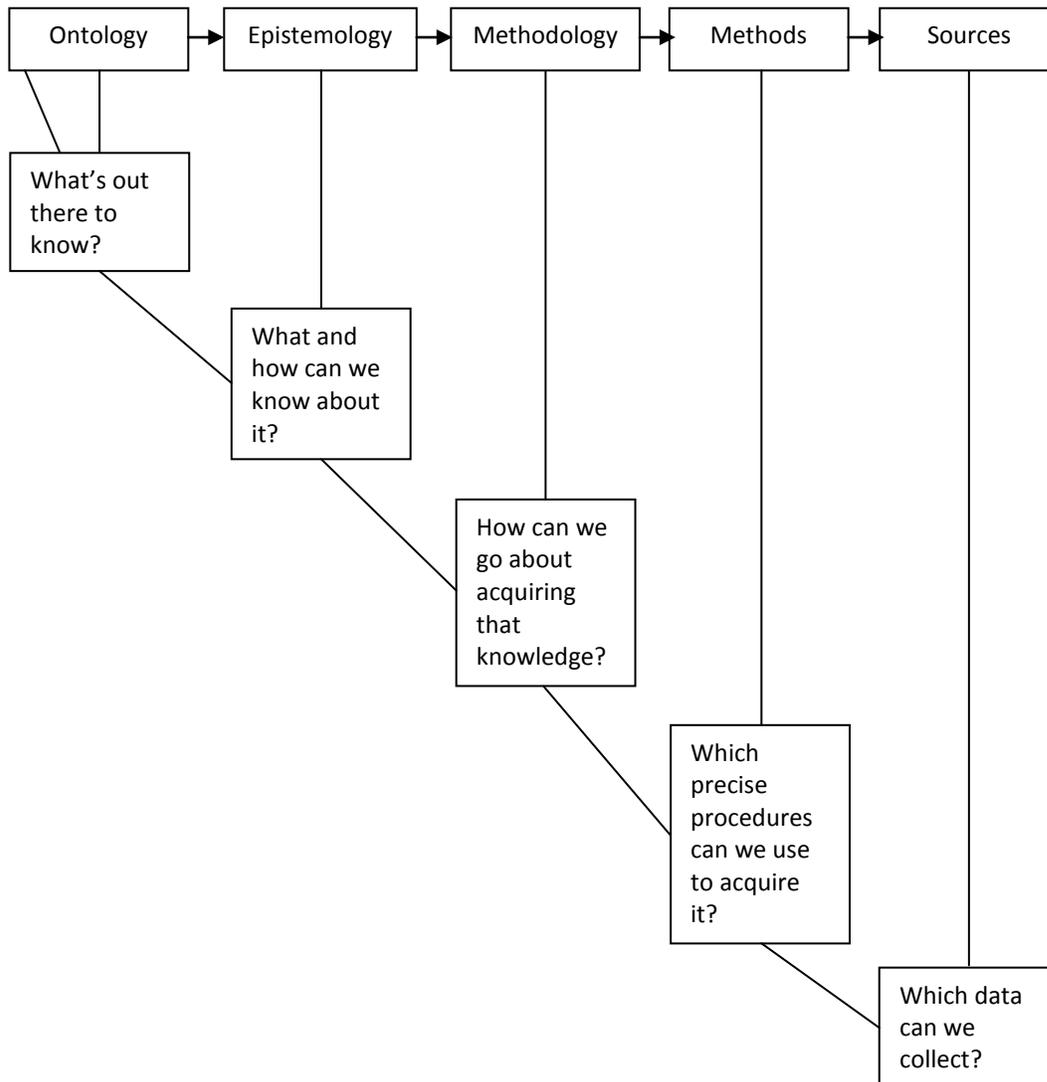
## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the considerations which informed the design of the empirical dimension of the research study. My analysis takes as a starting point an important notion from Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: p. 21) who suggest that ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; these in turn, give rise to methodological considerations; and these in turn give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection. The method(s) chosen for a research project are inextricably linked to the research questions posed and to the sources of data collected. Figure 3.1 below shows the interrelationship between the building blocks of a research project such as this.

Figure 3.1 The Interrelationship between the Building Blocks of Research.



Source: Adapted from Grix, 2004.

The figure does not show the impact and influence of questions one is asking, and type of project one is undertaking or the methods chosen. However, it is our ontological and epistemological positions that shape the very questions we may ask in the first place, how we pose them and how we set about answering them.

In my case, the research questions I posed and the decision primarily to conduct interviews and seek access to interviewees led me to:

- identify additional key documents that I needed to analyse (sources)
- interview technique (the principal research method)
- interview transcription (the main data collection/recording method)
- use of grounded theory (the main data analysis procedure)

Therefore my research questions (RQs) led me to additional sources (S), to my methods (M) and to ways of analysing my data (A) (RQ — >S —>M —>A). Prior to this, the research questions I asked were guided by my ontological and epistemological positions.

This perspective on research design view moves us beyond regarding research methods as simply a technical exercise: it recognizes that research is concerned with understanding the world and that this is informed by how we view our world(s), what we take understanding to be, and what we see as the purposes of understanding. The first part of this chapter outlines the ontological, epistemological and methodological premises of my research study and examines their strengths and weaknesses. In so doing, it recognises that the central themes of the study – education, educational research, politics and decision-making – are inextricably intertwined. The chapter then moves, in its second half, to a discussion of the empirical aspect of the study including methods and procedures in the field.

## **3.2 Methodology**

### *3.2.1. General considerations*

People have long been concerned to come to grips with their environment and to understand the nature of the phenomena it presents to their senses. The means by which they set out to achieve these ends may be classified into three broad categories: experience, reasoning and research (Mouly, 1978). Far from being independent and mutually exclusive, these categories must be seen as complementary and overlapping features, most readily in evidence where solutions to complex modern problems are sought.

In our endeavours to come to terms with the problems of day-to-day living, we are heavily dependent upon experience and authority and their value in this study was not underestimated. The experience of senior party leaders and educationists in Zimbabwe was sought in various critical areas, under very difficult conditions for fieldwork. Their input in this study and the authority their accounts lend were most valuable. Many of my research encounters were opportunistic and pointed me to other valuable sources of data. Experience and authority provided richly fertile sources of hypotheses and questions about Zimbabwe, though it must be remembered, of course, that as tools for uncovering ultimate truth, experience and authority have limitations. The limitations of personal experience in the form of common-sense knowing, for instance, can quickly be exposed when compared with features of a systematic and empirical approach to problem-solving (Cohen *et al.*, 2010).

A second category by means of which people attempt to comprehend the world around them, namely, reasoning, consists of three main types: deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, and the combined inductive-deductive approach (*ibid.*). Deductive reasoning is based on the syllogism which was Aristotle's great contribution to formal logic. In its simplest form the syllogism consists of a major premise based on an a priori or self-evident proposition, a minor premise providing a particular instance, and a conclusion.

Thus:

All planets orbit the sun;

The earth is a planet;

Therefore the earth orbits the sun.

The assumption underlying the syllogism is that through a sequence of formal steps of logic, from the general to the particular, a valid conclusion can be deduced from a valid premise. In my research, many respondents would tell me:

All ZANU (P.F.) members are murderers;

X is a ZANU (P.F.) member;

Therefore X is a murderer.

President Mugabe himself on repeated occasions would tell his youth militia that the liberation of the country came through blood and therefore there is nothing wrong with spilling blood. This helps to explain the culture of violence within ZANU (P.F.) and underlines the chief limitation of syllogism in that it can only handle certain kinds of statements (thus, it is certainly true that all planets in the solar system orbit the sun but

not true that all members of ZANU P.F. are murderers). Meanwhile, induction is, broadly, a mode of reasoning from the particular to the general and inductive research can be understood as research which draws conclusions from specific empirical data (the particular) and attempts to generalise from them, leading to more abstract ideas, including theories (Grix, 2004, p. 168).

Although both deduction and induction have their weaknesses, their contributions to the development of knowledge in this study were enormous and fell into three categories: (i) the suggestion of hypotheses; (ii) the logical development of these hypotheses; and (iii) the clarification and interpretation of empirical findings and their synthesis into a new conceptual framework. Later in the study it will be argued that the whole culture of violence within ZANU (P.F.) can be understood within the framework that has emerged from this study as a result of such formal reasoning. The culture of forgiveness among Zimbabweans can also be understood in a similar vein. 'We might not have money, cattle or property to leave for our children, but there is little excuse why we cannot leave them a peaceful country' was a sentiment expressed by many of my respondents. So, too, was the conviction that a peaceful country can only come about through forgiveness and reconciliation.

A third means by which we may set out to consider truth is research. Research has been defined by Kerlinger (1970) as the systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical propositions about presumed relations among natural phenomena (see also Cohen *et al.*, 2000). Research has three characteristics in particular, which distinguish it from the initial means of problem-solving identified earlier, namely experience. First, whereas experience deals with events occurring in a haphazard

manner, research is systematic and controlled, basing its operations on inductive-deductive forms of reasoning outlined above. Second, research is empirical. The scientist turns to investigation for validation. As Kerlinger puts it, 'subjective belief... must be checked against objective reality. Scientists must always subject their notions to the courts of empirical inquiry and test' (*ibid*). And, third, research is self-correcting. Scientific methods have built-in mechanisms to protect from error as far as is humanly possible, and procedures and results are open to public scrutiny by fellow professionals. As Mouly says, 'This self-corrective function is the most important single aspect of science, guaranteeing that incorrect results will in time be found to be incorrect and duly revised or discarded' (1970, p. 46). Research is a combination of both experience and reasoning and on account of this it is regarded as the most successful approach to the discovery of truth, particularly as far as the natural sciences are concerned (Borg, 1963).

Despite the considerable influence of the 'scientific' approaches to methodology in educational research, an alternative series of interpretive or qualitative approaches has long existed within education. These approaches claim either that 'scientific' method is inadequate on its own for collecting, analysing and explaining data, or that it is totally inappropriate in a subject that deals with human behaviour. Thus an educationist who advocates the use of interpretive and qualitative approaches might suggest that they should be used to supplement 'scientific' quantitative methodology; others that they should replace 'scientific' approaches (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008; Travers 2001).

Some interpretive educationists reject the use of natural science methodology for the study of social action. They see the subject matter of the social and natural sciences as fundamentally different. The natural sciences deal with matter, they argue. Since matter has no consciousness, its behaviour can be explained simply as a reaction to external stimuli. It is compelled to react in this way because its behaviour is essentially meaningless. Whatever action is taken by an individual, advocates of interpretive education would argue that causal explanation of human behaviour is impossible without some understanding of the subjective states of the individuals concerned. Thus a positivist might be content to discover solely what measurable external factors led to a certain type of human behaviour, while an advocate of a more qualitative approach would be interested, also or instead, in the meaning attached to the behaviour by those engaging in it.

It is at this point that opponents of positivist and 'scientific' methods begin to diverge. While some, such as Weber, regard the understanding of meaning as necessary to making causal explanations possible, others, such as phenomenologists, regard understanding as the end product of social research and they reject the possibility of producing causal explanations at all (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008; Travers 2001).

Phenomenology represents the most radical departure from the 'scientific' quantitative methodology. Angie Titchen and Dawn Hobson say that phenomenology is the study of lived, human phenomena within everyday social contexts in which the phenomena occur from the perspective of those who experience them. Phenomena comprise anything that

human beings live/experience (2005: 121). In my study (as in Bosnia and Rwanda: see Phillips *et al.*, 1998) respondents had been subjected to rape, torture, intimidation or other forms of violence. The attraction of the phenomenological method was, for Husserl (1970), as for me in this study, in its promise as a new science of being. Through this methodology, disclosure of a realm of being which presented itself with absolute certainty, arising from experience, seemed possible. Husserl saw this method as a way of reaching true meaning through penetrating deeper into reality. To attempt this in my own study, I decided to employ the following main methods:

- documentary analysis
- observation
- interviewing
- ethnographic fieldwork/fieldnotes

In agreement with Heidegger's view that language and understanding are inseparable structural aspects of human 'being-in-the-world' Gadamer stated that 'Language is the universal medium in which understanding occurs. Understanding occurs in interpreting' (1960/1998, p. 389). Gadamer viewed interpretation as a fusion of horizons, a dialectical interaction between the expectation of the interpreter and the meaning of the text (Polkinghorne, 1983). A 'horizon' is a range of vision that includes everything seen from a particular vantage point. A person with no horizon, in Gadamer's view, does not see far enough and overvalues what is nearest at hand, whereas to have a horizon means being able to see beyond what is close at hand. Questioning, he wrote, is an essential aspect of the interpretive process as it helps make new horizons and understanding possible:

Understanding is always more than merely re-creating someone else's meaning. Questioning opens up possibilities of meaning, and thus what is meaningful passes into one's own thinking on the subject...To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were (p. 375).

This explains why interviews and interviewing played a major part in my data collection.

The essence of my study was an act of discovery. The fact that a very prosperous country was at the verge of collapse due to the violence caused by a powerful minority seeking to retain power, meant that there was an urgent need for field-based investigation. Therefore, the heart of the design was investigation of this phenomenon in its natural setting. Initially, I used an ethnographic participant observation in certain areas of this study. Through this I learned of the existence of 'serious' levels of 'violence' and 'human rights abuses' from casual conversations with teachers in local primary schools and residents in these neighbourhoods. As I conducted further investigations, I began to learn more about the situation in Zimbabwe and how this situation was affecting all sectors of life including education and health. Teachers would not teach if they were threatened and children would not go to school if there was insecurity in the area. Many teachers and some prominent people in the area had been arrested and jailed. Those teachers not arrested and put in prison fled from the affected areas to safe havens. The whole population in the affected areas was uprooted leaving any form of schooling nonexistent.

Thus, the first and most necessary source of information was the presence of people who were brave enough to point me to other parts of the country where similar violence had or

was occurring and education had been seriously disrupted as a result. This source thus consisted of people who were closest at hand, or who were readily available: in other words, a convenience sample (Cohen *et al.*, 2010). This was most important in this study owing to its sensitive nature. One needed as participants at this early stage of the study people one could trust. As such, I had no choice but to use everyone willing and available who was prepared to either give me the information I required or point me to other sources of information. I also needed specialized informants from among teachers, educationists, political parties and human rights groups. With these in place, I carried out some initial interviews and administered some issues-generating questionnaires (see section 3.3.1). I soon realized that the whole country was on fire and needed, if possible, to comprise the scope of the field investigation. In addition, my initial opportunist sample pointed me to other important and relevant sources of data which enabled me to cover the whole country. By this means, I soon had a purposive sample of individuals who could supply me with a unique body of information. Specific participants were participants chosen because they were the only ones who could give me the answers or insights, which I was seeking. These included senior political leaders, teachers, rape victims, torture victims and members of the security forces. By virtue of proceeding with my investigation in this way, I uncovered a plausible set of motives to explain why and where violence had occurred and caused so much misery to those affected and this enabled me to keep my initial hypotheses under review and subject to refinement. In turn, these hypotheses were linked to the deductive methods of research, whereby such propositions were derived from theory to provide answers to the ‘why’

questions in social research (Blaikie, 2000) – in my case why Zimbabwe is now a pariah state.

Now that I had established the necessary background for understanding the problem under investigation, I needed to investigate it in some depth. I had choices to make. The first choice was that of selecting additional participants and the reasons for selecting them. Eventually my participants were selected from across the whole country. There were several reasons for this decision. First of all, my study topic clearly implied the need for the data to be collected across the whole country and not selected areas because the whole country was engulfed in violence and I wanted to find out why this was the case. Second, I had begun to establish that the problem under investigation had occurred throughout the country, although at different levels of intensity. Third, I wanted to establish why some areas were more affected than others. Finally, Zimbabwe has different ethnic groups and cultures and I wanted to establish what impact these ethnic, cultural and indeed linguistic divisions might have had on the problem under investigation.

Meanwhile, I capitalized on the benefits of a qualitative approach by analysing some selected scenarios in detail, using a broadly ethnographic approach. During the study, many unexpected issues emerged, which informed the next stage of data collection and analysis. Sometimes the surprises were challenging, particularly the levels of torture and destruction that had taken place. More surprising was the fact that, despite the murders, torture and levels of destruction, many people expressed a readiness to forgive and forget. The numbers of people killed were challenging to any sane mind. The resilience of the Zimbabwean people also stands out (and helps to explain why, to this day, many

Zimbabweans remain baffled that the International Community would not intervene). These two insights in particular were influential in refining my overall findings (see chapter 5).

I needed to capture what the people said and did, so I chose to collect my data through a range of means: documentary analysis, questionnaire data, observation, field notes, and interview recordings/transcripts. Ethical considerations were foremost in my mind and these are discussed in detail in chapter four. Finally, as I began to accumulate mounds and mounds of data, it became clear that I needed a system to organize and refine my data.

This study is an excellent example of the potentially fluid nature of a qualitative research design. As I learned more and more about my topic, my methods and style of gathering data and insights also began to change. While I was able to keep my initial focus on the role of education for national reconstruction and reconciliation in Zimbabwe, my approach toward researching this topic continued to expand and evolve. Most notably, face-to-face interviewing helped me to record the level of injury, destruction and, in some cases, facial trauma experienced by those who assisted the research as respondents.

### *3.2.2 Selecting A Theoretical Framework for The Research*

In selecting an appropriate theoretical framework, it was essential initially, to consider my own ontological and epistemological stance because this would have a profound effect on how I went about uncovering knowledge of social behaviour (Cohen *et al.*, 2010). Burrell and Morgan's (1979) summary of the assumptions that form the basis of investigations into human behaviour succinctly highlights the important link between one's ontological

stance and the nature of the research enquiry to be pursued (see also figure 3.1, above). Having identified that the characteristics underpinning the two principal views of social science (the subjective and objective dimensions) concern ontological, epistemological, human and methodological assumptions, they suggest that how one 'views' the world, as reflected in the first three perspectives (ontological, epistemological, human) directly influences the method by which that social reality is investigated (the methodological perspective). As I explained in chapter one, my concern was to understand the 'role of education in national reconstruction and reconciliation in Zimbabwe'. That I view the role of education in this way emphasises my nominalist perspective: meaning, reality and truth are negotiable concepts. In this way, the individual does not make sense of a fixed reality but creates his or her own meanings through modification, interpretation and imagination. Thus, it follows that my epistemological stance is similarly relativist. If reality is multi-layered and multi-faceted, then our interpretation or knowledge of that reality is equally complex.

Researchers working within this paradigm accept that there are a number of threats to validity in terms of the effects of variables that cannot be eliminated from the experiment (Cohen *et al*, 2010, 6th edition). Interestingly enough, the majority of these threats are connected with the subjects themselves: people. Concerns relating to selection bias, maturation, treatment of compensation and resentful demoralisation, for example, suggest that, within this paradigm, the diversity of subjective experiences is something not to be constrained but, rather, celebrated.

Illuminative in purpose, the interpretive paradigm places particular value on the subjective response, using the researcher as the chief research instrument. There is no

fixed reality, merely different perceptions of the world that may overlap and which are creations of individual consciousness (Burrell and Morgan 1979). In order to comprehend the extent of these 'lived truths', as Foucault (2001, 2002) termed them, it is therefore, necessary to empathise with those involved.

Verstehen (Weber, 1949) encourages the clarity of vision needed to achieve veridicality, both in terms of our perception and our understanding. In accumulating generally qualitative data, by means of participatory, documentary or observational methods, the interpretive researcher attempts to build up thick descriptions of the cases under study (Geertz, 1973). The same subjectivity that the scientific paradigm attempts to eradicate from its method is the lynchpin of the interpretive paradigm. By establishing a dialectic of analysis and re-analysis, the researcher strives to negotiate a shared reading of the enquiry (Le Compte and Preissle, 1993). Impositions of time, judgment and status are avoided in order to allow questions to emerge and to be explored; the contrast with the hypothetical-deductive nature of the scientific paradigm is particularly apparent here. My preference was to work within a paradigm that viewed this dialect of analysis and re-analysis as a specific strength. I reasoned that such an approach would allow and indeed celebrate, acknowledgement of the multifaceted nature of reconstruction and reconciliation.

However, those working within the critical theory tradition would contend that interpretive theory can influence practice only insofar as it influences the way an individual would understand himself/herself and his/her situation. Furthermore, if as Carr and Kemmis (1986, p. 117) suggest, 'the interpretive researcher aims to understand

practices and situations by seeking their significance in the ideas of actors', a consequence might be the interpretation of multiple realities from potentially deceptive viewpoints. Thus, if the concept of false-consciousness is inappropriate within the interpretive paradigm, it follows that the researcher has no means of exploring its inherent ideological implications. Powney and Watts (1987) in concluding their study, observe that the most we can hope for is an 'insight into the respondents' favourite self-image' (p. 47).

In its celebration of the individual through acknowledgement of micro-concepts such as individual perspectives and negotiated meanings, the interpretive paradigm seemed my most appropriate choice. Furthermore, small-scale research and the personal involvements of the researcher within the enquiry are significant features which attracted me to both the interpretive paradigm and insider case study. For these reasons, I selected the interpretive paradigm as the most appropriate paradigm within which to work and, within that, I sought to undertake a case study in which a mix of formal interviewing and interactive group-based discussion were central techniques.

### *3.2.3 The Management of Data*

The management of data produced was a highly important consideration in the study. Qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for, and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities. Mindful of Winters' (1996) comment that the action research tradition has a 'methodology for the creation of data, but not (as yet) for the interpretation of data'; I wanted to ensure that my interpretative research

project was sufficiently robust and rigorous in design. This would enable me to answer my research questions, whilst at the same time ensuring that the data collected was focused and pertinent. In this way, I hoped to avoid the potential pitfall that Winter (1996, p. 39) warns of: ‘the collection of an amorphous, unfocussed mass of data’. It was therefore, important to devise various means of data collection which, whilst being discrete units, would retain ‘fidelity to the integrity of the whole’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2010, p. 403).

Once the data had been collected, it had to be analysed. It should be noted here that there is no one single or correct way to analyse and present qualitative data; how one does it should abide by the criterion of fitness for purpose. Furthermore, qualitative data analysis is heavy on interpretation, and one has also to note that there are frequently multiple interpretations to be made of qualitative data – ‘that is their glory and their weakness’ (See Cohen, *et al.* 2010 p.361). In abiding by the principle of fitness for purpose, I was clear about what I wanted my data analysis to achieve and this helped to determine the kind of analysis that was to be undertaken. To this end my analysis undertook, as a whole, to:

- describe
- explore
- test
- interpret
- discover patterns
- generate themes

- understand groups
- raise issues
- prove or demonstrate
- explain and seek causality
- discover commonalities, difference and similarities
- summarize

A further significance of adopting a fitness for purpose perspective was that it helped me determine the kind of analysis to be performed on the data. This, in turn, influenced the way in which the analysis was going to be written up. Data analysis was also influenced by the kind of qualitative orientation I might adopt at different points. For example, an ethnography may be written as a narrative or stories, with issues raised, but not necessarily conforming to a chronology of events, and may include description, analysis, interpretation and explanation of the key features of groups or culture. Some of this is included in my findings. A grounded theory and content analysis have also played a major role in analysing data in this study (see below, 3.2.5).

Some qualitative studies deliberately focus on individuals and the responses of significant players in a particular scenario, often quoting verbatim responses in the final account. Others are content to summarize issues without necessarily identifying exactly from whom the specific data were derived. This study focuses on both for various reasons. First, some of the quotations were made by groups, such as torture victims and rape victims. In these cases it was difficult to single out one particular individual. Second, for ethical reasons the identities of those individuals could not be revealed. Third, the

study is sensitive, and no matter how much the quotations would be disguised, there was a feeling that their speakers would be discovered. Thus there are places where my findings take the form of summarising due to at least three considerations influencing the reporting of some of the data.

Elsewhere in my findings I have included the substantial *verbatim* contributions of respondents where I felt that it was important to convey the immediacy of the original data. In these cases I report direct phrases and sentences not only because they are often more illuminative and direct than my own words, but also because I felt that it was important to be faithful to the exact words used. This had nothing to do with the position or status of the respondent, for I considered all my respondents to be of the same weight and value. This also goes for the length of the various quotations used. Some people use very few words to say very important things, whilst others manage to achieve the same, but using many words. Direct conversations can be immensely rich in data and detail, but it is also important to vary the style of writing at times. Ball (1990) and Bowe *et al.* (1992) use a lot of verbatim data not least because those whom they interviewed were powerful people whose exact words are illuminating in relation to those over whom the exercise influence and reach. By contrast, Walford (2001, p. 92) commenting on the 'fetish of transcription', admits that he 'rarely fully transcribed more than a few interviews for any of (his) research studies' not least because of the time that transcription took in relation to the relative benefits accrued (Walford suggests a ratio of five to one: five hours to transcribe one hour of interviews, though it can take much longer than this) (see Cohen *et al.*, 2010).

As has already been pointed out, qualitative research rapidly amasses huge amounts of data, and early analysis reduces the problem of data overload by selecting out significant features for future focus. Miles and Huberman (1984) suggest that careful data display is an important element of data reduction and selection. Similarly, 'progressive focusing', according to Parlett and Hamilton (1976), starts with the researcher taking a wide angle lens to gather data, and then, by sifting, sorting, reviewing and reflecting on them, the salient features of the situation emerge. These are then used as the agenda for subsequent focusing. The process is akin to funneling from the wide to the narrow.

It has already been noted in this study that at a theoretical level, a major feature of qualitative research is that analysis often begins early on in the data collection process so that theory generation can be undertaken (LeCompte and Preissle 1993, p.238). These authors advise that researchers should set out the main outlines of the phenomena that are under investigation. They should then assemble blocks of data, putting them together to make a coherent whole (e.g. through writing summaries of what has been found). Then they should painstakingly take apart their field notes, matching, contrasting, aggregating, comparing and ordering the notes made, the intention being to move from description to explanation and theory generation (LeCompte and Preissle 1993pp 237-253).

#### *3.2.4 Organising and presenting data analysis*

The amount of data I accumulated was daunting. Needing to extract key issues, I filed, sorted and indexed the data with piles strewn on the floor until, after much paper

shuffling, I was left with eight key scenarios for reconstruction through education (see section 5.3) and six broader considerations that are most pertinent in setting out to achieve national reconstruction and reconciliation in Zimbabwe through both education and wider socio-cultural processes (see section 6.2). I made grids of key factors seeming to inform each of the scenarios and drew charts tracking different political movements relevant to those socio-cultural processes necessary to be adopted. I identified patterns across my participants and, within the gesture and dialogue of particular individuals, compared these with themes identified from analysis of the interviews. Coloured mind maps became an important way that I made sense of my data and kept it within a cohesive framework. At the polishing stage, I redrafted, whilst paring unnecessary phrases in order to make the points more emphatically. See Appendix A for details of data analysis methods.

As a result of this technique, five ways were used in this study to organise and present the data collected: the first two ways were by respondent type, the next two by issues identified and the final way by type of instrument deployed (Cohen *et al.*, 2010; Grix, 2004).

In the recounting of context and history, the data of respondents was organized and presented in relation to particular issues explored, and where groups of respondents made similar points, these were organised by type of respondent in relation to a given issue. Groups of respondents were also identified for the purpose of analysis organized by their membership of different strata in a stratified sample: for example, teachers of younger primary children, older primary children, younger secondary

children and older secondary children. The advantage of this method was that it automatically grouped the data and enabled themes, patterns and similar issues to be readily identified. While this was a useful method for summarizing similar responses, the collective responses of an individual participant were dispersed across many categories and groups, and the integrity and coherence of the individual response risked being lost to a collective summary. Despite this limitation, analysis by respondent type proved to be a very useful method and, considering that there is not a single method without its own limitations, this technique was found to be very helpful in creating analytical clarity.

A second way of organising data analysis in the study was by the responses of individuals. Here analysis of the total responses of a single participant was undertaken before analysis moved on to the next individual. This helped to preserve the coherence and integrity of each individual's response and enabled a whole picture of that person to be appreciated. It should be noted however, that this integrity was found to exact its price, in that it then required me to put together the issues arising across individuals (a second level of analysis) in order to look for themes, shared responses, patterns of response, agreement and disagreement, and to compare individuals and issues that each of them had raised. The approaches to analysis that are concerned with people strive to be faithful to those involved in terms of the completeness of the picture of them, *qua* people. Thus, in my study individual-focussed data from first-round interviews were accompanied by a second round of analysis, based on the issues that arose from dialogue with groups of people. It is to this matter of issues that I now turn.

A third way of organising data which was used in this study was to present all the data that were relevant to a particular issue. This was the method used in most of the reporting of the findings of this study as respondents raised in common many issues such as violence, torture, rape, reconstruction and reconciliation. While this procedure was economical in making comparisons across respondents, again the wholeness, coherence and integrity of each individual respondent risked being lost. I would put all the people who raised issues on violence or reconciliation in one basket to come out with patterns and themes and, in the process, risked submerging the integrity of outlook of individual respondents. Thus, while this was an economic approach to handling, summarizing and presenting data, it raised a trio of concerns.

- a) The integrity and wholeness of each individual could be lost, such that presenting comparisons across the whole picture from each individual is almost impossible.
- b) The data can become decontextualised. This may occur in two ways: (i) in terms of their place in the emerging sequence and content of an interview (e.g. the presentation of some data may require an understanding of what preceded a particular comment or set of comments); and (ii), in terms of the relatedness of the issues, as this approach can fragment the data into relatively discrete 'chunks', thereby losing their interconnectedness in terms of the overall picture.
- c) Having had its framework and areas of interest already decided pre-ordinately, the analysis of data in this way may be unresponsive to additional relevant factors that could emerge in the data. This is akin to lowering a magnet

onto data: the magnet picks up relevant data for the issue in question, but it also leaves behind data not deemed relevant and these risk being lost or decontextualised. The researcher, therefore, has to trawl through the residual data to see if there are other important issues that have not been caught in the pre-ordinate selection of categories and issues for attention (Grix., 2004). The consideration here was to decide whether it was or was not important to account for the whole set of responses of an individual i.e. to decide whether the data analysis should mainly be driven by people or by issues.

A fourth method of organising the analysis of data was by research question. This was a very useful way of organising data, as it drew together all of the relevant data for a specific issue of concern to the researcher, and preserved the coherence of the material. In this approach all the relevant data from various data streams (questionnaire responses, interviews, observations, group discussion and field notes) were collated to provide a collective answer to a research question. There was usually a degree of systematisation here, in that, for example, numerical data for a particular research question was recorded (i.e. frequency counting of the number of times certain responses were forthcoming), followed by collation of the qualitative data or *vice versa*. This enabled patterns, relationships, comparisons and qualifications across data types to be explored conveniently and clearly.

A fifth method of organising the data was by instrument. Typically, this approach is often used in conjunction with another approach (Cohen *et al.*, 2010). In my case it was used alongside the approaches already described - by people or by issue. Here the results derived from each instrument were presented and organized: all of the data from questions

in the interview schedules were presented, followed by all of the data generated by group discussions in the field, field observations and field notes. While this approach retained fidelity to the coherence of the instrument and enabled me to see clearly which data derived from which instrument, I observe that the instrument was often only a means to an end, and that further analysis would be required to analyze the content of the responses - by issue and by people.

In conclusion, it must be pointed out that none of the five approaches to organising the data reviewed above was better than any other. As a researcher, I needed to decide how to present data with respect to the overall aims of the project and its intended readership. Content analysis was, however, very important and it is to this that I now turn.

### *3.2.5 The Use of Grounded Theory in Data Analysis*

Theory generation in qualitative data can be emergent, and grounded theory is an important method of theory generation. Comparative analysis is a principal method in the generation of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1968). It is more inductive than content analysis, as the theories emerge from, rather than exist before the data. Strauss and Corbin (1994, p. 273) remark: 'grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed'. In viewing theory-making as essentially a creative process Glaser and Strauss (1968) advocate minimising differences at the earliest stages of research as this highlights similarities within the data and helps to verify the existence of categories. They argue that there is neither one type of data nor one technique of data collection that is appropriate. Furthermore, they suggest, that

both qualitative and quantitative data can be used in verification and generation of categories and hypotheses.

There are several features which attracted me to use grounded theory in my analysis of data. Some of the salient ones are:

- theory is emergent rather than predefined and tested. In other words, once in the field a lot of theories emerge.
- theory emerges from the data rather than vice versa. As more and more data is accumulated, more theories emerge.
- theory generation is a consequence of, and partner to, systematic data collection and analysis.
- patterns and theories are implicit in data, waiting to be discovered

(Glaser and Strauss, 1968).

I have emphasised earlier that my research questions were a means of investigating multiple perspectives by various processes of comparison, contrast and counterpoint. Central to these processes is an appreciation of the ways in which codes emerge from the data.

Glaser (1996) suggests that grounded theory is the systematic generation of a theory from data; it is an inductive process in which everything is integrated and in which data pattern themselves rather than having the researcher pattern them, as actions are integrated and interrelated with other actions. Glaser and Strauss's seminal work of 1968 rejects simple linear causality and the decontextualization of data, and argues that the world which participants inhabit is multivalent, multivariate and connected. As

Glaser (1996, p. 47) says, 'the world doesn't occur in a vacuum' and the researcher has to take account of the interconnectedness of action. In everyday life, actions are interconnected and people make connections naturally; it is part of everyday living, and hence grounded theory catches the naturalistic element of research and formulates it into a systematic methodology. For example, in this study, many connections were made, such as violence connected with the destruction of property which resulted in people fleeing the violence-infested areas to safe havens or violence connected with strained relations which resulted in the need for reconciliation in the country. The collapse of the education system, the economy and the health system are all connected with the governance of the country. Because President Mugabe often boasted of having a 'degree in violence' many of my participants attributed all the lawlessness in the country to Mugabe's utterances.

In seeking to catch the complexity and interconnectedness of every day actions, grounded theory is faithful to how people act since it takes account of apparent inconsistencies, contradictions, discontinuities and relatedness in actions. As Glaser (1996, p. 116) says, 'grounded theory is appealing because it tends to get at exactly what is going on'. Flick (1998, p. 41) writes that 'the aim is not to reduce complexity by breaking it down into variables but rather to increase complexity by including context.'

Theorising in grounded theory is an emergent process generated by a continuous cycle of collecting, coding and conceptualising (Glaser, 2005). Preconceived, pre-constructed notions of the kind generated by the use, for example, of a hypothesis-type of research question seemed inappropriate in the case of torture victims among my sample; the

narration of stories by torture victims was such that it ended up touching on my own experiences of being tortured. In order to avoid this form of 'forcing' (Glaser, 2005), it was essential that there should be a steady movement between concept and data in order to establish a context-based process-oriented description rather than a static one. In considering the three basic elements of grounded theory (concepts, categories and propositions) Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 68) emphasise that theory arises from the conceptualisation of data rather than data itself as 'theories can't be built with actual incidents of activities': conceptual labels have to be assigned. They consider that comparative analysis is essential in order to accumulate basic units of theory. Viewing categories as having a higher level of abstraction than concepts, they propose that these categories are the 'cornerstones' of developing theory. In terming the final element of grounded theory as propositions rather than hypothesis, as it was formerly considered (Glaser and Strauss, 1968), they emphasise that a grounded approach generates conceptual rather than measured relationships. Furthermore, they argue that data collection, analysis and theory 'stand in reciprocal relationship with each other' (p. 87). I believed that the interactive, comparative analysis that such an approach called for would help me understand my participants' conceptualisations of the situations they were in, whilst at the same time avoiding the preconceived notions that had subconsciously shaped my previous practice (as set out and explored above in chapter one). This approach was particularly relevant to my analysis of interview data. I was able to identify categories, which then informed the next phase of the research and facilitated the investigation of a rich vein of data. Thus, although a schedule of interviews was devised and focuses

assigned, focuses could be adapted in some way, to account for factors which had been raised in the previous interview.

The attraction of grounded theory for this study was that it starts with data, which are then analysed and reviewed to enable the theory to be generated from them; it is rooted in the data and little else. Hence the theory derives from the data - it is grounded in the data and emerges from it. As Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 205) argue, grounded theory must fit the situation that is being researched. Indeed, it was able to fit the situation that was being researched in this study - hence its use.

Once my research questions had been established and the literature had been used to build support for both the questions and the research paradigm to be adopted, it was time to consider which components to include in the fieldwork phase of the research. The four aspects that addressed the conduct of this research were designs, sampling, methods and procedures. Designs dealt with the process of turning research questions into a data gathering process. Sampling dealt with the selection of participants. Methods and procedures describe the ways the processes were actually conducted.

### **3.3 Research design and methods**

At the root of all research lies what the ancient Greeks termed *methodos*. On the one hand, the term means 'the path towards knowledge', and on the other, 'reflections on the quest for knowledge-gathering'. In this study, research methods, quite simply, can be seen as the 'techniques or procedures used to collate and analyse data' (Blaikie, 2000, p. 8). The methods chosen for this study are inextricably linked to the research questions posed and to the sources of data collected. My choice of methods was influenced by ontological and

epistemological assumptions and, of course, the questions I was asking and the type of project I was undertaking. However, I need to point out that methods themselves should be seen in this study as free from ontological and epistemological assumptions. The choice of which methods to use was more guided by my research questions than assumptions of these kinds. In this study, methods had two principal functions:

- they offered me a way of gathering information or gaining insight into my research topic;
- they also enable other researchers to re-enact my endeavours by emulating the methods employed.

Furthermore, in all qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument and qualitative data are mediated through him or her. Nevertheless, the human instrument on its own will not suffice. It has to work in conjunction with other instruments and it is to these that I now turn.

### *3.3.1 The initial questionnaire*

At an initial stage in the empirical fieldwork, issues-generating questionnaires were administered, designed to test and refine my understanding of the questions and issues that I wished to use in the main method to be deployed: face-to-face and telephone interviews (see 3.3.2).

A questionnaire is a widely used and a useful instrument in social research for collecting survey information providing structured, often numerical data. I used a questionnaire in

this study mainly in order to refine the interview schedule that I would go on to use later, but also in certain specific instance where interviewing was not possible. In particular, there were areas where I could not venture for security reasons. There were several 'no go' areas in 2008, so I had to use questionnaires to get to my respondents. Being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, I found them very useful in certain critical areas. In using questionnaires as instruments of data collection in this study, I was fully aware of the ethical issues involved (Grix, 2004) such as:

- intrusion into the life of the respondent, in terms of time taken to complete the instrument, the level of threat or sensitivity of the questions, or the possible invasion of privacy;
- willing involvement, in that I made sure that respondents were not forced into completing a questionnaire. They could be strongly encouraged, but decisions such as whether to become involved and when to withdraw from the research were entirely theirs. As such, involvement of participants in the research was a function of:
  - their informed consent;
  - their right to withdraw at any stage or not to complete particular items in the questionnaire with which they were uncomfortable;
  - the potential of the research to improve their situation (the issue of beneficence). This was very important, relevant and pertinent in this study;
  - assurance that the reporting of the research would not harm them (the

issue of non-maleficence). This was very important in this study because of its sensitive nature and was underwritten by guarantees of confidentiality, anonymity and non-traceability in the research. I was dealing with a very brutal regime in this research and any trace that someone took part in such a study could well mean death to the respondent and his or her immediate and extended family.

Generally, questionnaires can be administered in several ways, including:

- self-administration
- post
- face-to-face
- telephone
- internet

In order to reach the ‘no go’ areas already mentioned, I had to post some questionnaires. I also posted some to other parts of the world and so questionnaires were sent to contacts in Sierra Leone, Rwanda and South Africa. These served me very well in relation to the aim of helping to design the most insightful interview schedules for use in the next phase of fieldwork. In all 41 questionnaires of this type were completed and returned to me, 21 from Zimbabwe-based respondents in ‘no go’ areas and the remainder from respondents in other countries: Sierra Leone (7), Rwanda (4) and South Africa (9). An example of these questionnaires is included as Appendix B.

I also discussed the Zimbabwean problem more informally with a few British people and a larger number of Zimbabweans in Britain, Canada, United States of America and Australia. These people helped me understand and refine the complex nature of the problem under investigation.

### 3.3.2 *Interviews*

The use of the interview in research marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulable and data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations (Kvale, 1996). Kvale remarks (p. 14) that being an ‘inter-view’, an interchange of views occurs through this means between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. Kvale also emphasises the centrality of human interaction in knowledge production and the social situatedness of research data. As will be suggested below, knowledge should be seen as constructed between participants, generating data, rather than capturing it (Laing 1967, p. 53). As such, the interview is not exclusively either subjective or objective, it is intersubjective (Laing 1967, p. 66). Interviews enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. In these senses, the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself and its human embeddedness is inescapable (see Cohen et.al. 2010, p. 349).

The interview is also a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channel to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard. The order of the interview may be controlled while still giving space for spontaneity, and the interviewer can press not only

for complete answers but also for responses about complex and deep issues. In short, the interview is a powerful implement for researchers. On the other hand, interviews are expensive in time, they are open to interviewer bias, they may be inconvenient for respondents, issues of interviewee fatigue may hamper the interview and anonymity may be difficult.

It should be noted that an interview is not an ordinary, everyday conversation (Dyer 1995, pp. 56-58). For example, in contrast to an everyday conversation, it has a specific purpose and it is often question-based, with the questions being asked by the interviewer. As such it is a constructed rather than naturally occurring situation, and this renders it different from an everyday conversation: therefore the researcher has an obligation to set up, and abide by, the different 'rules of the game' in an interview. As Walford (2001, p. 36) writes: 'people don't buy products: they buy benefits' and researchers need to be clear on the benefits offered when the request to conduct an interview is made.

### The Use of the Interviews in this Study

Having initially considered investigating respondent attitudes by means of a questionnaire, I was aware of the limitations of interviews in exploring the contextualised perspectives of individuals and of participants within groups. In this light, interviews soon became an attractive option for me because of the potential for investigating personal contexts. An interview can, in many ways, be regarded as a social encounter. As a result, some argue that there is less reliability when compared with a self-administered questionnaire (Tuckman, 1972; Borg, 1963) because respondents are less likely to be completely honest in a face-to-face encounter, whereas, an anonymous questionnaire might yield more

candid information. Balanced against this consideration is the interview's potential to clarify meaning. Given that confusion over meaning or terminology has been cited as a key consideration in reconstruction and reconciliation research (see Phillips *et.al.*, 1998 and Minow, 1998), I considered interviews to be the more appropriate option because there were greater opportunities to explore meaning and interpretations.

Interviews have been regularly used in small-scale educational research as a means of eliciting detailed information from a range of respondents (Borg and Gall, 1983, Powney and Watts, 1987, Kvale, 1996). The advantages afforded by this method of data collection are many. Questions can be adapted in response to the feedback received in order to probe for further information or to verify previous comments, for example. Despite the reservations previously cited (Tuckman, 1972; Borg, 1963), if the interview is conducted face-to-face rather than by telephone, non-verbal communication can also be analysed in order to identify instances of conflict between verbal and non-verbal behaviour. This was very important in this study because of its sensitive nature and the very sensitive issues under investigation. Not only were face-to-face interviewees able to review and to refine their account as the interview progressed, the researcher was similarly able to clarify and verify meanings while observing the contribution to the responses provided of non-verbal behaviour.

### Designing the Interview

Having decided to use interviews as the main data-collection method in this study, there followed the preparation of the interview schedule itself. This involved translating the research questions guiding the entire study into items that would make up the main

body of the schedule. This needed to be done in such a way that the questions adequately reflected what it was the researcher was trying to find out. I began this task by writing down the variables to be dealt with in the study. As one commentator says, 'the first step in constructing interview questions is to specify your variables by name. Your variables are what you are trying to measure. They tell you where to begin' (Tuckman 1972).

Before the interview schedule items were prepared, it was incumbent on my part to give some thought to the question format and the response mode. The choice of question format for this study, depended on a consideration of one or more of the following factors:

- the objectives of the interview;
- the nature of the subject matter;
- whether the interviewer was dealing in facts, opinions or attitudes;
- whether specificity or depth was sought;
- the respondent's level of education;
- the kind of information the respondent was expected to have
- the extent of the interviewer's own insight into the respondent's situation,
- the kind of relationship the interviewer was expected to develop with the respondent during the study period (Grix, 2004, p. 126).

Having given prior thought to these matters, I was in a position to decide whether to use open and/or closed questions, direct and/or indirect questions, specific and/or non-specific questions and so on.

As a result of these various considerations and the stimulus provided by the issues-generating questionnaires already administered, my interview schedule followed a broadly common pattern covering two main themes and comprising questions requiring either descriptive or opinion-led responses, as follows:

*The national picture*

- What is happening in Zimbabwe?
- How is what is happening in Zimbabwe happening?
- What is the cost of what is happening in Zimbabwe to the nation?
- How can what is happening in Zimbabwe be stopped?

*The role that education can play in addressing the problems revealed by the national picture*

- Does what is happening in Zimbabwe require reconstruction and reconciliation?
- What role can education play in the processes of reconstruction and reconciliation in the country?
- Why is there a need for reconstruction and reconciliation in Zimbabwe?

An example of my semi-structured interview schedule is included as Appendix C.

The use of telephone interviews in this Study

In addition to face-to-face interviews, telephone interviewing was an important method of data collection for this study and this procedure deployed a similar semi-structured schedule

to that used in the face-to-face interviews. There were several specific attractions in using this data collection method.

- Distance from the United Kingdom. Zimbabwe is 10,000 miles from the United Kingdom. It was not only feasible but also much cheaper to telephone than to travel repeatedly to Zimbabwe to have a face-to-face interviews. Telephone interviewing was also not affected by volcanic ash and strikes. Planes could be grounded by the volcanic ash cloud or strikes that coincided with the period of field research., which was not the case with telephoning.
- The sensitive nature of the study. This study was sensitive, dangerous, unsafe and life threatening, so telephone interviews were safer to undertake than, for example, having to visit very dangerous and volatile neighbourhoods. Through telephone interviews I managed to collect sensitive data from very dangerous areas as possible feelings of threat generated by face-to-face questions or awkward, embarrassing or difficult matters were absent.
- Selection of respondents. It enabled me to select respondents from a much more dispersed population than if I had to travel to meet all interviewees. In the time allocated for this study, I would never have managed to cover the whole country.
- Call-back costs. These were so slight that I was able to make frequent call-backs, thereby enhancing reliability and contact.
- Convenience. Many groups could be reached. Many groups could be reached at times more convenient to them than if a visit had to be made.

- Anonymity. In some instances, there was complete anonymity in that I knew only occupational information about my respondent and no biographical details.

Moreover, compared to the alternative of administering questionnaires, telephone interviews:

- secured rapid responses. I got the information I wanted there and then;
- enabled monitoring and quality control, since I personally carried out the interviews;
- generated a high response rate and did not rely on the literacy of the respondent (as in the case of questionnaires, for example).

Counterbalancing these advantages, there were several potential problems with telephone interviewing. Those that I personally experienced in this study were as follows.

- Hanging up on the caller. On many occasions perpetrators of violence and other crimes simply hung up on me because they did not wish to be questioned.
- Motivation to participate. Motivation to participate was much lower than for personal interviews, seemingly because of fear since most telephones were tapped in Zimbabwe at this time, linked to an assessment of the risk involved – was the research more important to respondents than the fear of having the views intercepted?
- Dilemmas of skewed sampling. There was the potential for skewed sampling, as not all of my target population had access to a telephone, notably a majority of

people in the country who live in the rural areas. Even those who had them were finding, during 2008-2010, that they did not work most of the time, being either out of order or there being no electricity in the areas where they were. Most lower-income households have no telephones in Zimbabwe as they have no money to buy them, let alone run them.

- The standardized format of telephone interviewing. This prevented many would-be participants in taking part, particularly those who wanted to give thoughtful or deep answers. The time at their disposal would not allow for such thoughtful answers to be given and so, reluctantly, they were not able to be part of the formally identified respondent sample.

In all, out of a total respondent group of 290 (including the 200 face-to-face encounters), 90 of these were formally interviewed by telephone using the same semi-structured interview schedule as for the face-to-face interviews (see Appendix C). A total of 219 research telephone calls were made in all, a large majority of which yielded information that: tested the viability of undertaking subsequent fieldwork within the country; and contributed through discussion to the overall framing of the semi-structured interview schedules that came to comprise the formal fieldwork, data from which was subjected subsequently to grounded theory analysis and the findings from which are reported in chapters five and six. 60 of the 219 calls were unsuccessful (27%) in the sense that the intended person was not found at home or at the agreed venue, or that they terminated the call part way through. Meanwhile, although responses were at times difficult to transcribe or record during such telephone interview, in general the method served me well.

### 3.3.3 Sampling

The next set of decisions requiring discussion here concerned questions related to respondent sampling. According to Cohen *et al.* (2010, p. 100) 'the quality of a piece of research stands or falls not only by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted' (see also Morrison, 1993, pp. 112-17).

Questions of sampling arise directly out of the issue of defining the population on which the research will focus. In my study it proved challenging to define the population on which the research would be based because the population was always on the move due to the violence in the country. I took my sampling decisions quite early in the overall planning of this research. Factors such as expense, time, accessibility frequently prevent researchers from gaining information from a whole population. These factors were profound in this research. The distance between Exeter University and Zimbabwe of more than 10,000 miles meant that the project was going to be expensive. The insecurity and instability in the country meant that fieldwork timetables would not be met and this had an impact on time because some travel programmes had to be rescheduled. At times it was totally impossible to move in the field from point A to point B and this affected accessibility. Telephones did not work for most of the time which meant that it was not even possible to access some of the sought-after information through the telephone. Therefore, I often had to obtain data from a smaller group or subsets of the pre-determined sample population in such a way that the knowledge gained was as representative as possible of the specific populations (however defined) under study.

These smaller groups or subsets came to comprise my sample but first I had to make judgments about four key factors:

- the sample size overall
- representativeness and parameters of the overall sample
- the sampling strategy to be used
- access to subsets within the sample

Failure to make good judgments about these key factors would have endangered the credibility of the whole project.

### The Sample Size

A question that often plagues researchers is just how large their respondent samples should be. There is no clear-cut answer, for the correct sample size depends on the purpose of the study and the nature of the population under scrutiny. There is, therefore, no one sample size for all research projects. However, guidance on sample size is available. Where there is heterogeneity in the population, a sample must be selected on some basis that respects that heterogeneity (Cohen *et al.*, 2010). For example, from a population comprising a staff of one hundred secondary school teachers differentiated by gender, age, subject specialism, management or classroom responsibility, it would be insufficient to construct a sample consisting of thirty female classroom teachers of Arts and Humanities subjects, because this would be unrepresentative.

The representativeness of the sample.

The researcher will need to consider the extent to which it is important that the sample represents the whole population in question. As a researcher I had to be clear what it was that was being represented, i.e. to set the parameter characteristics of the wider population - the sampling frame - clearly and correctly.

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For this I interviewed Zimbabweans in the country and outside the country and also non-Zimbabweans, but only those living in Zimbabwe at the time of the fieldwork (2008-2010) were included in the 290 who comprised the complete sample from whom data was subjected to grounded theory, the findings of which are reported in chapters five and six.

Among these 290 respondents, six types of interview were deployed, the specific methods being determined on a case by case basis and driven by practical considerations relating to access (see 3.2.4, below), ethical considerations and the security of researcher and researched (see chapter four). The six types of interview were:

- (1) face-to-face, structured;
- (2) face-to-face, semi-structured;
- (3) face-to-face, unstructured;
- (4) telephone, structured;
- (5) telephone, semi-structured; and
- (6) group interviews /focus groups, semi-structured

My sample of 290 Zimbabwe-based respondents is reported below by province, indicating that I was eventually able to access respondents across the whole country. Zimbabwe is divided into ten provinces and fifty-eight districts, a province being made up of at least five districts. Bigger provinces have more districts. Meanwhile, being a patriarchal society men have more say in Zimbabwe on almost all issues than women, especially concerning the political issues. This had a bearing on the gender split within the sample as indicated below. Finally, my sample was dividable into the political and occupational locations of respondents (the 'other' category under political parties representing people known in Zimbabwe as 'povo' : 'people of various opinions'). Their input in this study was important as they often provided a mix of opinions and independence of view. They had no-one whipping them in any particular direction.

*Table 3.1: The interview respondent sample - by gender, province, political party and occupation (face to face and telephone interviewees)*

Totals by gender

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	159	55
Female	131	45

Representation by Political Parties in the Country

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
ZANU-PF	86	30

MCD	92	30
PF-ZAPU	44	15
Other	68	23

Representation by Profession \*

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Teachers	106	37
Education Administrators	43	15
University Lecturers	61	21
Human Rights Activists	39	13
Other	41	14

\* I deliberately chose to interview a high proportion of teachers in order to reflect the orientation of the study as a whole toward education. My intention was also to interview more ZANU-PF members but there was some trepidation on the part of ZANU-PF as to why this study was being conducted. Many, however, welcomed the study. The MDC is the majority party today which explains the number of participants in this study. PF-ZAPU is almost entirely based in the Matabeleland region which also explains its small participation in this study.

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Representation by Province (field-based interviews only)

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Matabeleland:		
- Bulawayo	78	39
- Matabeleland North	13	6.5

- Matabeleland South	13	6.5
Mashonaland:		
- Mashonaland West	10	5
- Mashonaland Central	7	3.5
- Mashonaland East	5	2.5
- Harare	25	12.5
Masvingo	10	5
Manicaland	5	2.5
Midlands	34	17

*3.3.4 Access, the overall chronology of the fieldwork and the nature of conditions in the field*

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Access was a key issue and a factor that dominated my thinking at the outset of the fieldwork phase. I had to ensure that access was not only permitted but also, in fact, practicable; there would be no point in coming up with a representative sample which was inaccessible. Moreover, access to sensitive areas was difficult because of the many 'no go' areas in the country at the time. Some of the interviews were conducted 'under cover' as it was at times political suicide for one to announce one's presence in some volatile parts of the country. In some sensitive areas access to a sample was denied by the sample participants themselves. For example, torture counsellors were at times so seriously distressed by their work that they simply could not face discussing with a

researcher the subject matter of their traumatic work. It was distressing enough to do the job without living through it again with a researcher.

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Access was also denied by some of the sampled participants themselves for very practical reasons. For example most politicians simply did not have the time to spend with the researcher. Meanwhile, Civil Servants were afraid that they would lose their jobs if it was discovered that they gave information to a researcher. Further, access was denied by people who had something to protect; for instance, many schools had recently received very poor results on external examinations, due to the fact students were taught by unqualified teachers. Fear was the major cause for denying access. There were very many reasons that might have prevented access to a reasonably constituted sample, so I could not afford to neglect the need for flexibility and 'fall-back' plans.

In many cases access was guarded by 'gatekeepers' – people who can control researchers' access to those whom they really want to target. In Zimbabwe the key gatekeeper was and continues to be the government. Government controls every aspect of society. For school staff this might be, for example, headteachers, school secretaries or form teachers. For rural areas it is the Chief, Councillors and headmen down to Kraalheads. The system of control is tough and almost water-tight. It was critical for me to consider not only whether access was possible, but also how access would be achieved: to whom does one have to go, both formally and informally, to gain access to the target group.

Not only was access likely to be difficult but its corollary – release of information – might also be problematic. For example, a researcher might gain access to a wealth of

sensitive information and appropriate people but there might be a restriction on the release of the data collected. In the field of education in the UK, reports have been known to be suppressed, delayed or 'doctored' (Pring, 2000). The situation is much worse in Zimbabwe. It is not, therefore, always enough to be able to 'get to' the sample; the major problem might be to 'get the information out' to the wider public, particularly if it could be critical of very powerful people. The information generated in this study is very critical of very powerful people.

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#### Overall chronology of data collection and the nature of conditions in the field

I started contacting people in Zimbabwe by telephone in January 2008. The first round of telephone calls enabled me to assess the feasibility of undertaking the study in Zimbabwe at the time and I managed to contact several people in all parts of the country to establish whether or not I could carry out my research.

Because of the political nature of the study, some participants were afraid to answer questions on the telephone because at the time this study was undertaken, telephone-tapping was very common in the country. Opposition strongholds had very few telephones working, with landline telephones being particularly targeted. In such circumstances I had to resort to mobile phones which were very expensive to call. The majority of people in the country did not and still do not have mobile phones. This resulted in some skewing of the sampling.

Despite these set-backs, telephone contact was used on a large scale, mainly because of distances to be covered and security-related problems. Calls were made from the United

Kingdom to selected people in Zimbabwe and other parts of the world. Within Zimbabwe itself calls were made to many parts of the country and I was able to collect incidental and contextual data by this means and well as, later, to conduct formal interviews by phone. The selection of those to be called was based on the willingness to participate in the study but the security of the premises in which these people lived was also a major consideration.

Calls were made from the United Kingdom, mainly over week-ends when people were at home although with nearly four million Zimbabweans in exile calling their families during week-ends, making contact with target individuals was often difficult. Both mobile and landline phones were used. At this time, landline phones were more easily interfered with than mobile phones, so many of my participants preferred the use of mobile phones as these are much more difficult to tap. The problem with mobile phones was and continues to be that of expense. It was much cheaper to use landline phones but less safe. Most of the phone calls were made just after 10 p.m. (Zimbabwe time) when fewer people were using their phones. Moreover, in the most sensitive parts of the country, 10 p.m. was considered too late for one to be still awake, with people usually turning their lights off at 8.p.m. (Zimbabwe time).

It was only after I had been assured by a number of my telephone contacts that the research was feasible that I planned my first visit to the country. Violence was at its worst in 2008, but I nevertheless decided to visit the country that year.

I conducted my face-to-face interviews in Zimbabwe in June/July, 2008, April/May, 2009 and December/January, 2010. In total 200 people were interviewed in this way (i.e. my

sample for the study, excluding the 90 additional respondents living in Zimbabwe and interviewed by telephone from Britain). The majority of those interviewed face-to-face were in urban areas because of security related and transport problems. Violence was at its worse in the rural areas because in these areas there were no news reporters to report what was going on. Poor rural people were given food as payment for raping, torturing and murdering their neighbours. Many people had their lips and ears cut off by ZANU-PF thugs. Buses were burnt, so there was no transport to those areas. Urban areas were much more secure because, by 2008, ZANU-PF had run out of support in those areas. In the rural areas, any stranger would be taken to the chief who after interrogating the stranger would send him or her to the nearest ZANU-PF office for questioning. Many people who dared venturing into these areas simply disappeared and were never seen again.

Thus, due to the sensitive nature and potential dangers of this study, interviews were mostly conducted in urban areas. I would go to church and after the service would go to the priest's house or remain in the church building interviewing the people I would have contacted earlier during the week. This worked well in certain parts of the country, but in other parts, the priests were afraid of being labelled MDC supporters. The security problem was worse in June/July 2008 because of the Parliamentary and Presidential elections that year. Many people were murdered and many more disappeared. I had to enter the country under cover that year and was 24-hour under surveillance. Although I had two full months in the country to conduct this research, I achieved very little because my respondents were visibly terrified and were not prepared to answer sensitive questions, particularly in front of security officers. I interviewed people in my house, as most people did not want their houses to be identified by security officers. All interviews

were conducted during week-ends or, if during the week, after working hours. I also interviewed people at football stadia under cover of watching football. I always informed my participants of the nature or purpose of the interview well in advance. In the stadia, I would choose a quiet corner where I would do the interview with little interruption. Everywhere I conducted my interviews, I made sure that distractions were minimised. At times, I used a tape-recorder where this was possible, but mainly I had to rely on note-taking and recounting as accurately as possible immediately after the interview the verbatim answers I received. This was also the procedure adopted for the recording of data generated by the telephone interviews.

During my visit in 2008, apart from the serious security problem, there was no fuel for vehicles. There was therefore no public transport to use as most of the fuel was reserved for the security forces and government and ZANU-PF personnel. The road network to the rural areas was non-existent and therefore one could hardly get to certain areas. On two occasions, instead of finding my research participants waiting for me, I found the police instead and spent that whole day at the police station.

During my visit in 2009, the situation in the country had markedly improved. The security situation was much better and fuel was available in the country. I was able to visit my targeted areas and was left alone to do my work for most of the time. I was able to cover much more ground. The improvement was attributed to the Global/Political Agreement (GPA), which had resulted in the formation of a Government of National Unity, which had been sworn in February 2009. I was able to travel to the rural parts of the country which enabled me to interview participants in their natural settings under the comfort or discomfort of their rural environments. It was indeed both a rewarding and traumatic

experience. People still spoke to me in 'whispers' fearing that someone was listening. Fear was evident in their eyes.

When I visited the country in 2009/2010 the situation was almost normal. The problem during this visit was that the country was totally bankrupt. The economy, the education system and the health system had collapsed. There was food everywhere in the country but no money to purchase it. The country still does not welcome researchers, particularly those researching sensitive issues: there was still so much to hide

#### **3.4 Limitations of the research design and interview method**

Reviewing the myriad points discussed in this chapter I would, when summarising the limitations of the overall research design and interview methods deployed, point to the following.

##### *Limitations of the overall design and face-to-face interview method*

- The situation in the country was very tense and doing research of this (sensitive) nature was not easy.
- The security situation did not allow people to speak freely.
- The researcher was at one time under surveillance for twenty-four hours per day and it was difficult to work effectively under these conditions.
- Interviews were mainly conducted in major towns and cities due to transport and security problems. The bulk of Zimbabwe's population

(70%) lives in the rural areas which were, during much of the period of the fieldwork, inaccessible.

- Funding was a big problem as I could not travel to Zimbabwe as and when the situation was conducive. Even when in the country, I could not travel fully because of shortage of money. Some critical people within ZANU-PF also wanted money in exchange for very valuable information they said that they could give me. I could not agree to this for ethical reasons and some very important information was thus lost.
- The distance between Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom was another great problem.

*Limitations of the telephone interview method deployed*

- Because of the sensitive nature of the study, many potentially valuable respondents were unwilling to give any sensitive information to a stranger's voice. Only the very brave and those who knew me personally were prepared to put their heads on the block.
- Most calls were made to urban areas where most people had phones which were working at the time. The bulk of the people in the rural areas had no phones.
- Most landline phones did not work when there was no electricity. Electricity was and continues to be heavily rationed in Zimbabwe, so supplies were very erratic and it was difficult to make planned calls.

'Telephone interviewing is a useful but tricky art' (Cohen *et al.* 2010, 292).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Developments in the field of social science in recent years have been accompanied by a growing awareness of the attendant moral issues implicit in the work of social researchers and their need to meet their obligations with those involved in, or affected by, their investigations. This has called for the need for ethical considerations to be included in the design of any social science research project. Such considerations can be extremely complex and subtle and can place researchers in moral predicaments which may appear quite irresolvable. One such dilemma is that which requires researchers to strike a balance between the demands placed on them as professional scientists in pursuit of truth, and their subjects' rights and values if these potentially threatened by the research (see Cohen *et al.* 2000). This is known as the 'costs/benefits ratio', the essence of which is outlined by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) as shown in the Figure below.

Figure 4.1: The costs/benefits ratio

The costs/benefits ratio is a fundamental concept expressing the primary ethical dilemma in social research. In planning their proposed research, social scientists have to consider the likely social benefits of their endeavours against the personal costs to the individual taking part. Possible benefits accruing from the research may take the form of crucial findings leading to significant advances in theoretical and applied knowledge. Failure to do the research may cost society the advantages of the research findings and ultimately the opportunity to improve the human condition. The cost to participants may include affronts to dignity, embarrassment, loss of trust in social relations, loss of autonomy and self-determination and a lowered self-esteem. On the other hand, the benefits to participants could take the form of satisfaction in having made a contribution to science and a greater personal understanding of the research area under scrutiny. The process of balancing benefits against possible costs is chiefly a subjective one and not at all easy. There are few or no absolutes and researchers have to make decisions about research content and procedures in accordance with professional and personal values. This costs/benefits ratio is the basic dilemma residual in a great deal of social research.

Source: Adapted from Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992.

The costs/benefits ratio is a particularly thorny dilemma because, as Aronson *et al.*, (1990) note, it cannot be shrugged off either by making pious statements about the inviolability of human dignity or by pledging glib allegiance to the cause of science. Whilst this was a problem in my own research because of its sensitive nature, most standard textbooks on ethics in social research would, in such cases, advise researchers to proceed ethically without threatening the validity of the research endeavour in so far as it is possible to do so. Conventional wisdom of this kind helped me to carry out my research to the finish, although not without problems of course.

The purpose of this chapter is to review *seriatim* the problems of informed consent, access to the research setting, the nature of ethics in this study, the sources of tension in the study as regards ethical considerations, and specific dilemmas confronting the researcher, including: matters of anonymity, confidentiality, privacy, deception, reciprocity and the role of the researcher as: exploiter, intervener/reformer, advocate, friend.

Before this, however, I examine briefly another fundamental concept which, along with the ethics costs/benefits ratio, contributes to the bedrock of ethical procedure, namely: informed consent.

## **4.2 Informed Consent**

Much social research necessitates obtaining the consent and co-operation of subjects who are to assist in investigations and of significant others in the institutions providing the research facilities. In this study, informed consent was very crucial due to the sensitive nature of the problem under investigation. In the study, participants were exposed to substantial risks, so it was absolutely essential to have their consent. Writing of the situation in the USA, for instance, Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias say:

When research participants are exposed to pain, physical or emotional injury, invasions of privacy, or physical or psychological stress, or when they are asked to surrender their autonomy temporarily (as, for example, in drug research), informed consent must be fully guaranteed. Participants should know that their involvement is voluntary at all times, and they should receive a thorough explanation beforehand of the benefits, rights, risks and dangers

involved as a consequence of their participation in the research project. (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992, 50).

The salience of informed consent arises in my study from my subject's right to freedom and self-determination. I had to ensure that in all cases consent was fully guaranteed. People who are normally forced to do things, as is the case in Zimbabwe today, needed to be informed clearly that their involvement in this study was voluntary. Consent protects and respects the right to self-determination and places some of the responsibility on the participants should anything go wrong in the research. Many things could have gone wrong in Zimbabwe in 2008-2010 and this underscores the need for informed consent. Another aspect of the right to self-determination is that the participant has the right to refuse to take part, or to withdraw once the research has begun (see Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992). Thus informed consent leaves open the possibility of informed refusal.

Informed consent has been defined by Diener and Crandall as 'the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions' (Diener and Crandall, 1978, p. 17). This definition involves four elements: competence, voluntarism, full information and comprehension.

'Competence' implies that responsible, mature individuals will make correct decisions if they are given relevant information. In the present research it was incumbent on my part to ensure that I did not engage individuals incapable of making such decisions either

because of immaturity or some form of psychological impairment. 'Voluntarism' entailed applying the principle of informed consent and thus ensuring that all my participants freely chose to take part (or not) in the research and ensuring that exposure to risks was undertaken knowingly and voluntarily. At no point in this research did I use my participants as guinea-pigs. 'Full information' implied that consent was fully informed, although, I must hasten to add that, in practice it was often impossible to inform my participants of everything. For example, there were occasions when I could not anticipate everything about the situation I would encounter on the ground and its implications for the security of specific respondents. In such circumstances, the strategy of reasonably informed consent was applied and, in this, I was guided in most cases by guidelines from the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare:

*Figure 4.2: Guidelines for reasonably informed consent.*

1. A fair explanation of the procedures to be followed and their purposes.
  2. A description of the attendant discomforts and risks reasonably to be expected.
  3. A description of the benefits reasonably to be expected.
  4. A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures that might be advantageous to the participants.
  5. An offer to answer any inquiries concerning the procedures.
- An instruction that the person is free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the project at any time without prejudice to the participants.

Source: United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare Institutional Guide to DHEW Policy, 1971.

‘Comprehension’ referred in this study to the fact that participants fully understood the nature of the research project, even when procedures were complicated and entailed risks. Guidance was provided to ensure that, so far as I could be sure, participants fully comprehended the situation they were putting themselves into (such as discussing human rights issues and violence in politically volatile Zimbabwe). With these four elements fully explained to my participants, I was reasonably satisfied that participants’ rights had been given full and appropriate consideration.

As Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias note, however:

The principle of informed consent should not... be made an absolute requirement of all social science research. Although usually desirable, it is not absolutely necessary to studies where no danger or risk is involved. The more serious the risk to research participants, the greater becomes the obligation to obtain informed consent (1992, 43).

In my study the principle of informed consent was an absolute necessity because of the nature of many of the problems to be investigated (human rights issues and violence), which explains its full and mandatory enforcement. I must, however, point out that there were some research methods even in this very sensitive study where it was impossible to seek informed consent. Covert observation, for example, as used at political meetings and gatherings and at times in classrooms would, by their nature rule out the option of informed consent (this is discussed further in sections 4.6.6 and 4.6.7, below). And, of course, there were occasions when problems arose, even though consent had been obtained. This was to be expected in a research study of this nature. Burgess (1989), for

example, cites his own research in which teachers had been informed that research was taking place but in which it was not possible to specify exactly what data would be collected or how they would be used. It could be said, in this particular case, that individuals were not fully informed, that consent had not been obtained, and that privacy had been violated (see Cohen *et al.*, 2000, 52). As a general rule, however, informed consent is an important principle to abide by and the fact that moral philosophers have joined in the debate engendered by the concept is testimony to the seriousness with which the principle is viewed (Soble, 1978). In the present study, it was this principle that formed the basis of an implicit contractual relationship, so to speak, between myself and the researched and which served as a foundation on which subsequent ethical considerations were structured.

From my remarks and citations so far on this subject of informed consent I may appear to be assuming hierarchical relationships between peers – researcher, chiefs and headmen, for example, or researcher and teachers. Moreover, this assumption would seem to underpin many of the discussions of an ethical nature in the research methodology literature generally. A prominent case in point concerns educational research involving children who cannot be regarded as being on equal terms with the researcher, and it is important to keep such relationships in mind at all stages in the research process, including the point where informed consent is sought. In this connection I refer to the important work of Fine and Sandstrom (1988) whose ethnographic and participant observational studies of children and young people focus, among other issues, on this asymmetry with respect to the problems of obtaining informed consent from their young

subjects and explaining the research in a comprehensive fashion. As a guiding principle Fine and Sandstrom advise that while it is desirable to lessen the power differential between children and adult researchers, the difference will remain and its elimination may be ethically inadvisable (cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2000, 52).

Speaking of participant observation, for example, these authors say that researchers must provide a credible and meaningful explanation of their research intentions, especially in situations where they have little authority and that children must be given a real and legitimate opportunity to say that they do not want to take part. The authors advise that where subjects do refuse, they should not be recorded, and they should not be included in any book or article (even under a pseudonym) (Fine and Sandstrom , cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p.52). My belief, however, is that this should be observed in all situations, not only in those where the researcher has ‘little authority’ and that, for example, should a child, show signs of discomfort or stress, the research should be terminated immediately. Many adults broke down during the interviews undertaken as part of this research and such interviews were terminated immediately. Some participants came back to say that they had gathered enough strength and courage to continue and only then were the interviews completed. People in Zimbabwe are highly traumatised, stressed and depressed. Most interviews in my study ended with participants breaking down and this helps to explain why the current government does not entertain any researchers in the country. I now turn to this government refusal under the heading ‘deception, access and acceptance.’

### **4.3 Deception, access and acceptance**

I highlight questions of access and acceptance in particular at this point because it was really a problem during the early stages of this study. The level of violence in Zimbabwe in 2008 was such that no person intending to conduct research on educational issues relating to human rights and violence was allowed to enter, let alone conduct interviews on these issues. This explains the use of telephones as a method of collecting data as well as the use of deception at the early stages of this study (see also section 4.6.8, below).

The use of deception in educational, social psychological and sociological research has, however, attracted a certain amount of adverse publicity. In social psychological research, the term is applied to that kind of experimental situation where the researcher knowingly conceals the true purpose and conditions of the research, or else positively misinforms the subjects, or exposes them to unduly painful, stressful or embarrassing experiences, without the subjects having knowledge of what is going on. The deception lies in not telling the whole truth (see Cohen *et al.*, 2000 p.63). Advocates of the method, however, feel that if a deception experiment is the only way to discover something of real importance, the truth so discovered is worth the lies told in the process, so long as no harm comes to the subject (see Aronson *et al.*, 1990). The problem from the researcher's point of view is: 'What is the proper balance between the interests of science and the thoughtful, humane treatment of people who innocently provide the data?' In other words, the problem hinges on an ethics costs/benefits ratio. My problem in this study was not with the participants, but it was with the government whose record of human rights abuses is well documented (see Bhebhe 2002a, Meredith, 2002, Stiff 2000). There are

many views and arguments in the research literature on the subject of deception, some key elements of which are summarised by Kimmel (1988) who claims that few researchers feel that they can do without deception entirely, since the adoption of an overtly conservative approach could deem the study of important phenomena hardly worth the effort. Deception studies, he considers, differ so greatly that even the harshest critics would be hard pressed to state unequivocally that all deception has potentially harmful effects on participants or is otherwise wrong. The pervasiveness of the problem of deception becomes even more apparent when one remembers that it is even built into many of our measurement devices, since it is important to keep the respondent ignorant of the personality and attitude dimensions that one wishes to investigate (see Cohen *et al.* 2000 p. 64). This study would not have been possible without deception. I had to deceive the government that my going to Zimbabwe was 'going back home' to visit my family, relatives and friends or sometimes to attend funerals. Had I told the truth I would not have even been allowed to enter the country, let alone conduct this research.

Before going to Zimbabwe, thorough and meticulous planning was undertaken. This included the identification of the aims of the research; its practical application; the design; methods and procedures to be used; the nature and size of samples or groups; what research instruments to be administered and how; what activities were to be observed and where; what subjects were to be interviewed and why; observational needs; the time involved; the degree of disruption envisaged; arrangements to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality with respect to data; explanations of the role of feedback and how findings would be best disseminated; and finally, whether assistance would be

required in the organisation and administration of the research. This planning and foresight gave me a good opportunity to anticipate and resolve likely problems, making it easier for me readily to gain permission, acceptance and support from target respondents. It must be remembered that hosts will have perceptions of researchers and their intentions and that these need always to be positive. According to Cohen *et al.* (2000, 66), 'researchers can best influence such perceptions by presenting themselves as competent, trustworthy and accommodating.'

Once in the country, achieving goodwill and cooperation remained my main goal. I had full support from most people in the country to the extent that they would warn me of any serious danger. Most people were fully prepared and ready to take part, so I had no significant problem in finding willing participants. Yet in any study of this nature there are bound to be sources of tension. It is to sources of tension that I now turn.

#### **4.4 Sources of tension**

I noted earlier in this study that the question of ethics in research is a highly complex subject. This complexity stems from numerous sources of tension. For the purpose of this study I will only consider the pair of such tensions which I consider the most important and relevant. The first, as expressed by Aronson and Carlsmith (1969) is the tension that exists between two sets of related values held by society: a belief in the value of free scientific inquiry in pursuit of truth and knowledge; and a belief in the dignity of individuals and their right to those considerations that flows from it. It is this polarity I referred to earlier as the cost/benefits ratio and by which 'greater consideration must be

given to the risks to physical, psychological, humane, proprietary and cultural values than to the potential contribution of research to knowledge' (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1981, 19). This is the issue of 'non-maleficence' (where no harm befalls the subjects). When confronted with this dilemma, I always resolved it in a manner that avoided the extremes of, on the one hand, giving up the whole research programme and on the other hand, ignoring the rights of my participants. The dangers of ignoring the rights of my participants were too ghastly to contemplate in the politically volatile Zimbabwe. Thus, I never lost sight of the obligations I owed to those who were helping me and I was constantly on the alert for alternative techniques should the ones I was employing at the time prove controversial or dangerous. In the final reckoning, the decision to go ahead with the research project rested on my subjective evaluation of the costs to the individual and society.

The second source of tension in this context was that generated by competing 'absolutist' and 'relativist' positions. The absolutist view holds that clear, set principles should guide the researchers in their work and that these should determine what ought and what ought not to be done. Those who hold a relativist position, by contrast, would argue that there can be no absolute guidelines and that the ethical considerations will arise from the very nature of the particular research being pursued at the time. In other words, the situation determines the behaviour. There are some contexts, however, where adoption of neither the absolutist nor the relativist position is clear cut or desirable. The situation in Zimbabwe in 2008 was so fluid and dynamic that it was difficult to know what would be the situation of the following day. One had to play things 'by ear' at all times. Writing of

the application of the principle of informed consent in this context, with respect to life history studies, Plummer (1983, cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2010, p.59) says:

Both sides have a weakness. If, for instance, as the absolutists usually insist, there should be informed consent, it may leave relatively privileged groups under-researched (since they will say 'no') and under privileged groups over-researched (they have nothing to lose and say 'yes' in hope). If the individual conscience is the guide, as the relativists insist, the door is wide open for the unscrupulous – even immoral – researcher.

He further suggests that broad guidelines laid down by professional bodies which offer the researcher room for ethical choice are the way out of the problem and the only way forward. In Zimbabwe, these had to be negotiated in every community due to polarisation in the country. Whatever the ethical stance one assumes and no matter what foresight or forethought one brings to bear on one's work, there will always be unknown, unforeseen problems and difficulties lying in wait (Kimmel, 1988). This was particularly the case in my study in Zimbabwe. I had to be totally ethical in everything I did and so it is to further consideration of ethics that I now want to turn.

#### **4.5 Ethics of Social Research**

Social scientists generally have a responsibility not only to their profession in its search for knowledge and quest for the truth, but also for the participants they depend on for their work. Whatever the specific nature of this work, social researchers must take into account the effects on participants, and act in such a way as to preserve their dignity as human beings (see Cohen, 2000 p. 56). According to Cavan (1977), ethics can be defined

as:

a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others. Being ethical limits the choices we can make in the pursuit of truth. Ethics says that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better, even if, in the extreme case, the respect of human nature leaves one ignorant of human nature (p. 810).

The word 'ethics' is often used loosely in research. For example, it is often used interchangeably with morals. Normally a distinction is drawn by philosophers between 'morals' (concerned with what is the right or wrong thing to do) and 'ethics' (the philosophical enquiry into the basis of morals or moral judgement). Translated into the language of educational research 'ethics' for Simons (1995, p. 436) refers to the 'search for rules of conduct that enable us to operate defensibly in the political contexts in which we have to conduct educational research'. This could be considered narrow in its focus on the political context, but the 'search for rules' is at least one important ethical dimension to any consideration of human behaviour. It acts as an important guide to the researcher.

This chapter study is more concerned with the meaning and justification of moral considerations which underlie research, than it is with making any particular moral judgement, even though its principal aim is to attempt to establish the role of education in national reconstruction and reconciliation in situations of crisis such as Zimbabwe in 2008-2010. My specific dilemma was that the rewards of uncovering the truth may be small in some studies if the researcher is arrested or killed and the findings of the study suppressed. While they are totally unethical, such things happen in many countries

including Zimbabwe but I felt that this should not deter researchers such as myself from attempting to carry out research in the country. Such principles seem particularly important in any educational research but may often prove irreconcilable according to Richard Pring:

first, the principle which requires respect for the dignity and confidentiality of those who are the objects' of research and second, the principle which reflects the purpose of the research, namely the pursuit of truth (2000, 154).

The source of all the violence in Zimbabwe is political power. Since politics constitutes the gateway to fabulous wealth in Africa, the competition for political power has always been ferocious. Political defeat could mean exile, jail or starvation. Those who win power take over key state institutions and proceed to plunder the treasury. Key positions in these institutions are handed over to the President's tribesmen, cronies and loyal supporters to serve their interest and not those of people or the nation. Meritocracy, rule of law, property rights, transparency and administrative capacity vanish. Eventually, however, the vampire state implodes, sucking the country into a vortex of savage carnage and heinous destruction. This has been the fate in recent years of Mozambique, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and now Zimbabwe. It is, of course, totally unethical.

I was totally determined to succeed in my research as was encouraged by Tommy Lasorda: 'The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in the person's determination' (*Reader's Digest*, 1987 p. 47).

#### **4.6 Specific ethical dilemmas**

At the beginning of this chapter I spoke of an ethics costs/benefits ratio. This has been explained by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias as a conflict between two rights which they express as:

the right to research and acquire knowledge and the right of individual research participants to self-determination, privacy and dignity. A decision not to conduct a planned research project because it interferes with the participants' welfare is a limit on the first of these rights. A decision to conduct research despite an ethically questionable practice...is a limit on the second right. (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992, cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2010, 60).

This constitutes the fundamental ethical dilemma of the social sciences. Which proposition is favoured, or how a balance between the two is struck is likely to be influenced by the background, experience and personal values of the individual researcher. With this in mind, I now want to examine other dilemmas which I faced during the conduct of this study.

Various professional groups have created codes of ethics. Cassell and Jacobs observe: 'A code is concerned with aspirations as well as avoidances, it represents our desire and attempt to respect the rights of others, fulfil obligations, avoid harm and augment benefits to those we interact with' (Cassell and Jacobs 1987, p. 2). In general, research codes of ethics address individual rights to dignity, privacy and confidentiality, and avoidance of harm (Punch, 1986).

Nazi concentration camps and the atomic bomb served to undermine the image of science as value-free and automatically contributing to human welfare (Diener and Crandall, 1978). Our image of science keeps changing. In light of today's codes of ethics, a number of studies from the 1950s and 1960s are questionable. Generally, subjects were drawn from low-power groups. In some cases, they gave information only to have the findings used against their own interests by people in position of power (Punch, 1986). Ethical codes help to mitigate this occurrence. Nonetheless, some researchers object to ethical codes because they can also protect the powerful. For example, (Wilkins 1979, p. 109) notes that prisoners' rights are rarely a matter of concern for authorities until someone wants to do research in prison. In effect, authorities can protect themselves under the guise of protecting subjects. This is a common occurrence in Zimbabwe today. Institutions that require explicit consent often have elaborate screening devices to deflect research on sensitive issues. Gilliher asks, 'Is not the failure of sociology to uncover corrupt illegitimate covert practices of government or industry because of the supposed prohibitions of professional ethics tantamount to supporting such practices?' (Galliher 1982, p. 160). Many Zimbabweans also ask this question.

The ethical principles adopted by the Council of the American Anthropological Association address issues that potentially face qualitative researchers. The following portion is representative of their statement:

In research, anthropologists' paramount responsibility is to those they study. When there is a conflict of interest, these individuals must come first. Anthropologists must do everything in

their power to protect the physical, social, and psychological welfare and to honour the dignity and privacy of those studied.

- a. Where research involves the acquisition of material and information transferred on the assumption of trust between persons, it is axiomatic that the rights, interests and sensitivities of those studied must be safeguarded.
- b. The aims of the investigation should be communicated as well as possible to the informant.
- c. Informants have a right to remain anonymous. This right should be respected both where it has been promised explicitly and where no clear understanding to the contrary has been reached . . .
- d. There should be no exploitation of individual informants for personal gain. Fair return should be given for all services.
- e. There is an obligation to reflect on the foreseeable repercussions of research and publication on the general population being studied (From Professional Ethics: Statements and Procedures of the American Anthropological Association, Statements on Ethics, June 1983, November 1986 by the American Anthropological Association).

The Council of the American Anthropology Association's ethical statements include directives on the researcher's responsibilities to the public, the discipline, students, sponsors, one's own government and host governments.

Finally, no matter how qualitative researchers view their roles, they develop relationships with their participants. These relationships, however, are generally asymmetrical, with power disproportionately on the side of the researcher. Consequently, researchers must consciously consider and protect the rights of participants to privacy. They must also reflect on and mitigate deceptive aspects of research and consider issues of reciprocity.

This point is now considered in more detail.

#### *4.6.1 Informed consent revisited*

Although informed consent neither precludes the abuse of research findings nor creates a symmetrical relationship between research and researched, it can contribute to the empowering of the researched. Many of my respondents expressed a high degree of satisfaction that I had the courage to talk to them about their problems. They felt empowered that they had an opportunity to tell someone about what they had gone through. The appropriateness of informed consent, particularly written consent forms, however, is a much-debated issue that accompanies discussions of ethics by qualitative researchers. Through informed consent, potential study participants are made aware:

- that participation is voluntary,
- of any aspects of the research that might affect their well - being, and
- that they may freely choose to stop participation at any point in the study (Diener and Crandall, 1978).

Originally developed for biomedical research, informed consent is now applicable when participants may be exposed to the physical or emotional risk. My own study falls in this category. Sometimes the requirement of written consent is readily accepted, as in the case of studying younger children by means of interviews. If it were required for all research projects, however, then this study would not have taken place. Written consent would eliminate all unobtrusive field observations and informal conversations. The very record left by consent papers could put most of my respondents' safety at risk due to the

sensitive nature of this study. As a result, most of my respondents refused to sign any consent papers, which means that consent was given verbally. Conversations were almost always in whispers as participants were afraid that some member of the security personnel was listening. ‘Walls have ears’, I was always reminded.

#### *4.6.2 Researcher as exploiter*

Questions of exploitation, or ‘using’ other people arose when I became immersed in research and began to rejoice in the richness of what I was learning. I was indeed thankful, but instead of simply appreciating the gift, I started to feel guilty for how much I was receiving and how little I was going to give in return. I felt the need to take this concern seriously. Do researchers, as welcomed but uninvited outsiders, enter a new community, mine words and behaviours, and then withdraw to process those words into a product that serves themselves and, perhaps, their professional colleagues? Research participants usually remain anonymous. In contrast, researchers may get status, prestige and royalties from publications (Plummer 1983). Researchers sometimes justify their actions with trickle-down promises such as ‘Through getting the word out to other professionals (e.g. special educators, educational administrators, teachers), we will be able to help people like you’. In my own study, it was clear that the people wanted their stories documented, so it was very easy to promise them that this would be done but more difficult to decide how it should be done.

Exploitation involves questions of power. Since I was not engaged in collaborative research projects, how would I decide if I was ‘using’ my research participants? I began

to interview victims of torture, rape or violence about the schooling of their children. I agonized over questions of power and exploitation:

What am I giving back to these unfortunate people that I interview? It seemed so unfair that I from the United Kingdom was 'using' this needy and suffering population . . . Could someone in a refugee camp in Zimbabwe tell me they did not have time? Privilege allowed my response (of no time) to others to be OK. For them that response would be suspect. Was I 'raping' the social issue of the moment? (research diary: Bindeira, 17 June, 2008).

Although you may applaud me for my heartfelt sentiments, do not simply accept my harsh interpretation of my own behaviour. Take my case. The victims of torture, rape and violence to be found among my respondents, were counted among the nation's most unfortunate people. My research will not bring them the security and support of a home, a job, and proper schooling for their children. But did I make such promises? To have done so would have been unethical. Did I treat these unfortunate people with respect and dignity? This would have been ethical. Did I listen carefully, taking pains to understand what I was hearing? This was ethical. Did I intend to incorporate what I had learned into my own professional conduct? This was ethical. Did I intend to drop my topic once my thesis was complete, never writing or talking about it again? This would be unethical.

If the standard of ethicality is solving the problems of the people from whom we collect data, and solving them right away, then much research would be doomed never to begin. Were I to use the results of my research exclusively for my own good, I would be accused of being an exploiter, in the strict sense of the term. That I receive more good

from my research - degree, job, status, income, attention - is not inevitable, but often it is unavoidable. When my concern fastens exclusively on my personal gain, I am being unethical. When I write honestly and cogently about the suffering people of Zimbabwe and the schooling of their children, sharing the knowledge that I gained, I am being ethical. Perhaps I should have conceived of a collaborative study with the people of Zimbabwe. That I did not do so because of the sensitive nature of the study does not condemn me as unethical.

#### *4.6.3 Researcher as intervener/reformer*

Unlike the role of exploiter which researchers wander into but want to avoid, the intervener or reformer role is one that researchers may consciously decide to assume. This temptation was much greater for me because of the nature of the problem to be investigated. As a result of conducting this research, I might have been tempted to right what I judged to be wrong, to change what I condemned as unjust. Through observation at refugee camps and in schools I grew increasingly concerned over what I considered to be inhumane treatment of adults and children and agonized over what to do with my information.

In the process of doing this research, I often acquired information that was potentially dangerous to many people. I always agonized over how to handle this information. Do I make the information public by reporting it to human rights organisations or to the United Nations? I went to investigate an educational institution in my home area. As I did this, I lamented: 'I am hearing stuff that I neither need nor wish to know about attitudes and

relationships'. (research diary: Mberengwa, 20 June, 2008). The process was complicated for me because I was investigating an organisation in which my own relatives were involved. What price objectivity!

As I interviewed young farmers about their practices, I learned about illegal cultivation and marketing of marijuana. The young farmers wanted money to buy food for their children, send their children to school but most importantly send their children to hospital. Would it then be ethical to report these farmers to the police? What would this mean for anonymity and confidentiality? As I interviewed students about life in school, I became privy to information such as the following:

You know about the corner store, right? No? Gosh. They sell alcohol to anyone. Anyone. My friend and I went there to buy some chips, and the guy who was standing behind the counter said 'You guys drink? I will sell you some wine coolers. I won't tell your parents. Don't worry about it. Want some wine coolers?' (Mberengwa, 21 June, 2008).

When your participants trust you, you will invariably receive the privilege and burden of learning things that are problematic at best and dangerous at worst.

My ethical dilemma included a concern with what to do with dangerous knowledge in a very security sensitive country. To what extent should I continue to protect the confidentiality of research participants? If I learn about illegal behaviour, should I expose it? If I were to inform authorities of my knowledge, I would jeopardize not only my continued research in those areas, but also possible subsequent projects. I therefore did not discuss my findings with other research participants, nor personally intervened in the

affairs of my respondents. Neither did I report my findings to the authorities. 'If what you learn relates to the point of your study, you must explore ways to communicate the dangerous knowledge so that you fully maintain the anonymity of your sources' (Corrine and Peshkin, 1992, p. 114). Such advice is consistent with other researchers who suggest that continual protection of confidentiality is the best policy (see Ball 1985).

The question remains, however, of how 'wrong' a situation must be before one should intervene on the basis of one's unexpectedly acquired knowledge. If, for example, as a researcher one becomes aware of an ongoing episode of child abuse, does one react differently than if one's work puts the perpetrator in contact with students being offered alcohol at the corner store? Could not the latter also be construed as a case of child abuse? How does one decide where the lines are between a felt moral obligation to intervene and an obligation to continue as the data collection researcher? There are no easy and definitive answers to such questions, but each time they arose I sought advice from my supervisors. I also developed a support group to discuss worries and dilemmas which I found to be extremely helpful.

#### *4.6.4 Researcher as advocate*

Advocates are like interveners in that they decide to take a position on some issue that they become aware of through their research. Unlike interveners or reformers who try to change something within the research site, the advocate champions a cause. I was tempted to champion the Zimbabwe cause. But would this have been ethical? As I conducted this research I was strongly tempted to become an advocate:

I kept asking myself to what extent the research should improve the situation in Zimbabwe. This was magnified somewhat by my feeling that I was a Zimbabwean, who had been a participant in the process, raising issues with fellow Zimbabweans that many by now have come to terms with or raising expectations that some good will results. Even though my research was for the purpose of understanding and not 'fixing', how can one come so close to what is judged to be a very bad situation and walk away? I kept asking myself, 'Do I owe them solutions or at least some relief?' My answer was always 'no' but then I kept asking myself the same question, probably because I just did not like my answer. (research diary: Tsholotso, 23 June, 2008).

My research heightened my concern for the well-being of Zimbabweans, and my 'take the data and run' approach left me uncomfortable. Qualitative researchers find that advocacy can take many forms, presentations and publications being among the most readily available. I needed to decide whether such formats would serve my concern or if there were others within my competency that would be more valuable to most Zimbabweans.

Finch (1984) experienced a dilemma over publishing data she collected through her study of play groups. She found that child-care standards differed in working- and middle-class women.

This evidence, I feared, could be used to reinforce the view that working-class women are inadequate and incompetent childrearers. Again, I felt that I was not willing to heap further insults upon women whose circumstances were far less privileged than my own, and indeed for a while, I felt quite unable to write anything about this aspect of the playground study (Finch, 1984, p. 84).

Finch resolved her dilemma by distinguishing between the structural position in which the women were placed and their own experience with that position. This enabled Finch to ‘see that evidence of women successfully accommodating to various structural features of their lives in no way alters the essentially exploitative character of the structures in which they are located’ (Finch 1984, p. 84). Thus, she described the child-care practices of the working-class women in a way that would support them in an unfair and unequal society. Finch did not alter her data; she did not explain away the differences she uncovered. Her ethical sensitivity led her to contextualize her findings, so that the behaviour of the two groups of women was framed within the differential realities of their lives. This is not the politician’s cynical ‘damage control’, but the academic’s commitment to effective interpretation.

#### *4.6.5 Researcher as friend*

Researchers often have friendly relations with their participants; in some cases, the relationship is one of friendship. Where friendship or friendliness is the case, ethical dilemmas can result. Many of my participants in this study were my friends. I gained access to intimate information given to me in the context of friendship rather than in my research role. Should I use such data? Both Hansen’s (1976) exploration of Danish life and Daniels’ (1967) investigation within a military setting relied on personal friendships as channels for information. Hansen expressed discomfort with her role as researcher and her role as friend: ‘The confidential information I received was given to me in my role as friend. Yet, I was also an anthropologist and everything I heard or observed was

potentially relevant to my understanding of the dynamics of Danish interaction' (Hansen 1976, p. 127). Hansen refers to a particular confidential story told to her by one woman:

Later that day I would record this conversation, alone, without her knowledge, in my role as anthropologist. In my role as investigator the conversation became 'data'. Would she have spoken so frankly about this and other more intimate subjects had she understood that I listened in both roles, not only as a friend? (Hansen 1976, p. 129).

As she continued to gather data, Hansen grew concerned over how she would protect the anonymity of her interviewees and struggled with thoughts as to whether public description of behaviours violate an individual's right to privacy. She and Daniels both experienced ethical dilemmas over publishing findings that would possibly discomfort their friends, if not betray their friendship relationships. Both needed to ask, as I do in similar circumstances, if their narrative truly had to include all that their friends told them. Would the narrative hold up if the troublesome bits were excluded? Could these troublesome bits be presented in less troublesome ways? In the end, should we not let our friends be judges, by submitting to them what we have written and taking our lead from their decision?

#### *4.6.6 The Right to Privacy*

In my study, privacy was generally the foremost concern. In a country where privacy is not respected I had to show my participants that I was different. Participants have a right to expect that when they give the researcher permission to observe and interview them,

the researcher will, in turn, protect their confidences and preserve their anonymity. In a country where a small mistake could lead to death or imprisonment, I endeavoured to make sure, for example, that in the most sensitive areas where telephones are normally tapped, I used mobile phones. Moreover, I made sure that even where a mobile phone was used there were no other people listening who could pass what they heard to someone else, thereby causing serious problems.

However, there were other cases where I had to interview some participants in the presence of security personnel. In such circumstances I always made sure that the security person was in another room far away from where the interview was taking place. There were always ways of doing this. Where this was not possible, interviews were called off and throughout the study I respected confidentiality by not discussing with anyone the specifics of what I saw and heard.

Sometimes I observed people in public places such as rallies, beer halls, football stadia just to see how they grouped themselves. Researchers sometimes argue over whether unobtrusive methods, even in such public places, invade rights of privacy. This discussion usually includes debates on the use of covert observation. One position is that covert observation in public places is permissible because people ordinarily watch and are watched by others in public places. Accordingly, educationists should be able to do so as well. There is, however, a counter point. When such observations are systematic, recorded and analyzed, no longer are they 'ordinary' and so may be held to violate rights of privacy (see Corrine and Peshkin, 1992, p. 118).

The issue of privacy arises again during the writing phase in qualitative inquiry. To protect their anonymity, researchers often provide respondents with fictitious names and sometimes change descriptive characteristics such as sex and age. It has since been shown that fictitious names do not necessarily protect participants as demonstrated by these two frequently cited cases: West's (1945) 'Plainville, U.S.A.' and Vidich and Bensman's (1968) 'Small Town' in 'Mass Society'. Despite made-up names, the towns were easily identified by descriptions of their characteristics, and locations, and people in the towns easily recognized themselves in the descriptions of individuals. In both cases, the research participants were upset by the portrayals of the towns and their inhabitants. In my case this would have been more serious as the authorities would think that the participants were trying to hide their identities. This explains why most of my participants simply wanted their names made public but, for reasons already explained, I did not feel able to agree to this on ethical grounds.

Critics (see Johnson 1982, p. 76) point out that West, for example, focused on the negative, that he looked dismissively on a rural community from an urban perspective, using offensive and judgemental words such as 'hillbilly' or 'people who lived like animals'. Plummer states that although 'confidentiality may appear to be a prerequisite of life history research, it frequently becomes an impossibility' (Plummer 1983, p. 143). He cites several examples: fifty years after the original study, Shaw's (1930) 'Jack-Roller' was located for re-interview, and after a month of detective work, a reporter tracked down Oscar Lewis' (1979) 'Children of Sanchez'. To ensure confidentiality, Plummer observes, 'Sometimes the researcher must partially deceive his readership' (1983, p.144).

These studies and many others raise a number of ethical questions about the publication of data: What obligations does the researcher have to research participants when publishing findings? If the researcher's analysis is different from that of participants, should one, both, or neither be published? Even if respondents tend to agree that some aspect of their community is portrayed in an unflattering light, should the researcher make this information public? There are no easy answers to these questions.

Despite justified worry about protecting anonymity, researchers may also have to deal with declined anonymity. Jacobs (1987) tells of an anthropologist who wrote about a community in Melanesia. She disguised villagers and their location through use of pseudonyms. Three years later she returned to the field to distribute copies of her manuscript to those who had been most helpful and to ask permission to conduct further study. People liked the book and felt the accounts were correct, but told her that she had the name of the village wrong and the names of the individuals wrong. She was told to be more careful and accurate in her next book. The author was faced with an ethical dilemma: should she follow the wishes of the villagers or the conventions and cautions of ethical codes? When her second book was completed, she sent a copy to the village and asked for comments as well as whether they still wanted actual names used. When she did not get a direct reply to her question she used the same pseudonyms in her second monograph. As already mentioned, I had similar experiences in the present study and in my previous studies of Zimbabwe. However, due to the security situation in the country, I had no problem subsequently in explaining why I had to use pseudonyms. This led to

my participants thanking me for my understanding of the security situation in the country and for my strict adherence to the ethical code.

#### *4.6.7 Deception revisited*

Conventionally, people in general regard deception as wrong. Nonetheless, its role in research is often debated. Deception easily enters various aspects of research, and it can take the form of either deliberate commission or omission. For example, in covert studies, participants never know that they are being researched. Some researchers in very security-sensitive areas misrepresent their identity and pretend to be someone they are not; others present themselves as researchers, but misrepresent or do not fully explain what it is that they are researching. I entered refugee camps without telling the authorities that I was undertaking research. I also went to certain Colleges of Education where I simply told the authorities that I was doing some research without clearly specifying what I was researching on. This worked very well. The latter practice of going to Colleges is called omission or shallow cover (see Fine, 1980). The reason to deceive generally rests on a concern to ensure the most natural behaviour among research participants. But in my case it was, as much as anything, to be allowed to enter those areas. Punch (1986, p. 39) raises two questions concerning the role of deception in research.

- 1) Are there areas in which some measure of deception is justified in gaining data?
- 2) Are devious means legitimate in institutions that deserve exposure?

These questions summarize the ongoing debate over the use of deliberate deception in research.

Covert research gets its strongest support from those who advocate research of the powerful. As in investigative journalism, access to the workings of some groups or institutions with power would be impossible without deception. Just imagine me arriving in Zimbabwe at Harare Airport in 2008 and telling the authorities there that I had come from the United Kingdom to conduct research touching on human rights abuses in the country. Van den Berge says of his research in South Africa, 'From the onset, I decided that I should have no scruples in deceiving the government' (cited in Punch 1986, p. 39). If a researcher like Van den Berge views an institution as 'essentially dishonourable, morally outrageous and destructive', does he/she ignore it and study something more publicly acceptable in order to avoid being deceptive? Jack Douglas, a strong supporter of the utilitarian or 'ends justify the means' approach in such cases, states:

The social researcher is... entitled and indeed compelled to adopt covert methods. Social actors employ lies, deceit, fraud, deception and blackmail in dealings with each other. Therefore the social scientist is justified in using them where necessary in order to achieve the higher objective of scientific truth. (cited in Punch, 1986, p.39)

From the utilitarian perspective, deception in research may be justified by benefits accruing to the larger society. Ethical decisions are made on the basis that moral action is that which results in the greatest good for the greatest number. Critics of this position, however, argue that although costs and benefits may be estimated, both are impossible to predict and measure. Furthermore, they argue, who is to set the standards that determine when something is for the greater good of society (Corrine and Peshkin, 1992, p. 121)? The decision in most studies is the researcher, who is never an objective participant, no

matter what he or she claims. This study would not have taken place had I not made the decision to undertake it amid all the dilemmas and risks involved.

Even when a researcher is as honest and open as possible about the nature of his or her research, he or she will continue to develop ethical questions concerning the execution of fieldwork. Many of these questions will be context-bound, arising out of specific instances in each study. For example, informed consent regulations indicate that the researcher should disclose to potential participants all information necessary for them to make intelligent decisions about participation. Yet doing so in volatile and security sensitive areas like Zimbabwe is difficult in qualitative research because often the researcher is not fully aware of what he or she is looking for, among whom, or with what possible risks. 'The researcher is in a perplexing situation', states Erickson. 'He or she needs to have done an ethnography of the setting in order to anticipate the range of risks and other burdens that will be involved for those studied', (Erickson 1986, p. 141). Although the partial nature of the researcher's knowledge does not obviate the propriety of informed consent, it does make implementing it problematic.

Certain ethical standards could encourage researchers to eliminate whole sections of their findings because publishing them could harm the individual or groups they studied. Could this, too, be a form of misrepresentation? Colvard (1967) suggests that reporting statuses and pseudonyms instead of actual names, paraphrasing quotations rather than presenting them verbatim, and withholding information obtained in more personal than official roles neither protects privacy adequately nor preserves knowledge adequately. I

see Colvard's observations as cautionary: We as researchers must always be aware of ways in which our work may be deceptive and try by all means to avoid it.

#### *4.6.8 Reciprocity*

In quantitative research, reciprocity is frequently assumed to be a matter of monetarily rewarding research subjects for their time. Although participants in qualitative research sometimes receive remuneration, the issue of reciprocity becomes more difficult because of the time involved and the nature of the relationships developed between researchers and their participants. The degree of indebtedness varies considerably from study to study and from participant to participant depending on the topic and the amount and type of time researchers spend with their researched. In my own study, I knew the participants very well as I researched in a country where I was born, grew up, was educated and I am well known. The degree of mutual indebtedness was therefore very high throughout the whole country.

Grazer defines reciprocity as 'the exchange of favours and commitments, the building of a sense of mutual identification and feeling of community' (Grazer 1982, p. 50). As research respondents willingly open up their lives to researchers – giving their time, sharing intimate and sometimes very sensitive stories, and frequently including them in both public and private events and activities – researchers become ambivalent, alternatively overjoyed with the data they are gathering and worried by their perceived inability to reciprocate adequately. How was I to reward the people for their bravery in agreeing to be participants in my research?

As a researcher I did not want to view people as means to ends of their choosing. Nonetheless, in a non-collaborative qualitative enquiry such as mine, I invariably cultivated relationships in order to be trusted and to gather data to meet my own needs. In the process, I reciprocated in a variety of ways such as promising to try to make the findings of the study public in some form sensitive and faithful to all of the ethical and safety dilemmas involved so that the International Community would then know what has been going on in the country and that perhaps some remedial action would be taken to ensure that what had happened would not happen again. But whether what my respondents gave me equals what they will receive is difficult, if not impossible, to determine.

However, in a country with no freedom of speech, the interviewing process provided a particular occasion for reciprocity. By listening to participants carefully and seriously, I believe that I was able to give them a sense of importance and specialness. By providing them with the opportunity to reflect on and voice answers to my questions, it seemed that I assisted them to understand some aspect of themselves better. My questions identified issues of importance to my interviewees. The interviewees were invariably both joyful and found useful their roles as information providers in such a sensitive environment. One of the women I interviewed in this study told me: 'You know I hadn't thought about high school in a long time. I can think about it this afternoon as an experience, but also see how it lays the foundation for where I am today' (Kezi, 20 April, 2009). In another example, I interviewed an administrator. I began at 4:00p.m, and allowed forty - five minutes because the administrator had a board meeting that night. Three quarters of an

hour was extended to an hour; and despite me saying, 'Ok, let us stop here and I will see you next week to continue', the administrator continued with another story. As I confirmed the same place, same time meeting for the following week, Tuesday, the administrator said, 'How about starting earlier? How's 3:00p.m.?' (Kezi, 21 April, 2009). Good listening with its attendant reinforcement, catharsis, and self-enlightenment are the major returns that I believe I was able to give to my interviewees.

Although researchers do not wittingly assume the role of therapist, they nonetheless fashion an interview process that can be strikingly therapeutic. Obligations accompany the therapeutic nature of the interview. Self-reflections can produce pain where least expected, and interviewers may suddenly find themselves face to face with a crying interviewee. Tears do not necessarily mean that the researcher has asked a bad or good question, but they obligate the researcher to deal sensitively and constructively with unresolved feelings without taking on the role of analyst (Corrine and Peshkin, 1992, p. 123). This was clearly evident in my own research. In some cases I ended up suggesting people, organizations or resources that could be of help. I am still following up such issues through letters or phone calls, to assist such interviewees in feeling comfortable with their degree of personal disclosure. When I interviewed first-year Headmasters in the South-Western part of the country, five began to cry as they expressed their stress and frustration with the job. When I interviewed Ndebele students in teachers' Colleges, some began to cry as they talked about how they were discriminated against by both lecturers and their fellow students. At first, I was really stunned, but then I empathically told them

of similar life experiences. Finally, I suggested people and organizations that could assist these interviewees.

Interviews and other means of data collection can also contribute to raised expectations in less intimate relationships. When researchers spend days and months asking people about their problems and aspirations, they elicit voices of dissatisfaction and dreams. In the process, they may encourage people to expect that someone will work to alleviate their plight. If, as a researcher, one plans only to publish one's findings, then one must find a way of making that clear to one's participants throughout the data gathering process. Through written reports, however, qualitative researchers frequently convey reciprocity by their tales of human rights abuses, injustice, struggle and pain. Reciprocity may also include making explicit arrangements to share royalties from publications (*ibid.*, 124). I hope this will be possible in my case.

#### **4.7 Final reflections on research ethics**

By their nature, ethical dilemmas defy easy solutions. Researchers continue to debate whether or not some people or areas or even countries such as Zimbabwe where research questions have to be given to the Research Council of Zimbabwe for censorship should be researched at all. They question whether or not fieldwork is inevitably deceitful. They argue over the role of conscious deception in fieldwork. They raise ethical questions over the issue of power relationships, particularly with poor and 'deviant' groups. And they question whether codes and regulations can successfully shape research ethics.

There are no easy answers and yet researchers will continue to conduct research and, when doing so, be asked to act ethically. Plummer (1993) suggests the adoption of broad ethical guidelines with room for personal ethical choice by the researcher. Ethical codes certainly guide research behaviour, but the degree to which social research is or is not ethical depends on the researcher's continual communication and interaction with research participants. Researchers alone must not be the arbiters of this critical research issue.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FINDINGS**

In this chapter I present the findings of the empirical part of the study in the context of a wider scholarly and professional literature.

In section 5.1, drawing on my interview data and other sources, I provide a short account of the state of education in Zimbabwe immediately prior to and during my period of fieldwork in 2008-2010. In section 5.2 the reporting of the first main body of findings is undertaken via an analysis of eight key themes arising from the fieldwork data. These data are related to the work of scholars and agencies who have reported on the challenges facing education in other crisis-torn countries. In section 5.3 the insights from the previous sections are then applied to the wider literature on the role of education in reconstruction and reconciliation in war-torn and crisis-damaged countries. Eight broad principles are identified and the implications of these discussed in the context of the task facing the next generation of Zimbabwean politicians and educators.

#### **5.1 Education in a country in crisis:**

##### **the context for fieldwork in Zimbabwe, 2008-2010**

At the time of the fieldwork Zimbabwe's education sector was in crisis. Many teachers had been lost through migration caused by political intimidation and violence or driven out of the profession by poor salaries. An estimated 25,000 teachers left Zimbabwe in 2007 alone, while 2008 saw a height of violence in which more than 250 people were killed (many of them teachers) more than 200,000 were uprooted and more than 2,400

homes destroyed, mainly those belonging to MDC supporters (*The Zimbabwean*, 2010). It has also been reported that the number of children attending school dropped from 85% in 2007 to below 20% in 2009 mainly due to unaffordability of the school fees introduced in 1991, the shortage of teachers (numbers are thought to have dropped from about 120,000 to less than 60,000 within a period of three years: HoCIDC, 2010) and the general violence. Thus, a senior official of a non-governmental organisation who I interviewed in Harare in 2010 stated that ‘in the past Zimbabwe had a very high standard of education and a very high standard of teaching. Quite rightly it was proud of it’. However, the situation now was that it was widely believed that ‘some of the best education in the countries around Zimbabwe is provided in schools where there are Zimbabwe exiled teachers’ (Harare, 10 January 2010).

By this time the depth of the crisis appeared to be easing a little. For example, the Inclusive Government of National Unity was providing an allowance of \$160 to all civil servants including teachers and, according to HoCIDC (2010), there were early indications of recovery in the education system. Most schools were now functioning again, but with reduced capacity. Nevertheless, continuing political violence and lack of security had resulted in the displacement of many Zimbabweans, the migration of many thousands to neighbouring countries and the closure of many schools and medical facilities throughout the country. It had been hoped that the Global Political Agreement between the two main political parties in the country would bring political stability and halt the migration of teachers to the neighbouring countries. However, the political situation remained fragile. The prospect of free and fair elections taking place, with the

result accepted by all sides, remained unlikely and the country continued to face enormous challenges over governance, respect for human rights and delivery of basic services, including education.

As a result of each of my three field visits during 2008-2010 it was clear that the impact of Gukurahundi on Matabeleland in the early 1980s (see section 2.2.2, above) was indelible. ‘This wound is huge and deep’ a village headman told me in Gwanda in 2008. ‘The liberation war was painful, but it had a purpose, it was planned, face to face. The Gukurahundi was much worse. It was fearful, unforgettable and unacknowledged’. This village headman went on to say:

For four years there was no schooling as teachers were either in jail or killed. Many people were uprooted because of fear and a lack of food as stores were shut during the curfew. Schools were used as interrogation centres and torture centres. School children saw their teachers handcuffed and taken away. At times they saw them being beaten to death. This was total hell. Mugabe told parliament in 1985 that ZAPU inspired dissident activities, inspired banditry and inspired lawlessness in the country, yet he never produced any material evidence to support these claims. Two lengthy treason trials, one in 1982 and the other in 1986, both failed to prove any collusion between ZAPU and the dissidents’ (Gwanda, 16 June 2008).

However, there was a crude logic to Mugabe's actions. His sole purpose had been to hold on to power by whatever means. Whatever the cost, his regime was dedicated towards that end: violence had paid off in the past and he expected it to secure the future.

The last comment on Robert Mugabe of Sir Garfield Todd, Zimbabwe's liberal prime minister, was 'what I cannot forgive is how many people he has corrupted' (Berger, 2007). Todd was thinking about individuals within Zimbabwe, never anticipating that the corruption would cascade beyond its borders. Yet, as a Zimbabwean constitutional lawyer told me in an interview: 'Mugabe has displaced the crisis from the national to the regional level as a pan-African struggle against imperial domination' (Harare, 21 June 2008).

Robert Mugabe and his acolytes also assiduously asset-stripped Zimbabwe and, in the period immediately prior to and during my early fieldwork, delivered its population into the depths of despair, poverty and illness. In January 2006, a survey conducted by Erasmus University, Rotterdam, found on a world data base of happiness, that Zimbabwe was the unhappiest country in the world. That April, the World Health Organisation announced that people in Zimbabwe now also had the lowest life expectancy in the world, an average of thirty-seven years for men (down from sixty-one in 1991) and just thirty-four years for women (Todd, 2007). Towards the end of 2006, it was estimated that 70 percent of the 18 to 65 age group lived outside the country. Well over 70 percent of those left inside were sick, poor, hungry, in thousands of cases without shelter, without hope, without stamina and unable to take up cudgels against guns and helicopters and the violence of brutal officials (*ibid*).

Interviewees explained to me that over the years Mugabe had perfected the art of leading people into temptation. For example, one of his weapons has been to offer irresistibly

beautiful stolen farms to judges. Meanwhile, only the dimmest of his cohorts have not been terrified, ripe for blackmail or already being blackmailed. Many suffered physically at his hands and knew what he was capable of. Driven by desperation, fear and greed, respondents in my study recounted how erstwhile opponents had joined a stampede onto a ZANU-PF 'gravy train', knowing that if they spoke out their fate would be similar to that of Movement for Democratic Change leaders Morgan Tsvangirai, Welshman Ncube, Nelson Chamisa, Sekai Holland who came close to death at the hands of police, 'war veterans' or the hangman. High-level Zimbabweans, including a number of my interviewees, undoubtedly loathed Mugabe for his destruction of the country and their integrity but felt that they had become complicit, guilty and fearful, bound hand and foot to their corrupter.

Summing up the plight of the MDC, this is what one of my respondents, a renowned former ZANU freedom fighter, reported to me.

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leadership totally underestimated Mugabe. They believed the struggle for democracy would be hard, but they never understood that he was prepared to destroy everything - them, the economy, the institutions, the infrastructure, the whole country and everything in it - to survive. The MDC thought they could win by being right, by appealing to the majority, and they got that support, but that was never enough. Mugabe controls the security forces, the courts, the media, the intelligence services and the assets, and he has perfected the system of patronage, manipulating each and every person in positions of power.

Mugabe was impossible to defeat in elections because he controls every aspect of them too. The task was too big for the decent MDC, and the party neglected to make inroads in the lower ranks of the army, who are just as poor as everyone else. (Harare, 18 June 2008).

One year later I was able to place this assessment alongside that of a political heavyweight I interviewed in Buhera who declared ‘Zimbabwe was better under colonialism’. In his view, Zimbabwe was in a spiral of decline.

The average Zimbabwean is much poorer now than during the age of colonialism. It is leadership or governance that presents the greatest challenge to Zimbabwe’s capacity to protect its environment, conserve its biodiversity, improve the quality of life of her people and to establish sustainable development. The adoption of a medieval monolithic mode of governance in Zimbabwe has caused instability in the country, encouraged ethnic and tribal conflicts, provided good ground for corruption, capital flight, civil conflicts and refugee problems and failed our leaders to differentiate between state and personal wealth. The impact has been gradual institutional decay, increase in poverty, illiteracy, state terrorism, mafia-type killing in urban areas, environmental destruction and pollution among other evils. A don’t care attitude – every person for himself and God for us all – has been the end result making effective mobilisation difficult (Buhera, May 3, 2009).

This interviewee (‘X’) accused Zimbabwe’s post-colonial leaders of neglecting development and wasting money on ‘enormous entourages of civil servants.’ He contrasted this with the record of colonial governments who built the roads and cities on which Zimbabwe depends on today. X pointed out that China had lifted 400 million people out of penury during the past twenty years while, over the same period, 10 million

Zimbabweans had fallen below the poverty line despite the country's mineral wealth, specifically the diamonds in Chief Marange's area of the country. He also referred to a World Bank report published in 2005 which found that Africa was the only continent where most people were poorer than they had been two decades previously (World Bank, 2005, p. 274-78). From this X concluded that Zimbabweans should take a tough line against the country's leaders: 'we should not tolerate the use of violence, torture and rigging of elections and, if necessary we should all support the opposition'.

This interviewee's analysis of Zimbabwe's recent history and of its predicament today differs fundamentally from that of most of the country's leaders who have pointedly refrained from criticising Mr Mugabe's excesses, blaming instead the legacy of British colonialism for the country's crisis.

Meanwhile, in the domestic arena, Mr Mugabe had been dedicating his government to addressing the grievances left by the era of white rule, a Black Economic Empowerment policy being designed to give black Zimbabweans control over what remains of a white dominated economy. But my interviewee, X, is intensely critical of this approach. The president's flagship policy, he said, was creating 'a culture of entitlement' among blacks and it was his experience that businesses were being handed over as 'free assets' to people without the technical know-how to run them. 'After the disastrous land reform policy our leaders are impervious to learning. A destruction of all businesses and the economy is fast approaching' was his conclusion. In this light he was clear that 'the

country cannot continue to create and perpetuate chaos and instability and heap all the blame for its marginalisation on the North. It must accept its share of the blame’.

By this interviewee and by others it was impressed upon me that the tragic irony of Zimbabwe was that the country’s leaders, though fully aware of the economic crisis, spent huge resources acquiring guns and other military hardware as part of illegal manoeuvres to retain and remain in power. In so doing they had become the architects of economic destruction, environmental degradation and pollution. And it was a deeper irony still that that Zimbabwe, which leads the African continent in biodiversity in terms of both plants and animal species and varieties, should be faced with constant hunger (Otim, 1992 p. 48).

Such was the context in which my research was conducted.

## **5.2 The role of education in Zimbabwean reconstruction and reconciliation: views from the field in comparative perspective**

### *5.2.1 Education in Zimbabwe: the absence of universal values*

At the turn of the century Tony Gallagher conducted a study to investigate the effect of education in divided societies in Switzerland, Belgium and Spain. In his book, *Education in Divided Societies* (2004) he writes:

In Switzerland people talk of 26 education systems, not one, but this is belied by the active attempts to maintain harmony. In Belgium people talk of two education systems and the

division is more profound. With few, if any, remaining links between the two main systems, the policymakers in each area have taken their school systems in different directions to the extent that any attempt to reverse the situation and restore some degree of harmony would be replete with difficulty. Again the contrast with Spain is striking. In Belgium increased levels of autonomy have been granted in order to reduce conflict, but at the cost of greater separation. In Spain the decision to grant autonomy was seen as a logical recognition of the intra-societal diversity that had been denied, and often brutally suppressed, during the Franco regime. In the context of a democratic Spain, decentralisation, both institutionally and, for some regions, linguistically, was offered as the best way to hold the country together and neutralise the centrifugal separatist pressures that had existed in various regions (p.49).

Overall, and in the context of my present interest, perhaps the most interesting conclusion to derive from this examination of three national case studies is that it raises questions about purely structural educational solutions to ethnic problems. In the case of these decentralised states, the implications for educational policy and practice in each has been quite different. In one, (Switzerland), a limited set of contracts provides the basis and incentive for greater harmony. In another (Belgium), decentralisation has led to rapid separation, while in yet another (Spain), decentralisation is seen as the historic compromise that will mitigate separatist pressures. Structural solutions, in other words, contain less than predictable consequences, and depend on their own specific context. This unpredictability of outcomes should serve only to emphasise the difficulties involved in trying to mitigate ethnic tensions and political polarisation through educational solutions. How do Zimbabwean educationists view this?

A senior lecturer I interviewed at the university of Zimbabwe (1 May 2009) examined the current ethos of the education system in Zimbabwe and proposed that values and morals, as well as good citizenship, should be part and parcel of the development of an indigenous Zimbabwean culture. He presented a sociological definition of the term 'culture' which in his view represented a system of values, objectives, knowledge, skills and feelings constituting the societal norms specific to an individual society. According to the lecturer, cultural education is defined as the aspect of the educational process that is concerned with the feelings, values, beliefs, attitudes and emotional well-being of pupils. Thus, the secular term 'culture' in the government school system displaces the term 'religious belief and deportment' in the mission school.

A Professor of Education I interviewed at another institution of Education (5 May 2009) discussed three major value-concepts that should characterize the school system in Zimbabwe.

The concepts 'acquired truth', 'freedom of thought' and 'modern' should be the driving forces behind education in Zimbabwe.' Truth is acquired through knowledge which in turn is acquired through the freedom of thought processes and originality of thought. The study of the modern versus the traditional leads the pupil to the establishment of a value-system congruent with a humanistic perception of the world'.

He also pointed out that religious belief is considered by the government school system to be anachronistic and it is the spirit of free inquiry which leads to the development of values and morals.

Finally, a college principal (7 May 2009) stated that Zimbabwean society was at a crossroads of a moral and ethical crisis due to ethnic tension and political divisions which have resulted in violence. 'Social abuses and delinquency increasingly characterize the pre-adolescent school-going community,' he lamented. He urged educational authorities to give high priority to an emphasis on moral and ethical development in the educational process. 'In our government schools', he said, '

this moral and ethical education should be based on universal humanistic values. An emphasis on moral and ethical reasoning, coming to terms with moral issues, and the provision of a healthy moral and ethical atmosphere should be major elements in values education in all our schools.

He also said that the presentation of real-life ethical and moral problems to pupils and their attempts to provide suitable solutions to these dilemmas should be integral features of moral and ethical education. Democracy, human rights, racial, religious and ethnic equality and harmony, fairness and justice and good citizenship should be some of the issues that come to the fore in this aspect of education.

With these visions of a productive future for Zimbabwean education in mind, collected in the field in May 2009, this section now reviews the outlook of my interviewees on the major immediate challengers facing educators in the dismal conditions in which the country currently finds itself.

### 5.2.2 *The politics of access and equality*

The two main political parties which before independence fought for the liberation of the country from Rhodesian rule were ZANU (representing the Shona) and ZAPU (representing the Ndebele). At the behest of the Publicity and Information Secretary of ZANU, Nathan Shamuyarira, the ZANU Grand Plan of 1979 included the statement: 'The only way to weaken the Ndebele is to deprive him or her of an education' and was a major indication of policy intent. One result of it is that today Shona is taught in all of the teachers' colleges countrywide, with Ndebele confined to those colleges in the Matabeleland region. According to a statement by Shamuyarira in Harare in 2008:

...pressure must continue to be applied to limit the teaching of Ndebele to those few who happen to be enrolled. The resistance to the teaching of Shona in all schools in the Matabeleland will soon fizzle out. More and more teaching posts are being taken up by Shona college graduates and appointments of Shona school heads has already been won (media reports, Harare, 3 July, 2008).

The existence of conflict inevitably raises questions concerning government views on the purpose of education and the extent to which education is seen as a tool for political or ideological purposes. Political involvement in operational matters such as education appointments, deployment of teachers and determination of the curriculum, may provide some indication of the extent to which government perceives education as mainly about 'social control' or about 'empowerment' through social, economic and cultural

development. In the Zimbabwe case and in many other circumstances, political elites have used education for their own purposes.

During the course of my fieldwork a senior lecturer, echoing the views of many, had this to say:

Although decentralisation of education systems may carry the potential to increase participation and ownership, it may leave education open to manipulation as part of local politics as we see in Zimbabwe today. This highlights the need for systems and structures that ‘insulate’ the education sector from political bias, potential corruption and interference in operational decisions to implement policy. Capacity building and training for those working within the public service may therefore be a necessary prerequisite for the success of any overall education sector plan that takes account of conflict. At all levels of the education system, governance is a crucial issue. Arrangements should be put in place for representation and participation in consultation, decision-making and governance in order to reduce potential sources of conflict. There should also be opportunities for inclusion and the resolution of grievances. Arrangements in the system for transparency and accountability must also reflect the system’s capacity to accept and address inequalities that might otherwise become sources of conflict (Bulwayo, 6 July 2008).

According to a progress review on the 1979 Grand Plan produced by ZANU P.F. in 2000:

...training in tertiary institutions has played a very significant role, as it is critical that in manpower development due attention is paid to giving skills to the majority indigenous Shona who will be able to take up employment opportunities always. Teacher’s Colleges, Polytechs,

Universities, all reflect in their enrolment Shona dominance regardless of where the institution is located in the country. The most educated people are Shonas consequently (p. 27).

Equality concerns in Zimbabwe arise in terms of 'inputs' such as equal access of all ethnic groups to education, transparency in the allocation of resources and the recruitment, training and deployment of teachers. Bush and Saltarelli (2000) claim that restricted access to education 'should be viewed as an indicator of deteriorating relations between 'groups' and 'a warning signal that should prod the international community to initiate what the World Bank would call a 'watching brief' so that it might anticipate and respond to further deterioration' (p. 117). Equality issues also arise in terms of educational 'outputs' such as differentials in education attainment and qualifications between groups. These have important consequences for equal opportunity of employment, for example, Bush and Saltarelli (*ibid.*) suggest that educational attainment is one of the ways in which dominant groups seek to maintain their privileged position within diverse societies. They cite examples from: Rwanda, where historically Catholic missionary schools favoured the Tutsi minority through preferential treatment that led to employment by the colonial government; and Burundi where restrictions on the admission of Hutu children to secondary schools prevented the acquisition of necessary employment skills.

In broad terms, government policies may play a part in developing trust or mistrust between groups. This, of course, depends on how the education system is structured in practice. Education may become a source of conflict depending on whether it promotes conformity to a single set of dominate values (assimilation), permits the development of

identity-based institutions (separate development) or encourages shared institutions (integration) but history suggests that results cannot be predicted with confidence and are highly context – dependent. In the case of Zimbabwe, the education system has promoted conformity to ZANU P.F., a value-system which has resulted in conflict. But South Africa encouraged an education system which promoted the development of identity-based institutions during the apartheid era and got nowhere while colonial education in Zimbabwe permitted and encouraged the development of identity-based institutions and but this, too had little impact on continuing conflict between peoples speaking separate languages.

It is instructive that since the genocide there, the government in Rwanda ‘has sought to improve educational opportunity and access for every Rwandan, irrespective of ethnic identity’ (Hodgkin, 2006, p. 202). Many assessments of the Rwandan government’s approach to education in the period of reconstruction and development are positive. Observers and those directly involved in the education system agree that the policy of inclusion and fair and equal opportunity for every Rwandan irrespective of ethnic identity, political affiliation or regional quotas is being implemented fairly and successfully (*ibid.*). Due to the ban on ethnic categorization within society, there are no statistics available that document the ethnicity of those attending government schools. However, qualitative studies gathering the opinions of secondary school students, teachers and parents carried out recently in Rwanda asked--though did not require--the respondents to state their ethnicity. A Tutsi student observed, ‘I can say that education has progressed, because ethnic discrimination no longer exists as it did long ago when a

Tutsi child could not go to secondary school because his spot was given to a Hutu child' (Barkan, 2006 p. 4). Zimbabwe could emulate the experience of Rwanda which was destroyed in 1994 and today is getting to a state of normality. It was a combination of commitment, patience, hard-work and enlightened socio-economic and political reforms that enabled it to use borrowed money wisely and rebuild the country.

### *5.2.3 Higher education and the brain drain*

Inevitably, the violence in Zimbabwe and the crippling inflation led to a major 'brain drain' of academics and other professionals to lucrative jobs in Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland, Australia, United Kingdom and America where they could command salaries up to twenty times higher (Guardian, 2003). This state of affairs seriously weakened the education system which was probably the best in Africa and the envy of many countries in the region.

For example, Zimbabwe's crippling inflation led to a major brain drain of University academics. A professor explained this to me during my 2009 field visit.

A chronic lack of financial resources, political gamesmanship, devastating bureaucratic practices and lock-in-thinking have gripped most National State Universities in Zimbabwe over the last twenty years. These have made many dons in these institutions-which are traditionally known as 'Ivory Towers' – further removed from problems facing the country. It is no surprise that these institutions which traditionally excelled in fundamental and applied research as well as in practical work of social relevance (i.e. extension) are in a state of crisis (Great Zimbabwe, 22 April 2009).

Further enquiries during this field visit revealed the existence of two broad groups of dons at most State Universities. One group comprised devoted individuals who are prepared to teach and carry out objective and creative research geared to solving problems. This group has little access to existing facilities due to lack of interest and flexibility on the part of the bureaucracies, and by non-availability of funding. The other group, to use the phrases of a second professorial interviewee 'is often a praxis of intellectual ideologists who are persuaded or coerced to support a political establishment' (Mutare, 24 April 2009). This latter group comprised individuals who had opted for ideological alternatives.

Commenting on the state of National State Universities in Zimbabwe a group of several lecturers I convened expressed similar sentiments, as recorded in my field notes immediately after the encounter.

Because of the existence of two groups of dons one finds also two academic axioms in most national state-controlled universities which run as follows: 'Publish or perish' and 'Lick the boots of political establishment and that of the academic administration couched in the politics of the day or else perish'. Owing to frustrations and changed objectivity, even the first axiom is no longer followed to the letter. Many academic dons are forced by circumstances to go for money rather than quality research. Consequently there is a tendency to publish inferior papers out of shoddy research not primarily to contribute to knowledge, but for promotional purposes. This academic materialism and intellectual disingenuousness must be reversed. The only way we can reverse it is through a form of purging (field notes Harare, 4 May, 2009).

Many informal reports carried out at most universities of this type have suggested that it is very common to find a university don undertaking research in areas totally unrelated to his/her field of specialization, simply because aid money happens to be available for a specific project. And many have become secretive where openness is crucial for information sharing. By the time of my final field visit to Zimbabwe early in 2010 it was evident that, with political change in the air, few were any longer willing to defend academic mediocrity and political gamesmanship. Rather, calls were growing for some form of purging in order to reverse the trend.

According to a recent study on Cost Effectiveness and Efficiency in Zimbabwean Universities, the quality of university education in the country has been declining. Research and library units receive just under 2% of the total recurrent funds of the Universities. Low level funding to research and the poor state of research facilities and libraries, coupled with low salaries or no salaries at all to overworked lecturers, have made Zimbabwean universities no longer the 'ivory towers' they once were (*Sunday News*, 2009). As one of my interviewees put this, 'the Zimbabwean universities are on their way to becoming empty shells unless drastic remedial steps are urgently taken to reverse the economic, political and financial chaos' (Gweru, 23 December 2009). In such circumstances, my interviewees connected to higher education commented that if university teachers were to contribute positively to environmental protection and sustainable development, then the current constraints on objective research and teaching needed to be removed through a process of radical change. State universities, they said, needed to be cleansed from the blackmailing and moral raping of the dons and students

for narrow political and selfish ends. Similar processes are on record as having been enacted in Germany after the Second World War, in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the 1992 War and in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide (Phillips *et al.*, 1998).

One regional context for action is the Synthesis Report of the study conducted under the auspices of the African Association of Universities by Professor D. Ekong its General Secretary (Otim, 1992, p. 40). This has the potential of being not just the basis of recommendations on how to revitalise universities in Africa but also of stimulating the Zimbabwean government to act in favour of universities and thus reverse a trend which has seen higher education, as in other sectors, rejecting local talent in favour of expatriate professors, some of whom are reported to have dubious qualifications, and who are more concerned with following their countries' aid money when they should be required to be apolitical or indifferent to all issues. Reports suggest that there were up to 5000 such professional expatriates in Zimbabwe in 2007 (expatsvoice , 2007).

Zimbabwe's education system has been further weakened by the risk of assassination or kidnap in the country. The 'brain drain' to Western Europe and North America in many African countries which experience social upheaval and political instability or a slow rate of economic growth jeopardises a human-centred sustainable development in these countries (von Ginkel, 1995). In response UNESCO, in collaboration with other Western European Universities, has formed UNITWIN programmes in order to:

- develop linking arrangements such as programmes of co-operation between institutions in both Europe and Southern America;

- develop centres of excellence of specialised post-graduate studies to advance research;
- establish UNESCO chairs within this UNITWIN network that would serve as cores of the centres of excellence.

In one such example, the University of Utrecht has developed a link with Faculdade Veterinaria of the Universidade Eduardo Mondlano in Maputo, Mozambique, and the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Zimbabwe. The co-operation involved appears not only to help with new fundamental research for the development of part of their respective economies, but also to stimulate regional co-operation. From this UNESCO concludes that inter-University and teacher-training college programmes in which partnership helps to rebuild strong regionally differentiated systems in eastern and southern Africa are vital to the reconstruction of higher education generally, and teacher education specifically (*ibid.*, pp. 91-100).

#### *5.2.4 Purging the teaching force those whose political involvement would make them unsuitable for any role in the reconstruction process*

A central theme of this section of my study is reflected in a view expressed by Carnoy: 'For an institution to play an important role in society, it must be 'legitimate': people who use it must believe that it serves their interests and needs' (1974, p. 1). This appears to be a cardinal requirement in the provision of adequately trained teachers in post-conflict situations and is important because teachers contribute significantly to the long-term development of any education system and schools in politically sensitive societies need to be perceived by the people they serve as acceptable or legitimate. How education systems

can meet this requirement in the face of a multitude of conflicting elements and issues is the theme which is next to be addressed.

The extent of the problem was put to me graphically by one of my informants who was a spokesperson for community leaders.

Twenty-one teachers and their headmaster terrorised this community during the March 2008 elections, killing our children and raping our daughters. School children were forced to sing ZANU P.F. songs and to denounce opposition parties and their leaders. The image of this whole school is tarnished. There will be no learning until the head teacher and his teachers are removed. As a result, unless the head teacher and all his teachers are transferred to other schools, we will not send our children to the school. They would rather stay at home or transfer to other schools (Bindura, 3 May 2009).

The need to purge the teaching force of people whose political involvement would make them unsuitable for any role in the reconstruction process was reported to me in the field as being very necessary across much of the country. Respondents in community after community were calling on the government to remove these ‘undesirable’ teachers and school administrators. Some communities had even threatened to take matters into their own hands unless their demands were met, the particular point being that it was important to ensure as far as possible that those in posts of responsibility are not so implicated in the original conflict as to be unsuitable to hold office.

Reform and change are among the most frequently encountered terms in the educational reconstruction literature. School reform, as it applies here, refers to improvements in student learning. Educational change refers to any planned alteration or intended innovation in educational enterprise. The Bindura community is calling for both reform and change. Obviously, changes take place that are unplanned or evolutionary and thus are not to be disregarded when reform is a concern. However, the planned alteration of removing such 'unsuitable' teachers and administrators is fraught with difficulty. Such a process necessarily raises sensitive issues about the judgment of what might be considered 'unsuitable' and by whom, about who should be involved in such a process and how it is implemented. In some cases, as in Germany after the Second World War, teachers and administrative staff, had to go through a process of evaluation which was intended to lead to a purging of the teaching force (Phillips *et al.* 1998, p. 19). Initially, it was intended that outside agencies would control decisions about the future of those deemed to be unsuitable, but the Western Allies quickly handed over 'denazification' to the Germans and thereby avoided charges of prejudice and unfairness themselves (*ibid.*, p. 12).

Among members of the Bindura community I raised a related question: The country is so short of teachers at the moment, where will you get replacement teachers? Their response was unanimous and vivid, as recorded in my field notes immediately after our encounter:

We would rather close the school or have retired and visiting teachers to teach our children rather than have them taught by rapists, terrorists and divisionists. These teachers terrorised this whole community, raped our girls and wives and in the process divided the whole

community. We want a united community and this can only take place without these teachers at this particular school. They can be deployed to other schools where their activities are not known. We need our children to learn, we need to reconstruct our school and we need reconciliation in this community. We cannot, however, reconcile with evil. This is why we want these teachers and their headteacher to go. We need a new set of teachers and a new headmaster. These can be deployed elsewhere. Schools should provide the opportunity for every student to develop his/her abilities and interests to the fullest, regardless of his/her parental circumstances, and regardless of the ultimate level to be attained (Bindura, 3 May 2009).

In the light of these comments, we can posit that the purpose of education in any country is to ensure that each student may develop his/her abilities regardless of the accident of birth or geography. But we can also discern the particular difficulties of achieving this in crisis-torn countries. Phillips *et al.* make this point: 'in emergency situations it is possible to draw upon the expertise and willing co-operation of a number of groups, though this must be approached with caution 'since the re-introduction of formerly marginalised people (exiles, refugees, those generally subjected to ethnic, religious, political or other forms of discrimination) could cause as many problems as it is intended to solve. (1998, p. 83).

Based on the responses of other countries to similar situations, the groups who might be called upon to strengthen or replace 'unsuitable teachers' in Zimbabwe could include:

- retired teachers;

- students e.g. undergraduate as in Bosnia where their studies had been disrupted by the war (*Guardian*, 1995);
- foreign students who volunteer their services for short periods of time;
- exiled people. The Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Culture in Rwanda, Dr Joseph Nsengimana, stressed the government's wish to have 71 professors return before the beginning of the new academic year in December (IOM News, 1995). In the case of South Africa, the London-based Africa Educational Trust and the International University Exchange Fund in Geneva have succeeded in helping to produce a highly educated and competent group of people who are currently making a significant contribution to the political, economical and cultural development of South Africa and its transition process (Jobbins, 1995); and
- repatriation of the many thousands of teachers who are currently outside the country.

In revivifying Zimbabwe's teaching force it is also likely that there will need to be professional encounters in the opposite direction. For example, after the fall of apartheid, South African educationists concerned with reconstruction of their system of education and training began conducting study visits to the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Germany, Singapore, Taiwan and Zimbabwe. Among the reform ideas that these advisers and consultants attempted to trial in South Africa in the early 1990s were the German 'dual system' of apprenticeship and a version of the UK's National Qualifications Framework [NQF] combining academic and vocational education. In these years there was also a strong recognition that education would play a fundamental role in helping business community (Finlay and Martin, 1995).

### 5.2.5 *A new workforce: teacher education and preparation*

Following the analysis thus far concerning the impact of the political framework of the country on education, this section offers insight into aspects of the organisation of teacher training in crisis-torn Zimbabwe. Hall and Schulz (2003), in their article comparing teacher education reform models in England and Canada, comment on the pressure on Canadian faculties of education to make changes to their programmes: ‘faculties of education are currently implementing or considering a number of programme and structural changes in response to political, public, and internal pressures to improve teacher education’ (376). Some of the changes that were being witnessed were longer teacher education programmes, increased emphasis on extended practicum, and preferences for a consecutive model of preparation. Motivation for many of the ongoing changes was the belief that the strength of a high-quality education system rested with high-quality teachers (see, for example, the work of Evertson, Hawley, and Zlotnik, 1995). Consequently, together with these changes, they were witnessing an enhanced concern with respect to accountability and performance standards. Reynolds (1992) and Rice (2003) also clearly identify this movement in their discussion of the greater attention given to accreditation, teacher licensure, and educational and experiential attributes of teachers.

The knowledge base on teaching and understanding teacher quality is extensive and continues to expand and change focusing on both the good and the effective or successful dimensions of teacher quality. Thus, when there exists a gap between preparation and performance in the field, a revisit of what is happening at the preparation stage is

recommended as necessary (Darling-Hammond 2003; Ingersoll and Kralik 2004). What is, but should not be happening, is the problem reported by Darling-Hammond (2003), namely that teacher preparation programmes merely provide the teacher candidates with coping skills, a situation for new teachers which Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) describe as ‘sink-or-swim,’ ‘trial-by-fire,’ or a ‘boot-camp’ experience.

Back in 1995, addressing a meeting in Bulawayo (Zimbabwe), Professor Phineas Makhurane observed:

Most schools in the Matabeleland region have poorly trained teachers whose understanding of Science and Maths is barely above their students (*Chronicle*, 1995, December 20).

Professor Makhurane went further in stating that ‘out of the 132 secondary schools in the Matabeleland region with about 1500 teachers only about 14 percent of these teachers could be considered well qualified to teach at secondary school. He concluded his address by saying, ‘to adequately prepare students for University, teachers should at least have a first degree, otherwise they would just be wasting time’ (*ibid.*). Although this was a reference to the Matabeleland region, the situation was the same in most parts of the country and Professor Makhurane’s address summed up the predicament in which the country found itself. The situation has got worse. Most schools in the country have the bulk of their teachers with no first degrees, a situation that is particularly acute in the Matabeleland region and many marginal areas such as the Zambezi Valley and the low veld.

Asked in my study what he now made of Professor Makhurane's address in Bulawayo about teachers in Matabeleland, a senior educationalist in the region said:

The problem is that most schools in the region are headed by people from outside the region which has resulted in students also being recruited from outside the region. This state of affairs has left thousands of qualified young men and women stranded without any school places. Frustrated, most of these young men and women end up in South Africa as either farm workers or domestic servants (Bulawayo, 7 July 2008).

Similar sentiments were expressed throughout the region by both parents and teachers whom I encountered. 'The Government should act now to rectify the situation' was a typical sentiment expressed by my interviewees. I then put it to a principal of a teachers' college, why the bulk of his students were recruited from outside the region when there were many students with very good passes locally. This is what he said:

There are several reasons. Our Colleges are national institutions which should recruit students nationally. We are therefore, required by law to recruit our students from anywhere in the country. There were also few students in Matabeleland with good passes to meet the entry requirements into these Colleges. Students sponsored by cabinet Ministers and other senior government officials are also a major problem as these are to be given places whether or not they qualified. Some students had wrong subjects combinations which made it difficult to offer them places. The Ministry of Gender and Employment Creation has also been sending Shona-speaking students to us in very large numbers through the so-called National Service. Only ZANU P.F. supporters are allowed to send their children to the Border Gezi College for

this so-called National Service. This makes the playing field uneven because these are now the ones who get first preference to teachers' colleges (Gweru, 21 June 2008).

Asked why only students in the Matabeleland region had low passes and wrong subjects combinations, the principal could not explain. A Ndebele teacher who was involved in the scoring of exams told me: 'It is not done in transparency, and the best students always fail, particularly if they were from this region. There is partiality' (Lupane, 14 June 2008). Thus it would appear that the entire educational administration requires alteration. Admissions procedures for secondary and tertiary institutions are likely to require reform so as to be transparent and merit-based with examinations being carefully administered and closely monitored. Textbooks and curricula that included biased material should be removed. Language policies, textbooks and curricula within education probably also need to be changed to accommodate minority ethnic groups.

Curriculum, pedagogy and learning resources are inter-related and teachers are an important factor in mediating the curriculum and the values it conveys. Factors related to teachers that have a bearing on the extent to which education can be a positive force include the relative status of teachers, the extent to which diversity-sensitive recruitment and deployment policies ensure adequate recruitment of male and female teachers from different ethnic groups and an adequate supply of teachers to provide education to different groups in their first languages. A UNESCO report on teacher training in 44 countries across sub-Saharan Africa highlights some of the challenges in terms of quality and type of teacher education available, including the presence of significant numbers of untrained teachers as well as difficulties in recruitment and retention (UNESCO, 2004).

This is significant from a conflict perspective where:

the main focus of teacher education in post-conflict countries is to design and implement comprehensive teacher training policy and teacher training programmes, especially focusing on primary education in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Guatemala. These teacher training programmes aim at enhancing countries' capacities of curriculum renewal and development, particularly to focus peace, human rights and democracy, literacy, girls education and education for youth returning from combat (UNESCO 2004, p. x).

It is unrealistic to expect that relatively inexperienced teachers, untrained in the basics of human rights education and dealing with traumatised children, will be able to take forward such areas with students. Furthermore, these priorities in conflict-torn societies need to sit alongside responses to wider pressures in teacher education being experienced in the developed world. In order to deal with challenges posed by multicultural society, serve diverse learners and prepare students to achieve higher learning standards, teachers in these countries are required to know more about everything (Hargreaves 2003). Darling-Hammond (2003) writes: 'Today's schools face numerous challenges. In response to an increasingly complex society and a rapidly changing technology-based economy, schools are asked to educate the most diverse student body in history to higher academic standards than ever before' (p. 149). She then goes on to offer a call to action for teacher education programmes:

This kind of learning cannot occur in college classrooms divorced from practice or in school classrooms divorced from knowledge about how to interpret practice. Good settings for teacher learning-in both colleges and schools-provide lots of opportunities for research and inquiry, for trying and testing, for talking about evaluating the results of learning and teaching. The rub between theory and practice occurs most productively when questions arise in the context of real students and work in progress, and where research and disciplined inquiry are also at hand (*ibid.*).

To these generic pressures, then, are added the particular requirements of teachers working in divided societies. As an example, the UNESCO International Bureau for Education has completed comparative research on curriculum reform processes in seven conflict-affected countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Guatemala, Lebanon, Mozambique, Northern Ireland, Rwanda, Sri Lanka) and the findings illustrate the complexity of educational issues that can become implicated in social and political conflict (UNESCO, 2004). A particular issue in situations of conflict is that teachers themselves may be part of the communities in conflict and therefore find it difficult to challenge the values of their own community without becoming emotionally involved in the issues (Tawil and Harley, 2004). Zimbabwe, Liberia and Sierra Leone are cases in point in Africa. Elsewhere, similar problems have been encountered in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lebanon and Palestine (*ibid.*).

With many levels and potential entry points to an education system such as that of Zimbabwe, it is a significant challenge to develop a comprehensive analysis of how a such system might be more 'conflict-sensitive.' Each area may represent a field of

specialist expertise (for example, the implications of language of instruction policies or approaches to teaching history in divided societies) nor is it likely that initiatives through a single entry point will be sufficient (for example, new approaches to teaching history require different forms of teacher education supported by textbooks consistent with new teaching methods). Further, it is unlikely that education policy-makers will have expertise across all such areas. In practical terms, a systemic, conflict-sensitive analysis of an education system may result, as in Sri Lanka, in a set of inter-related initiatives through various entry-points (Colenso, 2005).

Bakken, Aloia and Aloia (2002) strongly take the position that in the preparation of teachers for the widest possible range of students it is important that training programmes are guided by the goals and objectives of professional associations. I do not argue against this as it is a stance reflected in the evolution of the preparation programmes of teachers worldwide. But in current conditions in Zimbabwe this may not enable teachers in training to gain the necessary appreciation and understanding of the present education system. For while government regulations and requirements focus explicitly on curriculum expectations, faculties of education in the country are certainly not immune to political pressure and often have to deal with decreased government funding among many other problems. Decisions are thus not always made in the best interests of the student teacher but for simple survival of the teacher education programme.

Commenting on minimal bureaucracy and teacher preparation linkage one senior lecturer involved in my fieldwork had this to say:

In freeing the confines of the existing programme and its bureaucratic links to Higher Education regulations, faculties of education should look for new opportunities and responsibilities to provide contextual, applied, and nuanced preparation that is useful and appropriate (Bulawayo, 14 July 2008).

According to this interviewee, since the 1980s in Zimbabwe most educational reform documents published by teachers' colleges have called for changes to teacher education similar to those identified in Canada by Cole:

Across the country, faculties of education, as institutions with primary responsibilities for the initial preparation of teachers, are caught in a maelstrom of political, public and internal pressures to improve teacher education. One of the central arguments upon which the Board of Education reform agenda is, in part, based is that school (and therefore education) reform is dependent on the reform of teacher preparation (Cole, 1999, p. 281).

In addition to responding to government curricular legislation, teachers' colleges have significantly increased their intake of students, resulting in a significant increase in class sizes. The extra workload demands on colleges has meant a reduction in the depth and breadth of the content of the programme. Consequently, a perceived urgency on the part of the colleges to meet a quantity concern has led to an excessive academic focus on numbers of graduates while quality of teacher education programmes has faded into the background. This emphasis on quantity, with an apparent complete indifference towards quality, can be explained as the product of a bureaucratic mindset, obsessed as it is with showing measurable performance to those higher up in the hierarchy of power.

According to my interviewees, this approach has wreaked havoc at all levels of education in Zimbabwe, weakening educational aspirations, values and standards. Such conditions are highly likely to reap a crop of under prepared teachers (see Evertson, Hawley and Zlotnik, 1985).

The future of teacher education in Zimbabwe's teachers' colleges is inextricably interwoven with the future of teaching in the schools. Corrigan (1985) states that 'changing schools and teacher preparation programmes involves political, economic, social and educational reforms' (p. 8). In order to improve schools Corrigan suggests that a first step is to improve teacher education programmes. In the case of Zimbabwe this could involve such programmes in relating the country to the next generation through 'multiple meanings' (*ibid.* p.150). While the current traditional technical preferences for mastery over subject matter is surely important, without inquiry, without talking and reflecting about one's practice, little learning will take place and stagnation will inevitably result.

A senior educationist in Bulawayo summed up the current situation for research on teacher education reform in Zimbabwe:

in the face of daunting and arguable expectations, particularly now with thousands of our teachers outside the country, the question of how the nation's teachers are recruited, prepared and retrained has become one of the hottest topics in the public and academic discourse regarding education in this country (Bulawayo 14 July 2008).

Compounding this, in a much broader international context Naugaret, Scruggs and Mastropieri (2005) suggest that too often in the discussion of professional development of novice teachers, researchers have either undermined their legitimate concerns by launching emotionally charged attacks on teachers' preparation programmes within the University setting or have focused on statistical analysis of teacher certification while under-reporting the qualitative problems arising from systemic institutional dysfunction.

Making fundamental changes to teacher education programmes, while sorely needed in Zimbabwe, is extremely difficult, as is evident in a lack of progress in teacher education programmes over decades. Unimpeded and more focused research on teacher education priorities that adopt a realistic appraisal of contemporary Zimbabwean conditions is a clear priority.

#### 5.2.6 *Curriculum*

Defining the term 'curriculum' to everyone's satisfaction is probably an impossible task. But we need to agree on some sort of working definition, if only because rational discussion of issues raised in this section of my study depends to some extent on what is meant by 'curriculum.' I must, however, hasten to add this observation: 'Definitions of the word curriculum do not solve curricular problems: but they do suggest perspectives from which to view them' (Stenhouse 1975, p. 1). More recently Armitage *et al.*, (1999) suggest that due to oversized, undifferentiated classes the curriculum is all too often simply whatever course we happen to be teaching at the time' (p. 160).

In the literature more broadly, we seem to be confronted by at least two different views of the curriculum – one which emphasises plans and intentions (e.g. a set of intended learning outcomes or a written statement of syllabus content) and one which emphasises activities and effects (e.g. accounts of what teachers and learners actually do in classrooms or of the knowledge and skills acquired by learners, whether intended or not). Jenkins and Shipman (1976a) appear to favour a description which embraces both views:

A curriculum then is concerned with pre-requisites (antecedents, intentions), with transactions (what actually goes on in classrooms as the essential meanings are negotiated between teachers and taught, and worthwhile activities undertaken), and with outcomes (the knowledge and skills acquired by learners, attitude changes, intended and unintended side effects, etc.) (p. 5).

It is this meaning of ‘curriculum’ that will apply in the analysis which follows.

### Curriculum and conflict

At the practical level, there are many aspects of curriculum that have a bearing on conflict and recent developments of this kind in Rwanda have been reviewed by Smith (2010, pp. 17-18) who notes that that country’s

attempts at striking the balance between justice and healing, vengeance and forgiveness removed formal history from all school curricula, on the basis that modern national history is potentially too divisive to be taught in a society emerging from decades of ethnic hatred, distrust and prejudice. Instead, the government is focusing much of its time and resources on

promoting unity and reconciliation, stressing that Rwandan identity should now be based on national bonds rather than ethnic differences (Minow, 1998).

Broadening the assessment beyond the Rwandan case, Smith goes on to note that ‘when curriculum is conceived narrowly as the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next, it may be perceived as an extremely powerful tool to promote particular political ideologies, religious practices or cultural values and traditions’. One antidote to this is what Smith notes as the ‘contemporary trend in many countries is to “modernize” the curriculum so that it is defined in terms of “learning outcomes”’ where these refer to skills, attitudes and values as well as factual knowledge.

They may include communication of skills, the ability to draw on multiple sources of information and evaluate conflicting evidence, the development of media literacy, critical thinking and moral development (EFA, 2002). Within international development settings there is a particular emphasis on ‘life skills’ as a means of providing child protection, social and health education (id21, 2004; INEE, 2004) and the argument is that these are the type of skills that are helpful for peace-building’ (Smith, 2010, p. 18).

The genocide and civil war in Rwanda in 1994 resulted in almost total destruction of its education system (des Forges, 1999 p. 763) and, as such, may have lessons for Zimbabwe. The entire educational administration in Rwanda has required alteration. Admissions procedures for secondary and tertiary institutions have been reformed and are now transparent and merit-based. Examinations are also carefully administered and closely monitored. Textbooks and curricula that included biased material have been

removed. Language policies within the education system have also been changed to accommodate all ethnic groups in the country including the large numbers of returning exiles that have been educated in English while living in neighbouring Anglophone countries. The government has sought to improve educational opportunity and access for every Rwandan irrespective of ethnic identity (Hodgkin, 2006).

### Language teaching

Yet every area of the curriculum carries values with the potential to communicate implicit and explicit cultural messages, wittingly or unwittingly, even in national systems that are well resourced by international standards. Thus, language teaching British primary schools may be quite experimental and uncoordinated as Helen Brook's position paper shows:

Primary school language lessons depend on 'brave amateurs.' The programme to introduce languages into primary schools has resulted in 'amateurish' teaching with scant resources and potentially bad pronunciation (p. 31).

Teachers, journalists reported, described teaching Spanish at Brooks' Cambridgeshire primary school as 'terrifying' and potentially insulting to properly trained language teachers.'

I haven't a clue if I'm teaching the pupils anything wrongly, especially the pronunciation. I also wonder about whether our secondary school colleagues find it insulting to them. They are

properly trained and I'm here allegedly teaching these children. I am concerned that secondary teachers might end up having to 'unlearn' mistakes. (TES Magazine, 2010. March 26, p. 8.)

In Zimbabwe the use of language teaching is more culturally problematic. Since independence it has been government policy that only Shona should be taught in schools:

The Shona language has regained its dominant position in our society. It has become the lingua franca of Zimbabwe in the public sector particularly in government departments such as the army, police, hospitals, schools, immigration, customs throughout the country. National Zimbabwe Television (Z. T. V.) is completely Shona and does very well to promote and develop our language. This is as it should be since Zimbabwe is a Shona nation. We should not give room to the languages of the invading groups because our intention is to culturally fracture and dislocate them (ZANU Grand Plan, 1979).

As a result it has been deliberate government policy to fracture and dislocate other languages. Commenting on the deployment of non-Ndebele speaking teachers to the Matabeleland schools, this is what one senior lady teacher reported during my 2010 field trip:

Most educational institutions continue to have serious problems. Most teachers' colleges continue to enrol non-Ndebele students for training which means that when these students complete their studies, they go back to their home areas leaving the region with serious manpower shortages. The other concern is that teachers have been deployed to Matabeleland schools when they cannot speak the Ndebele language, let alone write and teach it. If such teachers were deployed to secondary schools where the medium of instruction is English it

would be much better, but teachers who are not Ndebele speakers have been deployed to teach Grades one, two and three classes, which is a very serious matter. This has compromised the education of these children. For professional reasons, there is a need to rationalise the deployment of teachers and to deploy them where they can teach pupils at this level in their mother tongue (Harare, 15 January 2010).

A UNESCO position paper on language of instruction highlights the importance of sensitivity to minority and majority languages and distinguishes between ‘official’ and ‘national’ languages:

Although there are more than 20 states with more than one official language (India alone, for example, has 19 official languages while South Africa has 11), the majority of countries in the world are monolingual nation states in the sense of recognizing, *de jure* or *de facto*, only one official language for government and legal purposes. That is not to say that they are not bilingual or multilingual societies, but rather that while there may be many languages widely used in a country these do not necessarily have the legal authority of an official language. In many countries that were previously under colonial regimes, the official language tends to be the language of the former colonizers.

The paper then goes on to make a crucial point in the context of the present study:

In addition to official languages, several countries recognize national languages, which may be compulsory in education. The choice of language in the educational system confers a power and prestige through its use in formal instruction.. Not only is there a symbolic aspect,

referring to status and visibility, but also a conceptual aspect referring to shared values and worldview expressed through and in that language (UNESCO, 2003, p. 13-14).

Having set out the context in this way, the UNESCO report advocates mother tongue instruction as a means of improving education quality and bilingual and/or multilingual education as a means of promoting social equality and understanding between different groups. Many of my interviewees also felt the same and confirmed that in Zimbabwe grades one, two and three continue to be taught in a pupil's mother tongue. It must, however, be pointed out that at a more political level arguments for mother tongue education may also mask movements for separate education as has happened in Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa (de Klerk, 2002).

### History and Geography

The Progress Review report on the 1979 ZANU Grand Plan, under the heading: 'Ndebele Crimes' and recounting oral history episodes from the sixteenth century says:

Mzilikazi's men, in particular under the command of his terrorist successor Lobengula, wrought havoc in our country. They raped and kidnapped Shona women, looted grain and stole our cattle. Anyone who disputes that this was conquest needs medical examination. For some sixty long years, the Shona people were brutalised, insulted and abused by the Ndebeles. Their wealth was ravenously plundered and economic life left to bleed to death in the most cruel manner. The Ndebele subjected the Shona people to the worst forms of barbarism and tyranny. They imported violence to Zimbabwe and it is a well known fact that violence was a

virtue in Zululand and perhaps continues to be to this day. No one doubts the assertion that violence flows in Ndebele blood (p. 4.).

Very strong language indeed, but where does it lead? Regardless of the accuracy of the alleged Ndebele atrocities, the effect of the Zanu call in 1979 for retribution has had a powerful influence. In an interview conducted for an earlier study a Zanu PF activist who said, and believed, that the Fifth Brigade (Gukurahundi) did very well during the 1980s by torturing, raping and killing the ‘Madzviti’ (Ndebele) and that all those who suffered were thieves, looters and ‘dissidents’: ‘they stole our cattle, our crops, our land, our sisters and our homes and property. They must pay dearly and we must never apologise to them. And yet those ‘Shona sisters’ constitute about 60per cent of Matabeleland today owing to intermarriages over many generations with the Ndebele (Bhebhe, 2002a). Also in 2001, I recorded the views of a secondary school teacher in Gwanda: ‘the Matabeleland question is a product of misunderstanding, carelessness and pride’ and this interviewee made it clear that he did not believe that autonomy was a solution. Rather, he endorsed a process whereby people needed to be frank to each other as well as courageous. According to this teacher, there was no substitute for the development of an understanding that most people in Matabeleland are actually descendants of Shona-speaking people who were forcefully incorporated and acculturated by Mzilikazi and Lobengula (*ibid*).

Political dimensions in the way that geography is taught and the lexicon it uses for disputed territories can also be problematic and, once again, there are historic problems to be overcome. As Otim (1992) points out: ‘The partitioning of Africa by arbitrary

boundaries during the Berlin Conference of 1884-5 and the resulting scrambling for the continent purely for economic gain, coupled with the establishment of institutions that promoted divide and rule practices, fragmented the people of Africa further'. This he reports

brought together ethnic groups of different backgrounds into one state and intensified division among people. These had the effect in the post-independent era of hampering and weakening Africans' capacity to administer the affairs of their multi-ethnic states that were previously homogeneous entities. Not surprisingly the new artificial independent African states had at independence not matured enough to build a solid base that could support sustainable development. (Otim, 1992 p. 12).

The content of teaching material for areas such as culture, art, music, demography and religious education can similarly be drawn into controversy. Indeed, the concept of a 'national curriculum' may be extremely problematic in a country such as Zimbabwe where it does not address the inevitable tensions between the need for unity whilst respecting diversity (Gutmann, 1994).

The enduring educational question here is how one teaches a nation's history when not only the scale and longevity of violence in the past is overwhelming, but the history itself is contested? In this context it is notable that the Rwandan curriculum has also been the subject of much similar debate. Rwandan history is still not taught in schools today despite official encouragement to teach those elements of history which are not in dispute. Rwanda, it seems, is simply not yet ready to tackle the revision of the history

curriculum and no history textbooks have been written since 1994, even though national and international historians continue to produce new and exciting findings on Rwanda's social history. Since 1994 no history textbooks have been written (Hodgkin, 2006; Obura, 2003).

Asked to comment on the teaching of history in Zimbabwe, a professor of history whom I interviewed had this to say:

History is all important in Zimbabwe. To interpret education in Zimbabwe without considering history is to fail to describe the experience of Zimbabwean childhood. Since the introduction of modern schooling there has been disequilibrium as large social groups have at one time or another felt excluded from schools and been deprived of education on grounds of social group or regional identity. The experience of exclusion from education has been a critical factor in fuelling conflict. However, reconciliation is a process that involves the rebuilding of relations – both individually and collectively. It is not an activity that simply entails 'being nicer to each other', but a long-term project that is based on the needs and interests of both groups. Long-lasting deep and meaningful reconciliation will not occur in Zimbabwe without reconciliation with history. An open, democratic and participatory debate about a national history curriculum is not only necessary for reconciliation but, if conducted well, could further social reconstruction and cohesion. (Harare, 14 April 2009).

This study argues that no matter how honourable the intention, the repression of discussion about divisive and contested moments in Zimbabwean history, both within and outside the school curriculum, will only serve to create new dynamics of social exclusion. However, the teaching of history in an intrinsically controversial area of the curriculum and always has the potential to become a vehicle for promoting particular versions of

history, revising historical events or confronting the past in a critical way (UNESCO, 1999a; Barton and McCully, 2005; Hodgkin, 2006). Immediately after gaining power in 1994, the current Rwandan government banned the teaching of history because in the years preceding the genocide, history had become a powerful tool for creating and perpetuating ethnic division in the country. Much of the genocidal ideology invoked historical events and past conflict in order to establish legitimacy and motivate support. In 1994, Ministry of Education officials clearly recognized the difficulties and complexities of teaching history in a situation where history had been used as a weapon of propaganda so recently, and where those still involved in education, both teachers and students, had such immediate experience of the country's violent past. However, what was to be a temporary measure is still in place. Sixteen years later, history is still absent from formal school curricula. As already reported, no new history textbooks have been published since 1994 (Hodgkin, 2006).

In Rwanda the government's response to such a question has been to remove formal history from all school curricula, arguing that modern national history is potentially too divisive to be taught in a society emerging from decades of ethnic hatred, distrust and prejudice. Instead, the government there in recent years has focused much of its time and resources on promoting unity and reconciliation, stressing that Rwandan identity should now be based on national bonds rather than ethnic differences and arguing that there is much to unite the Rwandan people: language, culture, religion and ancestral belief (Hodgkin, 2006). It is open to Zimbabwe policymakers to solicit the views and opinions of local people regarding the teaching of history in a similar spirit.

## Environmental Education

In Rwanda leaders and elites have taken seriously their responsibility to rebuild the country, so allowing proposals for educational reforms to be realized with the people empowered and put at the centre of environmental protection and sustainable development, all as a result of education. Meanwhile, in Zimbabwe in 2008 a senior environment officer, concerned about the level of environmental degradation and pollution lamented:

The brutal behaviour of Zimbabwe's militarists, which is a legacy of the Cold War strategies between the West and East, has contributed directly and indirectly to environment destruction, pollution, biodiversity loss and worsened the already unsustainable development. Whenever there is violence or when the armed forces are used in ethnic conflict or civil war, the direct effects include destruction of human and animal life, destruction of properties and facilities, destruction of vegetation and a large refugee influx. Indirect impact includes death due to famine and diseases, overcrowding in 'safe havens', overgrazing, environmental pollution due to poor sanitation and deforestation of areas where refugees with their livestock are camped (Harare, 3 July 2008).

After the Stockholm Conference on Environment in 1972, Zimbabwe created a National Environmental Secretariat to increase environmental awareness among the people. A Ministry of Environment and National Resources was established soon after independence in 1980. Like Kenya and South Africa at that time, Zimbabwe had a well developed curriculum for environmental management and practices for Primary, Secondary and post-secondary Colleges and institutions (Chung and Ngara, 1985).

Notwithstanding these early efforts, environmental illiteracy appears still to be widespread at grass-roots, among industrial and business executives, scientists, economists, policy-makers and implementers. This state of affairs underscores the failure of environmental education to integrate the underlying socio-economic causes of environmental degradation and pollution. Lack of funding and comprehensive environmental policies and laws as well as poor enforcement machinery have further reduced the effectiveness of environmental education. To develop effective environmental education key questions which must be answered became apparent to me during my fieldwork.

- How can rural people who depend on fuel wood as the sole source of energy be convinced to conserve trees when they are not provided with an alternative cheap source of energy harnessable within their level of skills?
- With declining household food security how can the rural population appreciate environmental education when their social condition and their political participation are given low priority?
- In whose interest is wildlife conservation, for example? Is it to enrich local peoples' lives; to give animals the right to live at the expense of human beings; or for the sporting big game hunters?
- What conditions will make Zimbabweans accept that environmental protection and biodiversity conservation have long-term benefits which outweigh short-term gains?
- How can environmental education place people at the centre of environmental protection and economic growth?

The starting point could be to listen and learn from the people who are to be educated. In this way environmental educationists will readily appreciate the existing problems and be in a position to develop effective strategies to accomplish the task. For example the Varozwi people of Zimbabwe, the Acholi people of Uganda and Kuku tribe of Southern Sudan rarely cut tree species they know require many years to mature. Instead, they used to cut those species with short regeneration time. Millet was never planted in fields where sorghum had previously been grown because yields would be poor. Sorghum was never grown in the same field for more than 2-3 years because it was known that striga normally appeared after 3 years of successive cultivation. Certainly these people had a tradition of environmental literacy; their traditional knowledge need not be ignored when educating rural Zimbabweans more generally concerning better ways of protecting their environment (Otim, 1992 p.45). Yet the people who probably need intensive environmental education are not the politicians, policy-makers, business executives and economists steeped in the Western model of development, for Zimbabwe has no financial capacity to meet the costs of cleaning up polluted air, water and soils as well as that of litigation and medical costs.

### National Strategic Studies

In 2002 the ZANU PF government introduced National Strategic Studies, (NSS) which are now a compulsory subject in all Teacher training colleges in the country and other educational institutions such as National State Universities. Its aim is to teach all teacher trainees that Mugabe was God-given and is the only leader to rule the country for life. It is a form of indoctrination to all students training to be teachers and is highly partisan.

Commenting on the introduction of this subject, *The Herald* declared that there was 'Nothing partisan about strategic studies' (*Herald* November 12, 2009). Many Zimbabweans disagree with these sentiments. A parliamentary committee in Harare was also told by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education that there was nothing sinister in teaching national and strategic studies at tertiary institutions as this was meant to instil an understanding of the country's history and heritage. The Secretary for the Ministry, Dr Washington Mbitvo also justified the teaching of the subject by saying that the subject was devoid of partisan politics. Without mentioning any country by name, Dr Mbitvo said that the subject was similar to other programmes run by many countries including some in the west. He declined to elaborate on the issue.

Writing on the same question, Mashingaidze (2010) has this to say:

The National Strategic Studies, (NSS) curriculum is informed by its narrowly defined and partisan premise designed to give ZANU PF a hegemonic position in the anti-colonial struggle narrative by according it all the praise for post-colonial developments and at the same time stamping out its political and administrative shortcomings (p. 130).

He then goes on to elaborate the point:

A disturbing phenomenon of such teaching is the exploitation of ethnicity as a coalescing factor in political alliances. In fact, this has become one of the major

determinants of struggles for power and domination apparent in all Zimbabwean political parties: the MDC, ZANU PF and PF ZAPU. Now and again one gets inferences from the media that there are Karanga, Ndebele, Manyika or Zezuru camps vying to outwit each other in achieving certain political outcomes both in their parties and in the nation. This is unfortunate and those who aspire for national office would do well to realise that a nation is an ever-evolving construct, with strong centripetal forces generated by an imaginative leadership who try to transcend narrow ethnic, regional, language and historical cleavages to establish communities that celebrate unity in diversity (Mashingaidze, 2009, unpaginated).

As I conclude in my epilogue, Zimbabwe's fate lies in the hands of Zimbabweans who are united. Divisive subjects, such as those advanced in the NSS will only help divide the nation further.

### *5.2.7 Learning resources and textbooks for traumatized children*

Asked to comment in 2009 on the state of the learning resources and textbooks in Zimbabwe's schools this is what one prominent headteacher interviewee said:

There are no teachers in our schools. I am not talking about 'qualified' teachers. I am talking about someone who stands in front of a class to talk to pupils. We do not have such people in our schools. There are no textbooks in our schools. Most of the books we use were bought by our colonial governments. These are old, torn and out of date. The situation is pathetic as

pupils have to share textbooks. Currently, in my school, 32 pupils share one old book with several missing pages. How do these pupils do homework at home? (Mutare, 5 May 2009)

Other headteachers I interviewed expressed similar sentiments, while college lecturers also complained that they were using very old textbooks which were out of date for training teachers.

A prevalent feature identified in the literature on Zimbabwe is the acute psychological trauma that still prevails among children. The violence which commenced in the early 1980s has been described by many as among the worst the country has seen (Bhebhe, 2002a; Stiff, 2000). A circumstance that exacerbates the situation is that survivors of the violence reported that in some cases teachers murdered children who attended their own classes. Similar situations have been reported in Rwanda (Sutcliffe, 1995, p. 7). Moreover, schools were sought out as sanctuaries at the height of the genocide in Rwanda, only to become the scene of some of the worst massacres (*ibid*). The tragedy has therefore left deep scars in pupils' attitudes and perceptions of the schooling system. UNESCO and UNDP, as well as various NGOs have introduced special trauma programmes which are currently in use in Rwanda and a special children's training centre and school near Butare (Rwanda) has been opened for traumatised child soldiers who have witnessed violent scenes of war and seen mass graves (*ibid*).

My fieldwork established that Zimbabwe cannot introduce these training schemes because of continuing denial. The president is on record denying that there is any violence in the country, let alone in our schools. Nevertheless, a number of college

principals expressed the need to train teachers to deal with traumatised children, since many have serious behavioural problems and this echoes experience in Rwanda. Teachers there have reported that traumatised children need kindness within a clear structure of routines if they are to learn to trust those who would seek to help them (*Guardian*, 1995).

In response to a similar problem a unique radio programme, 'Radio Zid' was created in June 1993 to provide aspects of education for children in Bosnia. With UNICEF assistance in response to a government request for help, this station started by broadcasting a daily 90-minute music, discussion, and educational programme, including such topics as mental health, conflict resolution and mine awareness. Children could also act out dramatised roles to help them cope with war-related problems. Tapes were delivered to Mostar, Gorazde, Tuzla, Vitez and Visoko. The University of London also helped to run a radio programme in Mostar (Phillips, *et al.*, 1998).

All this work was designed to help traumatised children and is very pertinent to the situation in Zimbabwe. Psycho-social programmes were also introduced in Bosnia and carried out with UNICEF assistance throughout the country. They were intended for children who had been traumatised by shelling, loss of parents or witnessing of atrocities. UNICEF distributed special 'psycho-social' kits that contained instructions for care providers as well as children's games and water-colours (*ibid.*).

After the 'Gukurahundi' massacres of the early 1980s in the Matabeleland region and parts of the Midlands Province, no psycho-social programmes were carried out among the people including the many teachers and adult educators who suffer from psychological stress. It has been found that some 62% of teachers have experienced some sort of psychological trauma (Gilbourn *et al.*, n.d.). Violence-disabled people need special attention. The country now has many more adult educators who suffer from psychological stress. The situation is worsened by the fact that Zimbabwe's health delivery system has collapsed and many experienced psychiatrists have left the country.

Of relevance here is one of UNESCO's emergency projects, 'HOPE for Sarajevo' which has been concerned with the provision of psychotherapeutic care and educational-professional training for war-disabled young people and young amputees. This project has included the training of mostly young and inexperienced Bosnian therapists and doctors to enable them to carry out the effective physical and psychological rehabilitation of war-disabled people. 'HOPE for Sarajevo' has been affiliated with the UNHCR relief programme for Bosnia-Herzegovina since October 1993 (UNESCO, 1994). 'HOPE for Zimbabwe' is urgently needed in 2010 for the survival of the nation and its education system.

Asked what Zimbabwe's education system needs today, a senior teacher I interviewed in Mberengwa said:

The country needs well qualified and trained teachers at both Primary and Secondary schools who can adequately prepare pupils and students for further education. The country also needs

facilities from which the teaching can be adequately carried out. It is one thing to have qualified teachers and a completely different thing to have facilities from where these qualified and trained teachers can discharge their duties. The schools in most parts of the country have no textbooks, no furniture of any kind and teachers have no chalk to write with. In the rural areas, nearly all schools have no laboratories. A twenty-first century school needs all these facilities and resources. Some of the textbooks we use are out of date and do not represent the current political, economic and socio-cultural conditions in the country (Mberengwa District, April 17 2009).

The values represented in textbooks, and other learning resources, is an area of specialist concern for education in violence-torn societies. For example, the operation of a ‘single textbook’ policy which is currently in use in Zimbabwe offers the Ministry of Education a way of guaranteeing a ‘minimum entitlement’ for all pupils to basic learning resources and it is a policy of particular importance in low-income countries such as Zimbabwe and where equal access to resources needs to be demonstrated. However, questions arise about who controls or benefits from the production of textbooks and about their content. In contested societies such as Zimbabwe, arguments over textbook content have also become cultural and ideological battlegrounds. A teacher in the Matabeleland region encapsulated the nature of this problem:

Before the violence in the early 1980s [Gukurahundi], Zimbabwe’s education system mirrored and reinforced the country’s destructive trends. Has the post-Unity Agreement between the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and ZANU P.F. education policy succeeded in promoting national Unity, reconciliation and tolerance? (Filabusi, 7 May 2009)

It is too early to tell whether education policy in this area has changed as a result of the political accommodations of 2009. However, my interviewees did assert that Zimbabwe is showing that the United Nations' goal of 'Education for All' (EFA, 2002) remains a crucial principle in a country which has been torn apart by discrimination and exclusion and where the education system was used as an instrument of social destruction. The lesson to be learned, they said, is that Education For All is an urgent current priority, with the state needing to reach out to every child, in every circumstance, with something that she or he can call school and to demonstrate to all children that they are, each one of them, the concern of the state.

Unless this happens experience elsewhere suggests that cultural and ideological battlegrounds are inevitable. For example, part of the education reforms in Bosnia involved the removal of 'offensive material' from history textbooks (Smith, 2010). Such a process necessarily raises sensitive issues about the judgment of what might be considered offensive and by whom, about who should be involved in such a process, and how it is implemented. Such policies have the potential to inflame an already violent society.

The problem of textbooks is very serious. Most textbooks were destroyed during the liberation war and a number of fieldwork respondents indicated that the few that had remained were largely destroyed during the recent violent episodes in the country. Further, it was reported that a majority of textbooks currently in use need to be revised. In Germany after the Second World War, a whole textbook section under Education Branch

of the Control Commission undertook the vast task of revising school textbooks (see Phillips *et al.*, 1998). In Zimbabwe, currently, my fieldwork demonstrated that such thorough preparation will not be possible, at least in the short term because of financial and logistical problems. Zimbabwe currently is sustained by foreign aid which targets the most critical problem areas such as food and health (see section 6.2, below). The production of textbooks is hardly likely to come before healthcare for people who could be wiped out either by diseases (cholera) or starvation. Yet textbook revision has been recognized as an important necessity in most countries affected by crisis associated with political extremism of various kinds (*ibid.*).

Books could be provided from outside (e.g. from international agencies). My informants confirmed that the most significant constraint here would be the great difficulty of printing them in local languages. In addition, much well-intentioned effort to ship unwanted books from other countries to crisis areas often results in the receiving institutions ending up with embarrassingly out-of-date and almost unusable materials after paying for shipment. Another constraint is the availability of the necessary financial resources. For example, in Georgia, the free provision of textbooks had to be stopped owing to the country's severe financial crisis (UNCIAAC, 1995) and in Mozambique educators had to rely on a loan from the World Bank in order to provide four million books for primary years pupils aged three to seven (Mozambique News Agency, 1996).

Because of the problems enumerated above, some countries have resorted to the production of single textbooks for different linguistic communities. This is fraught with difficulty. For example, textbooks produced by Sinhalese authors in Sri Lanka have been translated to produce copies for Tamil pupils. However, the Tamil Teacher's Union

identified inaccuracies in the translated versions and claimed cultural bias in some of the illustrations and content matter (Wickerema and Colenso, 2003). Similar cases have been reported in Rwanda and Burundi (Prunier, 1995). Textbook review processes, however, have a long history. For example, there were joint initiatives on French-German textbooks during the 1920s; German-Polish co-operation following the second World War; and a US-Soviet textbook project was mounted in the 1970s (Phillips *et al.*, 1998, Hopken, 2003). A project reviewing Palestinian and Israel projects has been underway for some years (*ibid.*, Adwan and Firer, 1999). Further examples include concerns raised by China and Korea about the treatment of World War II in Japanese textbooks which almost escalated into a crisis (see Woods Masalski, 2010) and a critique of international assistance for the replacement of textbooks in Afghanistan (Spink, 2005).

An important step in ideological reconstruction in Zimbabwe, eradicating obstacles towards the path to reconciliation now rests on how far and how fast the government there is able to remove the most controversial and divisive sections of existing instructional texts through careful and considered learning resources and the revision of textbooks.

#### *5.2.8 Education for peaceful co-existence and tolerance*

A recent empirical study on West African values (Fuoss-Buhler, 2006) concluded that in their history Africans have developed both a form of democracy and an ethic of inclusiveness of their own. As such, the study argues that they do not need to be given a western moral value-system in order to develop peaceful altruistic attitudes that include strangers, reduce anxieties, mitigate aggression and foster a peaceful community before going onto contend

that it is not wise to import Western criteria, for colonialism left emotional and moral barriers to the reception of such external value systems.

Even in terror-stricken part of Zimbabwe during my visits in 2008 and 2009, elements of the distinctive African concept of community were evident: its focus was not the isolated individual, but the enlarged family, kinship and village. Everyone sought to share his/her own goods and food with the others as his or her 'brothers' and sisters'. This traditional 'democracy' is a participatory basic democracy. Even if a chosen, authorized person finally made the decisions, a very long 'palaver' in an open-air assembly – with the symmetrical right of each member to raise his or her own voice – would precede the adoption of common actions or the modification of common rules. An individualistic approach is as alienating here as is the wider Western image of society, for the African traditional approach is not that of an aggregation of individuals under abstract 'rights' and 'contracts' as the European tradition of a *contrat sociale* has constructed it following the precepts of thinkers such as Hobbes or Rousseau (see Nipkow, 2006). And yet peaceful co-existence and self-reliance are elusive in Africa. When asked about this, a senior ZANU P.F. official who I interviewed in Harare in 2009 gave an extended set of responses.

Ecosystems and climate influenced indigenous cultures and levels of technological development. Plenty of sun, water, mineral wealth and biological diversity all year round meant simple technologies of building and for protection and cultivation.

This easy and simple life led to the saying 'there is plenty of time in Africa'. This contrasts significantly with the harsh climatic and ecological conditions of the North which demanded sophisticated technologies in order to ensure survival which gave rise to the saying 'necessity is the mother of invention'. The harsh environment also gave Europe the culture of

conquest and planning ahead in anticipation of harsh seasons. Hence the popular saying 'make hay while the sun shines'.

What relevance has all this to the question asked, I wanted to know. My interviewee continued:

Imperialists took advantage of their superior technologies developed to counter the harsh environment of the Northern Hemisphere to conquer and impose a political economy of imperialism on the African Continent, that still lived in simplicity. But Western imperialism was not interested in creating a solid African capitalism that was sustainable. Its main thrust was:

- i. destruction of traditional African cultures and economies;
- ii. transmission of capital greed to Africa without instilling capital discipline in Africans;
- iii. inculcation of the profit making motive in the indigenous Africans but not the durable entrepreneurial skills and risk taking necessary for building a solid capitalism; and
- iv. infusion of secular materialism in African minds but not the Western rationale of pursuing it.

What, then would he consider to have been the impact of these thrusts on the African continent?

The impact of these thrusts has been the disorientation of African minds as reflected particularly in the post-independence era by loss of African work ethics, destruction of African culture and resources, mimic change in African lifestyles, institutionalisation of corruption and embezzlement, and the promotion of a dependency syndrome in most spheres of life, in particular political economy. By dancing to the wrong tune many African leaders and elites of the post-independence era are largely to blame for the accelerated destruction of the continent's

educational systems, health systems, environment and its under-development. Unless this is corrected through our education systems there will be no peace in the African continent. We need to teach through our schools the values of co-existence, peaceful living together and self-reliance. (Harare, May 9, 2009).

The context for this articulate world-view, uttered by an interviewee who had chosen to further his career within the apparatus of a vicious one-party state, is that Zimbabwean society comprises numerous heterogeneous ethnic and national groupings, and also different religious sectors. As a result, peaceful co-existence, tolerance, inter-group understanding and inter-group skills are key issues which will need to be addressed by the Zimbabwean educational system in an attempt to promote cohesion and coherence in post-conflict Zimbabwean society. However as yet, not much has been, or is being done to promote peaceful co-existence among the major political parties, religious sectors and racial and/or ethnic groups.

### **5.3 Prospects for reconstruction and reconciliation through education in Zimbabwe: key considerations**

#### *5.3.1 Education and conflict as an emerging field of study*

Before looking in detail at processes designed to encourage education for reconstruction and reconciliation, it is important first to access briefly a wider context for thinking about education and conflict. The transition to the 21<sup>st</sup> century marks a number of significant changes in human development. Research by Parker, Ninomiya & Cogan (1999) suggests

that the major global trends likely to have an impact on the lives of people over the next 25 years include:

- the economic gap within and between countries will widen significantly, poverty will increase;
- information technologies will dramatically reduce the privacy of individuals;
- inequalities between those who have access to information technologies and those who do not will increase dramatically;
- the cost of obtaining adequate water will increase due to population growth, deforestation and environmental deterioration;
- conflict of interest between developed and developing countries will increase;
- migration flows from poor to rich areas within and between countries will have an impact on security and social order;

It is also thought that increased use of genetic engineering will create more complex ethical questions; and economic growth will be fuelled by knowledge, ideas and innovations more than natural resources. Such trends imply that conflict will continue to be a significant feature of human development during the 21<sup>st</sup> century with added security implications.

The negative effect of conflict on development is recognised in the United Kingdom (UK) government White Paper on Globalisation (HMSO, 2000) which states that, 'Violent conflict is one of the biggest barriers to development in many of the world's poorest countries. Of the forty poorest countries in the world, twenty four are either in the

midst of armed conflict or have only recently emerged from it' (p. 28). This statement implies that conflict is more likely where there is poverty. However, conflict in the world is not restricted exclusively to low income countries. There are many examples of violent conflict involving high income countries with well developed education systems, so wealth and education do not necessarily provide immunity from conflict and the 'wealthy' and the 'highly educated' may be just as capable of turning to violence as anyone else. The complexity of these relationships suggest that it will become increasingly important to understand the underlying causes and dynamics of conflict as part of human development processes and that we should be cautious about simplistic assumptions about the relationship between conflict and poverty, or conflict and education. More sophisticated arguments about the causes of conflict tend to emphasise three main perspectives: political explanations, economic explanations and socio-cultural explanations.

Political explanations emphasise the role of political elites and their motivations as they are played out within local, national and international context. In terms of international relations the latter half of the twentieth century has seen changes to the political context that few could have anticipated. These include significant world events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, dissolution of the Soviet Union and democratisation of former communist states in Eastern Europe, the release of Nelson Mandela and the democratisation of the former apartheid South Africa. Duffield (2001) is among those who argue that the prevalence of conflict today is related more to issues of political transformation and globalisation than to persistent poverty.

The political thesis argues that international power relations have changed as we enter the twenty first century and a new world order provides the context for human development. From this perspective conflict needs to be understood in terms of ideological struggles between different political systems after the Cold War (Stern & Druckman 2000). Roger depicts the situation as follows.

The prevailing post orthodoxy is that new forms of military power - driven by the revolution in military affairs - will allow the West to maintain its edge of superiority and therefore to confront these problems comfortably. The Gulf War, Bosnia and even Kosovo are being cited as proof of this enduring potential. Occasional military interventions will be necessary to 'keep the violent peace' in the post Cold War World. Consequently, military forces in most Western countries have modified their capabilities accordingly (Roger, 2000 p. 17).

However, he then argues that this 'security paradigm' at the end of the twentieth century is extremely limited and suggests that the global wealth-poverty divide, exacerbated by environmental limitations, will increasingly fuel conflicts characterised by anti-elite insurgencies, the effects of migration and environmental conflict over resources. The implication is that military and diplomatic approaches are insufficient responses to conflict resolution.

Economic explanations of conflict tend to take one of two main forms. The first emphasises the need for economic development as a means of eliminating poverty with an associated expectation that this might remove some of the causes or motivations for conflict. This type of explanation is evident in a recent strategy paper that identifies

development as the 'third pillar' of US foreign policy on a par with 'defence' and 'diplomacy':

The strategy recognises that a root of the national security threat to the United States and the broader international community is the lack of development, which cannot be addressed by military or diplomatic means alone. In countries that lack the ability, or will, to provide basic services or protection, we can no longer choose to look the other way. We need to engage in a coordinated and strategic manner to address the core issues of poverty and underdevelopment (US AID, 2005).

This type of analysis also underpins the international movement to implement the Millennium Development Goals, although more critical perspectives draw attention to the existence of a 'political economy' at work in this regard:

A Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan is of course ostensibly aimed towards poverty reduction, but in order to be approved such a plan has to conform to a market-friendly view of development. Leaving aside the question as to whether such a plan can ever do more than contain the most extreme manifestations of poverty, the argument is that development management in this context is effectively a tool deployed by institutions of global governance which are controlled by northern interests (Thomas, 2001 p. 36).

The second direction that economic analyses take is to explain conflict in terms of underlying economic causes (Bardhan, 1997; Allen & Thomas, 2000), such as 'resource wars' involving struggles over commodities and natural resources. From this perspective inequalities created by the regulations for international trade may also generate resentments

that fuel conflict arising from a sense of social injustice. Such motivations have become characterised as 'greed' and 'grievance' explanations for conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2001), although the model has been criticised as being too simplistic (Ballentine & Sherman, 2003). Depending on the emphasis taken (whether conflict causes poverty, or poverty causes conflict), it has been suggested that international development agencies have a choice: whether to work 'around conflict' by regarding conflict as an impediment to be avoided rather than addressed; to work 'in conflict' by accepting that development assistance cannot be suspended until conflict has been resolved; or to work 'on conflict' by including specific programmes on conflict prevention and to address underlying causes (Goodhand, 2001).

Finally, socio-cultural explanations of conflict emphasise the importance of relations between different social or ethnic groups as a means of understanding conflict. Opinion is, however, divided on whether the existence of different identity -based groups (linguistic, cultural, religious, ethnic) carries an inherent potential for conflict. The view that conflict between identity-based groups is inevitable underpins concepts such as a 'clash of civilisations' (Huntington, 2000). This is in contrast to the view that identity and ethnicity are important for understanding conflict, more because they may be mobilised to generate or escalate conflict, rather than their being fundamental causes. Stewart (2001) refers to differences between identity-based groups as 'horizontal inequalities' to distinguish them from 'vertical inequalities' based on economic status and access to power, although where identity and economic status map closely on each other the potential for conflict maybe greatest. Another significant factor in the early twenty first century is that the impacts of globalisation are perceived to be more extensive on all these fronts and this has highlighted

the need for better integration between political, economical, environmental, social and cultural analysis of development (Woolcock 2004).

Education is implicated in all these perspectives. First, it may be perceived politically as a powerful tool for ideological development. This can take many forms, ranging from the use of education in the development of liberal ideas to advance nation building and in extreme cases indoctrination. Second, education may be perceived as an instrument for providing the knowledge and skills necessary for economic development and this may or may not include explicit reference to the implications or ethics of different forms of technological and economic development. Third, education is a means by which social and cultural values are transmitted from generation to generation and depending on the values concerned, these may convey negative stereotypes or encourage attitudes that explicitly or implicitly condone violence or generate conflict.

Whilst there is a recognition of the positive and essential contribution of education to development (Lewin,2001), research has also documented how education may be misused so that it becomes 'part of the problem as well as part of the solution'. In this context, Hodgkin (2006) states that : 'Just as education can be used as a tool to promote division and heighten inter-group hatred, it can also be an essential component in the cultivation of peace, democracy, tolerance and the rebuilding of social relations' (p. 202). For example, a study conducted by Bush and Salterelli (2000) identifies examples of:

- education used as a weapon in cultural repression of minorities, unequal access to education or (as shown in this thesis) the use of education to suppress language, traditions, art forms, religious practices and cultural values;

- segregated education used to maintain inequality between groups within society;
- denial of education as a weapon of war;
- manipulation of history and textbooks for political purposes as seen in Sri Lanka; and
- inculcation of attitudes of superiority, for example in the way that other peoples or nations are described, and through the characteristics that are ascribed to them. In Zimbabwe today, the Prime Minister is referred to as a 'tea boy' by the ZANU P.F leadership and its supporters, while the late Dr. Joshua Nkomo when an opposition leader used to be referred to as 'Wedumbu guru', meaning 'he of a big stomach'.

A growing number of studies highlight aspects of education that have implications for conflict (Sommers, 2002; Smith and Vaux, 2003; Tawil and Harley, 2004; Buckland, 2004), including links between gender and violence (Leach 2003; Kirk, 2004), education in emergencies (Sinclair, 2002; Nicolai, 2004); refugee education (Crisp *et al.* 2001; Bird 2003), the means for reconstruction of education systems (Obura, 2003; Sommers and Buckland, 2004), the plight of education in divided societies (Gallagher, 2004) and aspects of schooling linked to violence (Davies, 2004; Harber, 2004). This body of work has opened up debate about coordination and the role of international development agencies (Sommers, 2004; Seitz, 2004) and led to the identification of a more explicit research agenda (Tomlinson and Benefield, 2005).

As an emerging field of study it therefore runs across a wide range of contexts. Conflict theory tends to emphasise 'conflict transformation' rather than 'conflict resolution' from the viewpoint that conflict is not a simple linear process involving predictable stages or cycles (Galtung, 1996; Lederach, 1997). Nevertheless from a development perspective, there are distinctive challenges in developing a conflict-sensitive approach to education depending on whether education is provided: within relatively peaceful and stable environments; during times of violent conflict, as part of reconstruction following conflict or political transition; or as part of longer term peace and reconciliation processes. Inevitably these distinctions are difficult to sustain, particularly in cases where there are transitions taking place, but within these different contexts an analysis of the role of education from a conflict perspective may be helpful in determining whether certain policies or practices are likely to ameliorate or inflame conflict. Some of the key issues are identified in the sections which follow below.

### *5.3.2 The need for 'conflict-sensitive' education systems*

The importance of education to human development is emphasised by its central place in achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals and its having been translated into the global initiative of the UN known as Education for All (EFA), aimed at securing primary education for all children by the year 2015 (EFA, 2002). There are many impediments to the achievement of universal primary education, including in Zimbabwe. These include lack of political will or a lack of priority given to education on the part of national governments (such as, insufficient spending as percentage of GNP or inequitable distribution of funding and resources) or lack of effective action in terms of development

assistance from the international community. Within countries, such as Zimbabwe, poverty, child labour, distance from school (e.g. in the resettlement areas), unequal access to gender or cultural factors (e.g. the Zambezi Valley) and the existence of conflict are barriers to the enrolment of all children in primary education. Child labour, poverty, distance from school and cultural factors were all cited by respondents in my study as impediments to the achievement of universal education in Zimbabwe. For example, many resettlement areas have no schools and children have to travel long distances to the nearest school.

Compounding this, never in the history of Zimbabwe had its people been under attack on so many fronts as at the time of my fieldwork. In the interest of future development and generations, many of my respondents called upon Zimbabweans wherever they were, whoever they were and whatever positions they held to reject the current policy of exclusion and embrace a policy of inclusion. This, it was stressed, was a precondition for reconstruction to start in earnest, for reconciliation to be embarked on and for the slowing of further degradation and pollution of an environment that was contributing to the socio-economic and socio-political problems currently ravaging the country.

Over the previous past twenty years, Zimbabwe had witnessed the growth of slums in its urban centres whose growth had been accelerating rapidly due to the collapse of the economy. In the countryside and resettlement areas it was evident from my field visits that the rural poor were destroying their life support systems and that these problems were the product of the economic suppression and marginalisation to which these people had been subjected. The difficult conditions had forced them to engage in activities that were

contributing to environmental degradation and pollution. On a national scale respondents also reported that the government was losing the capacity to render social services, provide equipment and text books in schools and maintain infrastructures and buildings. This was seen by interviewees as the price being paid for the adoption of a development model of conquest, domination and ruthless exploitation of nature and people.

The first Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA, 2002) presents a model of education based largely on quantifiable inputs, processes and outcomes. Yet the problem with a purely quantitative approach is that the 'quality' of education is particularly important in relation to conflict. In contrast, the International Commission on Education for the twenty first century (Delors, 1996) highlighted the need for education to take account of significant world trends and identified 'learning to live together' as one of four main pillars that needs to be strengthened in the light of increasing globalisation. This is an argument for a definition of quality education that takes more account of the type of values, educational content and processes that education systems provide. These values include the statement in Article 29 of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that the aims of education involve:

the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin (UNICEF, 1989, p. 17).

This has also been acknowledged in the third EFA Global Monitoring Report (2005):

Although most human rights legislation focuses upon access to education and is comparatively silent about its quality, the Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important exception. It expresses strong, detailed commitments about the aims of education. These commitments, in turn, have implications for the content and quality of education (p. 59).

Therefore, arguments have emerged that the right to education is not only about access to education, but also about access to a quality of education that is based on human rights principles and processes. Thus, whilst the right to education is properly concerned with universal access to free and compulsory education on a basis of equality, inclusion and non-discrimination, it is also concerned with the right to an education where the content and processes are consistent with human rights and fundamental freedoms (Tomasevski, 2004).

There are a number of problems in turning these aspirations into practice. Whilst there may be international norms and standards concerning the aims and purpose of education, these are mediated significantly by local conditions, customs and practice and governments tend to regard comments on their education system as external interference and an encroachment on national sovereignty. Added to this is the likelihood that many of the situations where there might be most concern about the type of education being provided are also those caught up in conflict. Nevertheless, from a rights-based development perspective, children do not lose the right to education simply because they live in the midst of a conflict or in a difficult environment. This perspective is consistent with emerging policies about effective ways of providing development assistance within 'fragile states' and difficult environments, defined as 'those areas where the state is unable or unwilling to

harness domestic and international resources effectively for poverty reduction.' These include situations of state collapse, loss of territorial control, low administrative capacity, political instability, neo-patrimonial politics, conflict and repressive polities (DFID, 2005). In this light education becomes identified as a crucial entry point and for such a strategy to work it is clear that any educational assistance must not only 'do no harm,' but should aim to contribute towards 'making things better' and certainly 'not making things worse'.

### *5.3.3 Education systems in the aftermath of conflict: reconstruction through openness*

As I know myself and as respondents informed me, the education system was particularly targeted during the conflict in Zimbabwe. Teachers and other educated people were singled out for assassinations and pupils and teachers were both victims and perpetrators of the violent crimes in state and church schools. Schools were ransacked and destroyed as was the Ministry of Education. Many teachers were arrested and jailed and a few were killed by their own pupils. Some pupils were also killed by their own teachers. A teacher at one rural school told me:

We were all told to lie down. Then they beat us with logs and iron bars. They then forced us to rape our own pupils. Some of the teachers were taken away and we never saw them again. Many teachers and pupils left the school after this incident (Mberengwa, July 4, 2008).

In Bosnia, schools and universities were also specific military targets, the shelling of the University of Sarajevo providing one of the most striking examples. The same was true of Rwanda (Phillips *et al.*, 1998). Little by way of documentation or school supplies remains intact in such situations. In addition, in the confusion that follows war and upheaval those buildings still suitable for educational purposes are often appropriated for

other uses such as military purposes, general administrative and civil use, and shelter for refugee and displaced persons.

Thus, the reconstruction of education systems represents an important priority in the immediate aftermath of armed conflict, humanitarian catastrophe or political transition. The report on 'Education for Reconstruction' (Phillips *et al.*, 1998) draws heavily on Europe's experience of reconstruction after the Second World War but also, as just mentioned, presents case studies on education reconstruction from Bosnia and Rwanda. This report makes the important distinction between: 'physical' reconstruction of school buildings, including emergency repair strategies, the needs and role of refugee education and landmine safety issues; 'ideological' reconstruction that refers, for example, to democratisation of the education system and retraining of teachers; and 'psychological' reconstruction that responds to issues of demoralisation, loss of confidence and health-related issues of stress and depression.

This assessment contrasts significantly with a report to evaluate the World Bank's experience with post conflict reconstruction suggesting that the Bank's main priority has been on the reconstruction of physical infrastructure (World Bank, 1998), based on its report which drew on nine case studies: Bosnia-Herzegovina, El Salvador, Uganda, Cambodia, Eritrea, Haiti, Lebanon, Rwanda and Sri Lanka. The main recommendation was that the bank should

develop an operational policy on the subject, to address readiness in the provision of economic development advice during peace negotiations; aid coordination following conflict; leadership on macroeconomic and external debt issues; priority definitions in macroeconomic stabilisation; infrastructure rebuilding; and the restoration of human and social capital (p. vii).

These recommendations illustrate how the World Bank's position has traditionally been to maintain a watching brief, but stops short of providing development assistance whilst conflict is underway.

However, a more recent report from the World Bank Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit acknowledges the need for a shift in position from an emphasis on post-conflict reconstruction to 'a sensitivity to conflict' (World Bank, 2004). UNESCO's Unit for Educational Rehabilitation and Reconstruction speaks of reconstruction as a 'more or less protracted process' with short, medium and long term aspects. Emergency programmes concerned with the basic requirements needed to get education systems working again, respond 'to the most urgent needs, both infrastructural and material and for the human component' (UNESCO, n.d., p. 16). Priorities, it concludes, must be determined at this stage so that efforts can be directed towards the most urgent and basic needs. Even here, UNESCO argues, reconstruction 'must not be carried out piecemeal, but must be carefully thought out and planned' (*ibid.*).

The example of Germany after the Second World War is relevant inasmuch as it demonstrates the advantages of planning, even if only in rudimentary form. The lesson

drawn is that agencies concerned with reconstruction should ideally be formulating plans for intervention in education long before it is possible to put an emergency programme in place (Phillips *et al.* 1998, p. 13). On this basis, plans for Zimbabwe's reconstruction programme should already be in place so that pupils are not unduly affected by shortages of classrooms. The emphasis on 'a sensitivity to conflict' is also reflected in a study undertaken by the World Bank education team on education and post-conflict reconstruction (Buckland, 2004). The study draws on a review of the literature, on a database of 52 countries affected by conflict since 1990 and on a set of 12 country studies. The 12 countries include three that are emerging from conflict (Angola, Burundi and Sri Lanka), four countries or territories that have 'recently' emerged from conflict (Bosnia - Herzegovina, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste) and five countries that have a longer history of post-conflict reconstruction (Cambodia, El-Salvador, Guatemala, Lebanon and Nicaragua). The main objective was to review experience of education system reconstruction in post-conflict countries and to identify lessons that can assist in the achievement of Education for All (EFA) goals. These more recent reports reflect a move away from the notion of thinking about conflict in discrete stages, to an appreciation that the analysis of conflict and 'conflict sensitivity' needs to be built into routine thinking as part of mainstream operations in such situations.

The Zimbabwean Global Political Agreement (GPA) of September 2008 between the two main political parties, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) was a significant step towards political reconstruction and stability. It resulted in the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) which

has initiated welcome recovery in the economy. However, the political situation remains fragile. This is because the new Zimbabwean regime is a bizarre construction. Outwardly it still fits within the tattered remnants of the ZANU P.F.

A majority of ministers are ZANU P.F. and the Prime Minister who is from the Opposition party has no power at all. He is just a figurehead. There is no proclaimed theory of ethnic exclusivity... But the whole thing is largely a make-believe exercise ... because, as in many authoritarian governments, there are two channels of authority: One is the official administrative structure...; the other is the ZANU P.F. network, both civilian and military, which ... makes up an official government of shadows (Prunier, 1995, p. 369).

In response, during my fieldwork respondents repeatedly called for openness and naming of those involved in the abuses of human rights in Zimbabwe. They felt that this was the only way reconciliation would come about. 'When one is telling the truth, there is no need for one to hide one's identity,' was a typical response of many participants when I explained the nature and conduct of my enquiry. However, this presents an ethical dilemma as it abrogates the principle of anonymity, and yet participants were clear that this was the only way the process of reconciliation was likely to move forward. One of my interviewees had had hot coals stuffed down his T-shirt by ZANU P.F thugs in Chitungwiza, Harare, during the 2008 Parliamentary and Presidential elections and had this to say: 'For the time, I cannot forgive. But revenge is not the way. The only thing I want is a law that they should confess, give details of what they did and who sent them' (Harare 15 June 2008).

Thus, people in my study wanted openness and public confession. Without this it seemed hard for them to see how a reconciliation process could be carried out. In South Africa during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, there were a lot of public and private confessions (see section 5.3.5, below). Participants in this study wanted to be named so as to be counted as people who were making a vital contribution to the rebuilding of the country. They felt that perpetrators should also be named and those who sent them brought to book, the interviewee quoted above being a case in point. Asked why he had not brought the perpetrators of the genocide in Rwanda to book, President Paul Kagame of that country had this to say:

Millions and millions of people were involved and we cannot put everyone in jail. Even if we wanted to do so we do not have the resources to jail everyone. We do not have enough jails in this country for millions of people. We will, however, find the leaders who planned this genocide and these will be tried and if found guilty will be sent to jail. We want to send a very clear message to our people that, if you abuse your power or allow others to do it in your name, you will be brought to justice and made to pay for your crimes (CNN, 2009).

Meanwhile, some of the perpetrators I contacted also wanted to be named because they felt that this was the only way reconciliation would come about. Protecting Zimbabwe from further harm was, in the view of some perpetrators, ethical, legitimate and desirable – but this is probably a minority view among this group. Commenting on the violence in the country, one Church leader lamented:

Many a time we have wondered if the so-called Zimbabwean leaders sometimes lack the capacity to think and understand the ramifications of their actions. After all the bloodshed in the country you would think we have learnt a lesson but no! The rationale for the current violence defies logic. The world must be getting tired of us, given our self-inflicted tragedies galore. We seem to lack any sense of urgency to handle problems in an expedient manner devoid of bloodshed. Lord Have Mercy'. (Bulwayo, 13 July, 2008)

#### *5.3.4 Education as reconciliation and peace-building*

In the wake of violence on a societal scale, finding the right balance between justice and healing, retribution and forgiveness, tribunals and truth commissions, remembering and 'moving on' was a messy if not impossible goal pre-occupying some of my interviewees. As one respondent in Mberengwa pointed out to me

No response can ever be adequate when your son has been killed by police ordered to shoot at a crowd of children, when you have been dragged out of your home, interrogated, and raped in a wave of 'ethnic cleansing,' or when your father having struggled against a repressive government has disappeared and left only a secret police file, bearing no clue to his final resting place' (Mberengwa, 22 April 2009).

While the concept of reconciliation is not new, it is however, vague. It has been a central feature of rebuilding relations between peoples and states in post-war Europe. Some legacies of the Second World War are still visible today, for example, the Austrian Fund for Reconciliation, Peace and Cooperation is still making 'voluntary payments to former slave and forced labourers of the Nazi regime on the territory of present-day Austria' (Gallagher, 2004).

For the purposes of this study, reconciliation refers to a societal or macro-level process, the necessary groundwork for the very private process of individual reconciliation to become thinkable. My premise is that legal instruments, striking political compromises, publicly acknowledging the wrongs inflicted on victims, and other measures, as 'messy' as they may be, are all more acceptable than doing nothing. I label 'doing nothing' unacceptable first because of its 'shocking implication that the perpetrators in fact succeeded' (Minow, 1998, p. 5). Indeed, silence makes us complicit bystanders to the perpetrators of yesterday. Secondly, inaction is unacceptable because it leaves grievances, fears of reprisals, and cultures of impunity to fester, encouraging cyclical outbursts of violence by the perpetrators of tomorrow characteristic of the periodic violent crises in Zimbabwe experienced before and during my period of fieldwork.

Explicit reference to reconciliation as part of post-conflict 'peace-building' has gained more prominence in recent years, particularly since the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa (Daye, 2004). A focus on processes of reconciliation has also been a feature of developments following the genocides in Rwanda and as part of the peace process in Northern Ireland supported by substantial European Union funding (Phillips *et al.*, 1998, Wylie, 2004). Whilst 'reconciliation' has received attention across a range of international contexts, each conflict is taken by analysts to be quantitatively different in terms of the level of violence and the number of casualties, and qualitatively different in terms of the social context and the nature of atrocities that may have taken place. These factors mean that those affected by conflict will have different perspectives on what is 'reasonable' or 'realistic' to expect in terms of a commitment to

reconciliation. This makes it extremely difficult to consider reconciliation as a generic concept with the same implications for different conflicts. However, 'reconciliation,' the umbrella term I will use to refer to this series of messy compromises, though it may be inconceivable or offensive to some, appears to be the only sustainable and genuine form of prevention in societies that have undergone mass violence as Zimbabwe.

Like any other concept, the concept of 'reconciliation' is problematic, both conceptually and in terms of the difficult and controversial issues it evokes. Hamber and Van der Merwe (1988) suggest that the term is considered to embody positive connotations about 'coming together' and healing past conflicts. However, a deeper understanding of the role of education in contributing to reconciliation processes has yet to be developed. Much more research in this area of education is called for, as reconciliation may be necessary at many levels (between individuals, between groups in conflict, between peoples or nations at war). In all these, there are implications for education in terms of facilitating reconciliation by addressing legacies of conflict. These include the impact on the bereaved and injured, remembrance and commemoration, debates about forgiveness, healing, retribution, expressions of regret, apology and symbolic events, understanding the role of amnesties and prisoner releases, alongside concepts of restorative and transitional justice (Restorative Justice Online - RJO, n.d.). These are challenging long-term tasks that link reconstruction programmes into the mainstream education sector and long-term goal of conflict prevention.

In the remainder of this chapter it is proposed that the educational response that is needed in order to stop conflict and warfare and promote peace and reconciliation is twofold: it

consists of clarification of cognitions (for example, prejudices) and reflection on feelings (such as resentment, antipathy, hate, and love). An accompanying educational task is to introduce the young, and adults through adult education, into a critique of ideologies. However, such conceptualisations are in their infancy and the researcher has to confront the striking absence of 'key themes' that might become part of a broader debate about curriculum development strategy within education systems that have been subject to violent crises. It is an elucidation of such themes with which the remainder of the chapter is concerned.

### *5.3.5 Learning from the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission.*

Beyond the generic, practical steps summarised by Obura above, the example of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was, inevitably, a reform model of central interest to my research, due both to its regional proximity to Zimbabwe and the salience of the themes and processes with which it was concerned. Accordingly, my South African research respondents were asked for their insights into its record and significance for Zimbabwe.

Commenting on the Commission, one of my South African research subjects, a senior member of the ruling ANC party, based in Messina, offered the following written assessment.

The Commission did a lot of good work because it helped diffuse a very volatile situation in the country. But you cannot find reconciliation between blacks and blacks and blacks and whites in a situation in which poverty and prosperity continue to be defined in terms of ethnicity and race. If you want reconciliation between blacks and whites and blacks and blacks, you need a whole transformation of our society [in the south of Africa]. If we continue to have an economy

that is geared to benefit only a few and disadvantage the majority, and we do not address that, you will not have any meaningful reconciliation in South Africa (email: Messina, South Africa, June 20, 2008).

What this South African feared most was what he described as the 'mounting rage' of millions of black South Africans denied the opportunity of advancement by the apartheid regimes still operating informally in the country. 'What happens to a dream deferred?' he asked me, before answering the question himself: 'It explodes'.

For his part, Nelson Mandela was very clear that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was the best vehicle of progress in South Africa and was 'confident that it has contributed to the work in progress of laying the foundation of the edifice of reconciliation' in his country (Meredith, 2005 p. 659). However, Thabo Mbeki, Mandela's successor, did not agree. He insisted that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was 'wrong and misguided' in that it accused some members of the African National Congress (ANC) of human rights abuses, while F.W. De Klerk, Mandela's predecessor, accused the Commission of 'seeking vengeance and not reconciliation' (*ibid.*).

Yet, obscured by furore, it would seem that the achievements of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa were considerable. It had been feared that there would be a bloodbath in South Africa after the formation of a black majority government in 1994. But because of the intervention of Archbishop Desmond Tutu and others through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, this was averted. The Commission established beyond doubt that death squads had operated not as aberrations but as part and

parcel of government repression; that torture had been used systematically and in effect condoned as official practice; and that violence between rival black factions had been officially encouraged, supported and financed by the government of the day (Meredith 2005). It had established the chain of command leading directly to the highest level of government. It had helped solve many of the murders and disappearances that for so long had troubled so many families. It also confronted the liberation movements with their own crimes of murders, torture and necklacing, refusing to judge these crimes any differently from government crimes (*ibid.*). In Rwanda, the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda failed to confront the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), the armed wing of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) ruling party, because President Paul Kagame of Rwanda refused them permission to do so. In a February 2004 interview on BBC World Service, this is what the President was quoted as having said:

Shouldn't we be trying those people for allowing genocide to take place in Rwanda when they had full responsibility to prevent that, let alone stop it? If people stood by watching genocide take place why can't they be tried? Those of the United Nations who are saying that (the Rwandan Patriotic Front R.P.F) should be tried for war crimes against humanity), they are the ones who allowed the genocide to take place in Rwanda (BBC, 2004).

The fact that the Tribunal has not been allowed to proceed because of its insistence that all war crimes committed from January to December 1994 be placed within its remit reflects credit on Nelson Mandela for giving the Commission in South Africa a 'free hand' and for not interfering with its work, and on the Commission itself for its courage in investigating all crimes including those committed by Umkonto Wesizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC) ruling party. The Commission also provided a

hearing for thousands of victims and their families, affording many people some relief from their burden of suffering and grief for the first time. In other words, it was a form of therapy. As Lukas Sikwepere, a victim blinded by police gunfire, summed this up: 'I feel that what has been making me sick all the time is the fact that I could not tell my story. But now it feels like I got my sight back by coming here and telling you my story' (Meredith, 2005, p.660).

And yet the story is more complicated than this. A South African correspondent, an Inkata Freedom Party Official, from whom I sought an assessment in 2008 wrote the following.

We were moved by the testimonies, the fears, the sobs and the wailing of the survivors and relatives who could not take the memories and the revelations. We cried a little too in our homes. We also sat glued to the radio and to television screens as killers of our patriots spoke of the murder they committed to defend white hegemony. We hissed as the men, with no visible remorse, spoke of the pyres and burning of human bodies alongside the lamb chops and steak barbecues on the banks of various rivers of our land. We got even more angry as the men walked away scot-free after such horrendous testimonies (email: Johannesbug, 22 June 2008).

Though the amnesty process had persuaded many perpetrators to come forward, throwing light on past atrocities, the disturbing consequence was that guilty men who had been seen and heard to confess to appalling crimes then walked entirely free adding fuel to the views of those who considered that there were few signs that the proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission had advanced the cause of reconciliation.

In answering to criticisms levelled at the Commission, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, its chairman, argued that the truth often turned out to be divisive. 'Reconciliation is not about

being cosy; it is not about pretending that things were other than they were. Reconciliation based on falsehood, on not facing up to reality is not true reconciliation and will not last' (Meredith, 2005, p.661). Thus, a conclusion that can be drawn is that while truth might not always lead to reconciliation, there will be no reconciliation without truth -- hence the need for Truth and Reconciliation Commissions.

### *5.3.6 Curriculum renewal in crisis-torn countries*

My starting point is that post-conflict education policy in Zimbabwe should promote national unity and reconciliation, prioritising equity of provision and access and encouraging a humanitarian culture of inclusion and mutual respect.

To achieve this, discrimination would have to be outlawed and the classification of learners and teachers by Karanga, Manyika, Ndebele, Shona and Varungu (English) abandoned. Central budgetary allocations would need to be concentrated on the major shortfall in our education system which continues to be the challenge to provide accessible, relevant education for the poorest and particularly for child-headed households. Many children in the rural and marginal areas such as the Zambezi Valley, Chikombezi, Binga and Gokwe North of school age still remain out of school.

Central also is consideration of the school curriculum. The Zimbabwean curriculum has been the subject of much debate since independence in 1980. For example, Zimbabwean history and the way that it is taught remains highly controversial (see Meredith, 2002), yet the country seems not yet ready to tackle the revision of the history curriculum.

Zimbabwe is, however, showing signs that the UN's Education for All (EFA) principle has a unique role to play in a country which has been torn apart by discrimination and exclusion and where the education system was used as an instrument of social destruction.

Meanwhile, thirty years have passed since Independence and there is still a wide disparity between the official view and the ordinary civilian's actual experience of education. By now Zimbabwean civilians have lost interest in the contrast between past and present. As evidenced in the testimony of my interviews, there is no doubt in any Zimbabwean's mind that colonial education was oppressive and inegalitarian, but it is not so clear, once one leaves out the question of intentions that the actual experience of education has changed greatly over the last thirty years, except in so far as it is not racist and there are many more children actually attending school today such that a corrupt post-colonial state has fastened more firmly its hold over civil society.

Allied to this, and regardless of the material degradations revealed graphically in this research, there is no clear evidence that the curriculum is effective. At the time of my research around 20% of state resources was being invested in education, supplemented, probably at least as much again, by parents yet there had been no increase either in employment or employability at the school-leaving level. Education was proving an 'unproductive' investment as well as an uneconomic one when employment stands at 90%. The school-leaver's educational aspirations are almost entirely utilitarian and parents' most urgent desire was that children find work after school.

Parents with high aspirations have even sharper grounds for criticising school policy. For while lip-service was being paid by the ruling party to a notion of socialist progress in the

curriculum, no meaningful change can be detected on the ground or in the classroom. 'Gardening', a subject meant under colonialism to prepare black children for agricultural labour has been re-named in Zimbabwe 'Education with Production'. The name has indeed changed but the content has not, while at secondary level 'technical' education has been introduced in all schools but such provision remains little different from the colonial era when 'F2' secondary schools only taught 'technical' subjects such as building, carpentry, fashion and fabrics, cookery and agriculture. As such, 'socialism' reproduced the colonial curriculum with the one exception of introducing 'political economy' as a compulsory subject (Pearce, 1991, p.32).

In Zimbabwe, such disappointing curriculum progress has, of course, been compounded by the crisis conditions in which schools find themselves. Nevertheless, a start must be made somewhere. To assist in this, international studies suggest clearly that curriculum reform for school systems near to collapse requires initially the establishment of clear material and practical priorities. These insights involved, drawn from various parts of the world, have been summarised by Anna Obura (2003) as follows:

- analysing the shortcomings and/or crimes of the previous education system, declaring a new policy and immediately providing visible and tangible evidence of a changed school experience;
- restarting familiar school programmes – trimmed to essentials – rather than attempting innovative inputs early on;
- lightening curricula so as to concentrate on fundamentals first and to 'clear space' for subsequent curriculum innovation;

- creating clear definition of the roles and tasks of different departments within the Ministry of Education;
- mobilising local resources through coordination with religious organisations, local authorities and other agencies;
- creating new smaller schools to reach out to isolated homesteads so that children do not walk long distances to school, for example in resettlement schemes and rural and marginal areas;
- recognising that physical rehabilitation of schools takes time (by 2002, eight years after recovery began, only half of Rwanda's classrooms were constructed of permanent materials);
- prioritising delivery of essential low-cost, locally-available supplies: chalkboards, chalk and slates should come first;
- follow-up mechanisms at community level to ensure children most in need do not drop out of school;
- sharing information with non-governmental educationists in mission and private schools;
- making timely decisions on textbook revision and delivery – without teaching materials, syllabuses will not be taught and teachers will try to avoid difficult and sensitive topics;
- realising that the structure of the education system is as much a source of learning as syllabus topics: if the aim is to teach equity, the school should practise it through transparent entrance mechanisms, abolition of corporal punishment and relationships of respect within the school;

- training teachers to cope and deal with traumatised children; and
- early commencement of discussions on how to teach local history (Obura, 2003).

### 5.3.7 *Appreciating the Complexity of Change*

Even in crisis-torn nations we can see dynamic conservatism at work and this raises perhaps the largest educational question of all: how to open a fractured society to the prospect of structural change, while at the same time stimulating awareness of the possibility that such change, once embarked upon, is vulnerable to failure. According to Everard and his colleagues, dynamic conservatism is a social phenomenon that stems more from the propensity of social systems to protect their integrity and thus to continue to provide a familiar framework within which individuals can order and make sense of their lives, than from the apparent stupidity of individuals who can't see what is good for them (Everard *et al.*, 2004).

For these authors a related insight is that few individuals in organizations appreciate how multidimensional change really is, instead espousing a comfortably simplistic notion of it. Sometimes this helps; we might not so readily accept some changes if we could foresee all implications. But usually it hinders change, because it diverts us from dealing with reality. Once we apprehend that it is the social system that withstands change, we begin to realize some of the complexity; for there exist within such systems innumerable relationships, unwritten norms, vested interests and other characteristics that will probably be disturbed by a proposed change (*ibid.*). In the Zimbabwean case, for example, ZANU P.F. has been in power for the past thirty years and so it is inconceivable on the part of its senior members to share this power, let alone lose it.

Heads of government and senior staff who want to implement change therefore have a sizeable educational task in their hands: they have to help everyone concerned to discover and conceptualize the true nature of change and how it impinges upon everyone. (This is separate from the equally important need to develop the skills for coping with change). Change is an educative process that will affect beliefs, assumptions and values, and be affected by them. Change will also alter the way we are expected to do things and the things we need to do them with.

Twenty years of political and economic mismanagement have turned Zimbabwe from a well run state to one that depends on remittances and aid for food and basic services. This decline began in the late 1990s when the ZANU P.F. government's political monopoly was challenged by radical civic organisations and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). ZANU PF responded by using currency and financial market controls, the printing press, a grain and fuel marketing monopoly, and land seizures to transfer resources from efficient producers to the political cronies, security services and war veterans that it relied on for support. It attacked and intimidated political opponents, forcibly destroyed the urban informal sector, manipulated elections and used its control over land, food and information to retain its majorities in rural constituencies. Initially, this enabled it to win elections, but destroyed the economic system, leading to fiscal, food, fuel and foreign exchange crises (HoCIDC, 2010). However, the abuses also enabled the MDC to win majority support, and forced ZANU P.F. to negotiate the 2008 Global Political Agreement (GPA) that produced the current uneasy governing coalition.

The MDC won clear majorities in Parliament in the first round of the Presidential elections in 2008, but conceded the presidency because of a state of managed programme

of violence and intimidation that was occurring during my period of fieldwork. Zanu PF remained utterly opposed to this 'partnership with ideologically incompatible MDC formations' (5<sup>th</sup> Party Congress Resolution D, 13 December, 2005) and retained control over the security apparatuses, the Reserve Bank, Attorney General, and Provincial governorships, and agriculture, and is using these to block attempts to introduce a viable reconstruction programme (HoCIDC, 2010) and yet the MDC was nevertheless able to introduce important economic and social reforms, and received greater support from the donor community.

Most of my respondents, especially from 2009 onwards, sensed the potential for change but also the enormity of its being achieved, with one likening the educational task to that of tilling the ground before planting seed. When it came to operationalising change, most took the view that this would involve both helping people to understand change - any change - in the abstract but that there were matters that also needed to be discussed face to face. These interviewees considered that it was insufficient to read about such developments - they needed to be tossed around and savoured, especially if many people in the current ZANU P.F. leadership were to have their fears allayed that they could survive such changes, including the threat of eroded identity and loss of a sense of personal competence.

Some changes, it was considered, may also serve to challenge the core values and assumptions held by experienced educators and the remedy here, advanced by several interviewees, was that fear of tampering with something unknown but still perceived as important can only be assuaged by trying to clarify what it is we are really worried about. So, they argued, it helps to hammer out a set of beliefs that are shared with

colleagues and regularly subjected to review and revision in the light of experience: beliefs about both education and change.

### *5.3.8 Why Plans for Implementing Change Fail*

In the context of Zimbabwe at the time of the fieldwork, extravagance and flamboyance had been the hallmark of the ZANU P.F. government for over 25 years. Robert Mugabe had granted favours to his chiefs, his political allies, his relatives and sycophants and this, it was considered, helped explain his personal resistance to change. However, a wider societal resistance to change is one of the major reasons why plans for implementing it can fail and it is to this that I now turn.

The UK House of Commons report of 2010 reflects on this problem in Zimbabwe and points to a first reason why those who initiate change will often fail to secure a successful conclusion to their dreams – they tend to be too rational, developing in their minds a clear, coherent vision of where they want to be and assume that all they have to do is to spell out the logic to the world and everyone will be immediately motivated to follow the lead. Those in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) who brokered 2008 Global Political Agreement wanted to help Zimbabwe to recover and rebuild its shattered economy, health and education systems, and agriculture while in tandem supporting the establishment of effective functioning democracy. As such, the task for them was to be both developmental and political. Yet both of the political parties in the country had other ideas totally at variance with those who brokered the deal. The result was a Government of National Unity that was not fully

functional and this explains why change is still elusive in Zimbabwe to this day (HoCIDC, 2010).

A second reason why such change can fail is when reformers operate at a different level of thought from that of the people to be affected by the change they seek to implement. According to Everard and his colleagues, an instance from UK education was the 1981 Education Act which characterised policy formulation and implementation relating to provision for those with educational needs in six stages (Everard *et al.*, p. 220):

1. *Philosophy*: integration of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools.
2. *Principle*: education to be in least restrictive environment.
3. *Concept*: Locational, social, functional integration.
4. *Strategy*: Provide support staff and systems to achieve integration.
5. *Design*: Set up multi-skilled force of peripatetic professionals.
6. *Action*: Establish new posts according to plan and eliminate some existing posts (see Everard *et al.* p.241).

However, the authors show that implementation turned out to be problematic due to insufficient care being taken to engage professional staff at all levels in both the policy thinking and the detailed operational implications of the changes proposed (*ibid.*).

In a different context and on a different scale, the SADC, the African Union and the broader international community have a similar task in understanding the importance of engagement before implementing any reconstruction plans in Zimbabwe. Everard *et*

*al.* conclude that effecting change calls for open-mindedness and a readiness to understand the feelings and position of others, that truth and reality are multifaceted and that most people act rationally and sensibly within the reality of the world as they see it. In Zimbabwe, as my respondents pointed out, President Mugabe saw the country as his personal property, so that when people ask him to share power with the opposition he simply could or would not understand the logic of the request. Hence innovators have to address themselves not just to the world they see but also to the world other people see, however misguided, perverse and distorted they may think the outlook of others to be. Thirty years after Zimbabwe's independence, Zimbabweans are still told that their leaders fought the War of Liberation and they should be rewarded for it (Godwin, 2010) and that the leader of the democratic party is a 'British stooge' (Stiff, 2000, p.315).

Thus, implementing change is a process of interaction, dialogue, feedback, modified objectives, recycle plans, coping with mixed feelings and values, pragmatism, micropolitics, frustration, patience and muddle. Yet messy though the process is, the attempt to adopt an objective, rational and systematic approach to implementing change is more likely to be crowned with success than relying simply on intuition (though this has its part to play too): rationality has to be applied not only to defining the end of change but also the means (Bush, 1986, p. 8-10).

Having established these principles, Everard *et al.* leave us with some final considerations about effecting the process of structural, societal change. First, it is a fallacy that those who have the positional power to inflict change on an organization or country will necessarily

be successful in implementing enduring change: seldom are their sanctions adequate to do so, including in educational systems above the level of a pupil. Successful managers of change have to take into account the feelings, values, ideas and experiences of those affected by change (Everard *et al.*, 2004). At Zimbabwean independence, in 1980, Robert Mugabe wanted to declare a One Party State in Zimbabwe. The people of Matabeleland refused and so he murdered more than 20,000 people in the region in response instigating a bitter legacy that lingers on to this day.

Second, a trap in implementing change is to ascribe the problems that necessitate change to the shortcomings of individuals. Not only is personalisation of the problems likely to lead to defensiveness but it is also often a mis-diagnosis of true causes (*ibid.*). In Zimbabwe most organizational defects were attributed by my respondents to artless methods and systems imposed by national leaders, accompanied by a culture of personalising blame for the inevitable short-comings that followed. Finally, the reasons why some plans for implementing change fail is that they are addressed to insoluble problems insofar as some undesirable conditions of society are so little understood or so complex to explain causally that in the present state of knowledge and expertise there is no solution to hand. Even if someone of outstanding conceptual ability could fully grasp the problem, it may well be an impossible task to transfer that understanding to others who have a significant and indispensable part to play in solving the problem. *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*, quoth Virgil ('happy is he who can find out the causes of things'); but we live in an often unhappy world (*ibid.*, p. 221).

However, on a more optimistic note, not all problems are intractable and it was striking that most of my respondents, drawn from a sample representative of most shades of opinion and ethnic/linguistic groupings in the country, earnestly and urgently sought to tackle the country's problems, not least through education. 'The best way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time' (Swahili proverb).

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

In this concluding chapter, the main strands of the thesis are drawn together in three sections. The first summarises some of the overarching processes of reconstruction and reconciliation through education that scholars and analysts have discerned in the examples of crisis-torn countries that, unhappily, have been available for study over the last 30 years. The middle section draws conclusions from my research into the specific situation in Zimbabwe and how the key insights generated may be related to this broader literature and to improving international understanding of my chosen theme. The third section – and the short epilogue that follows – broadens all of these considerations into a discussion of some universal considerations informing education for peaceful co-existence and tolerance.

#### **6.1 Education for Reconciliation and Education for Reconstruction**

The world has suddenly become unusually complex and far less intelligible. The old order has collapsed, but no one has yet created a new one.

Vaclav Havel, President of Czech Republic

We women do not make war...we are the ones who have to leave, the ones who have to fight for the survival of our children. We are tired of running, tired of not knowing what the future will bring, tired of not being able to plant. Why don't these people sit together and talk, why are the international organisations not helping the poor and suffering?

Elizabeth Alek, Dinka Woman from Southern Sudan (Adams and Bradbury, 1994).

The causes of conflict are diverse, and every conflict arises from a different combination of circumstances. Ethnic tensions, denial of political rights, poverty, and competition over scarce resources can fuel conflict, and weaken the fabric of nation states, many of which were built on fragile and artificial foundations in the colonial period.

For example, in Rwanda, the occupation classifications drawn up by the Belgian colonial authorities, which divided the population on the basis of asset ownership, provided the grounds for a Tutsi supremacist ideology, and a Hutu backlash. The mass violence of the mid-1990s was instigated by members of the Hutu political elite who feared losing power, and were able to exploit ethnic tensions and fear with terrifying effect. Underlying social and economic pressures increased their ability to manipulate the thousands of young Hutus who carried out the massacres. Rapid population growth in Rwanda had contributed to chronic land shortage. Rural poverty was further accentuated by the sharp fall in international coffee prices in the late 1980s and subsequent collapse in employment and social services. These economic pressures created a fertile ground for the growth of genocidal violence (Watkins, 1995: p. 44). Elsewhere, it is the breakdown of systems of political control that led to the emergence of conflict. The demise of the former Soviet Union, while it marked an end to the Cold War, resulted in an intense struggle for control over resources, often under the banner of competing 'nationalisms' or 'ethnicities'. For example, in the Transcaucasus region, nationalist movements sprang up and war ravaged the economic foundations of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Group identity has also become an increasingly important - and violent - focal point for dissent and political aspirations (*ibid.*: pp. 44-45).

In Rwanda, the horror of modern conflict was presented in its most extreme form by the genocide which swept the country in 1994 when around a million Tutsi were killed by gangs of militia, acting on the orders of the government, armed with machetes, nailed clubs and fragmentation grenades. One report compared the scale of the genocide to that of the Nazi death camps; and this was in a country lacking the infrastructure and technology of mass extermination. Words can never describe the suffering experienced by the people of Rwanda. An Oxfam staff member witnessed one Interahamwe massacre:

They sought out and killed seven members of the Tutsi nurse's family...Those killed included a three - year old boy, his skull split open with a machete blow, and a pregnant woman whose body was split open and the unborn baby exposed...we all witnessed the elderly mission cook being beaten to death (Adams and Bradbury, 1994, p. 63).

Media images of the slaughter in Rwanda briefly diverted public attention from Bosnia, where the term 'ethnic cleansing' was introduced into the vocabulary of modern warfare. In that part of Eastern Europe almost a quarter of a million people were killed and 2.5 million displaced. Civilian populations were subjected to bombardment, torture, mass rape, and killed and 2.5 million displaced to achieve the expansionist designs of nationalist Serbs and Croats. The Bosnian conflict gave rise to the re-emergence on European soil of vast ghettos, deliberately fashioned so that the communities trapped within them could be terrorised, starved, and demoralised, and their will to resist destroyed (Phillips *et al.*, 1998; Whitaker, 1988). Back in Africa:

Instead of being exploited for the benefit of the people, Africa's mineral resources have been so mismanaged and plundered that they are now the source of our misery (Annan, 2000).

Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone have all suffered because of mineral resources. Charles Taylor, former President of Liberia, now being tried for human rights abuses at the Hague, was directly involved in the massacres of many thousands in Sierra Leone. He also used thousands of child soldiers in the conflict. Angola suffered a similar fate. Diamonds have always been the minerals involved. Zimbabwe appears to be following this route since the discovery of diamonds in the Marange area of Manicaland five years ago (All About Gemstones, 2009). Arguably, the single most important challenge facing conflict ridden countries today is that of developing effective policies for conflict prevention and response – and grounding these in the slow but essential task of educational reconstruction. As has been seen in many studies, the immediate human costs of conflict are to be measured in the suffering, loss of livelihoods and death experienced by vulnerable people. But massive destruction of infrastructure is also experienced leaving people without homes, schools and hospitals. Conflict always leaves people depressed, stressed and traumatized (Adams and Bradbury, 1994; UNESCO, 2003). Studies elsewhere where conflicts have occurred have identified the following priorities when drawing conclusions and formulating their suggested response:

- physical reconstruction
- ideological reconstruction
- psychological reconstruction
- human resources reconstruction

(Phillips, *et al.*, 1998: p. 11. See also, UNESCO, 2003).

### Physical Reconstruction

In any post-conflict situation one of the most obvious and pressing needs will be to ensure that there are sufficient buildings and facilities to allow educational activities of whatever level to take place.

Clearly, an immediate problem is the availability of appropriate buildings, especially in situations where most have been destroyed. The situation may be accompanied by widespread destruction as a result of civil upheaval. This was in the case in Iraq where more than 5,500 (42%) of the educational institutions were destroyed during and following the hostilities of the Gulf War. Military action was responsible for this in a number of cases, but most of the damage in fact was caused by looting and vandalism (Williams, 1993).

Destruction on this scale is not yet the current problem in Zimbabwe, although most buildings need to be repaired, having suffered serious neglect due to shortage of money. Nevertheless, my study of the situation in Zimbabwe during 2008-2010 has pointed to both urgent immediate needs of an 'emergency' nature and long-term needs for which planning can start even at an early stage. For example, the country needs considerable donor support to address a shortage of teachers a problem which, in turn, can only be solved through wider recovery of the economy and political system including the payment of adequate salaries to public servants. This was a problem that also had to be directly addressed in Bosnia, Lebanon (the American University) and Rwanda (Phillips *et al*, 1998). A further dimension of physical reconstruction – true in Zimbabwe as in

similar situations elsewhere – is confronting the severe shortage of textbooks, especially those which are current and relevant to pupils' needs.

### Ideological Reconstruction

Following a period of conflict or social upheaval, the causes of conflict will always need to be addressed. Ideological posturing is commonly perceived as one of the major factors which perpetuates unrest. Democratisation is seen as a major concept in reforming authoritarian, autocratic systems, of altering the attitudes of individuals and encouraging the replacement of previous structures and values. In the context of education, David Phillips and his colleagues have identified a number of ways in which this process of democratisation has been brought about in recent years, such as:

- the Trans - European Mobility Scheme for University Studies (TEMPUS), introduced by the EC in 1990 which promotes
  - enhancement of the quality and development of higher education in Eastern Central Europe and
  - encouragement of collaboration between eastern and western Europe through joint activities and student/staff mobility;
- the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) which aims to accomplish the task of helping people to make the transition to democracy through a range of economic, social and educational development projects (Phillips *et al.*, 1998; UNESCO, 2003: pp. 13-16).

A vital aspect in the democratisation of education is the encouragement of critical, independent and creative thinking among our children in schools. Owing to the fact that individuals are often obstructed in exercising their rights as citizens, as is the case in Zimbabwe today, projects focusing on an understanding of democratic processes such as voting procedures and principles and freedom of speech are an important starting point.

Moreover, retraining of educational personnel at every level of an education system is necessary for the process of ideological reconstruction. This could be done in various ways, for example in-service training courses for key teachers who can then retrain other teachers in the 'cascade' model of training. In Zimbabwe, we can follow the methods used by the Novalis Institute in South Africa which trains teachers in that country in the methods of the Waldorf schools which incorporate in their training programme the teacher's vital role in contributing to the healing and reconstruction of the racist past in schools and wider communities. Whereas the apartheid system managed to keep different communities apart, the Novalis Institute has been successful in bringing these communities together and in helping to develop new joint realities, preparing the groundwork for a new integrated community. Similarly, in Israel, a Department for Democracy and Co-existence was established which publicises guidelines and assists in the development of educational programmes and projects throughout the country, emphasising in-service training for teachers (Phillips *et al.*, 1998; UNESCO, 2003: 13-16). Zimbabwe needs such programmes urgently to help bring healing to the polarised nation.

### Psychological Reconstruction

According to a number of international agencies, ‘a common feature of any post-conflict situation is the presence of various psychological problems ranging from demoralisation to severe trauma’ (Gomez, 2002, p. 93). This is a prevalent feature identified in the literature on Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, the Sudan, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe (Phillips *et al.*, 1998). A circumstance that exacerbates the situation in all these countries is that survivors of the conflict situations reported ‘that in some cases teachers murdered children who attended their own classes’ (Sutcliffe, 1995 p. 7). Moreover, schools were sought out as sanctuaries at the height of these conflicts, only to become the scene of some of the worst massacres as in Rwanda, Liberia, Somalia and, as my study has shown, to a limited extent Zimbabwe. The tragedy has therefore left deep scars in pupil’s attitudes and perceptions of the schooling system. UNESCO and UNDP as well as various NGOs have introduced special trauma programmes to deal with this very serious problem and these are relevant to some communities in Zimbabwe. In Rwanda, a special children’s training centre and school near Butare was opened for traumatised child soldiers who witnessed violent scenes of war and saw mass graves (Sutcliffe, 1995).

Commentators also conclude that there is a need to train teachers to deal with traumatised children, since many of these have behavioural problems. As Agathe, a teacher in Rwanda stated in 1994, ‘what children need most is a routine with kindness and sensible discipline...they have nightmares or won’t talk to anyone. We are learning as we go how to help them’ (*Guardian*, 1995).

### Human Resources Reconstruction

The new Zimbabwean government embarked on the process of re-opening schools from May 2009 and is experiencing a critical shortage of skilled and qualified teachers. It is estimated that approximately 61% of Zimbabwean teachers have died or fled to neighbouring countries, while some have moved further afield to countries such as the UK, Australia, Canada, Sweden, New Zealand and America (Hwede, 2006; CSO, 1994).

These exiles have to be persuaded to go back home and this will not be easy. As several political observers have underlined, the current scope of the political situation in Zimbabwe leaves little hope for long-term peace and development. Yet already in 2004, at a seminar in Harare, a government official summarised the preconditions for reconciliation, mentioning the following key points that are imperative for the country's future:

- an end to the legacy of violence and culture of impunity;
- material reconstruction
- broad political solutions, including the acceptance of opposition parties;
- reconstruction of the social fabric (BBC, 2009).

In all of these daunting challenges, education will play a major role. Thus, the prioritising of educational reconstruction is likely to remain both a short- and long-term goal of the new unity government, in partnership with aid organisations and the wider international community. Moreover, once persuaded to return home, Zimbabwean teachers will need

skills in bringing together curricular, psychological and sociological concerns so as to create a positive and appropriate learning environment within the classroom. In turn, this will require a major departure from the traditional approach in teacher training where the main emphasis has been placed on regulatory measures.

## **6.2 Learning for the Zimbabwean case: insights into education for reconciliation and reconstruction.**

Having presented in the previous section some of the conclusions arrived at by authors who have studied the role of education in a range of war- and crisis-torn countries, this section places alongside these the specific conclusions to be drawn from the example of Zimbabwe. First, the particular characteristics of the Zimbabwean case are delineated, before six country-specific insights concerning education for reconciliation and reconstruction are set out.

There are many countries around the world in which there is oppression and abuse of human rights, including the use of child soldiers (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Bosnia) and the ordeals of torture, rape and mass-murder, and the targeting of education (such as universities in Bosnia, Rwanda, Liberia and Sierra Leone) (Phillips *et al.*, 1998). Common also in each of these cases – as in Zimbabwe – was the exercise of extreme political power.

In what ways, then, is the Zimbabwean case distinctive? A number of particular characteristics may be identified and these, in turn, will help to pinpoint some context-based lessons for educational reconstruction that may have use in future situations.

First, Zimbabwe stands out because it was a country that formerly had democracy, rule of law with an independent judiciary and media, and it was a wealthy country that could meet the economic and social needs of its people. As such, it also had one of the best education and health systems in Africa – a facet of the jewel that, on the eve of Independence, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania told the country to keep safe (Meredith, 2002, p. 15). These crucial assets have now mainly been lost due to the record of the Zanu PF one-party state.

Second, in Zimbabwe in 2005, for the first time since the terror of Pol Pot in Cambodia during 1975-1979, a mass of people have been rendered homeless as a deliberate policy of government, to be sent out into the countryside where they lacked shelter and food (Tibaijuka, 2005).

Third, ZANU PF under Robert Mugabe has maintained power by, uniquely, attempting to outlaw all opposition parties and their leaders as treasonable: Revd. Ndabaningi Sithole in the early 1980s (founder of the current ZANU PF); Dr Joshua Nkomo in the late 1980s (leader of PF Zapu) and Morgan Tsvangirai in the early 2000s (the current prime minister and leader of the MDC). All were sent for trial for treason and all were found not guilty. Meanwhile and alongside, ZANU PF has remained a military party despite running a

civilian government. As such and also uniquely, all of its main programmes have been militarised:

- Operation Gukurahundi ('Peoples' storm') in Matabeleland in the early 1980s (see section 2.2.2, above);
- Operation Chimumu (Silent arrests') in 2002 and 2004;
- Operation Maguta ('Feed the nation') in 2004;
- Operation Murambatsvina ('Clear out the dirt') in 2005;
- Operation Chkorokoza ('Stop gold panning') in 2006-07; and
- Operation Mavhoterapapi ('Who did you vote for') in 2008.

These military terms have been a constant source of tension in the country because the army is always in charge of such programmes and uses force where no such force is needed.

Fourth, Zanu PF has also used mass chanting repeatedly to generate a further source of tension. Slogans such as Pasi ne ('down with') or Pamberi ne ('forward with') are commonly used at Zanu PF rallies (where indeed, in reference to the author, mass chants of the slogan 'Pasi ne Bhebhe' have been incited). This is accompanied by a broader rhetoric of hate and blame, the latter often directed at the West (including in particular Britain, the former coloniser).

Fifth, some extreme acts of barbarism have been enforced such as the ordering of children to kill their parents, bury them and then dance on their grave. As a result, Zimbabwe has one of the highest rates of traumatised orphans. Others, especially during the period of

Gukurahundi, were ordered to dig their own graves before being buried alive (Bhebe, 2002a, Meredith, 2002, Stiff, 2000).

Finally and connected to the above, most Zimbabweans are suffering from a toxic residue of fear, anger and depression – in other words, a mass undiagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder. How does one prevent experiences such as torture and gang-rape from defining the rest of one's life? As one of my respondents put this: 'nothing fixes a thing in the memory so intensely as the wish to forget it. The axe forgets but not the tree' (Kezi, 22 June 2008).

This catalogue of Zimbabwe's particular traumas during the period since 1983 is the austere and distressing background against which it is now possible to advance six specific insights into the aspects of education for reconstruction and reconciliation arising from my study.

#### *Attending to stereotyping*

Teachers should see children they teach as children no matter their backgrounds and upbringing. Every teacher likes to think they are fair in the way they treat their students. I was no exception during my teaching days. However, during my field study in Zimbabwe in June/July 2008 and April/May 2009 student respondents repeatedly told me: 'Many of our teachers routinely indulge in stereotyping of the most blatant kind'. In particular, they pointed to issues of social class, a rural/urban divide and the way teachers tailored their expectations to the students' backgrounds. Thus children from 'slum and rural areas' were

always viewed as 'difficult to teach' and 'poor performers'. In contrast, when dealing with students from more affluent surroundings, a typical student respondent from my sample recalled teachers as saying things such as 'You feel you're accomplishing so much more' and 'the students know what you're talking about and are prepared to really think about it' (Harare, 11 April 2009).

Social class, and in some extreme cases political factors, continue to colour the attitude of teachers in some Zimbabwean schools. Related to this and perhaps most striking, was the bias that interviewees reported in marking by teachers when related to pupils' ethnicity. Thus I was told that children from minority ethnic backgrounds and slum areas often received lower marks from their classroom teachers than from 'blind' external assessments. Seemingly this was not least because teachers were influenced by the pattern of attainment of certain groups in the past such that it was on the basis of previous models or templates that they made their estimates of their current students' worth (Harare, 14 April 2009).

Of course, this is a not unknown problem in countries with developed economies and during my fieldwork there were reports of similar practices occurring in England. For example, a Bristol University study found that black pupils from African and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds often received lower marks from their own teachers than from external assessments (*TES Magazine*, 2010. 23 April, p. 2). Tutsi children have been reported as receiving similar treatment in Rwanda (Hodgkin, 2006).

Marking takes up much time and energy in many teacher' lives, yet it hardly ever comes up as a subject for in-service training in Zimbabwe (or, perhaps, elsewhere). Yet, as we

have seen, discrimination of this kind is particularly damaging in the context in which Zimbabwe finds itself.

*Attending to historic divides*

As many as 20,000 to 30,000 Ndebeles were murdered in just three years during the Gukurahundi period in the early 1980s, in a violence orchestrated by the extremist Shonas in government and carried out by the Fifth Brigade. Schools like Tsholotsho primary and many others in the region became places of refuge and then the venue for some of the worst massacres witnessed in Zimbabwe. Inevitably, the entire school system in the Matabeleland region and parts of the Midlands Province was massively affected by the massacres. Not only was much of the infrastructure destroyed, but it is estimated that more than 75 per cent of teachers during this period were either killed or were in jail for alleged participation in the so-called 'dissident' menace, with those few who remained deserting their schools and homes and leaving the whole region without any teachers (Bhebhe, 2002a, Meredith, 2002, Stiff, 2000). By the time of my fieldwork many years later it was reported to me that 70 per cent of children in this part of the country are believed to have witnessed violent injury or death during the massacres (Matobo, 19 April 2009).

The massacres stopped after the formation of a Unity government following the Unity Accord of December 22 1987 (*ibid*). At this juncture the new government had not only to react to the educational emergency prompted by the events of 1980-1987 but also to address the legacies of an education system that had been based on racial and ethnic inequality and discrimination since its inception.

In her research in Rwanda, Hodgkin found that ‘inequalities of opportunity and access based on ethnic or regional affiliation permeated the entire education system’. The same has been true in Zimbabwe and my research echoed that of Hodgkin who reported that ‘even more harmful in terms of social equality and stability was the extent to which many elements of the institutional structure, teacher and pupil behaviour, textbooks and curricula promoted ethnic division and hatred’ (Hodgkin, 2006, p. 201). One of my respondents recalled how, when a boy and in order to make a point as about ethnic difference, one of his teachers had divided the class along physiological lines: ‘he compared our complexion, ears, heights and bums. Then he placed us in groups: big bums and long ears to one side, dark complexion and short on the other’ (Masvingo, May 7, 2009). Strikingly, Hodgkin reports a very similar episode in her Rwanda fieldwork as told to her by a government minister:

The teacher asked us to stand in two lines face to face. He asked if we looked the same. We laughed because we had the same life, travelled to the same school, wore the same clothes. The teacher told us we were not the same: he compared our heights and noses. Then our class was divided: long noses on one side, flat noses on the other. We had not been aware of our ethnic identity...but after this incident we no longer played together with banana leaf footballs (2006, p. 201).

In the light of such legacies, it is clear that education has to play an entirely new role in helping pupils understand, accept and celebrate difference. Sadly, the context in Zimbabwe remains one in which a political rhetoric of hatred stimulates a fear of difference. There were more massacres after the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in September 1999, while after the rejection of the Constitutional Referendum in 2000 the

government responded with so much violence that more than 70 per cent of teachers left the country (Buckle, 2001; Stiff, 2000).

A key way to encourage political healing is for local councils to encourage community-based initiatives aimed at promoting reconciliation and community justice. Rwanda tried this through what is called 'Gacaca' ('Justice on the grass') and this is reported to have paid dividends (Hodgkin, 2006).

### *The words we use*

Words are important in our lives. The language we use and the stories we tell have great significance to all involved and this requires teachers and education authorities at all levels to be careful about what words they use when they teach children.

It is especially pertinent that Zimbabwean teachers should always mind their language, given its degradation at the hands of politicians. Of countless examples, Robert Mugabe once said about P.F. ZAPU and its leader the late Dr. Joshua Nkomo that they were 'like a cobra in the house. The only way to deal effectively with a snake is to strike and destroy its head' (Todd, 2007 p. 57).

The slogans commonly used recklessly by ZANU P.F. politicians such as Pasi ne ('down with') and Pamberi ne ('forward with') are both dangerous and destructive. People, schools and businesses have been destroyed by the use of Pasi ne against them. Many of my respondents deplored the use of such terms and called on the government to ban them, while others declared that one can only be safe and secure in a society that, not least through words, practises tolerance, cherishes harmony and can celebrate difference. Thus, educators have a particular responsibility in this regard. Words can carry a sense of hope and

possibility, or be associated with a sense of pessimism and low expectations, both of which can influence pupils profoundly.

### *Making poverty history*

Given the overt and underlying structural discrimination and divisive in equality in Zimbabwe, it is perhaps surprising that the international community has considered the country a development success story. Before 2000, Zimbabwe was seen as a model of macro economic development and considered the ‘bread basket of Africa’ by many NGOs. Zimbabwe was praised for expanding primary and secondary school enrolments and achieving gender parity in primary schools by 1990 (HoCIDC, 2010). Zimbabwe was one of the most aided countries in the world, receiving much more from the donors than from private investment commercial export revenues combined.

And yet, despite the presence of over 200 NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donor representatives in the country prior to 2000, none denounced the official racism and development of an increasingly divided society, ‘not even in the 1990s when it was clear that they were preparing for mass violence’, commented one of my respondents, a bishop of the Roman Catholic Church (Bulwayo, 13 July, 2008). In the years leading up to the violence, donor agencies adopted what one senior lecturer described to me as a policy of injustice, exclusion and prejudice in Zimbabwe notwithstanding, as a second respondent pointed out, their design and oversight by international experts.

The key problem was that in Zimbabwe, as in Rwanda (Hodgkin, 2006), ‘the development projects on which aid agencies embarked were depoliticized to such a degree that political instability and the evidence of human rights violations were simply considered to be outside their mandate’ (pp. 201-02). As such, donors operated an apolitical, technocratic bubble. The country was thus seen as a ‘development problem’ solvable through planning, infrastructural development and research but with development projects operating in the separate, parallel sphere, ‘concerned with their own internal dynamics but oblivious to the political and social trends that were fracturing the country’ (*ibid.*).

Meanwhile, economic and political breakdown intensified by the Aids pandemic, food shortages, the systematic destruction urban housing and livelihoods (under the terror of the Murambatsvina in 2005), and the collapse of social provision has almost halved Zimbabwean life expectancy over the past decade. In addition, political and economic mismanagement has destroyed jobs and livelihoods, disrupted health and education, and turned a large proportion of the population into economic migrants. Now that the political situation is improving donors need not only to sustain provision through NGOs, but also support public sector reform programmes in education and health, increase the resources at the disposal of the state, and strengthen the incentive systems that guarantee its efficiency and ability to serve the poor as well as the rich (see HoCIDC, 2010).

Restoring the productivity of the small and medium enterprise sector will also be essential, but difficult, given the availability of cheap imports. This sector has always played a key role in poverty alleviation, but often been discouraged by the state and suffered devastating

losses during the Murambatsvina campaign, when most small urban businesses were destroyed because of the support they gave to the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

The Government of National Unity (GNU) should have as its two overarching priorities the fostering of national reconciliation, not least through education, and poverty reduction. Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai reiterated this latter point in November 2009 at the close of a retreat where cabinet members and other top government officials discussed goals for the Government of National Unity. In a public statement Tsvangirai described poverty as a matter of 'grave concern' requiring 'urgent attention' and called for prioritization of poverty reduction in all government programmes (*The Herald*, 2009). Thus poverty reduction is a key part of the answer to a question posed by one of my interviewees, a widowed Zimbabwean woman's question: 'How can I forgive when my livelihood was destroyed and I cannot even pay for the schooling of my children, let alone feed them?' (Harare, September 20, 2008).

Her question is insightful because it implies that if someone would help her restore her livelihood, and help her pay for the schooling of her children as well as giving them food, the ground work would have been laid for the process of forgiveness and/or reconciliation to become thinkable. Indeed, many of my respondents put to me 'you can't eat peace, you can't eat reconciliation'-type arguments, especially those who suffered material loss through violence, whose property was destroyed or (in the case of farms) confiscated or who had seen the productive members of their families either die or put in prison. I include the government's poverty reduction strategy as one of the tools in Zimbabwe's reconciliation tool-kit because so many of my respondents made this key connection.

This implies, in turn, that part of the legacy of the violence in Zimbabwe is of a socio-economic nature, part of the solution to which lies in better educational opportunities. This also echoes current debate in South Africa, where political apartheid may have been abolished in 1994, but its economic twin lingers on. Indeed Alex Boraine, Desmond Tutu's deputy at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, is one of the most prominent proponents for the urgent need for economic justice/redistribution in South Africa (*The Sowetan*, August 15, 2008). Moreover, Peter Uvin argues in respect of Rwanda that, in a cumulative way, poverty, inequality, exclusion, prejudice and 'structural violence' fed into the dynamics of genocide – and that, as such, it follows that 'national unity and reconciliation' have as a necessary foundation notions of economic development, equality, participation, tolerance, human rights and the rule of law (Uvin, 1988).

*A National Unity and Reconciliation Commission.*

Although the country as a whole, including all my respondents, broadly welcomes the Global Political Agreement of 2008 that created the basis for the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU), the progress made since has been slow and important provisions have been ignored by some of the parties involved. In particular, adherence to the rule of law and respect for human rights are two very critical areas requiring urgent and significant improvement (HoCIDC, 2010).

Within this, the management of a process of reconciliation raises difficult issues about impunity and the right to retain politically acquired assets. The security services and their political masters have been responsible for serious political crimes including: the Matabeleland massacres in the 1980s; assassinations; illegal imprisonments and torture

over the past decade; and the illegal destruction of property during the Murambatsvina and Chikorokoza Chapera in 2005 and 2006, respectively. Most recently, the threat of legal action had ZANU PF lost the national poll of 2008 explains the level of violence during the last stage of these elections and, as several MDC officials and many community leaders in the country pointed out to me in interviews, this could also play a key role in the run up to the next elections.

Political leaders, donors and neighbouring countries will need to decide whether to accept a political settlement that would allow the beneficiaries of past crimes to retire and enjoy their wealth, as happened in South Africa. With impunity they might leave the public sphere without a struggle, but refuse this and they could destabilise the whole political settlement. Meanwhile, within Zimbabwe the challenge is to commence reconstruction in order to achieve better education, a higher standard of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment, more equality of opportunity, greater individual freedom, and a richer cultural life. This is a formidable task calling for sacrifice, vision, courage and relentless struggle against a multiplicity of forces which must be identified and tenaciously tackled.

In my judgment it also requires a formal process of reconciliation. This would be similar to the South African and Sierra Leonean Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCSA, 1995-2002; TRCSL, 2005) and the main aim would be to allow the perpetrators of violence to reflect on their past activities and analyse the present situation in order to prepare for the future. The processes involved would include the

organisation of meetings, conferences and workshops on the theme of Unity and Reconciliation. These, it may be envisaged, could culminate in national summits where Zimbabweans from all levels of society and all walks of life, including representatives from Zimbabwe's diaspora community would be present.

This National Unity and Reconciliation Commission would also be involved in workshops targeted at those segments of the population undergoing 'civic' re-education programmes. Demobilised soldiers, child soldiers, militias, party activists and released prisoners would attend such workshops. Also war veterans would be required to attend. Seminars for education administrators and teachers would be organised to discuss educational reforms. These would attempt to go deeper than simple yet admirable administrative and operational transformation in education. The whole ethos and philosophy of schooling would be discussed and debated in an effort to change it for the better, not least through a general government policy of national unity, reconciliation and healing being firmly instituted within the education system.

From the national to the local and community level, the aims of education, pupils' learning and the hidden curriculum would be scrutinized and systematically reformulated. Similarities, rather than differences would be given strong emphasis at these seminars and the focus, as in Rwanda, would be on a progressive future driven by traditional values of *ubumwe* ('unity', 'solidarity') and *ubuntu* ('nobility of heart', 'goodness', 'courage', and 'respect for the ancestors') (Hodgkin, 2006, p. 203). The government would be urged at these seminars to focus much of its energy, and resources

on creating a new national identity that transcends the historical divides of Karanga, Ndebele, Manyika, Shona and Varungu (English). Rwandan efforts in this regard have yielded many beneficial results (*ibid.*). 'Graduating' ceremonies would be held at the conclusion of Commission sessions, to which senior government and political party officials and the press would be invited, with participants performing plays or make statements of commitment to the merits and aims of unity and reconciliation, and how they looked forward to living in a united and peaceful Zimbabwe.

*'Culture', reconciliation and collective memory.*

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has estimated that a million farm-workers and their families in Zimbabwe lost their homes and livelihoods as a result of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) inaugurated in 2000. A further 700,000 people were made homeless by the urban demolitions of Operation Murambatsvina (clear the filth') in 2005 (Tibaijuka, 2005). In late 2006 and early 2007 the Government destroyed the homes of thousands of informal mine workers in Operation Chikorokoza Chapera (stop the gold panning'). Estimates of the displacement caused by electoral violence in 2008 range from 36,000 to 200,000 people (see IDMC, n.d.).

A substantial proportion of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have been displaced multiple times by successive operations. For example, many people who escaped from the Matabeleland and Midlands Provinces during the Gukurahundi period and went to Harare were later caught up in other operations. Many displaced farm-workers who went to towns and cities or to mining areas were later caught up in Operation Murambatsvina or Operation Chikorokoza Chapera. Some of the people who were internally displaced have since left

Zimbabwe and are included in the estimate of three to four million migrants (*ibid*). Each of these displacements has caused much misery and suffering among those affected. Schools were seriously disrupted and many families ended up in the streets as beggars, a culture that is foreign to Zimbabwe.

While academic historians debate contested points of Zimbabwean history (Stiff, 2000) and there is, as in Rwanda, professional recognition that there will never be one definitive history of Zimbabwe, the government's populist message is more linear and less nuanced' (Hodgkin, 2006). Yet, also as in Rwanda, there is a multiplicity of social identities and a multiplicity of understandings of the past among: survivors; perpetrators; Ndebele, Manyika, Karanga and Shona; returnees; the educated elite; and illiterate farmers. As such, and as Hodgkin argues in the context of Rwanda, an 'official' truth or the creation of a single narrative and interpretation, is likely to deny or repress the memories of each distinctive grouping within a traumatised society. The negative impact imposing such a narrative of reconciliation in Zimbabwe is also likely to be exacerbated by the authoritarian nature of the current government which has yet to welcome unequivocally 'freedom of expression and to democratic rights accorded among those of different shades of opinion' (*ibid*. pp. 204-05).

In recognition both of past suffering and of the heterogeneity of the present, monuments, memorials and museums, as 'institutional embodiments of collective memory' should be thought of as part of the reconciliation process, as in the case of Rwanda (Zorbas, 2004). Cultural products of various kinds, such as films, novels and national holidays can also be recognised as part of this exercise in collective memory. A national day of mourning could

also be created intended to refresh and foster collective memory for the victims of Gukurahundi, Operation Murambatsvina, Operation Chikorokoza Chapera and the 2008 Parliamentary and Presidential elections. At the national level, each year a site could be chosen from which services would be held to remember the victims of the violence, led by the Prime Minister or President. At provincial and district levels, governors and district administrators could lead similar ceremonies at Provincial and District levels respectively.

Such ideas remain at an early stage. When asked for views, my respondents were varied in their thoughts. Some hard-core ZANU P.F. respondents considered an annual national day of mourning to be an 'obstacle to unity', perhaps taking the view that forgetting the past was the best way to 'move on'. But as has already been described above, others considered that forgetting would constitute a victory for perpetrators and that memory was the best safeguard against a recurrence of mass violence.

### **6.3 Education for peaceful co-existence and tolerance - a universal viewpoint**

If these are some of the specific goals and activities that might be pursued within a Zimbabwean programme of education for reconstruction and reconciliation, what wider and more universal insights has this study identified?

Nohas Angula, who was to become the first Minister of Education in independent Namibia, wrote in 1986, that schools should 'aim at fostering patriotic culture, national unity, respect and appreciation of the Namibian culture, love for work, personal integrity, pan-Africanism and a progressive outlook towards humanity' (cited in Norkville, 1995, p.365).

Namibia had been under the illegal occupation of South Africa from 1915 to 1990 at which point independence and democracy were achieved. Education policy prior to independence had mirrored the apartheid education system with ethnic and racial separation allied with highly unequal provision for the different groups. At independence there was a move to establish English as the language of instruction in schools, despite the fact that Afrikaans was more widely spoken, was the common language in most education regions of the country and was the language in which most schoolbooks were published (Jansen, 1995). More generally, a new curriculum was introduced with great speed: the curriculum itself was finalised in six weeks. While a variety of factors influenced the scope and speed of these changes after independence, in a manner contrary to the government's commitment otherwise to consultation, Jansen (1995) suggests that the main reason for this approach was to demonstrate a change from the apartheid status quo as quickly as possible. There were, Jansen suggested, few ways in which the new government could materially signal a fundamental step away from the old regime, but education provided one such method.

Chatfield (1986) proposed that education for peace and peaceful co-existence should include three major components, namely, judicial order, associated, with the Latin word 'paxi,' ethical social relationships, conveyed by the Greek word 'irene'; and well-being that flows from spiritual wholeness, intimated by the Hebrew word 'shalom'. Thus, concludes, Chatfield, education for peace must include learning and instruction that allude to the upholding of law and order, the promotion of positive social relationships, and the development of psychological and spiritual well being. Meanwhile, Virens

(2003) has described education for peaceful co-existence as resembling in its methodology other forms of problem-oriented education, such as development education, environment education and human rights education. According to Virens, education for peaceful coexistence, tolerance and understanding needs careful justification, and must be legitimized as an integral part of the school curriculum by pointing out its importance for the lives of pupils in the school setting, as well as in the wider society. As a part of values education, peace education must be imparted in the affective domain by experiential learning and instruction that appeals to the pupils' feelings and their authentic daily needs rather than to their rational and cognitive judgements.

Several scholars have taken these broad principles and analysed the kinds of organisational practices that are implied and have been tried. Iram (2001) described education for peace and tolerance as an integral part of multicultural education in heterogeneous societies, where different population groups live together and interact. Thus peace education deals, first and foremost, with the prevention of racism, discrimination, inequality, unfairness, injustice and segregation. After preventative measures have been put in place in the peace education programmes of heterogeneous societies, positive measures - such as the promotion of equality, understanding, tolerance, citizenship, co-existence and peace - can be added to the peace education curriculum. Steiner-Khamsi (2003) advocates that, in sectoral societies, peace education must move away from educational approaches that tend to see each pupil as a representative of a specific nation, race, ethnicity or religion. Instead, peace education must emphasize multicultural settings based on communality of values, identity, equality and intergroup cooperation and understanding. For example, in Rwanda, the Ministry

of Education has emphasised as essential to the process of reconciliation that children should see themselves as part of a larger entity, namely Rwandans, as opposed to seeing themselves as part of a particular tribe or ethnic group (TES, 1995). In different European cities, refugee students from Bosnia after the 1992 war, founded clubs to look worldwide for available places to study and for possible funding and scholarships. In these clubs Muslims, Croats and Serbs worked together in spite of their ethnic and religious differences (See Phillips *et al.*, 1998 p. 18).

According to Grossman *et al.*, (1997), increasing pro-social actions undertaken within the school in order to promote friendships, coexistence, tolerance, conflict-resolution and inter-group understanding can bring about the prevention of negative behaviour within and outside the school. Educators agree that inter-group communication and understanding need to be included in the school programme to address the problem of inter-group alienation and friction, which can lead to frustration, a breakdown of discipline, and even classroom upheaval and violence. De Jong (1994) concluded that researchers agree that interventions that stress the value of peaceful coexistence, tolerance, conflict-resolution and inter-group skills can lead to understanding and empathy between, heterogeneous groups and pupils. Educational administrators and policy-makers insist that any educational programme that promotes peaceful coexistence and conflict - resolution between groups and pupils should always emphasize prevention (Giuliano, 1994).

Thus there seems to be agreement among researchers who have studied the different aspects of education for peaceful coexistence that carefully prepared educational interventions

designed to promote tolerance and understanding, are important for the promotion of peace education within national school systems. Prevention can be achieved by implementing suitable peace education programmes, and different pupil groups can be taught to come to terms with each other through these educational means.

African traditional societies are community centred and their philosophy is based on the maintenance of balance, or equilibrium between human beings and their environment...All members of the community are expected to show a spirit of collective responsibility mutual obligations and solidarity...The collective community good and sacredness of life provide the ethical foundation of human rights and respect for the environment... (SONED, 1991, p. 36). Basic to all African cultures, however, is a close relationship between mankind and nature (Mazrui, 1986, p. 63).

These quotations summarise the traditional African attitude and belief towards nature and its Creator. They also emphasize the awareness of dependence on nature's gifts and the need for sustainability. African religions were in fact tailored to create this awareness and articulate the relationship between human beings, nature and the Creator. The spirit of sustainable coexistence is therefore, deeply rooted in the minds of traditional indigenous Africans and this explains the great influence of tropical ecology and climate on African traditions, cultures and technology. Traditional Africans believed they were part and NOT the controllers of nature and therefore evolved their way of life in response to the environment in which they lived.

Our education system needs to do much more in this area for the sake of peace in the country. Pupils attending government, council, mission and private schools should

participate in programmes designed to promote peaceful co-existence, tolerance and understanding among all sectors of Zimbabwean society, as part and parcel of their routine school activities. While little to date has been done on this score, the education system should gear itself to promote those values vital for cohesion and coherence across Zimbabwean society. The time to do this is now.

For example, in religious education in Zimbabwe today teachers often invite children to portray conflict situations where aggression against the wicked is quite normal, which serve as the raw material for discussion. Yet Taoism preached the idea of co-existing with nature and urged the Chinese people of two and a half millennia ago to return to nature, while contemporary Confucianism took a more pragmatic approach by teaching the principles that can maintain social order while also emphasising the importance of regulating one's life with peace, justice and harmony in the wider society (WTBTS, 1990). Such teaching is not far removed from traditional African spirituality. Meanwhile, Christianity points to two other elements that are central to any theory of education for peace – the violence-reducing strategies of Jesus and his peace-oriented symbolic actions. Both are expressions of what, in contemporary Zimbabwe, would comprise a values revolution. The first element may be illustrated from Matthean texts:

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they will be called children of God (Matthew 5:9).

You have heard it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you; 'do not resist an evil-doer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile (Matthew 5:38-42).

You have heard that it was said, 'you shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy'. But I say to you, Love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you ... Matthew 5:43-45).

Among several forms of violence-reducing methods, the way of 'self stigmatizing' in the examples quoted above has two co-existing interrelated effects highly relevant to advocated of peaceful co-existence and tolerance. The aggressor expects resistance because the normal reaction in human life and history is to beat back, but the retaliatory reaction does not happen - to the surprise of the aggressor, whose demands are voluntarily surpassed. Both forms of behaviour - to be able to do without counter - violence and to surpass the demands of the aggressor - can irritate the other very much. Viewed in terms of role behaviour, the person who is supposed to accept the role of a passive victim refuses this role by undermining it in an act of freedom. The weak becomes the strong in a new, unexpected way: his responses are examples of what has been called a 'paradox intervention' (see Lankton, 2004, p. 97).

In therapy, paradox interventions are well known and often applied: both Ghandhi and Martin Luther King successfully used them in their political struggles, the latter remarking that 'peace is not the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice' (Stiff, 2000, p. 1). Nelson Mandela too used them in his fight against apartheid in South Africa. This behaviour pattern can be taught as an element within anti-violence strategies and peace education can integrate and practise them. In political conflicts 'non violence' has become a powerful instrument against bloody oppression. To a large extent, the breakdown of the socialist regime in the German Democratic Republic in 1989 was caused by peace demonstrations, later called 'candle demonstrations' (Nipkow, 2006).

Finally, a second non-aggressive step against violence is provided by symbolic actions. In contrast to the military strength paraded in the route marches of the Roman army, a famous symbolic action of Jesus was his entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, according to the prophetic announcement:

Lo, your King comes to you, triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey (Zechariah 9:9).

Jesus confronted the world with the message of forgiveness and practised it in loving inclusion. Education for reconstruction and reconciliation in Zimbabwe demands no less of its architects and practitioners.

## Epilogue

In this study, I have tried to trace the roots, causes and potential solutions to the crisis facing education and the wider society in Zimbabwe. Theology, history, economics, democracy and dictatorship have all played significant roles in bringing Zimbabwe to this cross roads. My premise from the beginning has been that extremism thrives under dictatorship and is fueled by poverty, ignorance and hopelessness. The extremist threat within Zimbabwean society and the antagonism it has created between Zimbabwe and the West can be solved, but to solve it we will need to address through education all or most of the factors that allowed it to arise and have fed it since.

I appreciate that what I propose may seem a daunting and even impossible task. Yet I make these recommendations because the times require a transformation of a *status quo* that has brought with it poverty, ignorance, hopelessness, violence and dictatorship in the country. There has been enough pain. It is now time for reconstruction and reconciliation.

Some may argue that this will simply reopen wounds and that my study should not be allowed to see the light of day. It may also be argued that this chapter of Zimbabwe's history should be buried in the hope that all of the residual hurt and suffering will lessen over time. This line of argument assumes that wounds have healed and that the residual suffering is minor. But my evidence from the field contradicts that notion: the wounds have not healed. Indeed many of the wounds are festering and need sunlight and treatment if they are to heal – conditions which begin with education.

This thesis affirms everything that those who killed our loved ones and almost totally destroyed our country could never understand: democracy, tolerance, rationality, hope and above all, the message of true Christian living. Or maybe they did understand these things and feared them and, thus fearing, murdered those who were the fanatics' worst nightmare.

Nothing can lessen our grief or mend our broken hearts. The tears, loss, loneliness, longing to be with the loved ones – to hear their voices and to receive their guidance – all of this will be part of our souls forever. We who loved those who died will always love them even in their graves. And we keep on fighting for the things in which they so strongly believed and for which they were willing to risk their lives.

Through our schools, colleges and universities we will continue to battle for democracy and for the extinction of extremism, violence and hatred. We commit our lives to making the findings of this study their legacy and the future of a democratic Zimbabwe. We seek to improve the social, educational, economical and political status of all Zimbabweans, whoever they are and wherever they live but, more important, we will work through education to create a mentality of self-reliance among our people, a mentality of non-violent struggle for human rights.

This land, this Zimbabwe, does not belong either to Ndebeles or Shonas; nor does it belong to one political party. Rather we are compatriots who belong to the land and to each other. If we cannot live together, we surely will be buried here together. We must choose life rather than death - hence this study.

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## Appendix A

### Managing raw data: creating contextual categories and undertaking thematic analysis of fieldwork data.

#### Creating contextual categories

In section 3.2.4 mention is made of the large dataset that resulted from the fieldwork for this study. In order to interrogate these data systematically and, from this, to derive secure thematic areas of analysis, three techniques were deployed to create contextual categories: creation of grids of key factors in the experience of interview respondents; tracking of political movements of state-sponsored violence; and mind-mapping the dynamics of violence during the period of the fieldwork.

#### Key factors in the experience of interviewees

The key factors identified among the experiences of the 190 interview respondents were those which it was thought would best inform a range of principles for discussion in the findings chapter with respect to the role of education in reconciliation and reconstruction in war-torn and crisis-damaged countries. The results were as follows.

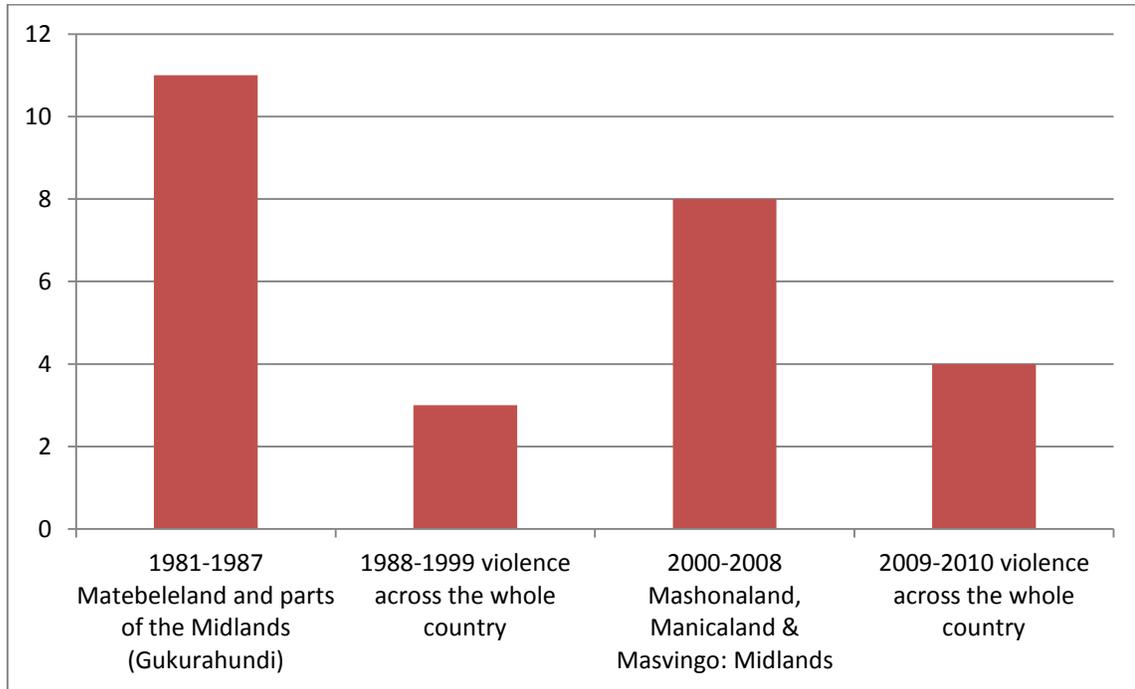
Desire for peace and reconciliation	Violence victims	Torture victims	Rape victims	Other victims
n = 171	n = 119	n = 79	n = 81	n = 40

The majority of those interviewed wanted peace and reconciliation despite the personal violence they had experienced. Many violence victims ended up being either tortured, raped or imprisoned, killed or jailed. These were the experiences out of which themes representative of respondents' views were formed. Most Zimbabweans are peace loving which explains the high number of those interviewed who wanted peace and reconciliation.

#### Tracking of political movements: the geographical incidence of state-sponsored violence

Political movements resulting in state-sponsored violence were tracked through charts which gave a clear visual impression. Violence started in the Matabeleland region and parts of the Midlands in the early 1980s in which more than 20,000 people were killed (*Gukurahundi*). Peace returned to the country after the signing of the Unity Accord in December 1987 between Robert Mugabe and the late Joshua Nkomo. However, after the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 violence return to the country in full force. The climax of this violence was during the 2008 elections in which many people were killed, reinforcing the point that there has not

been peace in the country since the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Below are charts depicting these movements of state-sponsored violence.



*Y axis = approximate relative intensity of episodes of violence.*

*Mind-mapping dynamics of violence during the period of fieldwork*

Coloured mind maps became an important means by which I made sense of the context of my data in terms of the patterns of violence occurring during the course of the fieldwork. These were schematic maps that became diagrammatic representations in my mind of the intensity of regional violence in a country which, during 2008-10, was experiencing incidences of at least low-level violence nationwide. Below is how these maps were schematised.

- Hot spots were coloured Red.
- Places where the most people had been murdered or killed were painted Black.
- Places there was relative peace were painted White.
- Those areas free from any recent form of violence prior to field visits were painted Green.

These representations kept changing as the violence moved from one area to another such that a clear picture of the dynamics of violence within the country was constructed in 'real time'.

### **Thematic analysis of fieldwork data**

Material for this study was collected through qualitative data methods. Such material is, in its raw form, normally unstructured and unwieldy. A high proportion of the material for this study was text based, consisting of verbatim transcriptions of interviews or discussions, field notes or other written documents. The internal content of the material was detailed and in micro form (e.g. accounts of experiences, descriptions of interchanges, observations of interactions, etc.). As a qualitative researcher, I had to provide some coherence and structure out of this cumbersome data set while retaining a hold of the original accounts and observations from which the material was derived. All this had implications for the methods of analysis which were developed.

As qualitative data analysis is essentially about detection and the tasks of defining, categorizing, theorizing, explaining, exploring and mapping, these also played a major role in my own analysis. The method used for data analysis was such that it facilitated some detection and allowed certain functions to be performed. These functions varied depending on the research questions being addressed, but, certainly, the following were included:

- Defining the concepts: understanding internal structures.
- Mapping the range, nature and dynamics of phenomena, most notably the disruption to education caused by systemic violence.
- Creating typologies: categorising different types of attitudes, behaviours, motivations etc., e.g. why all of a sudden is Zimbabwe such a violent country or what has motivated people to kill?
- Finding associations: between experiences and attitudes, between attitudes and behaviours, and between circumstances and motivations.
- Seeking explanations: explicit or implicit.
- Developing new theories or strategies concerning the role of education in reconstruction and reconciliation.

Through this set of functions, an analytical 'framework' was developed to help in the understanding of the role of education in national reconstruction and reconciliation, not only in Zimbabwe but in all conflict ridden countries. When all the data had been sifted and charted according to the core themes that came to structure Chapter 5, the researcher began to pull together key characteristics of the data and to map and interpret the data set as a whole. Although contextual categories, associations and patterns were noted and recorded during initial indexing and charting phases – such as methods of torture, torture victims, rape victims – the serious and systematic process of analysing the entire fieldwork dataset was now undertaken. Data was loosely coded under provisional headings until the eight broad principles reported in section 5.2 became settled as both the dominant themes and those with the

most explanatory power. This process was one of trial and error to begin with until such time as the key principles began to hold their own as the analysis 'saturated' all of the available data.

As a way of concluding my remarks on data analysis, I wish to stress that the analysis method described in this study is just one approach for synthesising and interpreting data. Although it does accommodate all features I believe to be important for a study of this kind, there are certainly other approaches that would equally satisfy these requirements. Only in recent years have qualitative researchers considered it essential to make accessible accounts of their use of analytic tools. It is therefore important that, as a commonplace, individual researchers provide documentation of their methods and techniques of analysis. This is important in relation to the subject-matter of this study. Too few precise accounts of methodology are provided in the 'grey literature' of aid agencies, think tanks and supra-national organisations outside formal studies designed and carried out within higher education. Only by such systematic reporting will the research and policy community widen its pool of analytic knowledge and extend its methodological base.

## **Appendix B**

### **Preliminary postal questionnaire (2008)**

1. What do you believe are the most serious problems facing Zimbabwe today?
2. What is the impact of these problems on the lives of Zimbabweans?
3. What kind of country would you like Zimbabwe to be in five years' time?
4. Why are most people fleeing from your area? How can this be stopped?
5. Why would some people not like your future and how would you respond to them?
6. What are some good points about your future?
7. What should be done about Zimbabwe's economic, political and social problems?
8. What lesson have we learned from South Africa about solving political and social problems?
9. How should we be involved as a country in problems of the rest of Africa?
10. What kind of future do you want to live in?
11. How do you want the International Community to be involved in Zimbabwe's problems?
12. What role, in your opinion, can education play in the processes of reconstruction and reconciliation in Zimbabwe?

## Appendix C

### Example of the field-based semi-structured interview schedule

#### 1. Background / biographical

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- What is the name of this area?
- How long have you lived in this area?
- Are you married?
- How many children do you have?
- What work do you do?

#### 2. Political context

- Are you a member of any political party?
- Which political party is dominant in this area?
- What is the biggest problem faced by people in this area?
- What help do you get from government?
- Apart from the government, do you get any help from other sources? If so, which ones?

#### 3. Problems of and violence in the country

- Zimbabwe was one of the best countries in Africa. What do you think went wrong?
- What should Zimbabweans do to solve their problems?
- How widespread is violence in this part of the country
- Who, in your opinion, is behind this violence?

#### 4. Education

- What is the state of education in the country?
- Zimbabwe had one of the best education systems in Africa. What do you think went wrong? How can what went wrong be corrected?

#### 5. Health and Agriculture

- What is the state of health and agriculture in the country?
- Zimbabwe sat the bread basket of Africa. Why is there shortage of food in the country?

6. Reconstruction and reconciliation

- Do you blame anybody for the problems that the country is facing? Why?
- What do you think is the best way forward for Zimbabwe?
- Have you heard about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? In what country was it? Do you think it produced the desired results in that country?
- Do you think Zimbabwe should have a Truth and Reconciliation Commission similar to the one in South Africa?
- What lessons, if any, should Zimbabwe learn from the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
- What role can education play in all of this?

7. The International Community

- How should the International Community be involved in solving Zimbabwe's problems?
- What role should South Africa play in helping Zimbabwe to resolve its problems?