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Community-Based Development: A Study of Nhimbe practice in Zimbabwe

By

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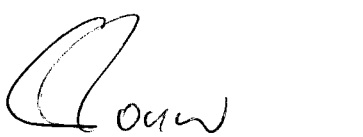
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

JULY 2014

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that he has read and recommended to the Department of Development Studies in the Faculty of Humanities at Witwatersrand University for acceptance of this thesis entitled: *Community-Based Development: A Study of Nhimbe Practice in Zimbabwe* by Pindai Mangwanindichero Sithole. The research work is in fulfillment for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Development Studies.

Sign:



Date: 30 July 2014

Dr. Stephen Louw, Supervisor

DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this thesis is my original research work. It has never been submitted by anyone for the award of other degree or diploma in any college or university. Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.



_____ Date: 30 July 2014

Pindai Mangwanindichero Sithole

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DEDICATION

I warmly dedicate this thesis to my late parents who always encouraged me to study and provided resolute support throughout my life during their lifetime. To sum up their conviction and the value they placed on education, my father, *Musindo Durban Mangwanindichero Sithole*, aspired that I became a teacher while my mother, *Makurudzeni Sithole* wanted me to be a medical doctor. Indeed, I sincerely express my appreciation for their lasting love and inspiration for the furthering of my education.

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ABSTRACT

The researcher was most motivated to undertake this study by his own experience in nhimbe practice and community-based development (CBD) work. A variety of factors contribute to a successful or failure of CBD initiatives in rural communities and these include knowledge, skills, community culture or values, type of project, internally or externally driven, financial and material resources. To date, at least in the literature, very little evidence is available to inform development agencies about the relationships among these factors and their effects to CBD in specific communities. Furthermore, not much is known about the contributions community-based or traditional practices like *nhimbe* make to community development. Similar practices in other parts of the world were reviewed in this study: *Study Circle* in Sweden; *Milpa* in Mexico; *Harambee* in Kenya; and *Chilimba* in Zambia.

This was a qualitative study and the purpose was to establish what *nhimbe* is and how it contributes to economic and social life of the three communities studied in Zimbabwe namely Gambiza, Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho. Oral tradition, interviews, focus group discussions and participant observations were among the data collection methods used to get views from key informants, traditional leaders and members of the communities. A total of 158 respondents participated in the study across the three communities studied.

The study revealed that nhimbe is a community internal mechanism people use to assist each other on emergency livelihoods and long-term planning development initiatives alike. In other words, it is an affective practice which is hinged on social capital found among members of the community particularly inter-household bonds, reciprocity, trust, solidarity and peace. *Nhimbe* is couched in the culture and socio-moral fibre of the community. The study discovered that, for the most part, the practice contributes to the social and economic life of communities. Additionally, the study findings showed that there is a strong relationship between the practice and the cultural framework of a community in which it is practised. Apart from social capital, other theories that manifest in the *nhimbe* practice include people-centred approach and appreciative inquiry.

On the whole, the study achieved its purpose and the findings presented were adequate to resolve the research problem, propositions and the questions. A nhimbe related theory was developed from the study called *Organised Community Cultural Capital for Development (OCCCD)*. Some of the factors for a strong nhimbe in a community include homogeneity, strong inter-household bonds, a community is far away from a town, shared community values, and active role of traditional leaders in community development. For a weak nhimbe they are heterogeneity, weak inter-household bonds, less traditional leaders' involvement and close to an urban centre.

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ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
ACD	Asset -Based Community Development
Ad	Adult members of the community
AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
AI	Appreciative Inquiry
CA	Community Apprenticeship
CBD	Community Based Development
CBPP	Community Based Philanthropic Practice
CC	Community Culture
CCA	Community Contextualized Analysis
CDP	Community Development Practitioners
CE	Community Elders
CLSC	Chautauqua Library and Scientific Circles
CP	Community Patriotism
CPD	Community Patriotism to Development
CPOC	Community members' Patriotism to their own Culture
CRM	Common Resource Management
CS	Community Sociology
CSMC	Community Socio-moral Campass
CVM	Community Validation Meetings
DFID	Department for International Development
DRoD	Diminishing Return on Development
EFSS	Extended Family Support System
F	Female
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GZ	Gambiza
HC	Human Capital
HF	Human Factor
IKCD	Indigenous Knowledge Capital for Development
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge System
K-GZ	Key Informant in Gambiza
KII	Key Informant Interview
K-MSK	Key Informant in Musikvanhu
K-TSH	Key Informant in Tsholotsho
LEDC	Less Economically Developed Countries
LRAs	Local Research Assistants
M	Male

Acronym	Meaning
M and E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSK	Musikavanhu
NBCD	Need Based Community Practice
OCCCD	Organised Community Cultural Capital for Development
OR	Oral History
OR-GZ	Oral Historian in Gambiza
OR-MSK	Oral Historian in Musikavanhu
OR-TSH	Oral Historian in Tsholotsho
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PC	People-centred
PK	Professional Key Informant
PO	Participant Observation
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRA	Principal Research Assistant
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SC	Study Circle
SC	Social Capital
SDA	School Development Association
Slip	Strengths, Limitations, insights and Potential
SV	Studiefobundet Vuxenskolan
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TSH	Tsholotsho
USA	United State of America
VH	Village Heads
Y	Youth
Yad	Young Adult
Y-GZ	Youth in Gambiza
Y-MSK	Youth in Musikavanhu
Y-TSH	Youth in Tsholotsho

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Chapter objectives

The main objective of this chapter is to introduce nhimbe, being the subject matter of this study, through:

- Providing background to the study;
- Stating the research problem;
- Pointing out the purpose and significance of the study;
- Discussing the study limitations, delimitations and bias; and
- Outlining the organisation of the study.

1.2 Background and trigger for the study

I was born in 1966 and grew up in the rural areas of Chipinge District in Manicaland province, Zimbabwe. Chipinge is among communities in Zimbabwe that practise *nhimbe*. In the limited literature available, *nhimbe* is described as a community work party through which households help each other with extra labour normally during farming seasons (Leedy 2010, Mbenene et al 2010 and Shutt 2001). It is clear from the literature that the authors view *nhimbe* narrowly as fundamentally a labour supply practice in the community. Although Gelfand (1979) and Mbenene and others (2010) attempted to analyse *nhimbe* from a social perspective, no one has explored the socialisation phenomenon of the practice as this study has demonstrated particularly in chapters six and seven. Related to the socialisation imbedded in the practice, nhimbe is also regarded as an indigenous knowledge system (Thompson 2010), an aspect which is

discussed at length in Chapter Two, section 2.2 of this thesis. As would be seen in Chapter Eight, *nhimbe* is couched in the community culture and hence, one of the conclusions from the study is that the practice is an organised cultural capital for community development (OC^3D).

Like any other children in the community, my elder brother, sister and two cousins who stayed with us and I would often help my parents with farming activities, among other household chores sometimes through a *nhimbe* arrangement. In retrospect, the farming activities where *nhimbe* was applied included pre-planting preparation of land, planting, weeding, harvesting and storing of grain in the granaries. Often, the most exciting aspect for me was when at times our neighbours joined us to work in the fields normally for half a day or sometimes the whole day. In the same way, my parents, sister, brother and cousins also assisted our neighbours with their farming activities. As was the norm regarding the role and responsibilities of children in the community, we would also assist our neighbours to herd their livestock. The community assistance on livestock was usually given to households who did not have children of their own or where children were not old enough to take on such a responsibility. In some instances, a household could have children who were old enough but had a large herd of livestock beyond the capacity of their children and this required help from the community members. I always got thrilled whenever we helped our neighbours with their farming activities and livestock management as this simultaneously provided me with ample opportunities to play with other children in the community. It has become clear to me that *nhimbe* is not ad hoc practice but a well organised community assistance framework with economic and social objectives to enhance and sustain livelihoods. In the *nhimbe* practice, it was not just one neighbour who helped us but a group of representatives from various families in our village.

Reflecting back on my community life, I have always been curious why social and work life in my community was organized that way, that is, through a *nhimbe* arrangement. In essence, I never really understood why we had to go and work in the fields of our neighbours including management of livestock for some of the households. What stuck to my mind is how this collective community action called *nhimbe* came about. Based on my personal observations, I have also been questioning why almost everyone in the community felt strongly socially obligated to help one another. Furthermore, I have been wondering *what consequences one could face if he/she did not uphold the community value of helping others*. Another question I have been grappling with is, *what economic and social benefits were or are derived from this practice at individual, householdand community levels*? Although these questions occasionally crossed my mind then, I never seriously pursued them at the time perhaps because I was born into that way of life and, naturally, I took it as the norm. The fact that I was young at that time, could further explain why my involvement in the community collective life routine through the *nhimbe* practice never became a concern in my life.

One day in 1979 when I was 13 years old, I remember vividly asking my mother why sometimes our neighbours helped us in the fields with what I considered to be sincere commitment, enthusiasm and compassion. She answered, "Because you, your brother, your sister, and your two cousins are young, inexperienced in farming and besides we are too few to execute the multitude of our household work; so we won't meet our farming targets if we continue to work alone in our fields without the assistance of our neighbours. If we don't meet our targets, you know what it means; it means you will not have food to eat; do you like to experience that situation?" Focusing on the last part of her answer, I shook my head in expression that indeed we should never run out of food in our home. Nyaumwe and Mkabela (2007:155) observe the cooperation spirit in Southern African communities in relation to food security that "At the beginning of summer

the genuine needs of all families in a community were to plant crops timeously in order to avert famine." I wonder if my mother's explanation is similar to what Nyaumwe and Mkabela 27 years later referred to as "cooperation spirit in Southern African communities".

A close examination of my mother's response reveals three things: Firstly, that as children we were considered to be letting our parents down by not working to their expected standards. Secondly, what was happening in my family is typical of the survivalistic nature of small scale farming in Zimbabwe rural households and the difficulty associated with it to ensure livelihood viability. Finally, that every time community members came to help us with our farming activities it was not, as I always thought, just time for parents and children to socialise but also a planned strategy to ensure household food security in the village. My mother's explanation why community members sometimes helped us particularly on the food security aspect motivated my siblings, cousins and I to always work hard in the fields and on any other tasks that our parents would assign us to do at home and in the community through or without the *nhimbe* arrangement.

Although the conversation I held with my mother clarified why members of our community would sometimes help one another, I still wanted to know what that practice contributed to the lives of people in the community beyond food security. In 1980, two years later and at the age of 14, I asked my mother another question regarding what that act of helping one another was called in our local Shona dialect called *Ndau*. To this, she said it was called *humwe* or *mukote* while in standard Shona it is known as *nhimbe*. She did not elaborate what the three terms really meant and this left me with yet another curiosity for thirty-one years that followed. Notably, my participation in nhimbe decreased significantly when I went to a boarding high school. Additionally, I completely never participated in nhimbe from the time when I worked as an unqualified primary school teacher in Chipinge district from 1989 to 1991. Apart from absence of

active involvement in the *nhimbe* practice, my interaction with communities who practise it was totally cut off when I went to do my undergraduate studies in the United States of America from 1991 to 1995.

My professional work as a development consultant from 1998 to 2009 revived my curiosity and interest about the *nhimbe* practice. As a result, I discovered that there are similar traditional practices in other countries which have been documented and are being applied today as strategies for community-based development. The similar practices examined in this study are the *Study Circle* in Sweden, *Milipa* in Mexico, *Harambee* in Kenya and *Chilimba* in Zambia. The realisation that these practices are well documented and used for development triggered me to explore the *nhimbe* practice in relation to community development beyond what I already knew from my experience when I was growing up in Chipinge. In particular, these practices play dual roles, that is, they define economic and social life of the community in which it is practised. Furthermore, as Chapter Two shows, there is a strong relationship between the underpinnings of each practice and the socio-moral compass of the community. Accordingly, I started to question the rationale of *nhimbe* in 2002, which was 24 years after I asked my mother regarding this community-based practice. Since then, a question that has remained in my mind about *nhimbe* is: *How does it specifically contribute to both the economic and social life of the community?*

I kept reflecting on this question as I worked with rural communities in Zimbabwe, Southern Africa, East Africa and Asia. I have also been keen to know the extent to which *nhimbe* is still being practised in Zimbabwe. If it is still practised, I have been interested to establish whether or not there is any significant difference between its level of incidences and importance accorded to it then and now. More importantly, I have been eager to find out whether *nhimbe* has a role to play in community life today and in the future especially in rural communities

where it is practised. If it is no longer being practised, I was curious to to find out the reasons.

Given the foregoing discussion, it appeared to me that *nhimbe* plays two important and mutually supportive roles, namely, in-so-far as it helps reduce household vulnerability to outside shocks or threats to livelihoods, whilst also serving as a planned developmental framework in the community. *Nhimbe* is thus important for both shorter and longer-term survival strategies in the communities that practise it. The practice is underpinned by the belief and trust that one can draw on the social and human capital in the community for development initiatives.

From my *nhimbe* related autobiography just presented, it is clear that two factors motivated me to undertake this exploratory study on *nhimbe* practice. These are my personal experiences with the *nhimbe* practice and my professional community development work in Zimbabwe and in other parts of the world. I take my mother's explanation to mean that *nhimbe* practice ensures that those in need, normally at household level in the community, are helped expeditiously. Notwithstanding my childhood experience with *nhimbe*, my mother's narrative and my development experience, at the time of the study, it was still not clear to me what exactly *nhimbe* is and if helping one another is an absolute purpose of the practice. I had a strong suspicion that nhimbe goes beyond it being an arrangement through which community members help one another on farming activities. Furthermore, it was not clear to me whether or not everyone in the community has the right to participate in *nhimbe*. If some people in the community are excluded in the practice, I was interested to know the criteria communities use for selection of participants.

1.3 **Prologue to the statement of the problem**

Today there is a growing tendency for proponents of community-based development to use people-centred (PC) or bottom up approaches (Madziva 2011, Mulwa 2004 and De Beer 2006). The PC theory hinges on the premise that effective development designs are those which are, for the most part, understood from the standpoint of the people the development programmes intend to benefit. This is linked to another theory called appreciative inquiry (AI) (Brett 1995, Hammond and others 1998, Senge 1990, Whitney and Trosten-Bloom 2002). The emphasis of AI is that development practitioners and social researchers alike should explore the inherent positive attributes of organisations or communities, including the ability independently to address their own development situations. This means that institutional or community development practitioners should properly understand the local context (including knowledge, values and practices) of people to enable formulation of appropriate and sustainable development solutions.

From this author's deduction, the underlining belief for both the PC and the AI theories is that if genuinely applied: (i) understanding of people's development needs/problems is greatly enhanced; (ii) sustainability of development initiatives in communities is promoted and likely to be sustained; (iii) buy-in and ownership of development initiatives in communities is encouraged; (iv) knowledge, skills as well as community wisdom in development practices are unearthed and/or shared; and (v) an improved analysis and documentation of traditional community-based development practices is likely to be achieved. The last two premises, inquiry on community-based development practices and documentation are the anchor to the problem explored in this study. This is because *nhimbe* is an example of a community-based development practice which has received little attention in recent development discourse.

1.4 **Statement of the problem**

While some authors have noted that *nhimbe* has been practised since the 1800s or earlier and is regarded generally as a type of work party (Anderson 2002, Kajese 1987, Kapasula 2010, Leedy 2010, Shutt 2001), not much is known beyond this particular materialistic aspect. The wider importance of *nhimbe* to self-definition, socialisation and reproduction of community relationships (social capital) is largely ignored in the literature. In addition, *nhimbe* has not been adequately documented leading to little understanding of the practice. Against this backdrop, the study explored the economic and social contribution of *nhimbe* to community life in specific Zimbabwe rural communities.

1.5 **Purpose of the study**

The aim of the study was to explore what *nhimbe* is in the context of community development in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the study had seven purposes (i) to describe *nhimbe* towards understanding the practice; (ii) to determine the purpose of *nhimbe* practice in the communities; (iii) to ascertain the extent to which *nhimbe* is an inclusive community practice; and (iv) to establish how *nhimbe* contributes to economic and social life of the three communities studied; (v) to find out the socio-moral obligations that underpin the *nhimbe* practice; (vi) to systematically document the practice; and (vii) to develop a *nhimbe* related theory.

1.6 **Hypothesis**

One key hypothesis and two sub-hypotheses are applied in this study. The main hypothesis is: *Nhimbe practice is a holistic community-based development model which incorporates social, economic, spiritual, political, leadership and gender issues.* The two related sub-hypotheses are:

a) *Nhimbe* promotes community involvement in development initiatives as it seems to be a practice imbedded in the community culture and socio-moral compass; and
b) *Nhimbe* encourages economic and social sustainability in communities, affecting both short-term and long-term developmental viability, particularly because it is a community-based practice.

1.7 **Significance of the study**

The current study is important from three perspectives. The review of the related current literature revealed that little was systematically documented about *nhimbe*. Although others like Kozanayi and Nemarundwe (2002), Leedy (2010), Mararike (1999), Madziva (2011) and Shutt (2002) have written about *nhimbe*, they did so as a subordinate issue or as a factor to explain phenomena in their focus areas of study. In other words, none of these authors have studied *nhimbe* in detail and therefore this study is the first academic research on the *nhimbe* practice. In addition, the study contributes to the literature on community development, sociological and anthropological studies. Another value of this study is that such information would be vital to policymakers and planners in rural development. Furthermore, the study has a potential to contribute to the theories of social capital, appreciative inquiry, sustainability in development initiatives and people-centred development.

1.8 **Key questions considered in the study**

Seven key questions guided this exploratory study of the *nhimbe* practice:

a) What is *nhimbe*? The question included dimensions of its genesis, how it was started, who participates in it, how it is organised and its uses in the communities.
b) What is the purpose of *nhimbe*?

c) What, if any, community obligations that drive people to participate in *nhimbe*?

d) What are the economic and social benefits of the *nhimbe* practice in the communities studied?

e) What challenges are associated with the *nhimbe* practice in the communities studied?

f) If *nhimbe* were to be introduced to a community where it has not been practised, what should be considered the most?

g) What are the potential future benefits of *nhimbe* in Zimbabwe community-based development?

1.9 Limitations of the study

This study had three limitations. Firstly, social interactions in most rural communities in Zimbabwe are normally defined along gender dimensions. Specifically in this study, being a male researcher meant that some female research participants in the selected communities would not feel comfortable to be interviewed by a male counterpart. Secondly, the researcher was not fluent in the Ndebele language which is spoken in one of the three communities selected for the study. Finally, the high levels of in-and-out migration of people in the communities caused by, in part, the Zimbabwe Land Reform Programme[1], reduced consistency of *nhimbe* stories from individuals in the communities selected for the study.

Pertaining to the language limitation, research assistants who were fluent in the Ndebele language were engaged. As for possible situations where it was not morally acceptable in the communities studied for the investigator to interview research participants of the opposite sex, both female and male research

[1]In 2000, Government of Zimbabwe embarked on a Land Reform Programmethrough which many people got resettled or relocated throughout the country.

assistants were engaged throughout the fieldwork. The migration and emigration limitation in the communities due to the effect of the Zimbabwe Land Reform Programme and other factors was resolved by verifying the *nhimbe* stories obtained with traditional chiefs, historians, social scientists, and elders in the communities before the final data analysis. Although the researcher made attempts to overcome the limitations prior to the data collection process, the gender aspect remained a challenge and was not fully resolved. This means that views from women across the three communities studied who were interviewed by the investigator or male research assistants could have been compromised in this study.

1.10 **Delimitations of the study**

The study did not try to quantify the economic and social benefits of *nhimbe* to community life. The thrust was to get rich descriptions about *nhimbe* including how it is organised in order to build literature on community-based development practice in specific Zimbabwe communities. In addition, it was not the intention of the study to get views from urban communities because of the understanding that *nhimbe* is a rural community practice (Anderson 2002, Kajese 1987 and Madziva 2011).

1.11 **Bias declaration and its implications to the study**

The researcher had a keen interest in the *nhimbe* study to find out its economic and social contribution to community-based development resulting from his experience in the practice as discussed in section 1.2 of this chapter. He had a high regard for *nhimbe* and hence could probably be blind to some of its weaknesses. One strategy the researcher applied to minimise the effects of this bias was the utilisation of different data collection methods as well as to obtain data sets from diverse sources. The methods used to collect data were detailed

interviews, focus group discussions, participant observations and oral histories which are detailed in Chapter Four of this thesis. In terms of various data sources, this included three different ethnic communities, traditional leaders, experts in culture and indigenous knowledge systems as well as an intentional targeting of males and females disaggregated by age groups in each community. The use of various data methods and sources was vital to compare and contrast the perceptions or facts about the *nhimbe* practice across various levels of people and differentiated communities studied as presented in Chapter Seven.

1.12 **Organisation of the thesis**

The thesis is organised into nine chapters. **Chapter One** provides the background to the study highlighting what triggered the researcher to carry out this study. In addition, the chapter presents problem statement, purpose of the study, significance of the study, hypothesis, key research questions, limitations, delimitations, bias and the organisation of the thesis.

Chapter Two is a review of *nhimbe* and similar practices around the world. The practices reviewed are compared and contrasted in the context of development discourse.

Chapter Three is a review of relevant literature and discussion of the theoretical propositions advanced in the study. The relevant theories in development are discussed and critical analysis is done from the standpoint of developed and developing countries in general and Zimbabwe in particular.

Chapter Four details the methodology that was employed in the execution of the study. The chapter discusses the three different ethnic communities that participated in the study and gives justification for their selection. In addition, the

chapter presents sampling techniques applied, the data collection methods used and the types of data that constituted the study.

Chapter Five explains how the different data sets were obtained across the three communities studied. The chapter also narrates the fieldwork experiences of the researcher including challenges encountered and solutions devised to meet the objectives of the study. In addition, the chapter discusses data management and analytical framework applied.

Chapter Six is dedicated to the presentation of findings from the key informants. The findings are organised according to emerging themes.

Chapter Seven presents study findings from the fieldwork across the three communities studied. As in Chapter Six, findings are thematically organised and disaggregated by research interviewees and focus group discussion participants (traditional leaders, adult and young adult members of the communities).

Chapter Eight provides a synthesis of the research findings in terms of the study implications to community development practice and development studies. Significant in this chapter is that a *nhimbe* theory is presented based on the research findings and critiques of related development theories. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the extent to which the study aims were resolved through the data obtained, analysed and presented in chapters six and seven.

Chapter Nine presents conclusions and recommendations emerging from the study. Additionally, the chapter points out some potential areas for future research on the *nhimbe* practice and other related aspects.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF NHIMBE AND SIMILAR PRACTICES

2.1 Chapter objectives

This chapter has two objectives which are to:

- Examine the literature available on nimbhe; and
- Compare and contrast similar traditional practices to nhimbe in Zimbabwe and in other parts of the world.

2.2 Nhimbe and similar practices in other countries

As already stated in chapter one, the study is an exploratory investigation of the *nhimbe* practice within the context of community-based development. Other related practices reviewed in this study are: Study Circle in Sweden, *Milpa* in Mexico, *Chilimba* in Zambia, *Harambee* in Kenya and *Zunde raMambo* in Zimbabwe.

2.2.1 Nhimbe

2.2.1.1 Genesis and description

To date, it is not known when *nhimbe* started or how it became a practice in communities throughout Zimbabwe as this would have been useful to provide timeliness to the study. Nevertheless, there is a general agreement that *nhimbe* has been in existence in rural communities for centuries, dating back to at least the 1800s (Bhila 1982, Kajese 1987 and Munyuki-Hungwe 2011). *Nhimbe*, as evidenced in the literature, is known by various names (Chigara 2011, Gelfand 1979, Hampson 1990, Mararike 1999, Tavuyanago, Mutami and Mbenene 2010 and Thompson 2010,). This confirmed findings from the informal discussions

the researcher had in 2008 with seven community elders and indigenous knowledge experts which revealed that nhimbe is known through different labels among the Shona and Ndebele people due to differences in ethnicity and dialects as tabulated below. The double '√' denotes that the term applies relative more to the indicated dialect.

Term	**Functional Meaning**	**Ethnic group associate with the term**			
		Ndebele	Shona dialects		
			Ndau	Karanga	Zezuru
Nhimbe	Working together for a common cause			√	√√
Humwe	All of us in it for one another		√	√	
Ilima	Working together in the agricultural activities	√			
Hala	Dealing or getting rid of a problem		√		
Mukote	Being together for a common goal		√		
Jangano	Helping each other in turns			√√	√
Hoka	Inviting others for assistance			√	√
Jakwara	Working together especially in shelling of grain			√	√

Table 2.1: Nhimbe and its other terms

As presented above, the connotation of the Shona terms is generally to work collectively while *ilima* literally means farming (Manona 2005 and Nyaumwe and Mkabela (2007). In this study, *nhimbe* is used because the researcher is Shona and the term is widely known among the Shona communities. Despite the different names used, it is claimed that the practice is quite similar throughout the country (Mararike 1999 and Mutunhu 2011). This study, among other aspects, compared and contrasted *nhimbe* practice across the three communities namely Gambiza, Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho.

Preliminary literature reviewed as a preparatory process for this research indicated that there was limited literature on *nhimbe*. The literature includes

related writings of Gelfand (1979), Bhila (1982), Hampson (1990) Andersson (2002), Kozanayi and Nemarundwe (2002), Thompson (2010) and Madziva (2011). As pointed out earlier, it is important to note that the authors were not specifically focusing on *nhimbe* in their writing but it became a significant interest to explain the phenomena in the studies they conducted.

Thompson (2010), in reference to the Madziwa community in the 1920s and Kapasula (2010), both mention *nhimbe* in discussing gender issues and generational conflict in rural Zimbabwe communities and Sub-Saharan Africa respectively. In explaining the extent to which people work together in communities, Andersson (2002) singles out *nhimbe* as a manifestation of how kinship ties resonates in cooperation among community members. Shutt (2002) studied how squatters in rural communities of Zimbabwe in the period 1931 to 1965 helped each other on agricultural activities through *nhimbe.* In their missionary work in the period 1900 to 1962, some missionaries took advantage of *nhimbe* gatherings to preach the Word of God in what Leedy (2010:483) calls "...agricultural evangelism in colonial Zimbabwe". Leedy (2010: 493) comments that missionaries viewed *nhimbe* as an immoral community practice since people normally drink beer at the gatherings. Mbenene, Mutami and Tavuyanago (2010) cite *nhimbe* as a leisure and entertainment practice in Zimbabwe. *Nhimbe* is described by Madziva (2011) as an indigenous knowledge system and appeals for people to harness it as a community development model. While Madziva extensively explains the underpinnings of *nhimbe* which include solidarity, respect, trust, allegiance and reciprocity, not much is discussed about how it is organised and its contribution to community social sustainability. Kozanayi and Nemarundwe (2002) state *nhimbe* as a community strategy which Chivi district in Southern Zimbabwe used in 1999 to develop community water sources such as wells and small dams. The mention of nhimbe by Madziva, Kozanayi and Nemarundwe in their separate writings suggests an attempt to relate it as a community development strategy in Zimbabwe.

From the literature, it is clear that *nhimbe* is described from four dimensions: Firstly, as a work party through which community members provide extra labour to help each other on farming activities (Andersson 2002, Bhila 1982, Manona 2005, Shutt 2002). Manona (2005:136) emphasises this notion and posits that "*ilima* [*nhimbe*] is an organised labour party which occurs through a relationship of reciprocity" within a community.

Secondly, *nhimbe* is regarded as a gender discrimination practice in Zimbabwe rural communities which undermines women and favours men (Thompson 2010 and Kapasula 2010).

Thirdly, *nhimbe* is a socialisation or entertainment practice in the community (Gelfand 1979, Mbenene, Mutami and Tavuyanago 2010).

Finally, *nhimbe* is viewed as a community development strategy that is applied to address various community needs (Kajese 1987, Madziva 2011, Mararike 1999, and Kozanayi and Nemarundwe 2002).

Having examined the contexts in which various authors alluded to *nhimbe* and the descriptions they offered about the practice, some questions remained unanswered. The questions are sixfold which are: (a) does anyone hold intellectual property to the *nhimbe* practice?; (b) how is *nhimbe* organised in a community?; (c) is the use of *nhimbe* in the communities restricted to agriculture and water related activities?; (d) what are the economic and social benefits of *nhimbe* to individuals, households and community as a whole?; (e) what is the current level of *nhimbe* practice in communities relative to the past?; (f) who can or cannot participate in *nhimbe*?; and (g) what are the facilitating factors or challenges associated with the practice? Except for Kapasula who mentioned *nhimbe* weakness from a gender perspective, most authors positively portrayed it with no critique about its limitations.

In view of the questions raised here, it was the expectation of the study that these be fully answered through use of diverse and complementary data collection methods and analysis as detailed in Chapter Four. The current knowledge gaps highlighted are a clear indication that *nhimbe* is a subject matter that still requires further investigation, hence this study. Madziva (2011: iv) makes the same observation when she remarks that "*nhimbe* remains a subject open to further research". Realising that there was still a knowledge gap in understanding *nhimbe*, the researcher decided to obtain some data about the practice through oral tradition (orature) prior to the fieldwork and key informant interviews.

2.2.1.2 **Nhimbe findings through oratory methodology**

Asante (1998: 25) describes orature as a social research method that encompasses oral discourse, styles and traditions of a people in a particular context. This author adds that orature, which is *ngano* in Shona, is a mirror of people's beliefs, norms and practices in a given community. In all the three communities studied orature was conducted in the form of songs, rhetorical questions, sarcasm, folktales and most significant incidences. The acronyms GZ, MSK and TSH stand for Gambiza, Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho respectively. For the purpose of analysis and presentation of the oratory findings, respondents who participated in the oral tradition process are denoted by the names of their communities, sex and age. For example, 'GZ-F57' means the participant is from Gambiza and is a female aged 57. The need to consult older members of the communities was a consistent finding in this study. For this reason, oral tradition discussants were carefully chosen and had to be over 50 years of age. The following are the oral tradition findings obtained from each community investigated which gave a rich insight into the fieldwork design.

Gambiza community oratories

a) God is angry

Zvawakauraya vana vako,
Tarisa vevamwe vanofara,
Mudzimu mukuru chirega chinya
Chinaisai mvura tifare
Hezvo, torima zvedu sema zuva ose [techishandisa nhimbe]
Todyazve, pasisina nzara
(Song: GZ-F57)

Interpretation:

The song brings out an instance where God has ignored the participant's children by not making rain for their agricultural production. There is a complaint that God is exercising favoritism in the community. The people in the song have noticed that other communities have and are receiving rain but not them (*Tarisa vevamwe vanofara*). There is an appeal for forgiveness to God (*Mudzimu mukuru chirega chinya)* and people believe that the reason why they are not getting rain for their agricultural activities is because of their sins.

However, the people are very clear in their minds that it is not everyone who sinned against God. For this reason, people believe that God should indeed be lenient and forgive them through releasing rain for their community without any further delays as this will bring happiness (*Chinaisai mvura tifare*). In the song, there is a strong promise that if God gives rain to the community, the people will work together in the fields using the *nhimbe* practice and to ensure food for everyone (*Todyazve, pasisina nzara).*

b) Had it not been nhimbe...

Dai isiri nhimbe,
Tingadai tisina kuwana mvura gore rino.
Mwari atigonera.
Dai isiri nhimbe
(Rhetorical questions/sarcasm: GZ-F57)

Interpretation

This rhetorical question acknowledges that through *nhimbe* people are demonstrating love as they help one another. It goes on to say because of the love shown among the people in the community nhimbe practice (*Dai isiri nhimbe*), God is always pleased with them. To show that God is indeed contented with them, the community always receives good rains for farming and other water needs (*Mwari atigonera*).

c) With nhimbe, all is well

Mushauri/lead singer: Yakarira mucherechere,
Yakarira nhonga makore,
Yakarira ndiri kwaGutu
Vadairi/others respond: Zhii
(Song: GZ-F67)

Interpretation

This is a song which is normally sung at a *nhimbe* for shelling grain (*nziyo yekupura zviyo*). There are three terms in the song that deserve a brief explanation and hence the interpretation.

Mucherechere: This means things are well. This refers to the happiness bumper harvest brings to the community. The happiness is also that *nhimbe* brings when people work together in the field.

Nhonga makore: This refers to the good rains which makes it possible for the bumper harvest. The statement is a thanksgiving to God's mercy on them demonstrated by giving the community good rains on time for farming and other household uses.

Zhii: In the Shona language, the expression '*zhii*' is an idiom which denotes affirmation and solidarity by the majority. In the song, people are equating the '*zhii*' to togetherness and synchronization of work. When shelling, everyone is expected to pound the grain in unison. Implicit in the *zhii* idiom is that it brings rhythm in the work process as well as energy and it is a morale boost to the *nhimbe* participants. The phenomenon of rhythm was elaborated by informant PK04.

> People sing in rhythm and the rhythmic force make people to work hard, thus, work becomes lighter. It is also that singing synchronises people's energy and brings coordination towards the task at hand (PK04).

d) Had it not been nhimbe...

Dai isiri nhimbe
Ndingadai ndisina kurima pakuru gore rino
Ndingadai ndiri murombo
(Rhetorical questions/sarcasm: GZ-F67)

Interpretation

The rhetorical question affirms that if it had not been *nhimbe*, one would not have cultivated a big piece of land this year. In addition, the oratory testifies that *nhimbe* brought the orator and her household out of poverty.

e) Starvation

Kwaivapo umwe murume uyu aiva nevakadzi vaviri.
Raive gore renzara.
Aingobuda pamba achienda kudondo.
Aisvika pamuti oimba muti wobva wadonhesa zvokudya.
Asi zvokudya izvi anga asingaendi nazvo kumba.
Mhuri yaingofa nenzara.
Umwe mwana akazofunga zano rekuenda nababa.
Vakaenda kumuti uya vakaimba muti ukadonhesa chikafu.
Imbo yacho ndiyo inotevera.
Mwana uyu akaudza mai vake.
Mai ava vakabva vatora vana vavo vose kuenda kumuti uya vakaimba chikafu chikadonha.
Vakadya vakaguta vakaenda nechimwe kumba
Kushandira pamwe kwakaitat kuti
Vadye, kudya, nekusingaperi
(Folktale/ngano GZ-F71)

Interpretation

The man in the folktale does not have love for his family as shown by not bringing food from the magic tree despite the fact that the community was experiencing starvation *(Asi zvokudya izvi anga asingaendi nazvo kumba).* The mother is depicted as the symbol of love in the family because she ensures that

all her children always have enough food (*Mai ava vakabva vatora vana vavo vose kuenda kumuti uya vakaimba chikafu chikadonha*).

When the mother mobilized her children to get the food from the tree, this signifies the nhimbe spirit in which people work together. In working together, abundance is guaranteed (*Vakadya vakaguta vakaenda nechimwe kumba).* The folktale concludes that it is a good thing for households to work together because it brings sustainable development (*Vadye, kudya, nekusingaperi).*

f) A cry over a pot of beer

> *A man once dropped a pot of beer in 1944. The pot of beer was the chisaino [the last pot which has the best beer]. People got very angry at the man. What angered people the most is that his wife (and other women at the nhimbe) had warned him not to carry the pot but he insisted he was able to do it alone*
>
> *(Most significant incident: GZ-M82)*

Interpretation

The moral of the incident is that the *nhimbe* host should always ensure that people have enough to eat and drink. Another significant aspect about this incident is that when faced with challenges in life, one should call upon others for help. The actor in the story does not heed this advice and consequently drops the pot of beer because it becomes too heavy for him to carry alone. This is likened to the *nhimbe* practice whereby a household should call upon its neighbours for help whenever it has a difficult or challenging work to do.

g) Good things

Mushauri/lead singer: Kuya buya khulungi (zvichauya zvinonaka)
Indlala ikhona
All: A-ha kuya buya khulungi (x2)
(Song: GZ-M82)

Interpretation

The song epitomises that hard work bears good results in the near or far future and so one has to be patient. The word *indlala* (hunger/starvation) is a symbolic expression for development challenges in life. In the song, it is predicted that hunger will go away meaning that poverty will soon be eradicated in the community.

h) Nhimbe is happiness

*Pahumwe taifara zvikuru uye wanga usingasungirirwi nevabereki kudzoka kumba nekukurumidza kana humwe yapera. Kuhumwe taifara zvakanyanya. Nhasi uno ndingaona vanhu vachifara, ndinobva ndafunga nguva yehumwe pausikana hwangu. (*Most significant: GZ-11-F88)

Interpretation

Humwe (*nhimbe*) is associated with happiness and joy. The person who is narrating the story reflects his *nhimbe* experiences during her adolescent years and states that *nhimbe* brings some level of personal freedom and learning to young adults outside their home environment. Therefore, *nhimbe* is viewed as a practice that provides a good platform for adolescent development. The aspect of *nhimbe* as a platform to socialise young people is a notion Gelfand (1979) holds. He observes that *nhimbe* provides an opportunity for socialisation of young people into adulthood in three dimensions: (i) they learn the ways of society including values, norms and practices, (ii) they learn more about their kith

and kin through interaction as elders relate to each other and (iii) respect for oneself and elders is inculcated in them during work sessions.

i) Had it not been nhimbe...

Dai isiri nhimbe ndingandai ndisina kukwanisa kuchera makomba ekudyara mbeu dzangu (ndakanga ndichirwara).Kuchera makomba ekudyara izano rakaunzwa ne bato rakazvimirira roga rinonzi Carritas. (Most significant incident: GZ-F71)

Interpretation

This is an acknowledgement that *nhimbe* has been very useful for her farming activities in 2009/2010 farming season. In particular, land preparation for sowing grain (*makomba ekudyara mbeu*) which she could not have done on her own without the help from community members. She goes on to say that if it had not been *nhimbe*, she would not have managed to farm in that season because she was not feeling well (*ndakanga ndichirwara).* The neighbours observed her health condition and decided to organise nhimbe for her and carried out land preparation and sowing of maize seeds.

Musikavanhu community oratories

a) Praising each other

Ruka (Luke) ibako redu rekutakura nhamo (repeated several times)
Vari mhungura, vari dondo vagoni.
Vari mubako rebira mutserendende.
(Song: MSK-F92)

Interpretation

In the song, the chorister mentions names of the traditional chiefs which are signified by the phrases *vari mhungura* and *vari mubako*. It is reported that this song is usually sung after work at *nhimbe*. The *nhimbe* participants would stand in a circle and each woman in turn gets at the center of the circle and recites her husband's totem in a song fashion. In response, her family members would join her in dance and singing for a short while and this continues until everyone has had her turn.The song is also a reflection of the assistance the community received from missionaries in the past and continues so even up to the present time. The missionaries are represented by the disciple Luke who is mentioned in the song. Essentially, the song depicts the assistance community members give each other through nhimbe. In the song, the following terms deserve brief explanations.

Vari mhungura: *Mhungura* is a sacred mountain which is found in that community. The significance is that *mhungura* is where the spirit medium of the area resides. The singing of this song is an appeal to the spirit medium to support the community members in their development efforts. The African spirits and how they are connected to community development is a widely researched subject (Bediako 1997, Mbigi 2005 and Sithole 2007).

Vari mubako rebira mutserendende: Just like *mhungura*, the term *mubako rebira* refers to the spirit medium of the area. The explanation is that if the community does not violate the requirements of the spirit medium, everything will go on well in the community. These include good harvest, health, social relations, and good rains.

b) Education is a bad omen to the community

Unoti iwe chikora hachina kuuraya tsika here?
Izvozvi vazukuru vako ava (referring to his niece who sat next to him during the discussion and helped this researcher to interpret this folklore sarcasm) kana vakura vapedza chikora vanoenda iwewe wosarazve woita musikana.
(Rhetorical questions / sarcasm: MSK-02-F91)

Interpretation

The oral historian argues that modern education system is destroying local culture and community ethics. To reinforce this position, the orator warns his niece that she should not be too excited to think that her children will continue with the spirit of caring for her and the family when they grow up and have finished schooling *(kana vakura vapedza chikora vanoenda).* He sarcastically says that she be prepared to become a young girl again to do the household chores because the children will no longer be around and too educated to have interest in her welfare (*iwewe wosarazve woita musikana).* His view of the modern education system is that it fosters individualism in children and destroys a culture of caring for one another.

c) Stinginess is a curse

Vonothwa vega
Kunyima kwavo masese, kunyima
Touya ere tithwe teshe
Kunyima kwavo masese, kunyima
Tadini kuita humwe, iwe nyakunyima
(Song/sarcasm: MSK-M87)

Interpretation

The song is repeated several times in unison. It warns those in the community who do not want to work with others (*vanothwa vega*) and are stingy (*Kunyima kwavo masese).* Community members have observed this behaviour and are offering their services to help (*Touya ere tithwe teshe*). The song is an advice to those who shun *nhimbe* to reconsider because the practice is good for the community. Drinking beer (*masese*) in this community is associated with *nhimbe* gathering such as traditional pounding of grain for meal-mealie (*kuthwa*). On the whole, the song brings out the aspect of lack of generosity to share food with others in the community. In addition, it emphasises the importance of assisting one another in a community. The song also states that *nhimbe* is a good thing as it demonstrates togetherness and benevolence spirit in the community.

d) ***Nhimbe is benevolence***

Mushauri/lead singer*: Chemutsunzura tungamira tiende kwaMbuya*
*Vadairi (*others respond*): Tungamira*
(Song: MSK-M58)

Interpretation

This song is a way of communicating that people need to eat at the *humwe* gathering. Implied in the song is that it is immoral to ask people for help and one does not provide them food. *Mbuya* (grandmother) connotes benevolence in the Shona culture. In the song, *mbuya* symbolises food provision which is a vital element of *nhimbe* practice. This is because in the Shona culture, mbuya is regarded as a benevolent member of society particularly in giving food. The phrase '*Chemutsunzura* refers to cockerel (jongwe) which means that at a *nhimbe* meat will always be served. More significantly about the *jongwe* is that in the Shona culture serving a visitor chicken meat shows a high degree of

hospitality. The *'tungamira'* term is a notion to remind a *nhimbe* host to always plan effectively for food provision so that everyone gets enough to eat.

e) Laziness

Ndorima musana worwadza
Pakudya
Ndomera mandhenga
(Song: MSK-M65)

Interpretation

The song states that there are people who always do not want to work and they have endless explanations to justify their behaviour (*Ndorima musana worwadza*). The song goes on to say that it is often surprising to note that lazy people are always on the forefront to eat when food is served (*Pakudya ndomera mandhenga*). The song also brings out that a community knows those who do not want to work with others (*ndorima musana worwadza*) but when it comes to eating they are in the forefront to be served food (*pakudya ndomere mandhenga*). A paradox to this statement, *Pakudya ndomera mandhenga*, is that lazy people should never be allowed to eat.

f) A drought year

Paivapo nemhuka dzose dzesango. Mugorero ranga riri gore renzara huru kwazvo. Hapana kana paigona kuwanikwa mvura.Mhuka dzakafunga kuchera mvura kuti dziwane kubatsirika.Dzakabva dzatsvaka nzvimbo yaimbova nemvura makore maviri ainge apfuura. Mhuka dzose dzakaenda asi tsuro akaramba. Dzvava panzvimbo iya, dzakatanga kuchera.Mhuka huru ndidzo dzakatanga dzechifunga kuti ndidzo dzaiva nesimba rekuchera pasi.Padzaichera, dzaiti dzikati kupandu-kupandu pwititi.Hadzina kukwanisa kubata mvura.Kamhuka kadoko kanozi chitobvu kakakumbira kumbo cherawo. Mhuka huru dzaikamhura asi dzakatendera kupinda. Pakaichera

kudaro chaitiwo 'kutafa-kutafa-kutafanana, kutafa-kutafa kutafanana.'Akachera akabata zvimadhaka. Mhuka huru dzakamubata dzikamukandira kure. Padzakati dzipinde, guruva rakatangazve kupwititika.Dzakazonyengerera chitobvu akapinda akabata mvura yakawanda. Mhuka dzose dzakafara chose nekuwana mvura. Dzakazoronga zano rekurinda mvura patsime kuitira kuti tsuro asanwa sezvo anga aramba kushanda nevamwe. (Folktale/ngano: MSK-F68)

Interpretation

This folktale brings out the concept of *nhimbe* in which the animals get together to solve the water problem through cooperation in digging a communal well. The folktale surfaces the notion that people should not look down upon each other lest the person perceived to be useless might end up doing great things in the community.

> *...mukadzi wamambo wakakumbira chiwenda.* Translated literally, a king's wife at some point in her life will look for a broken pot because she is so rich that all her pots are so intact and beautiful you can hardly find a broken pot. There are times she would need a broken pot from a poor person to put it on fire to roast grain, peanuts, mealies and so on (PK01).

This is seen when the big animals pushed away the frog (*chitobvu)* as they did not believe it had the competence and strength to dig a well (*Mhuka huru dzaikamhura...*)

The folktale also reminds people in the community that laziness is not beneficial to anyone. This is seen when the hare refused to work with others in the water source project the animals have agreed to embark on (*...sezvo anga aramba kushanda nevamwe*). There is also a teaching that it is important to give credit to those who have done well in life regardless of one's socio-economic status or physical outlook. When the '*chitobvu*' almost reached the water table, the big

animals pull it out so that they complete the digging and get the praise and recognition. In *nhimbe*, everyone matters and contributes something to the task at hand.

g) Bad people in the community oratory

There was this very, very old lady in a certain community who wanted to eat her grandson. Realising this, the grandson ran away and climbed a tree for refuge. Because she advanced in age, she could not climb the tree but instead chopped away the tree using her long and sharp teeth. When the boy felt that the tree was about to fall, he called his dogs to chase away the old lady (mbuya) so that she could not continue to chop the tree. When the dogs approached, mbuya tore apart the dogs to death using her teeth. The boy got even more terrified and managed to jump to another tree just before the tree fell. The *mbuya* rushed to that tree where the boy had jumped to and started chopping it. Immediately, the boy summoned his other dogs to chase away the *mbuya*. The dogs came and managed to conquer the mbuya and killed her. This is how the boy survived. He safely climbed down and went back home. (Folktale/ngano: MSK-02-F91)

Interpretation

This *ngano* brings out that there are some bad people in communities who always want to impede development and this is represented by *mbuya* (old grandmother). Even though such people exist in communities there are also good people who help others in times of challenges and difficulties. The dogs which fought and the trees which provided refuge for the grandson all represent good people in the community.

When one faces challenges in life, he or she should seek help just like what the young boy did when he appealed for help from the dogs although this was not any easy process. In running away from the cruel *mbuya*, the young boy had to

be innovative and persistent. There is a lesson that in life one has to prepare to lose some resources in order to solve one big problem. This is depicted by the first set of dogs that were killed by *mbuya* but the boy did not give up. The folktale also portrays an optimistic view in community that good people always triumph over bad people.

Tsholotsho community oratories

a) Jealousy

Uvudla lonteletsha bephekana
Kwaqala uvudla ukuphekwa wathi ngikipha sengisitsha
Waphuma kwagena unteletsha wathi esesitsha wakala
Uvudla wathi tshana nyamazana yami waze wafa
(Folktale/iganu/ngano: TSH-M87)

Interpretation

The folktale is about some clever people who cheat others in the community during farming season. For instance, they may not go and work with others at *ilima* or any other tasks that may require community effort. The moral of the story is that cruelty, jealousy, and lack of love for others is not good for anyone in the community for development.

b) A song for energy boost

Hayi! Haya! Hayi!
Utshala bumunandi madoda
Ayikale amahlaka
Heyi – Heyi – Heyi
Siyabonga
(Song: TSH-F76)

Interpretation

This is a song of motivation for energy boost. People at *ilima* sing this song to encourage and motivate one another to work hard. The song is normally sung when people are getting tired.

c) Fieldwork, not for me

Sponono namuhla kuya hlakulwa
Namuhla kuya hlakulwa
Ayii namuhla kuya hlakulwa
Sponono namuhla kuya hlakulwa
(Rhetorical questions / sarcasm: TSH-14-F83)

Interpretation

This is a song which is sung about beautiful young ladies (*sponono*) at *ilima* who shun weeding crops (*...hlakulwa)*. The older ladies are advising that no matter how beautiful one is, working in the fields is a good thing for anyone as it provides food. In addition, the song is an appeal to people in the community to work together on development initiatives.

2.2.1.3 Synthesis of community oratories

Five themes about *nhimbe* emerge from the foregoing community oratories which are: (a) spiritual connectedness, (b) nhimbe is rhythmic, (c) nhimbe fosters hardworking, (d) nhimbe is benevolence and (e) nhimbe brings happiness in the community.

a) Spiritual connectedness

Nhimbe is associated with how people in the community are related to their God or gods (Supreme Being). This is because socio-economic being in the African context including Zimbabwe is often inseparable from one's spiritual welfare (Bediako 1997, Mbigi 2005, Mbiti 1999 and Sithole 2007). Mbigi (2005) points out

that one's cultural and spiritual identity cannot be separated from economic advancement. Bediako (1997) and Mbiti (2005) discuss types and levels of African spirits and how these influence people's social and economic constructs of reality in community life.

The oratories above have implied that when people work together in *nhimbe*, the Supreme Being is always pleased and consequently releases rains in good time for people to farm and to meet other water needs. The Supreme Being gets angry when people do not help each other or show love among them. To show the anger, the Supreme Being suspends rains until they ask for forgiveness and reform as portrayed by oratories in Gambiza (a) and Musikavanhu (a). Obviously, these findings confirm scholarship on spiritual belief and spiritual connectedness to development in the African context (Bediako 1997, Mbigi 2005 and Mbiti 1999).

b) Nhimbe is rhythmic

It is revealed that *nhimbe* participants work in a somewhat rhythmic arrangement. This is illustrated in the Gambiza oratory (c) and key informant PK04 illuminates on this perspective.

> People sing in rhythm and the rhythmic force make people to work hard, thus, work becomes lighter. It is also that singing synchronises people's energy and brings coordination towards the task at hand (PK04).

It is clear that music and rhythm work together to sustain participants' energy to complete a given task at a *nhimbe*.

c) Nhimbe fosters hardworking

The findings show that *nhimbe* practice fosters hardworking ethics in the community. It does not condone laziness as exemplified by the oratories in Gambiza (g), Musikavanhu (e) and Tsholotsho (c).

d) Nhimbe is benevolence

It is vivid that *nhimbe* is regarded as a symbol of benevolence in the community and this is analysed at two levels. Firstly, it promotes hardworking and encourages people to help one another to achieve development goals. Secondly, people feast at a *nhimbe*. The oratories in Gambiza (e) and (f), Musikavanhu (c) and (d) and Tsholotsho (a) all demonstrate that *nhimbe* is both benevolence.

e) Nhimbe brings happiness in the community

The oratories suggest that *nhimbe* is a platform where people rejoice as they socialise including eating and drinking beer. This is demonstrated in the Gambiza oratories (a), (h) and (f) as well as Musikavanhu (a).

For the most part, the oratories have shown that *nhimbe* is largely viewed as strength in the communities. Furthermore, it is regarded as a cultural connection in the life of the community. There seem to be a correlation between *nhimbe* and the social capital framework in the communities. The findings suggest that *nhimbe* is a community development strategy in which socialisation is embedded. Its strength, weaknesses, cultural connection, social capital and its contribution to community development are interest areas in this study and the findings are presented in chapters six and seven of this thesis.

2.2.1.4 **Purpose of the nhimbe practice**

As earlier noted, *nhimbe* is mostly used for agricultural activities which include land preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting, threshing, and winnowing. Farming is characteristic of most Southern African communities as Nyaumwe and Mkabela (2007:155) state that "at the beginning of summer the genuine need of all families in a community is to plant crops timeously in order to avert famine." There is a growing recognition of the *nhimbe* practice in Zimbabwe in the context of community development (Kozanayi and Nemarundwe 2002 and Madziva

2011). In view of this, the study explored the role *nhimbe* plays or could play in community development practice in Zimbabwe.

2.2.1.5 **Key principles of nhimbe**

From the preceding discussions, it is clear that *nhimbe* has four key principles or features as discussed below.

a) Work party

Nhimbe is an organised work party whereby people provide extra labour to carry out a given task for a household in need. In the process, people eat and drink beer (Kapasula 2010, Madziva 2011 and Thompson 2010) and this is normally restricted to members of the same village (Hampson 1990).

b) Rotational

Members of the community help each other in turns although the literature is not clear on how this is typically done. Nyaumwe and Mkabela (2007:155) assert that "[It] is important that one community does not have several functions [*nhimbe*] on the same day." This signifies that *nhimbe* is associated with fairness in the way it is practised among community members.

c) Reciprocal relationship

Nhimbe occurs through a shared reciprocal relationship among community members (Manona 2005, Madziva 2011 and Leedy 2010). For one to act humanely in society, community members show this by recognising the genuine needs of their neighbours through provision of appropriate assistance (Nyaumwe and Mkabela 2007: 155). As noted from the oral histories and the literature, the reciprocal principle illustrates that members of a community are motivated to help others because they expect to get assistance when they need it from the same people.

2.2.1.6 **Inclusion-exclusion notion in the nhimbe practice**

With regards to who participates or is excluded from participation, the literature simply states that *nhimbe* is restricted to members of the same village who uphold the value of reciprocity (Hampson 1990 and Manona 2005). Restriction to members of the same village might denote the administrative requirement of the practice in the communities. At the same time, upholding of reciprocity could suggest that those who do not practise reciprocal relationship might be excluded in taking part in *nhimbe*. It should be pointed out that chapters six and seven discuss these issues in great detail.

2.2.1.7 **Uses of nhimbe in development initiatives**

The foregoing discussion has shown that *nhimbe* is designed to benefit families/households with their farming activities. Besides agriculture, *nhimbe* is used to achieve other development initiatives like building houses; construction or maintenance of cattle dips and water projects in communities. Furthermore, *nhimbe* is used as an occasion for community members to share knowledge, skills and experiences on farming as well as socio-economic issues at individual, household, community or national levels. *Nhimbe* still exists in Zimbabwe as a community-based development owing to the fact that it is anchored on community culture and socio-moral values. Additionally, households and communities continue to benefit from the practice in diverse ways including social, economic and spiritual perspectives (Madziva 2011 and Mararike 1999)

Having described *nhimbe*, its uses and who participates, four key characteristics are apparent: (a) it is community driven; (b) it is pivoted on the community socio-cultural values and norms, (c) it promotes solidarity and peace in the community through enabling interactions among community members; (d) it is specific because it addresses needs at household level in a village. Nevertheless, *nhimbe* seem to have two major weaknesses:

Firstly, *nhimbe* practice appears to presuppose a homogeneous community whereby people have a shared worldview and cultural connection. Homogeneity in every community is unlikely today in Zimbabwe due to inter-marriages, migration and emigration across communities.

Secondly, based on the researcher's field experience, the practice has failed to embrace emerging technological advances towards improving agricultural output beyond the subsistence level.

2.2.2 **Study Circle**

2.2.1 **Genesis and description**

A Study Circle (SC) is a small, diverse group of 8 to 12 participants in a given setting who meet for about two hours weekly for four to six weeks to address issues of common development interest through democratic and collaborative means[2] (Swedish Cooperative Centre 2010). It is a participatory development practice widely used in Sweden for direct participation of citizens in development initiatives. The unique aspect about SC is that it is the participants and their active participation that drive the problem analysis, learning and provision of solution; not an external person. Study Circles have been traditional methods for liberal adult education in Nordic and Scandinavian countries since the 1800s. The SC falls under the Swedish *folkbildning* which is an indigenous collective term for folk high schools, study associations in the form of courses, study circles and cultural activities for development[3]. SC is credited to Bishop John H. Vincent who introduced the practice in the United States of America (USA) early 1870s through his initiative of the Chautauqua Library and Scientific Circles (CLSC). The CLSC initiative centred on adult education through home study circle-

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[2] www.everyday-democracy.org [13 May 2012]
[3] www.folkbildning.se and www.folkbildning.net> [5 June 2012]

organised groups for reading and discussion for adults who had no training beyond four years of secondary education (Kindstrom 2002 and Hassan et al 2005). In 1920, Holland founded its own study circle known then as "The Home of Free Thought' which is known today as StudieförbundetVuxenskolan (SV) organisation. The SV was formally established in 1967 and its aim was to create a modern and more equitable society through educating the population (Aliona 2005).

The economic and social challenges Sweden experienced in the 1870s forced about one third of Swedes to migrate to the USA for a better life. In an effort to find solutions to the deteriorating socio-economic situation in the country, Edvard Wavrinsky visited CLSC in 1893 and was impressed with the CLSC home study circles. His experience with CLSC motivated him to write an article about it. Oscar Olson got interested and organised a series of study circles nationwide in 1920 towards improving the education and socio-economic situation of the country. In fact, Oscar is referred to as the "father of the Study Circle" as he is considered to be the initiator of the practice in Sweden[4]. It is clear that the socio-economic challenge experienced at that time was a key factor for the adaption of the Study Circle in Sweden. Subsequently the country popularised it worldwide as a democratic and participatory community development method.

2.2.2 **Purpose of the Study Circle**

When it was first introduced, the application of the SC was limited to educational development. Notably, in 1842 the SC became a key method in the design and implementation of a compulsory primary school system in Sweden (Kindstrom 2002: 5). In the mid 20th century, the application of the Study Circle evolved to enable people to study and address a wide spectrum of socio-economic and political issues across Sweden and some parts of the world. It is reported that

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[4] www.everyday-democracy.org [5 June 2012]

the SC in Sweden is the most important empowerment and people-centred participatory development method used in the education system as well as development initiatives in the communities (Kindstrom 2002 and The Paul J. Foundation 2008).

2.2.3 **Key principles in the Study Circle practice**

As earlier pointed out, the unique aspect about SC is that it is the participants themselves, through their active participation, who drive the problem analysis process, learning and provision of solutions; not an external person or service provider. Kindstrom (2002) posits that the SC has eight underpinning principles namely: (a) equality and democracy; (b) experiences and cooperation; (c) freedom of study; (d) planning and active participation; (e) availability of study materials; (f) change and action; (g) minimum and maximum number of participants; and (h) gender inclusivity. These principles are the basis for the three key stages of a typical Study Circle process namely organizing, dialogue and action. The diagramme below is a modified representation of this process in that this author has added a stage (Stage 1) preceding the usual three stages and also brief explanations in each stage. The addition of a *situation or need identification* is vital because people are normally motivated to participate in a specific scenario to address a development problem.

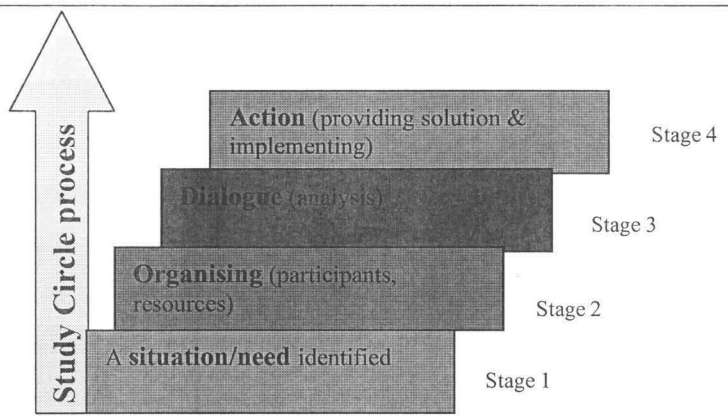


Figure 2.1: Stages of a Study Circle process (adapted from www.everyday-democracy.org)

Taken together, the eight principles and the four stages indicate that the SC aims at providing a platform to promote people to share knowledge, resources, power, and decision making. Additionally, SC is an adaptable development method that enables people in different circumstances to talk and build understanding towards exploring solutions to a development need. Today, one in every five Swedes (20%) participates in a Study Circle for diverse aspects of individual and community life. It is estimated that of the one fifth of the participants, 90% of them are women (Hassan et al, 2005:4). This indicates popularity of SC and the gender dimension embodied in the practice. In fact, this statistic illustrates that SC is more popular among women than men.

2.2.4 **Inclusion and exclusion notion in the Study Circle**

Males and females participate together or separately depending on the development situation to which the SC is being applied. In other words, anyone in the community can participate in SC as long as one commits himself/herself to active participation in order to address the development issue under dialogue.

2.2.5 **Use of Study Circle in development initiatives**

The Study Circle has gained recognition around the world and is being applied variously for development initiatives. The Swedish Cooperative Centre has popularised SC as one of its key strategies for community development in various countries[5]. In Australia, an institution called the Australian Study Circles Network assists and works with individuals, organizations and communities on development issues using the practice[6]. The Study Circle has been used in some of Bangladesh development programmes as a key development framework[7]. In addition, Bangladesh has used SC to reduce school dropout rate notably in Bogra. In the USA, there is Wisdom Circles organisation which is committed to giving voice to the values of compassionate community and to make integrity a visible force in development worldwide[8]. It is also used extensively in Southern Africa including Zimbabwe for community development initiatives. Of note, Swedish Cooperative Centre uses SC method in Zimbabwe on various community development initiatives which include farming, education, peace building and gender issues (Swedish Cooperative Centre 1999 and 2010).

After reviewing this practice, it can be concluded that the key strengths of the Study Circle are: (a) adequately documented; (b) non-discriminatory; (c) people-centred or locally driven process; and (d) emphasises on sharing knowledge, skills and experiences concerning a development challenge people might be facing through democratic or participatory dialogues. As already discussed, it is obvious that there are enforced social rules and procedures that guide the success of the use of the SC practice. These include: personal opinions are welcomed, dialogue is upheld and every person has an equal opportunity to contribute towards achieving development goals. Inferred from the literature reviewed, one major weakness of SC is that if dialogues in a given study group

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[5] www.sccportal.org [22 May 2012] I
[6] http://studycircles.net.au/home [22 May 2012]
[7] http:www.studycirclebangladesh.info/pub.php [22 May 2012]
[8] http://www.wisdomcircle.org [22 May 2012]

are not effectively managed, the process to resolve an identified situation or problem could probably take long.

2.2.3 **Milpa**

2.2.3.1 **Genesis and description**

Milpa has been in practice by the indigenous Maya rural people of Mexico since early 1800s and those who practise it are called *milperos* (Frece and Poole 2008). The word *milpa* is derived from the *Nahuatl* phrase *mil-pa* which means "to the field."[9] It is an agricultural-based community development practice designed to create relatively large yields of food crops at household and community levels without the use of artificial pesticides or fertilizers[10]. The practice exists under the patterns of local rituals, religious customs, community values and social norms. Milpa is a community-based practice whereby people use local resources and intellectual capacity to help their fellow community members on a diversity of development needs mainly farming. In the *milpa* practice, traditional leaders and elders mobilise people within a community to assist a household on specific farming activities. The kind of assistance provided includes but not limited to: furnishing knowledge and skills required for identifying good soils for farming certain crops especially maize; soil management, cultivation, weeding, harvesting, irrigation and even transporting produce to the markets. At the *milpa*, people feast and the main food prepared is normally made out of maize and it is also called *milpa*. During the gathering, the villagers take the occasion to discuss other community related issues which are religious, economic and social in nature. In the process, the *Milpa* practice is indoctrinated and passed on to the young people in the community (Sooner 1998: 342).

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[9] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milpa [24 September 2013]
[10] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milpa [24 September 2013]

The term *Milpa* among rural Mexicans signifies that they are connected to their ancestors and it provides them with their cultural identity (Frece and Poole 2008). The people who practise *Milpa* feel a sense of moral obligation to pass on the practice to the next generations and this may explain its endurance among the Mexican rural communities since the 1800s. The *milperos* have pride and they attach great value to the *milpa* practice. One *milpero* aged 65 expressed the importance of this practice this way; "...it is our duty to make [practise] Milpa. God told our fathers how to make [practise] Milpa and we have to respect that, it is the way we know. I am proud to be [a] Milpero." (Frece and Poole 2008:347).

2.2.3.2 **Purpose of Milpa**

The purpose of *milpa* has evolved from its initial use by community members to provide required labour, knowledge and skills for farming activities to a community wide economic model. In addition to its role in farming, community members use *milpa* development strategy to mobilise resources for acquisition of vehicles or pay transporters as a community to transport their agricultural produce to markets within Mexico and neighbouring countries (Frece and Poole 2008 and Sooner 1998). The other dimension of *milpa* is that it encourages people to use local intellectual capacity to develop their own communities in a sustainable manner especially on agricultural perspectives.

2.2.3.3 **Key principles in the Milpa practice**

The central features of *milpa* are fairness, help, trust; sharing knowledge, skills and experiences for agricultural activities in a community. Additionally, *milpa* is a practice which is anchored on the community socio-cultural values or norms in order to maintain peace among the living and the dead. In line with this notion of

peace, one notes that "the making of *milpa* [food and eating] is the central, most sacred act, one which binds together the family, the community,..."[11]

2.2.3.4 **Inclusion and exclusion notion in the milpa practice**

Just like *nhimbe* and the Study Circle, *milpa* involves everyone in the community as long as that individual upholds the community ideals of help, fairness and trust as well as socio-cultural values and normative framework. However, it has an inherent exclusion when someone is not a member of the village.

2.2.3.5 **Use of Milpa in development initiatives**

The Maya people of Mexico use *milpa* extensively for crop-growing and trading of their agricultural produce. This means that milpa has gone beyond a subsistence practice to a micro-economic system in the rural communities of Mexico. In particular, it provides economies of scale to the rural farmers through affective relationships among community members.

The strengths of milpa are that it is: (a) adequately documented; (b) community driven; and (c) pivoted on the community socio-cultural and spiritual values and norms, (d) a practice that promotes and sustains peace in the community through enabling interactions among community members; (e) adaptable to go beyond subsistence level of development to micro-economic activities in the community, and (f) environmentally sustainable since artificial pesticides or fertilizers are not used in the *milpa* farming system. However, a dilemma associated with *milpa* is that while it is environmentally self-sustaining, increased population in the communities might require intensive levels of cultivation including mechanisation to which *milpa* will not be suitable. In other words, it seems *milpa* is a conservative community development practice which has limited flexibility in view

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[11] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milpa [24 September 2013]

of mechanisation and modernisation. This challenge is not unique to *milpa* but to any rural developmental practice including *nhimbe*.

2.2.4 **Harambee**

2.2.4.1 **Genesis and description**

Harambee is a Kenyan community development practice popularised in the 1960s (Kenya Development Plan 1979). It gained currency after Kenya's independence in 1963 when the first Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta adopted *harambee* at a national level and encouraged communities to work together for sustainable development (Kenya Development plan 1979). Harambee is a Swahili word which literally means "Let us all pull together". From 1963 to the time of this study, 2013, *harambee*[12] has progressed to be a way of life for Kenyans (Ngethe 1979 and Mulwa 2004). People organise collective development initiatives to address identified development needs in the community. If a development need is beyond the capacity of a family then it appeals to the community at large for support. In other words, *harambee* functions as a social cushioning or support system in the community. It can be organised at family, community, national or even international levels. It is important that people are clear of the need and organisers are trustworthy and committed to achieve the development objective identified. It is similar to other development practices like *Ujamaa* in Tanzania and *Chilimba* in Zambia; the latter is discussed later in this chapter. The similarities are that they are community-based and underpinned by socio-cultural values which apply in the respective communities.

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[12] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harambee [19 June 2012]

2.2.4.2 **Purpose of harambee**

As the preceding discussions already show, harambee is a community philanthropic development strategy whose main objective is to address diverse social, economic and political needs of individuals, families, households, communities and the nation.

2.2.4.3 **Key principles in the Harambee practice**

Harambee is anchored on the social concepts of mutual trust, joint effort, reciprocal relationship, mutual community responsibility and sharing (Akong'a 1989, Chien 1997 and Mulwa 2004). From the writings of Chieni (1997) and Chepkwony (2008), the principles that guide the *harambee* practice can be summarized into four key categories:

i) It fosters bottom-up development strategy in which people at community level actively participate in planning and implementation of their development initiatives;
ii) Participation in *harambee* is directed by collective good rather than individual gain which means that the products or services from any development initiative should benefit the community rather than just an individual;
iii) The choice of the development project is guided by the felt needs and priorities of the community instead of leaving this to external development agents who might have a different motivation to that of the local people; and
iv) Any *harambee* project implementation is supposed to maximize the utilisation of local resources such as labour, funds and materials which would otherwise have remained unutilised or underutilised.

2.2.4.4 **Inclusion and exclusion in Harambee**

As a community-based practice, everyone has an opportunity to take part, organise or benefit from *harambee* in the community (Chieni 1997). Chien's

observation applies in an ideal situation. For instance, three separate discussions the researcher held with three Kenyan citizens (*Harambee* discussions 2012) revealed that sometimes politicians or unscrupulous people in society abuse *harambee* arrangement for personal gain other that the objective for which it would have been organised.

2.2.4.5 **Uses of harambee in development initiatives**

Harambee could be used for cultivation or harvesting; building houses for one another or making bricks to build schools or health centres in communities; construction or maintenance of cattle dips and water projects. Other aspects where *harambee* is applied include fundraising for weddings, education assistance for youths and payment of hospital bills for community members. The continued existence of *harambee* practice in Kenya as a community development strategy is attributed to the general benefits realised from it at both community and individual levels. These include building of schools, health centres and education support for deserving young people in communities.

Harambee has the following strengths: (a) adequately documented; (b) community driven and participatory; (c) pivoted on the community socio-cultural and spiritual values and norms; (d) promotes solidarity in the community through enabling interactions among community members; and (e) adaptable to address needs at individual, family, community or national levels. However, a key weakness of *harambee* is that people like politicians can use *harambee* to meet needs which are counterproductive to the development priorities of individuals or communities.

Realising scarcity of financial and other resources to implement community development projects, the government of Kenya has continued to encourage people at all levels to use *harambee* to resolve challenges in life.

> The harambee movement, which stresses working together for the good of the community as a whole and individual persons as well, is an example of a partnership that lasts; that of the government and of the people of Kenya, to make the quality of life of Kenyans better (Chieni 1997).

Chien's words above imply that Kenyans believe *harambee* is an effective model for community-based development in the country. This also explains the government's endorsement of the *harambee* practice nationwide (Kenya Development Plan 1979).

2.2.5 **Chilimba**

The description and analysis of the *Chilimba* practice in Zambia presented below is based on the detailed interviews the researcher held with three Zambian nationals in Lusaka on 16 May 2013. Two of the three interviewees were members of a *Chilimba* in their communities and this provided elaborate real life perspective of the practice.

2.2.5.1 **Genesis and description**

Chilimba is a *Bemba* word which is spoken by the majority of Zambian population mainly in the provinces of Copperbelt, Northern, Luapula and Central. *Chilimba* means a musical instrument; any musical instrument and its plural is *ifilimba*. Initially, *chilimba* was popularised to mean a radio where people dance to the same tune. Conceptually, *chilimba* means playing in concert, in harmony or as a team (*balalisha ifilimba*) bound by common goals. *Chilimba* is a resource mobilization and sharing community scheme practised in both rural and urban areas usually among low income earners, business women, and those in informal settlements (Copestake 2001). A group of people come together and agree on the type of *chilimba* they want to form. For example, it could be a cash *chilimba*, kitchen mending chilimba, village banking scheme *chilimba* and so on. The kitchen mending *chilimba* is exclusively for women. Normally the

membership in a single *chilimba* ranges from 4 to 6 people. A small membership often has an advantage of a quick turnaround for members to benefit since it is a rotational system. The practice is common among women groups in churches and house wives in both rural and urban communities. Normally members select among themselves a coordinator whose key responsibility is to ensure that members honour their contribution commitments. Additionally, there could also be a secretary and treasurer in a particular *chilimba*.

If it is a cash *chilimba,* members agree on the amount to contribute as well as the period after which they can start benefiting. It should be noted that contribution is often the lowest amount one or few of the members are able to contribute. For instance, if in a *chilimba* of four, three people can afford to contribute $3 while one is able to contribute a $1; this means that the contribution amount for that group is automatically a dollar. This is in line with the concept of *chilimba* that there should be no differential levels of contribution in a single *chilimba*. In other words, the members are peers and no one should be excluded. Once members have agreed on both the amount to contribute and the waiting period before they start to benefit, then they proceed to make a draw which forms the interval of individuals to benefit. However, it should be noted that members have flexibility, where it is necessary, to mutually agree to make another draw during the current *chilimba* span to extend its life and increase the benefits. This is done to foster fairness among the group members.

A major reason for the growing recognition of *chilimba* in Zambia lies in the observed challenges people often face in the formal financial services sector. For instance, microfinance credit largely characterised by complex bureaucratic systems in the formal banking sector which include long queues and extended time taken for one to be served. Furthermore, complicated loan procedures, collateral requirements, lack of access to banking facilities especially for people who live in rural areas and high levels of statutory bank balance requirements

(Copestake 2001 and O'reilly 1996) normally contribute to popularity of *chilimba*. As a result, communities form resource mobilisation schemes to help one another with various resources to address their respective development needs. *Chilimba* has evolved from its original focus on non-financial resources to informal credit and savings (microfinance).

Members in each club develop rules of how they want their scheme to operate towards meeting members' needs. The way *chilimba* functions is similar to *kaloba* except that in *chilimba* there is usually no interest incurred to members (O'reilly 1996). That is, *kaloba* is a community-based microfinance lending scheme and members pay interest on the money borrowed (2001 and O'reilly 1996). For both *chilimba* and *kaloba*, the repayment period and interest are always mutually agreed. Sometimes some members choose to pay back the money using their livestock like what the Tonga and the Namwanga ethnic groups do (Copestake 2001). Members can mutually agree to dissolve a chilimba and the following often necessitate dissolution: (a) the needs that triggered formation of a *chilimba* have been met; (b) the objective of the *chilimba* has changed; and (c) one or more members are failing to meet their contribution commitment.

2.2.5.2 **Purpose of the chilimba practice**

The aim of *chilimba* is to raise financial and non-financial resources based on mutual understanding and trust among members. This is in order to address diverse development needs in communities at both individual and household levels.

2.2.5.3 **Key principles in the chilimba practice**

Chilimba has six major principles (O'reilly 1996 and Copestake 2001):

i) The most important principle is that each member should contribute consistently to the agreed *chilimba* arrangement (financial or material). In other words, a member should not break the contribution chain.
ii) Friendship among the members entrenched in the spirit of helping one another.
iii) The way the club operates is based on mutual trust without any legal requirements. As such, *chilimba* has no formal written procedures and systems. In addition, it is not a formally registered institution.
iv) Decisions are based on consensual agreement.
v) The life of any given *chilimba* is based on the extent to which the needs are met or the discipline of the members to honour their own rules.
vi) It is often that a *chilimba* should have people with similar needs and socio-economic status as this helps to balance power dynamics among the members.

For the most part, members of a *chilimba* would normally adhere to these principles. In situations where one or more of these are broken, the *chilimba* is dissolved as discussed in the genesis and description section.

2.2.5.4 **Inclusion and exclusion notion in the chilimba practice**

Anyone in society can participate in *chilimba* as long as that individual has a need and is willing to abide by the agreed rules of operation. However, there are situations where *chilimba* is formed for needs that are gender defined such as kitchen mending which is only for women while livestock re-stocking is for men. Overall, *chilimba* is not a discriminatory development practice. The practice is need-driven designed as a coping strategy in communities. Furthermore, *chilimba* is a flexible development model that can be applied to address a wide range of development initiatives among poor or vulnerable people in society.

Five strengths are attributed to *Chilimba*: (a) it is an inclusive practice; (b) community driven and participatory; (c) pivoted on group values and norms; (d) promotes solidarity and peace in the community through friendship shared; and (e) adaptable to address diverse needs at individual or family level. It should be noted that while trust is a key driver, *chilimba's* demerit is that it does not have reinforcement mechanism to deal with members who might default on their commitments. In other words, there is no recourse to recover lost resources if *chilimba* is dissolved due to members who might have failed to make their contributions as agreed.

2.2.5.5 **Uses of Chilimba in development initiatives**

It is clear from the interviews conducted with the three Zambians and the literature reviewed that *chilimba* is a community safety net development model designed to mobilise resources including money into a common 'basket' for the concerned members to share at agreed intervals and duration. Some of the specific uses of *chilimba* include credit savings, kitchen mending, livestock stocking, livestock re-stocking and building houses.The practice also provides opportunities for community members to interact and in the process share knowledge, skills and experiences on socio-economic issues.

2.2.6 **Zunde raMambo**

2.2.6.1 **Genesis and description**

Unlike the preceding five practices (nhimbe, study circle, milpa, harambee, chilimba) whose benefit is at household level (micro), the thrust of *Zunde raMamabo* is benefit to the whole community (macro) under the chietainship[13]. It

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[13] The highest level of the community structure is the chiefdom, followed by the villages and households. This aspect is detailed in chapter Four, Section 4.3.

should be noted that *Zunde raMambo* is an extension from *Zunde raBaba,* which literary means father's field, a food security arrangement within a polygamous family (Vambe 2011). *Zunde raMambo* is a community food security practice in Zimbabwe which focuses on crop production under the administration of a chief. It is practised by both the Shona and the Ndebele people of Zimbabwe. The Shona people know it as *Zunde raMambo* while the Ndebele calls it *Inkomo zeButho* (Mararike 1999 and Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2005). The terms *Zunde raMambo* and *Inkomo zeButho* deserve brief explanations so that the practice is understood from a local language perspective. *Zunde* is a Shona word which has multiple related meanings. Mararike (1999:3) provides insight into its meaning: "It may mean a large gathering of people taking part in a common activity or ...plenty of grain stored for future use ...or informal, in-built social, economic and political mechanism." The prefix *'ra'* before *mambo* translates to 'of;' and *mambo* is 'chief'. Therefore, *Zunde raMambo* literally means the chief's gathering of grain. In the Ndebele language, the term *Inkomo zeButho* means communal herd as *inkomo* means cattle and *butho* community (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2005). The prefix *'ze'* is equivalent to 'of' in English. It should be noted that *Zunde raMambo* is a variation of *nhimbe* and whereby it is owned and driven by the chief. When it comes to *nhimbe*, the study discovered that it is organised and implemented by community members themselves in pursuit of their livelihoods even beyond food requirements. Notably, both practices focus on strengthening food security and traditional leaders play an integral role.

The concepts of *Zunde raMambo* and *Inkomo zeButho* are the same in that the focus is for the community under the same chiefdom to collectively grow crops or breed livestock for food relief or to give poor households cattle as startup for breeding. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2005) explains that the objective of *Inkomo zeButho* is to help those in need in the community.

> The chiefs usually distribute cattle and *amabele* (millet, sorghum and maize) to the starving people. The chiefs keep grain in secure places [granaries] for distribution to their people during times of crisis Ndlovu-(Gatsheni 2005: 461)

Apart from benefiting the immediate community members, the *Zunde raMambo* food or cattle are also given to subjects awaiting trial at the chief's court, chief's advisors, destitutes and needy travelers in transit to their destinations. The giving out of the food is normally witnessed by the chief's headman or village heads for transparency and accountability. The only difference between these two practices is that *Zunde raMambo* focuses on grain crops while *Inkomo zeButho* on livestock. *Zunde raMambo* is regarded as a development strategy because it ensures sustainable food security in communities through collective farming at which people share knowledge and skills on various crops and soil science. As for the *Inkomo zeButho*, community members exchange knowledge, skills and experiences about animal husbandry or management (Mararike 2001). The way *Zunde raMambo* is organised is that the chief reserves arable land for agriculture in his chiefdom. This is a community farm specifically set aside to grow crops that will be stored at the chief's granaries. Normally the chief selects particular days in a week that are devoted to *Zunde raMambo* in a community. For *Inkomo zeButho*, the chief mobilises the community to contribute cattle that become communal property under the chief's administration.

2.2.6.2 **Purpose of Zunde raMambo**

The main objective of the practice is to create a food security safety net for members of the community. Any household in the community under the same chiefdom who runs out of food or needs livestock as a startup can approach the chief for assistance. Apart from the food security, *Zunde raMambo* provides an opportunity for members of the community to share and learn together on a wide range of community social, economic, religious and political issues. It is during *Zunde raMambo* that the elders and the experienced members of the community

pass on knowledge and wisdom on crop growing and animal management to others.

2.2.6.3 **Key principles in the zunde ramambo practice**

To benefit from these practices, a household should have participated in the farming activities with others at the chief's communal land. This shows that cooperation and reciprocity are important values in *Zunde raMambo* practice. Other important principles that are associated with *Zunde raMambo* include that community members uphold moral values of respecting the chief through following rules and regulations of the community. In addition, the practice requires that community members share knowledge, skills and experience on farming and animal management.

2.2.6.4 **Inclusion and exclusion notion in the zunde ramambo practice**

A chief requires every household or family to get involved in the *Zunde raMambo* in order to sustain food security in the community. For this reason, *Zunde raMambo* is an inclusive practice. However, if one decides to not participate, the individual is simply breaching the chief's rules and regulations and is likely to be sanctioned through withdrawal of the privilege to receive food or livestock when in need. Obviously this is in line with the chief's requirements for community members to always uphold the values of cooperation, reciprocity and respect as discussed earlier.

2.2.6.5 **Uses of Zunde raMambo in development initiatives**

From the foregoing discussions, it is apparent that *Zunde raMambo* is a community food security development model designed to benefit the needy members of the community as well as outsiders based on the chief's discretion. In the process of carrying out the *Zunde raMambo*, the practice provides

opportunities for community members to share knowledge, skills and experiences on crop growing, soil science and animal management.

The obvious strengths of *Zunde raMambo* are that it is: (a) adequately documented; (b) community driven and participatory; and (c) pivoted on the community socio-cultural values, rules and regulations; and (d) a practice that promotes solidarity and peace in the community through enabling interactions among community members as well as to ensure food security. It should be highlighted that *Zunde raMambo* has inherent weakness in that the practice is prone to abuse. This can happen when the chief applies his discretion to benefit outsiders when there are deserving people within the community. In addition, it is possible that community members who are not consistently involved or never participated benefit from the *Zunde raMambo*. Another weakness is that the population of the chiefdom today is relatively larger that what it used to be like 50 years ago. This means that the effective management and complexity of *Zunde raMambo* is likely to be proportional to the population size. This suggests that perhaps *Zunde raMambo* should be done at village level rather than at the current chiefdom administrative structure. Of course, this notion requires a separate study beyond this thesis.

2.3 **Comparative analysis of the community-based practices reviewed**

Having examined community based development practices in Zimbabwe and other parts of the world, it is vital at this point to compare and contrast them as tabulated in Table 2:2 below. The tick (√) stands for 'Yes' while 'X' depicts a no scenario.

	Principles and features	Community development practices					
		Study Circle	Milpa	Harambee	Chilimba	Zunde raMambo	Nhimbe
1	Need-driven	√	√	√	√	√	√
2	Informal	√	√	√	√	x	√
3	Mutual trust driven	x	√	√	√	x	√
4	Reciprocal relationship based	√	√	√	√	√	√
5	Social inclusive	√	√	√	√	√	√
6	Number of participants is pre-defined	√	x	x	√	x	x
7	Platform for exchange of knowledge, skills and experiences	√	√	√	√	√	√
8	Cooperation is required	√	√	√	√	√	√
9	Feasting	x	√	√	x	√	√

Table 2.2: Comparative analysis of nhimbe with other similar practices

Generally, the traditional practices reviewed are quite similar. This could be an indication that development strategies that are community-born are bound by similar circumstances and their practices transcend geo-political boundaries. Table 2.3 below is a further analysis to establish the extent to which these practices are recognised by national governments, documented and adapted as development models beyond their countries. The tick (√) stands for 'Yes' while 'X' depicts no scenario.

	Current status of the practice	Community development practices					
		Study Circle	Milpa	Harambee	Chilimba	Zunde raMambo	Nhimbe
1	Officially recognised by government as a development model	√	x	√	x	√	x
2	Documented	√	√	√	x	√	x
3	Adapted/used outside its home country as a development model	√	x	x	x	x	x

Table 2.3: Comparative analysis of community based practices reviewed

The matrix analysis above clearly indicates that nhimbe is not yet officially recognised by the government of Zimbabwe as a development model. This is

despite the fact that it is popular and an ongoing practice in most rural communities in the country (Madziva 2011, Mararike 2003, Gelfand 1979, Kajese 1987). The literature has shown that official recognition of the Study Circle is mainstreamed into the development design of Swedish development programmes (Swedish Cooperative Centre 1999 and 2010). As for *Harambee*, the Government of Kenya officially declared it as a development strategy in 1979 (Kenya Development Plan 1979) while *Zunde raMambo* has been upheld as a food security strategy by the Government of Zimbabwe (Mararike 1999). Another revelation from this analysis is that only *nhimbe* and *chilimba* are currently not adequately documented. This is one of the key objectives of this study to contribute towards a systematic documentation of the *nhimbe* practice.

The comparison of these practices has also revealed that only Study Circle has gained international recognition and consequently adapted as a community development model. A close examination illustrates that all the five practices including *nhimbe* are associated with developing countries while Study Circle originates and has been popularised by a developed country. This might imply that although there are indigenous practices in developing countries, not much has been done to document and develop them into adaptable development models. Notably, these practices have been in existence since the 1800s. Hence, this study sought to contribute towards understanding *nhimbe* and the role it plays in the social and economic community development.

The preceding sections explored six community-based practices namely: nhimbe, *study circle*, *milpa*, *harambee*, *chilimba* and *zunde ramambo*. It is clear that the underlining objective of all these practices is for community members to help each other on economic and social needs in the short-term (livelihoods shocks) and long-term development planning. In all these practices, community members initiate, organise and participate. It is evident that there is a genuine

application of the bottom-up approach in development through these community-based practices reviewed.

Notably, all the practices have been in existence for a long time. For instance, *nhimbe*, *study circle* and *milpa* have been around since at least the 1800s. The lubricants for their resilience are trust, reciprocity, homogeneity, strong household bonds, community solidarity and a strong community belief of self-determination to address own development challenges. Additionally, these practices, for the most part, are rooted in the community cultural and normative frameworks.

2.4 **Chapter summary**

The review of community development practices in this chapter was significant in three ways: (a) it helped to gain insights on how similar practices to *nhimbe* started and how they are being used for community-based development, (b) it provided knowledge on the level of documentation, design and application, and (c) it offered strengths and weaknesses of each practice. The next chapter is the review of literature and theoretical framework which guided this study.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1. **Chapter objectives**

The focus of the chapter is threefold:

- Review of three community-based theories, namely Participation or People-centred, Appreciative Inquiry and Social Capital in the context of community-based development;
- Establish how the underlining concepts in each theory relate to the *nhimbe* practice; and
- Critique of each theory in the context of development practice.

The main theoretical frameworks advanced in this study are *participation (Pt)* or *people-centred* (PC), *social capital (SC)* and *Appreciative inquiry* (AI) *theories,* looked at within the broader context of community-based development (CBD). The argument for participation theory in development discourse is that, unless people whose needs solutions are sought do participate, development initiatives are likely to become unsustainable (Chambers 1997, Ling 2010, Williams 2004). An examination of the participation theory reveals that it is linked to the people-centred or bottom up approach which came to prominence in the 1990s. Its proponents argue that the people immediately affected by a situation should take an active role as appropriate, in all faucets of development programme which includes problem analysis, design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (Chambers 1997, Kajese 1987, Madziva and Mulwa 2004). Of course, it should be noted that this will vary depending on the type of project, stage of the project and the socio-cultural and moral framework of the community. In any case, the overall argument which is inherent in the people-centred theory is that

local people's participation in their own development initiative encourages utilisation of local resources (knowledge, skills and material), buy-in and it promotes ownership. In other words, the theory supposes that the presence of local participation is likely to nurture and sustain community-based development. However, it should be pointed out that this is normally discussed in abstract terms, that is, without a specific framework through which communities can put the theory into practice for their development endevours. In fact, the questions that arise in this study are: as a community-based practice, *how does nhimbe operate? How does this practice promote development*? *What are the strengths and weakensses associated with the people-centred development approaches and practices such as nhimbe*?

This people-centred notion formed the central theoretical conception for the study as *nhimbe* is a community-based development practice (Madziva 2011, Mararike 2003 and Thompson 2010). In the people-centered approach, there is a phenonomen of participation. It should be noted that this participation takes place in varied contexts. Firstly, participation in a development initiative funded or driven by outsiders (aid agencies or external experts). Secondly, participation in development initiative originated or funded by insiders (community members themselves) with minimal relationship to or support from aid agencies or external experts. Finally, participation in a development programme initiated or funded by insiders (community members themselves) with no relationship to or support from outsiders. It is therefore, necessary to be sensitive to the local dynamics in which participation is expected for any given community development initiative.

As presented in chapter two of this thesis, *nhimbe* may be an example of the type of community practice that outsiders (aid agencies, external development experts) should understand. This implies that outsiders should seek to work with the *nhimbe* arrangement when they support development undertakings in the communities where it is practised. Certainly, when outsiders' development

framework is guided by the *nhimbe* or similar practices, this does not suggest an erosion of the local participation. Instead, when outsiders' consider *nhimbe*, this is supposed to bring a fusion of the local and external participation in providing forth the necessary resources and expertise in community based-development projects. Thus, this study sought to establish how nhimbe practice is located within the notions of internal and external participation from the perspective of people-centred theory.

An equally important theoretical foundation which guided this study is the *social capital theory.* This was a key theory because of the social, cultural and moral dimensions which are embedded in the *nhimbe* practice. Additionally, the participation in the practice is among people who know each other and not outsiders, that is, people within the same village as detailed in chapters six and seven of the study. This seems to suggest that in the practice of *nhimbe*, people's relationships in the village are vital. For this reason, it is expected that the *nhimbe* practice, for the most part, hinges on social capital shared in its various forms among the community members.

From the literature reviewed, the various forms of social capital include trust, normative framework, shared community values, social interactions and networks in the community (Putnam, 1993; Realo and Allik, 2008). As the presentation of the related traditional practices in chapter two revealed, it is obvious that social dimension forms a solid foundation for community-based practices (Kajese 1987, Madziva 2011 and Shutt 2002). The proponents of the theory argue that the intentional consideration of the tenets of social capital in CBD is likely to foster ownership, sense of belonging and sustainability (Getz 2008, Mulwa 2004, Madziva 2011 and Putnam 1993). In this regard, the study sought to establish, specifically, how the *nhimbe* practice within the three communities investigated is linked to the social theory phenomenon.

When it comes to AI, the emphasis of this theory is that local people have intrinsic potential to resolve their own development challenges (Cooperrider 1986 and Hammond and Annis 1996). In other words, AI is a supportive theory to people-centred approach which focuses on the existing or likely abilities of people in a given setup to address their own development situations. Its emphasis is on stressing successes or strengths while discouraging people from being drawn back by their failures or weaknesses. Essentially, AI is a positive approach which encourages people in communities and organisations to learn from their past achievements and limitations in order to continuously improve quality of life (Stellnberger 2010). While people-centered approach is all encompassing and general, AI is a specific theoretical formulation that encourages people to identify their worth in community development discourse. In this study, AI theory was significant to allow for rigorous exploration of the *nhimbe* strengths and weaknesses as well as determination of its potential contribution to CBD in specific Zimbabwe communities. In particular, AI influenced the author to design the overall study methodology and analysis framework to bring conceptual balance in understanding *nhimbe* especially how it contributes to the socio-economic lives of the communities studied and CBD in general.

As this study would show, the way these theories are understood in the literature and how they manifest themselves in *nhimbe* shed more light about community-based practices for development. As found in the literature (Chambers 1997, Ling 2010, Owens 1993 and Williams 2004) the understanding of participation is analogous to *nhimbe* in that the participants of this community-based practice are the community members themselves who immediately face development challenges in their lives. The difference lies in that the participation in the *nhimbe* is absolutely community driven, that is, with no relationship or support from external development agencies, a perspective not recognised in the current literature. When it comes to social capital, the notion manifests itself quite well in

nhimbe particularly on the aspects of trust and reciprocal relationship which underline the practice. The key difference in social capital often discussed in the literature (Putnam 1993 and Reallo and Allik 2008) is that the one found in the *nhimbe* practice is couched in cultural framework and normative practices of a specific community (Madziva 2011, Mararike 2003 and Nyaumwe and Mkabela 2007). As for the appreciative inquiry, this theory is apparent in *nhimbe* because people who practise it strongly believe in their abilities or potential to resolve development challenges that affect them at household and community levels. The slight difference of the appreciative inquiry as found in the literature (Cooperrider 1986, Hammond and Annis 1996 and Stellnberger 2010) is that the primacy of appreciation in the *nhimbe* practice is the people's own community culture and socio-moral compass.

Having discussed the justification for inclusion of these three theories (Pt, SC and AI) as the theoretical pillars upon which the study was anchored, the next sections provide the detailed analysis of each theory. This includes description of the theory, rationale, critique and challenges normally faced in the application of each theory.

3.2. **Theoretical pillars underpinning the study**

3.2.1 **Participation theory**

3.2.1.1 **Description**

Those who argue for participation give an impression that it is a panacea for the past mistakes made in development as pointed out by Arnstein (1969), Chambers (1993, 1994 & 1997), White (1996), Williams (2004), and Ling (2010). For the most part, participation theory has been applied variously in development discourse and social scientists have described this situation using diverse terms. Arnstein (1969) and van Rensburg (2000) call it 'manipulation', Uvin (2007)

'cooperation' and Williams (2004) "a form of subjection". These expressions denote that as an accepted theory in development practice, participation is prone to abuse by both development agencies or experts and communities themselves. It is important to point out that literature reviewed in this study show little theoretical analysis or reference to traditional practices in communities like *nhimbe* and how that might be associated with participative development. The community-based practices could provide insights into the issues of inclusion and exclusion when it comes to participation in community-based development initiatives.

The participation theory came to prominence in the early 1960s and since then it has gained significant support in mainstream development practice (Arnstein 1969, Chambers 1997, Williams 2004: 565 and Ling 2010: 5). However, Cohen and Uphoff (1980) note that it has remained an 'elusive' phenomenon in terms of comprehension and application at community level. In the early 1980s to late 1990s, the theory of participative development was popularised and adopted by most international aid organisations and development institutions including the World Bank (Williams 2004).

During the same period, two related forms of participatory techniques evolved namely Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). They were developed as a response to disappointment and the criticism of the exclusion manner of most current development practices. That is, the observation that knowledge, expertise and experiences required for a development initiative are normally limited to external development agencies or professionals (Chambers 1994a and Mikkelsen 1995: 67). Madziva (2011: 265) argues alongside Chambers and Mikkelsen when she observes that "[Development] agendas that are brewed outside of the community imply no participation at all even though community members can gather under a tree and endorse an activity". Madziva's conviction implies that members of the

community for which a development initiative is designed should be involved and play an active role in decision making at all levels. In other words, they should own the process in terms of contribution of their expertise and other resources found in the community to address a development need.

Following the review of the literature, it appears that the difference between RRA and PRA is minimal. In Chambers' (1994a) view, the distinction relates largely to the fact that RRA is about 'extracting' local knowledge while PRA focuses on mobilising local capacities for people to manage development initiatives. Mikkelsen (1995:69) does not see a significant conceptual disparity between RRA and PRA. Hence, she describes the key principle underlining the two as "to learn from people, directly, on the site, and face-to-face, gaining from local physical, technical, and social knowledge." A close examination of Mikkelsen's postulation shows that together, RRA and PRA are a revolution in development practice from top-down to people-centred dimension. In fact, participation is understood today as an attempt to shift away from externally driven development practice that dominated the development scene especially up to the 1980s to a mode where people contribute their ideas, knowledge and experiences (Chambers 1983). It is the expectation of this study that *nhimbe* is a people-centred (bottom-up) development practice and the analysis should show its contribution to community development in the context of Zimbabwe. This is against the backdrop of the top-down approach criticism in community development as succinctly expressed below:

> "[Development professionals] themselves as the sole owners of development wisdom and having the monopoly of solutions which consistently under-rate and under-value the capacities of local people to make their own decisions as well as to determine their own priorities" (Botes and van Rensburg 2000:43).

Foster (2000b: 8) agrees with the excerpt above and argues that "ordinary people [community members] have considerable more skill and much greater vested interest than outsiders in overcoming their own problems". In addition, other proponents of participation theory argue that it promotes localisation of development as opposed to externally driven, controlled, and managed approaches that have dominated development practice particularly from the 1950s (Cornwall 2008; Ling 2010). It is seen that the observations of Madziva (2011), Foster (2000b), Botes and van Rensburg (2000), Cornwall (2008), and Ling (2010) suggest that there is a growing tendency whereby local people are often not taken seriously in development initiatives which are meant to address their own challenges. Other authors who include De Beer and Swanepoel (1998 & 2006) and Mulwa (2004) have written widely on people-centred development and participation with a focus on rural communities. The key point from these scholars is that, for the most part, development programme design should take cognizance of the community context (including socio-cultural dimensions) and the role it can play in resolving local development situation. As will be seen in Chapters Six and Seven, part of the investigation in this study sought to establish whether or not *nhimbe* is an internal community practice. Moreover, the study analysed *nhimbe* contribution to community life or development within the Zimbabwe context.

Depending on one's orientation, the theory of participation has been understood and applied differently, thereby subjecting it to a dichotomy of 'good uses' and 'abuses' in the development realm. Various studies and evaluation work done on the theory to date all point to the fact that its evolution and ascendency is rooted in human rights paradigm (Chambers 1997; Ling 2004; Cornwall 2008). Others have discussed participation in the context of politics and social disobedience (Bhila 1982, Ling 2010, Mutunhu 2011 and Oakley 1995). In this context, the proponents of this theory argue that it is an appropriate development strategy to engage the marginalised in society in mainstream socio-political dispensation.

One advocate emphasises this point and retorts that participation is vital because it enables 'the excluded and the disempowered [the vulnerable and marginalised] in a process of learning and social transformation that would enable them to become aware of, and able to overcome the structures of oppression that shaped their lives" (Ling 2010: 5). In line with community development, the fundamental issue is about the exclusion of local voices from the formulation of development strategies as external experts often make assumptions that their course of action is correct and sustainable (Chivaura and Mararike 1998, Foster 200b, Kajese 1987, Madziva and Mutunhu 2011). Earlier scholars on the subject illuminated the rationale for participation when they describe it as a vehicle available to societies to enable them to have a voice in their development initiatives in order to achieve ownership and sustainability (Abers 1998, Arnstein 1969, Chambers 1997 and Turner 1993). During that period, participation was limited to human rights education and social disobedience as a strategy to address global political instabilities and various forms of oppression. This could explain why participation is often inseparable from political science. Williams (2004: 557) observes that "participation has been politicised over the years, meaning that it is often used for political expediency by those in power". Williams's remark indicates probable complexity of applying participation phenomenon in social development practice. This might also show that despite its popularity in development discourse, the theoretical analysis regarding its application has not received adequate attention. At this point, it is important to state that participation is one of the theories used in sometimes ambigious ways in the development literature. Table 3.1 below outlines the work of four authors who contributed immensely in their attempt to differentiate kinds or levels of participation in what is known as "typology or ladder of participation" (Arnstein 1969, Pretty 1995, White 1996 and Wilcox 2000).

				High level of participation
Citizen control	Self-mobilising			
Delegated power	Interactive participation			
Partnership	Functional participation		Supporting	
Consultation	Participation for material incentives	Transformative	Acting together	
Informing	Participation by consultation	Representative	Deciding together	
Therapy	Passive participation	Instrumental	Consultation	
Manipulation	Manipulative participation	Nominal	Information	Low level of participation
Anerstein (1969) A	Pretty (1995) B	White (1996) C	Wilcox (2000) D	

Table 3.1: Typologies of participation

Adapated from: Arnestein (1969), Pretty (1995) and Wilcox (2000)

Following the review of literature on typologies, this author juxtaposed the prepositions as shown in Table 3.1 above. The four typologies of participation (A, B, C and D) reveal three similarities. Firstly, the four authors agree that there are a variety of different ways in which participation can occur in development. Secondly, participation is a continuum that ranges from non-participation to genuine participation. The non-participation is indicated by the phrases 'manipulation', 'passive participation', and 'nominal'. Alant and others (1990:119) agree with Arnstein (1969), Pretty (1995), White (1996) and Wilcox (2000) when they go on to say that it is a passive engagement. Genuine participation is depicted by the terms 'citizen control', 'self-mobilising', 'transformative' and 'supporting'. It is clear that the authors often present participation narrowly or in particular contexts. Granted, it should be noted that different levels of participation are required throughout a project cycle and this understanding is paramount in community development dynamics.

It is important to point out that *nhimbe* is not quite similar to the participation referred to by Chambers and others. Most significantly, *nhimbe* is an internal mechanism for communities to work among themselves through mobalising or harnessing the available local knowledge, skills, resources and socio-cultural compass of the community.

Indeed, as discussed earlier, each type of a development project requires certain levels of participation from insiders and outsiders alike. For instance, people with certain expertise would be needed to participate in the situational analysis, conception/design, execution/implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting phases. This means that in reality, different types of participation are appropriate in each stage of community development initiative. Furthermore, it suggests that participation should be contextually viewed and understood as diverse development situations might require different types of participation. Therefore, 'citizen control' might not necessarily mean that the community has full control of all the processes, strategies or even services they receive. Instead, this denotes that community members can participate in provision of data about their situation as well as influencing decisions throughout the project cycle as appropriate. Finally, moderate level of participation is characteristic of a situation where people are invited to 'participate' in development initiatives. Normally this is after decisions have already been made for them. Arnstein (1969) calls this 'tokenism' through 'informing' and 'consulting' tendencies and Madziva uses the term 'endorse' to refer to a situation whereby a community agree to implement a development initiative in which it never took part. Cornwall (2008:270) concurs with Arnstein and Madziva when he asserts that tokenism is often an act of external development agencies whose intention is normally to legitimise their work by "providing a thin veneer of participation to lend the process moral authority". This illustrates the complexity of the notion of participation and that it is still a subject with limited understanding in terms of how it is applied in

development within specific communities. Accordingly, this study sought to shed light on how *nhimbe* practice resonates with participation in the context of CBD.

It is also evident in the typologies examined above that the authors have different points of departure. Arnstein (1969) and White (1996) constructed their typologies from the beneficiary standpoint. As for Pretty (1995), he analyses it from the perspective of the user of participatory methods. The thrust is on how participation should help to achieve the project goals in terms of efficiency and cost-effectiveness from the standpoint of the external agent. Wilcox's (2000) typology represents a mixture of the two conceptions. In the end, these typologies help to show the elasticity or complexity of the participation phenomenon in development practice. Cornwall (2008:269) affirms that participation is "infinitely malleable concept", suggesting the easiness at which it can take different forms and purposes in view of the types of development projects that are designed and implemented in various communities. This also implies that participation should not be applied in a one size fits all manner but to consider the context in order to determine nature and level of its application. The following section is a critique of the theory with emphasis on its rationale and how it is currently understood in development discourse.

3.2.1.2 **Rationale for Participation theory**

Although many remain wary of the costs involved (usually upfront), and the time-required for meaningful participation, there is a widespread acceptance of the need for far greater local people involvement in their community development initiatives (Chambers 1997, Ling 2010, Owens 1993 and Williams 2004). To emphasise this, Owens (1993: 241) upholds that "...indigenous institutions [communities] have the best potential to implement participatory development initiatives that respond to the genuine local need". As discussed earlier, the nature and complexity of the development initiative under consideration should be regarded to determine the levels of community participation. In the current

study, one of the key issues explored was to establish the level of community participation evident in the *nhimbe* practice.

The argument about the levels of participation leads to a conclusion that participative development enables insiders and outsiders to combine their resources including human capital, social capital, knowledge systems, culture and financial capital for development initiatives at different levels of contribution. This justification arises from recorded failures in community-based development worldwide which are, for the most part, due to the top-down approaches that have continued their resilience to occupy space in mainstream development practice (Mikkelsen 1995 and Ling 2010).

Although the literature indicates that participation has potential in community-based development processes, there is currently inadequate research to link community-based practices to the theory. In other words, the theory, in its current form, is, to a large extent, silent on the importance of understanding local dynamics and practices like *nhimbe* as practical examples of participative development in communities. If the local dynamics are understood such as community values and they get incorporated into the development framework, this is likely to motivate local people to participate. Certainly, participation theory in community-based development might possibly require a socio-anthropological consideration, that is, to intentionally understand the community social and cultural dynamics. Regardless of the direction of participation debate, it is clear that in participative development, people and their socio-cultural compass, to a great extent, remain the epicentre of any development process. This study explored how the *nhimbe* knowledge system and local social participation helps to inform community-based development.

3.2.1.3 A critique of Participation theory

The preceding discussions have visibly pointed out that participation is part of the current thinking in development practice which advocates for a people-centred paradigm. The critique of the participation theory focuses on two flaws, namely linearity and inclusivity.

Participation as a linear phenomenon

Scholarship on participation as shown by the typologies presented and other related literature reviewed give an impression that it is linear with starting and ending points. Given that communities are not homogenous and that they possess unique experiences including different levels of development, it is therefore naïve to view participation linearly. It is seamless and when juxtaposed on the typologies, the level of participation can start at any point in relation to the objectives of a given development programme and/or circumstances of the community under consideration (Farrington & Bebbington 1993; Cornwall 2008:276). Quoted in Williams (2004:560), Chambers captures this point of view at length:

> In an evolving paradigm of development there is a new high ground, a paradigm of people as people... On the new high ground, decentralization, democracy, diversity and dynamism combine. Multiple local and individual realities are recognized, accepted, enhanced and celebrated. Truth, trust and diversity link. Baskets of choice replace packages of practices. Doubt, self-critical, self-awareness and acknowledgement of error are valued. For the realities of lowers to count more, and for the new high ground to prevail, it is uppers who have to change. (Chambers 1997: 188)

This excerpt reinforces the fact that participation is a complex theory and its true meaning is contextual rather than from a generalised perspective. In other words, participation resonates with the situation in which it is applied. Chambers (1983) posits that development practice that ignores the local people's involvement often makes the poor in what he calls "invisible" in the development

process. Therefore, if participation is linearly or myopically understood, its application might fail to address the different forms of diversity or dynamics that could exist in a local community for development.

Participation as an inclusive phenomenon

As the analysis has indicated already, the theory is premised on the assumption or belief that everyone in a community or organisation has an equal chance of participating in a given development initiative. Thus, Uma and Kothari (2001) assert that participation is a means for inclusion. This general inclusivity claim obviously ignores the implications of the local dynamics as discussed in (b) above. For instance, if one does not uphold the community values, it is possible that the individual may not be allowed to participate with others in a particular development process. In other words, perhaps the participation theory exaggerates the very possibility of communities having similar views, and does not have enough space to tolerate and allow for diversity. As chapters six and seven would show, the local dynamics (politics, relationships and community values) are among the key determinants for one's participation in the *nhimbe* practice. Although Hickey and Mohan (2004) stress that participation is an expression of the right and obligation of citizens as well as a direct response to the often exclusion of people, this does not necessarily mean that one automatically participates in a given community development initiative. This notion assumes absence of social or economic differentiation in the community to which the interests of people to participate would probably be similar. It should be pointed out that homogeneity is rare in today's societies. In addition, requirements for development projects vary with the community context. For this reason, in any development project, some people are likely to be included while others excluded in direct response to the project requirements, individual interests or other community dynamics.

It seems that those who argue that participation is synonymous with inclusivity view this notion narrowly. As Williams (2004:563) notes, participation has been grossly abused: it is sometimes used for "enlisting and demonstrating popular participation in development programmes and has become an end in itself, a crucial measure of scheme success and a key condition of donor approval." Although this might be true in certain development situations, it is apparent that when participation is used this way, then it is not a genuine (inclusive) application of the theory but rather an abuse of people for self-aggrandisement. Genuine participation means that the people explicitly benefit from the development process in which they are involved. This is why Moore and Purtzel (1998) posit that [genuine] participation expands people's possibilities to contribute towards development processes that, hopefully, would improve their lives.

While inclusion is believed to be the central principle of participation, the current literature is limited on why some people are excluded. Oakley (1995) emotionally gives one possible reason that explains participation exclusion of rural communities in developing countries.

> Participation...cannot merely be proclaimed or wished upon rural people in the Third World; it must begin by recognising the powerful, multi-dimensional and, in many instances, anti-participatory forces which dominate the lives of rural people. Centuries of domination and subservience will not disappear overnight just because we have 'discovered' the concept of participation (Oakley 1995: 4).

Indeed the foregoing extract sheds more light on the implications of the local dynamics to the participation theory. Five perspectives are apparent in Oakley postulation above. Firstly, participation is not an ad hoc phenomenon but rather it requires careful planning. Secondly, power dynamics or differential authority levels in a community influence type and intensity of people's participation in a development initiative. Thirdly, there are multiple forces that facilitate or constrain participation in communities. Fourthly, the powerful members of

society use participation selectively, that is, they embrace it to the extent to which they benefit from the process. Finally, people should use participation carefully, which suggests that it is neither linear nor social inclusive. In particular, this analysis reinforces the point that participation as an outside organised strategy for community development often misses key local dynamics. As the current study builds on endogenous practices specifically *nhimbe*, the findings would probably help to capture the local dynamics and how they influence participative development at community level.

Challenges faced in applying participation

Oakley brings out an important aspect, which is that participation should be applied in context. Obviously, he argues that communities have different social, economic and political circumstances that consistently play a role in development and these are factors which account for inclusion-exclusion in participative development. For this reason, it is vitally important that one should be sensitive to the local context or dynamics when applying participation theory in CBD. Another reason why some people might exclude themselves is when they know or believe that their "knowledge and ideas are more likely to be laughed at than taken seriously" (Cornwall 2008:279). This suggests that application of participation should affirm contributions people bring onto the development process. Some proponents of the theory argue that participation provides for everyone to engage in all stages of the different process (Farrington and Bebbington 1993). As discussed earlier in section 3.1 above, this could be counterproductive particularly because not every individual would equally add value at each stage of a development programme or project. On this, Cornwall (2008:276) proposes an alternative way of looking at inclusion. He believes that what is needed now is 'optimum' participation where there is a balance of the depth of contributions and representative inclusion of people for a given development initiative. This attests to the fluidity nature of the theory as it is

applied in development practice. Williams (2004:572-573) graphically puts it this way: "...participation remains highly malleable and agile" and Cornwall (2008:269) concurs saying that it is an "infinitely malleable concept". Clearly, the terms "malleable", "agile", and infinitely malleable" all demonstrate that the understanding and application of participation are constantly influenced by different referent points in the communities like politics, economics, sociology, religion and anthropology (Turner 1993:2).

Notably, the foregoing discussion has illustrated that the participation theory remains a subject of further research particularly its application in community-based development practice. Furthermore, the current literature has done little to discuss how endogenous practices like *nhimbe* relate to the participation theory. Lastly, limited analysis has been carried out to contextualise participative development beyond the often understood spirit of community solidarity. In fact, not much attention has been given to the local social, economic, political and cultural dynamics in terms of the application of the participation theory (Mikkelsen 1995, Oakley 1995 and Madziva 2011).

4.5.2 **Social Capital Theory**

The third theoretical foundation considered in the study is social capital. The theory feeds into the discussion of *nhimbe* because, as presented in the previous chapter, the practice is bedrocked on the reservoirs of trust, reciprocity and solidarity; these being key elements of social capital.

Community development efforts that do not affirm and incorporate community social values often constrain sustainable development (Wilson & Morrison, 2002). Community social values normally determine people's interaction including how they make choices about what they do cooperatively and individually in the context of development. In the community, social values also determine who is included or excluded in the development processes. This has

become to be known as social capital. Notably, high level of social capital including the individuals' upholding of community values makes community-based development more likely and viable because of the associated reduced transaction costs (North 1989). For instance, the more people trust one another and their livelihoods depend on reciprocal relationships, the less likely they are to cheat or engage in bribery behaviour in their various socio-economic development initiatives. Experts in socio-economic development came up with this theory to describe people's social interactions and networks in a community and how these contribute to community-based development (Putnam, 1993; Realo and Allik, 2008). SC is a feature of community fibre as defined by trust, norms, shared community values, and social networks (Putnam, 1993:167). Getz (2008:575) describes social capital as the 'fabric' to society that contributes towards sustainable community-based development. The description of social capital by Putnam (1993) and Getz (2008) imply that it is an integral factor for community-based development viability.

The social capital theory has been greatly influenced by the work of Putnam (1993) especially by the study he conducted in Italy. This study was prompted by an observation that northern communities of Italy were more successful than those in the south. Putnam (1993) explored the possible explanations for that observed reality. The study concluded that northern communities were more successful in their development endevours mainly because of their stronger social capital than was the case in the southern communities. From Putnam's study, it can be inferred that a community that embraces inter-personal relationships is more likely to achieve its development objectives better than if it is impersonal. In the study, Putnam concludes:

> The solution invented in the North [of Italy] however, was quite different, relying less on vertical hierarchy and more on horizontal collaboration. The communes [collective associations] sprang originally from voluntary associations, formed when groups of neighbours swore personal oaths to

> render one another mutual assistance, to provide for common defense and economic cooperation" (Putnam 1993:124).

From Putnam's statement, it stands out that social capital flourishes where people exercise mutual trust and cooperation and this philosophy is quite similar to the underpinnings of the *nhimbe* practice (Madziva 2011, Mararike 2003, Munyuki-Hungwe 2001 and Leedy 2010). In this theory, trust is an important element primarily because affective relationships, strong bonds and love for one another are all features of SC. Therefore, it would be highly unlikely for people to develop and sustain strong bonds and to love each other without trust among themselves. As this study will reveal, *nhimbe* is equally dependent on, and likely to help strengthen inter-personal trust among people in the communities where it is practised. Putnam's study shows that the northern communities of Italy sustained their livelihoods through credit arrangement on various kinds of merchandise. This is an indication that unless people trusted each other (mutual trust), it would have been almost impossible for community members in northern Italy to use credit as a strategy to run their businesses. The fact that credit was not based on legal arrangements but on inter-personal trust, this helped to lower transaction costs considerably. This is similar to the finding North (1989) made on the relationship that often exists in affective communities between interpersonal relationships and transaction costs in business undertaking.

Etymologically, the term credit comes from 'credere' which means to believe or to trust (Putnam 1993:128). He adds that "...the network of associations and the extension of solidarity beyond the bonds of kinship that had emerged in the northern communes were crucial for the trust and confidence to flourish" (Putnam 1993:128). This brings out a faucet that mutual responsibility is vital in community development initiatives. This was demonstrated in northern Italy as Putnam (1993:135) observes that "the ethic of mutual responsibility persisted in the northern countryside, as well as for example, in the '*auiterella*', a traditional practice of work exchange among neighbours." In the context of Southern Africa,

auiterella is similar to endogenous practices like *chilimba* in *Zambia*, *harambee* in Kenya, *Study Circle* in Sweden and *nhimbe* in Zimbabwe as already presented in Chapter Two of this thesis. It was necessary in this study to explore how, if any, social capital is linked or play a role in the *nhimbe* practice and how it contributes to community-based development. *Nhimbe* being an affective endogenous practice, trust is expected to play a central role in the way it is practised within the communities studied.

In contrast, there was very limited mutual trust in the southern communities. Putnam (1993:143) explains that "the weight of the past [in Italy], when combined with the failures of state authority in 1860 and the disastrous peasant-land relations...produced a society where *fede publica* [civic trust] had been reduced to a minimum." This suggests that the lack of trust in southern communities was associated with people's unpleasant life experiences. Putnam discovered that the mistrust was explicit and almost a way of life in the southern communities as some people expressed:

> "He who behaves honestly comes to a miserable end"
>
> "Damned is who trusts another"
>
> "Don't make loans, don't give gifts, don't do good, for it will turn out bad for you"
>
> "Everyone thinks of his own and cheats on his companion"

The above statements depict what takes place in a community when mutual trust is absent. The degree to which social capital contributes to community-based development has been widely researched. There is now an understanding that intricate relationship exists, on one hand, between social capital and people's culture, and on another, between social capital and the extent of development in communities (Madziva 2011, Getz 2008, Guttmann 2003, Putnam1993 and Shutt

2002). In the words of Mbenene and others (2010: 5), they epitomise social capital as a form of social insurance in communities. This might suggest that social capital plays a significant role in the lives of individuals or communities and endogenous practices like *nhimbe* could be its explicit manifestations.

Apart from Putnam's work on the subject, studies by Pitchet (1999), Skidmore (2000), Realo and Allik (2008) reveal that people with high levels of social capital tend to contribute more positively to development initiatives in the communities than those with low levels. It has also been established that trust is associated with the concept of reciprocity and both are key attributes of social capital (Madziva 2011, Mbenene, Mutami and Tavuyanago 2010, Gelfand 1979). Research on social capital phenomenon has shown that reciprocity is normally influenced by the level of trust among people in a community (Realo & Allik, 2008; Putnam, 1993). Realo and Allik (2008) elaborate that when radius of trust widens, reciprocity increases and this tends to foster community participation in community-based initiatives.

The notion of reciprocity deserves further explanation in relation to the focus of this study. Most of all, reciprocity is human relationship which is explicitly shown when people's positive or negative actions reflect how they ordinarily interact or treat each other. In other words, if one has done something good or bad to another person, the recipient of the treatment is likely to act in a similar manner. It should be pointed out that the literature reviewed in this study has consistently revealed that reciprocity is often presented in a positive manner, that is, a state where people counter act (reciprocate) the good and not the bad. As already highlighted in section 2.2 of Chapter Two, reciprocity is a factor in the *nhimbe* practice. In fact, the study findings should disclose the extent to which it plays a role or its implications to the practice in terms of both individual and community life.

Further to the theory, it is clear that the various studies conducted so far have demonstrated that social capital is a two-tier phenomenon. Its theoretical foundation is premised on two mutually reinforcing concepts namely trust and reciprocity. Based on the various studies conducted, if social capital is genuinely upheld and applied, it might contribute positively to community development initiatives. In this study, the relationship between traditional practices and social capital was of great interest. More importantly, the study sought, among other things, to establish how social capital contributes to participative development in the communities investigated.

3.2.2.1 **A critique of Social Capital theory**

The proponents of this theory give an impression that existence of SC in a community is almost a sufficient ingredient to successfully drive community development. While social capital is a necessity in community development practice, it should be noted that it cannot function in isolation of other requirements. For instance, in addition to one's level of social capital, a person should also have the necessary expertise appropriate to resolve a particular development need. Furthermore, social capital should be practised in line with the community identity as depicted through socio-moral values and normative practices that apply or define each community. Thus, social capital should be anchored on the values, beliefs and norms that define a community life. In view of this study, the researcher sought to establish whether or not *nhimbe* is associated with social capital and if so, how it relates to the socio-moral values and culture of the communities studied. Having discussed participation and social capital phenomena, below is the exploration of appreciative inquiry theory. AI is the last and final theoretical foundation which guided the study.

4.5.3 **Appreciative Inquiry Theory**

AI is a theory which was developed in the late 1980s as an alternative strategy to promote peoples' participation, social capital and learning in organisations or communities to achieve desired results. AI is linked to a concept called asset-based community development (ACD). The emphasis of ACD is to motivate individuals and communities to use resources they have within their surroundings to improve own life situations (Hammond and Annis 1996). Its theoretical foundation is mostly attributed to the work of Cooperrider (1986) with special reference to his doctoral studies where he focused on positive history of an organization as a source for (re)discovering possibilities for a better future (Stellnberger 2010:4). In fact, the concept of positive organisational history is essentially a focus or reflection on successes (regardless of magnitude) as an inspiration/springboard to achieve even greater results in life. Thus, the primacy of AI is on people's positive experiences and capabilities towards improving their situations rather than on their failures. Cited in Salopek (2006:18), Drucker holds the same view, "the task of leadership is to create an alignment of strengths in ways that make the system's weaknesses irrelevant." Accordingly, AI focuses on maximising strengths, aspirations, passions and "life-giving forces" found within individuals, organisations and communities to bring positive change in society (Cooperrider & Srivastva 1987; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2010). Those who support this paradigm in development practice hold that AI is a radical departure from the problem-based approaches in which the focus is normally on the weaknesses of the people with little or no regard to their strengths. In other words, proponents of AI maintain that it opens possibilities for people to participate in development initiatives for improved individual and community life (Cooperrider Srivastva 1987; Jones 1998; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2010). This study explored the *nhimbe* with a keen interest to find out its strength or potential and how that contributes to community development.

The two words, 'appreciative' and 'inquiry' that constitute the name of the theory provide more insight about its philosophical underpinnings. Cooperrider and Whitney provide the most comprehensive descriptions. They explain that 'appreciate', the verb from which 'appreciative' is derived, means:

> Valuing; the act of recognizing the best in people or the world around us; affirming past and present strengths, successes, and potentials; to perceive those things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems. 2.to increase in value, e.g. the economy has appreciated in value. Synonyms: VALUING, PRIZING, ESTEEMING, and HONORING (Cooperrider andWhitney 2008:1)

On 'inquiry', they illuminate:

> 1. The act of exploration and discovery. 2. To ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities. Synonyms: DISCOVERY, SEARCH, and SYSTEMATIC EXPLORATION, STUDY
> (Cooperrider& Whitney 2008:1)

From the above definitions, it is clear that AI theory puts people at the centre of development from three perspectives: (i) as positive drivers of development, (ii) as contributors of knowledge, wisdom, expertise (competence) and positive experiences in the development process, and more importantly, (iii) as aspirers of improved situations in their lives and communities. As already discussed under the participation theory, it came out that people normally participate in a development programme/project with a desire to contribute their competences and other resources. Thus, this is a feature AI and participation theories have in common. When it comes to the 'inquiry' aspect of the theory, the term presupposes that unless someone endeavours to find out, people do not always come forth with their knowledge, wisdom, expertise and relevant experiences onto the scene of development. This is implied by the words "exploration', "discovery', and "ask". Therefore, the fulcrum of the argument for the AI theory is that no organisation or community was created as a problem but a solution to people's situations.

Writers of AI note that it is built on the assumption that in every community there is something that works which should be discovered, used, and exploited for development. This is premised on the notion that in life there is more than one reality and no one has a monopoly of 'play' in development as "people individually and collectively have unique gifts, skills, and contributions to bring to life" (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2010:1).

In this study, AI provides a unique connection to the theoretical debate on participative development. This follows a scrutiny of its 4-D Cycle implementation model which has four components namely 'discovery', 'dream', 'design', and 'destiny' (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom 2010:1). Of these four, 'discovery' and 'dream' were most relevant to the study. Principally, 'discovery' encourages people to understand the "best of what is and what has been" while 'dream' looks at what "could be opportunities for the future beyond the boundaries of what has been in the past" (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2010:6-8). Noting that *nhimbe* is fairly a new area of study, the concepts of discovery and dream lay down a significant theoretical platform to explore the practice. This should lead to bringing out knowledge on what is good about *nhimbe* practice through critical analysis regarding its contribution to participative or community-based development.

3.2.3.1 **A critique of Appreciative Inquiry theory**

An examination of the literature on AI reveals that it is often presented in a very positive manner with little or no critique. Critics of AI note that it has been over-celebrated and very little thinking has been done to ascertain its claimed contribution to development practice (Stellnberger 2010:5; Wood 2007:124). Different AI evaluations Wood (2007) and Stellnberger (2010) conducted reveal that it is not possible to shift people away from their negative past into positive realm in absolute terms. Notwithstanding this proposition, it is clear that AI is a theoretical framework designed to help people overcome pessimism by focusing

on strength, potential and self-identity. While positive thinking mindset is useful in development, it is equally important to understand why people are weak, marginalised or excluded in order to formulate solutions for improved life. As already discussed in Chapter Two, some people view certain aspects of *nhimbe* in a negative manner (Kapasula 2011, Leedy 2010) while others regard it positively (Madziva 2011, Mararike 2003, Kozanayi Nemarundwe 2002 and Thompson 2010). This brings out a fundamental consideration in this *nhimbe* study that AI theory should be used to discover not only strengths but also weaknesses as well as its potential in community-based development dispensation.

The discussion on AI has disclosed that it complements the current thinking to localise development by encouraging participation of the local people in their development initiatives (Foster 2000b, Madziva 2011, Mulwa 2004, Mutunhu 2011, Kajese 1987 and Owens 1993). In fact, the theory advocates for a shift away from negative to positive thinking in development practice. Certainly, AI has intersections with participation and social capital notions particularly on the perspective of the couched interest of these theories for improved life of the local people.

The foregoing discussions lead to the question; what is the contribution of each one of these theories in people-centered and participative development? Whereas AI encourages people to celebrate their successes and identify potential in addressing development initiatives, the participation theory emphasises genuine involvement and engagement of people in a development process; and yet the social capital stresses the importance of healthy social relationships to foster participative development in a community.

Clearly, these three theories complement each other. AI identifies successes and potential which are celebrated (this has a motivating effect). It is more likely

for a motivated group of people to get involved in a development initiative and this is the thrust of the participation theory. For AI and participation theories to work well, it is apparent that there must be strong inter-personal relationships among the people (trust, reciprocity, respect and solidarity) which are also central components of social capital. Inarguably, these complementary theories are central to people-centred or participative development as shall be seen in the *nhimbe* practice.

3.3. **Chapter summary**

As the preceding discussions illustrate, the three related theories were significant theoretical pillars in this study primarily because of their direct link to the principle of people-centred or bottom-up development. It became clear that participation should be understood and applied in context, that is, one has to pay attention to the local dynamics because these have direct implications to development agenda. As for social capital, trust and reciprocity are the key features of the notion and the two are correlated. With regard to reciprocity, it emerged that this is a concept which people exercise positively or negatively in their socio-economic interactions. Concerning appreciative inquiry, it has been understood that this is a theory to encourage people to overcome pessimism in life through focusing on their strengths and potential. It is apparent that one has to understand the context in which these theories are applied. This is in view of the fact that communities are not necessarily homogenous. In other words, a one size fits all approach may not work well in certain situations. It is important to point out that the review also examined the strengths and weaknesses of these theories in development practice. On the whole, it is obvious that the central focus of the three theories is community-driven development. That is, community members genuinely get involved (participation) in various phases and aspects of their own development endevours and intentionaly use each others' abilities (social capital) and group strength to collectively solve development challenges

(appreciative inquiry). While participation is the action of people in a defined development initative, social capital and appreciative inquiry are conceptual underpinnings that contribute to the extent of participation.

The chapters that follow shall show that: (a) participation is important in *nhimbe* practice as it is both a strategy and a process through which people share their knowledge and skills as well as other resources for development; (b) social capital plays a significant role because *nhimbe* is practised by people of the same village who trust and pay allegiance to each other through giving assistance; and (c) appreciative inquiry provides the researcher with methodological and analytical constructs for research design and analysis framework applied in the study. Most importantly, the analysis showed that the application of these theories in community-based development is ultimately context dependent. It is clear that the theoretical arguments advanced in this chapter formed the basis to explore the *nhimbe* practice in the study. The chapter was important to locate *nhimbe* from a broader theoretical perspective in development practice. The next chapter details the methodology which guided the entire study.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

4.1 Chapter objectives

The chapter is about how the nhimbe study was designed. Specifically, the objectives of this chapter are to outline, explain and justify:

- research design applied;
- research approach utilised;
- communities selected for field research;
- research participants selected;
- data collection methods employed;
- pilot-testing of data collection methods; and
- sampling techniques used.

4.2 Research design

Qualitative research was used extensively in this study. The choice for this research design was influenced by two related factors. Firstly, *nhimbe* has not been adequately researched or documented and this has led to limited knowledge about the practice in terms of, among other dimensions, its economic and social contribution, if any, to community-based development (CBD). Secondly, *nhimbe* practice is couched in people's culture and tradition (Kajese 1987, Madziva 2011 and Thompson 2010). The current limited knowledge about *nhimbe* in terms of its contribution to community development and its link to culture justifies the choice of qualitative approach because of the anticipated rich descriptions, sociological and anthropological implications of the *nhimbe* practice.

Given the above, qualitative research was a suitable design to undertake the study of *nhimbe* because it enabled the researcher to examine and interpret social life of people in the selected communities as manifested through the *nhimbe* practice. Most importantly, qualitative method was needed given that there have been only general descriptive studies which are, to a great extent, insufficiently sensitive to the nuance of time, place and socio-cultural dimensions of the practice. Neuman (2006: 157) holds that "...qualitative researchers examine social processes and cases [people] in their social context, and look at interpretations or the creation of meaning in specific settings." Schwandt cited in Badenhorst (2008: 92) concurs with Neuman when he explains that qualitative research is a study design which seeks meaning of human actions in a given setting. Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 133) use the phrase 'real world' when describing qualitative research which clearly signifies that it is done to understand the real life situations of people in their social world. In this study, *nhimbe* is the action which reflects people's real social and economic life situation in the context of community-based development.

The study focused on three communities in the country namely Musikavanhu in the east, Gambiza in the middle and Tsholotsho in the south in which the researcher interacted with community members in their socio-cultural contexts. The conceptualisation of qualitative research as being anchored on the social world and context is enchoed by Neuman who posits that "Qualitative researchers emphasise the social context for understanding the social world" (Neuman 2006: 158). Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 134), Polgar and Thomas (2008) Bless and others (2006) concur that researchers normally choose to use qualitative research because it enables them to come up with rich descriptions, interpretations and verifications of phenomena under study. Undoubtedly, qualitative research design became the choice for the present study because indeed *nhimbe* is a real life situation that takes place in specific social contexts across the communities studied.

4.3 **Methodological approach utilised**

A combination of ethnographic methods including extensive participant observations, oral histories, focus group discussions and detailed interviews were utilised in this study because of the socio-cultural nature of the *nhimbe* practice (Gelfand 1979, Kajese 1987, Madziva 2011). From a linguistic perspective, when the word ethnography is split into two parts, 'ethno' means people and 'graphy' refers to describing something (Neuman, 2006: 381). The term 'approach' the researcher decided to use is significant in that it implies the notions of drawing near or coming close to something and this resonates with the exploratory character of this study. Other authors like Hammersley and Atkinson (1989) call it method or principle, Leedy and Ormrod (2005) label it as method or design and Neuman (2006) simply calls it a way of carrying out field research. Ethnographic approach contributed immensely in this study to bring out varying perspectives on the *nhimbe* practice, notably, how it defines community life.

The ethnographic approach was supplemented by both phenomenology and grounded theory (Leedy and Ormrod 2005 and Polgar and Thomas 2008). Regarding phenomenology, Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 108) state that it is a "qualitative method that attempts to understand [research] participants' perspectives and views of the social realities." Primarily, phenomenology influenced the study to steer the author towards analysis that would allow understanding of community members' views about the role of *nhimbe* in their social realities as detailed in chapters six and seven. Experts in ethnography emphasise that researchers who use this approach should often spend an extended period of time with the people whose situation is being studied (Krueger 1988, Neuman 2006: 381 and Leedy and Ormrod 2005: 137). Extended period here means months or years and the researcher in this study spent a maximum of three weeks in each community investigated. It should be noted that the limited time the researcher spent in the communities was actually

sufficient to adequately cover the scope of the study as guided by the objectives stated in chapter one.

Most significantly, the ethnographic methods applied enabled the researcher to have a direct interaction with the people within their socio-cultural contexts. Furthermore, it facilitated drawing out meaning of how the *nhimbe* practice influences their social and economic world. As discussed earlier, this was done through the use of a variety of complementary qualitative techniques including interviews, oral tradition, participant observations and focus group discussions as detailed in section 4.5 below. This approach was also important to understand the local dynamics associated with the *nhimbe* practice in the communities studied. In fact, the use of these multiple data collection methods and analysis considerably contributed to the derivation of the *nhimbe* related theory called Organised Community Cultural Capital for Development (OCCCD) as presented in Chapter Eight, Section 8.6. Additionally, it helped in understanding the nhimbe practice from the inside. To comprehend research focus from within is a notion Mehan and Wood (1975:3,5) have emphasised in similar studies. On the whole, the approach enabled the researcher to explore how *nhimbe* is practised, how people use it to define, construct, reconstruct, and maintain their everyday socio-cultural as well as economic reality in the context of CBD.

4.4 **Communities selected for fieldwork**

The three communities that participated in this study are *Musikavanhu*, *Gambiza* and *Tsholotsho*. The rationale for the seletion of these three communities was to establish similarities or differences in the way *nhimbe* is described and practised by the various ethnic groups in the country; *Musikavanhu* being the *Ndau* people, *Tsholotsho* the Ndebele and *Gambiza* a mixture of people from different ethnic groups throughout Zimbabwe. It is also crucial to briefly discuss the concept of *community* in order to appreciate how this is understood in the communities

studied. According to Bedford and others (2008:497), a community is "a group of people who live in a specific locality with shared experiences and/or shared concerns." De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:17) concur with Bedford when they state that community is a "geographical locality of shared interests, needs or in terms of deprivation and disadvantage." In a slightly different way, Mulwa (2004:22) posits that community constitutes "utilization of habitational space." Ife (2002:82) takes a psycho-sociological view to describe community and puts it this way; "...the word community would incorporate some sense of 'belonging' or being accepted and valued in a group." In the Zimbabwe context, the Shona and Ndebele communities often exist along kinship lines and the people are spiritually associated with land (Beach 1980; Bourdilion 1976; Munyuki-Hungwe 2011). From the literature reviewed, it is clear that community is defined as a physical land or locality with people who have shared socio-cultural values and norms under a shared leadership structure. In this study, the term "community" was used in line with the customary law of Zimbabwe which defines it as a "community of persons under the jurisdiction of a chief" (Zimbabwe Traditional Leaders Act, Chapter 29:17). It should be noted that almost all rural communities in Zimbabwe have a history or are currently practising some or other form of *nhimbe* (Gelfand 1979, Hampson1990: 19, Kapasula 2011 and Leedy 2010). Figure 4.1 below is a geo-political map of Zimbabwe including three provinces where the three communities studied are located; that is, Musikavanhu in the South-Eastern part of Manicaland, Gambiza in the central part of Midlands and Tsholotsho in the Southern part of Matebeleland North.

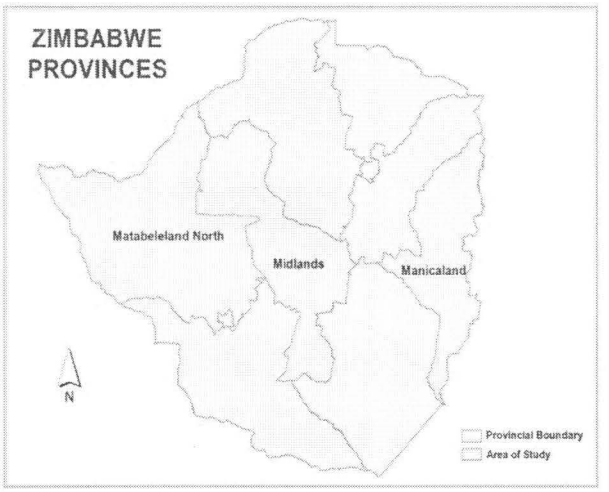


Figure 4.1: Map of Zimbabwe and three provinces where three study sites are located

The populations of these provinces are 1 755 000 (Manicaland), 1 622 476 (Midlands) and 743 871 (Matebeleland North) while that of the country is 12 973 808 (Census 2012). The specific locations of study sites within their respective provinces are given in Figure 4.2. To give some context on the communities selected to participate in the study, it is important to briefly describe the traditional community structure in Zimbabwe. As already discussed in Chapter One sections 1.2 and 1.10, the study fieldwork was guided by the traditional community structures because *nhimbe* is a rural community practice (Gelfand 1979, Leedy 2010, Madziva 2011, Mararike 2003, Thompson 2010). Figure 4.2 below is a diagrammatic adaption from Mararike's (2003: 8-10) writing about communitypolitical and administrative structure in Zimbabwe. The significance of this diagram is to locate the communities studied in relation to community traditional leadership.

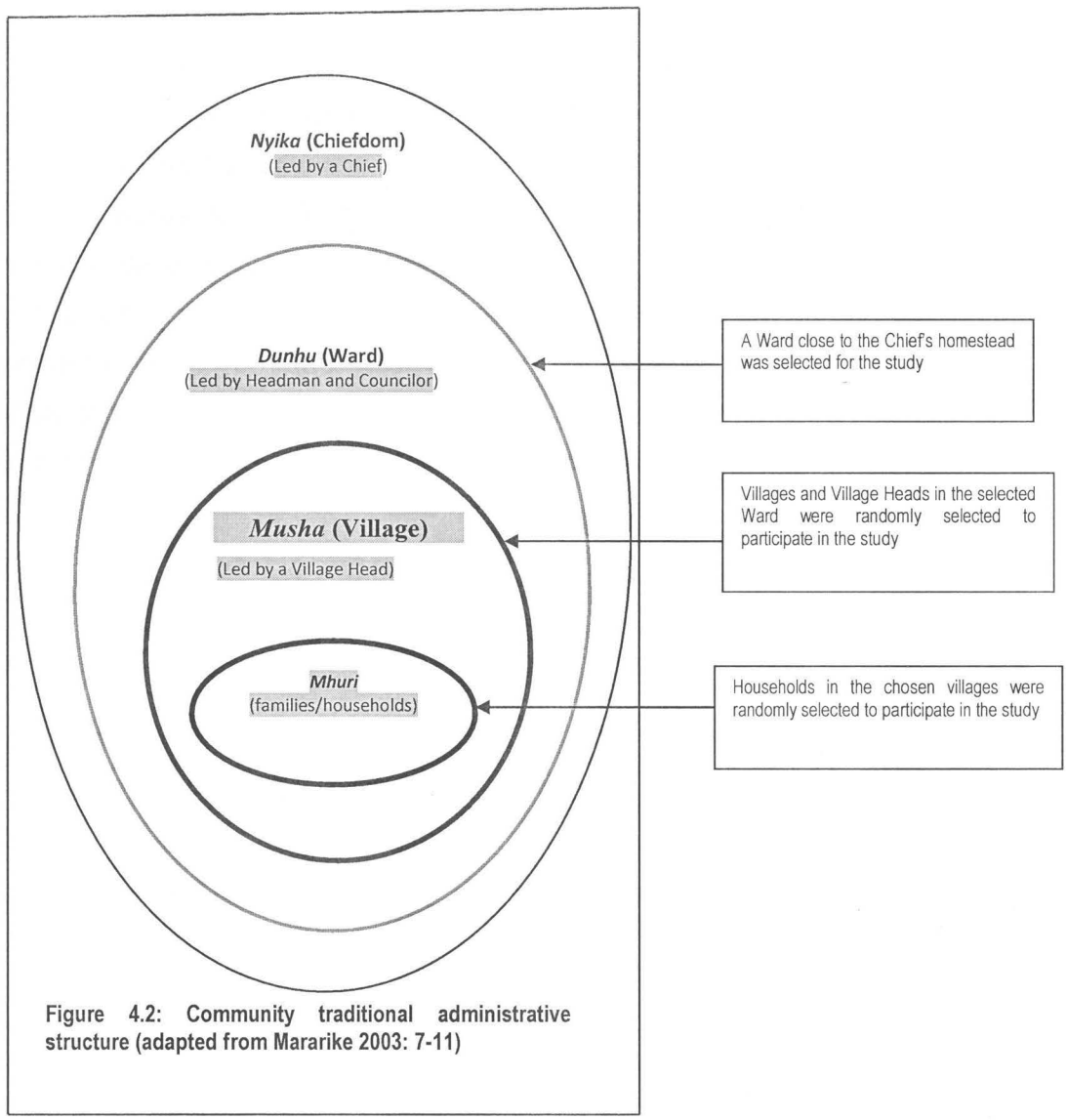


Figure 4.2: Community traditional administrative structure (adapted from Mararike 2003: 7-11)

Although there is considerable variation, generally, chiefdom is under a jurisdiction of a traditional chief called *Mambo* or *Ishe* in *Shona; Mutape* in *Ndau,* a dialect of Shona *and Inkosi* in *Ndebele.* A chief is held responsible for promoting and upholding cultural values, normative practices within his or her chiefdom (Traditional Leaders Act Chapter 29:17, section 5b). It should be

pointed out that it was beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the extent to which traditional leaders promote or uphold cultural values in the communities investigated. In relation to the communities studied, Shona, Ndebele and Karanga languages are spoken in Gambiza while Ndau and Ndebele are languages in Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho communities respectively. In a single chiefdom, wards range from two to 31 and each is headed by an elected community development leader called councilor. Population size is a key factor which is used to determine number of wards that should be in a district. It is important to point out that a councilor is a politician who is elected through a political process of the country. The Table 4.1 which follows is a distribution of wards, villages and households in the communities studied.

District	No. of wards	Ward studied	Number of villages in the ward studied	Number of households in the wards studied	Average number of households in the villages studied
Chipinge	31	Musikavanh (Ward 23)	11	1744	159
Vungu	19	Gambiza (Ward 10)	21	1235	59
Tsholotsho	22	Tsholotsho (Ward 3)	6	1031	172

Table 4.1: Villages and households in the communities studied
Source: Ministry of Local Government, Zimbabwe

As the table above shows, each ward is made up of villages and a single village is under the leadership of a village head called *Sabhuku in Shona or Ndau* and *Induna in Ndebele*. A village comprises households and in this study they ranged from 59 to 172 in number. From the figures tabulated, the average number of households in the villages studied is 130. Assuming that one household sends one person to participate in someone's *nhimbe*, this means that an average number of participants would be about 130 people. The variation in the number of households in a village is often determined by the geographical boundaries agreed in a particular chiefdom. Generally, the provinces are

ethnically different from one another although heterogeneous chiefdoms and villages can be found in some of the provinces.

In this study, the word community refers to a ward precisely because *nhimbe* is organised within villages in a ward (Madziva 2011 and Mararike 2003: 9). Each village is headed by a village head and a number of village heads in a ward are under the leadership of a Headman and elected government official called councilor (Traditional Leaders Act Chapter 29:17, section 5). While this is the government administrative definition of a community at various levels, this study established that people in the areas studied define themselves as a community along the extended family and ethnic relations which go beyond boundaries of provinces, wards or a villages. The term 'community' is a widely misunderstood concept in development discourse as put forward in the analysis by Anderson (1983), Bozzoli (1987) and De Beer and Swanepoel (1998) as it is normally defined in terms of geographical locality or people who share something in common. In the context of this study, it became clear that community is a group of people who can be relied upon in life. Initially, the researcher planned to select four provinces and three wards in each of them but this turned out to be a huge sample size which was costly and required significant amount of time. As already pointed out earlier in this section, the rationale was to gain a wide coverage of ethnic dimension of the *nhimbe* practice in order to provide a robust comparative analysis across ethnic groups in the country. However, due to limited financial resources and time, the researcher scaled down to three provinces and three wards as shown in Figure 4.3 on the next page.

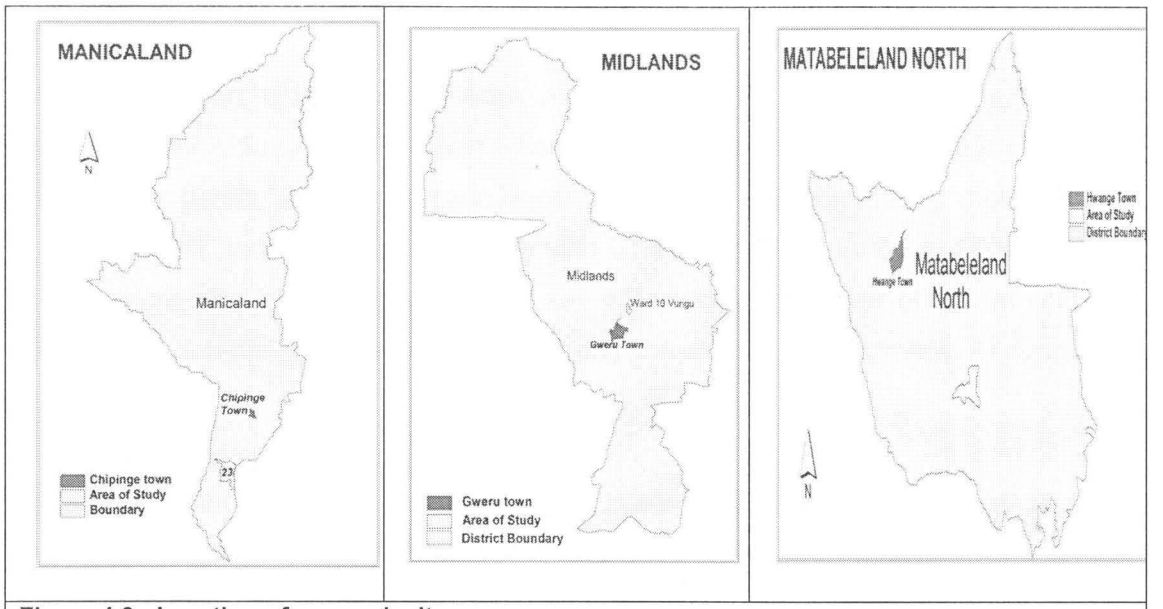


Figure 4.3: Location of research sites

In terms of distance from the nearest town, Musikavanhu is 122km from Chipinge, Gambiza 32km from Gweru and Tsholotsho 245km from Hwange. As for the population and households' sizes of the communities studied, this is detailed in Table 4.2 below.

Community		Population				
	Ward number studied	*Males*	*Females*	*Total*	*Number of Household*	*Average household size*
Musikavanhu	23	3 974	4 599	8 573	1 744	4.9
Gambiza	03	2 422	2 927	5 349	1 031	5.2
Tsholotsho	10	2 361	2 821	5 182	1 235	4.2

Table 4.2: Population and number of household in the communities studied
Source: Census 2012, Zimbabwe

Although the sample size was reduced from 12 communities to three, the ethnic interest in the study was maintained. Apart from the ethnicity perspective, the communities were sufficiently representative of the country's diverse socio-cultural and geo-political perspectives insofar as how these influence the *nhimbe* practice. Discussed below are the research participants who provided primary data for the study.

4.5 **Research participants**

The key research participants were members of the selected communities studied. This included the traditional community leadership who were the chiefs and village heads as well as councilors. A total of 158 community members aged 18 to 92 participated in the study with 51% aged between 51 to 80 years. Furthermore, the researcher consulted key informants aged over 50 years who are experts in traditional practices, culture and community development.

4.5.1 **Chiefs**

As already pointed out, traditional chiefs are custodians of community values and practices (Beach 1980, Gombe 1998, Mararike 2003 and Munyuki-Hungwe 2011). Within the traditional community structure, community development initiatives are normally done following approval of a village head (Zimbabwe Traditional Leaders Act: 1998) and this includes the *nhimbe* practice. In addition, an outsider who wishes to carry out research or any philanthropic initiatives in the community should first present the issue to the village head or chief for authorisation. Through understanding of these roles, responsibilities of chiefs and village heads in community development, it became a necessity to include chiefs as key research participants in the study.

4.5.2 **Village heads**

It is clear from the foregoing discussion on chiefs that a household which intends to organise *nhimbe* has to inform the village head. This, it must be emphasised, is not discretional. The term household in this study deserves a contextual description. Clearly, from the perspective of community members, this is a term which is not familiar or used to define configuration of life in the communities. Instead, the term family (*mhuri*) is the expression commonly used in the communities studied to mean both nuclear and extended family members including non-blood relations whose livelihoods are dependent on that particularly *mhuri*. In fact, the concept of *mhuri* is couched in the extended family

value system. There are important formalities involved, which distinguish *nhimbe* from the sort of ad hoc assistance that neighbours, like people anywhere else in the world, often give one another when dealing with small day to day socio-economic issues. It is required that the information one gives the village head includes type of tasks for which *nhimbe* is intended to be organised as well as the date. This is important in that the village head checks if there is no other *nhimbe* or other activities taking place in the village on the proposed date. Furthermore, to know the type of *nhimbe* enables the community members to establish the required knowledge, skills and equipment for the nhimbe.

It is generally understood that a village should have one *nhimbe* at a time in order to attain high attendance. In addition, if multiple *nhimbes* take place on the same day, the village head would not be able to give adequate leadership support to all of them as it is normally his/her role to preside over the *nhimbe* proceedings. Once the village head approves, then the household proceeds with the plan. It is in light of this that the researcher included village heads in the study. Moreso, just like chiefs, village heads are community elders who normally have a wide spectrum of experience and knowledge on traditional or community-based practices like *nhimbe* as well as other related issues.

4.5.3 **Community members aged 18 to 39**

The necessity for inclusion of research participants aged 18 to 39 in every community explored enabled the researcher to establish the extent to which *nhimbe* is viewed and practised by young people. In addition, the views from this age group facilitated the researcher to estimate the contribution of *nhimbe* at the time of the study and its future potential in community development discourse.

4.5.4 **Community members aged 40 to 92**

This category of research participants was vital in the study as they were community elders who provided extensive and reflective discussions on the

nhimbe practice. Furthermore, the elders had rich personal experiences of *nhimbe* throughout their lives. Most importantly, the majority of the people in this category spent most of their lives in the communities studied which meant they had a solid knowledge of the community culture and norms. In fact, the data they provided was expected to indicate crucial trends and patterns of *nhimbe* practice over generations in those communities.

4.5.5 **Key informants**

In this study, key informants were at two distinct levels. The first was at community level and these were traditional chiefs and councilors. The second was at professional level which included experts in Zimbabwe traditional practices and also development practitioners. It should be noted that key informants at community level were consulted prior to the professional ones who are discussed in section 4.8.6 of this chapter. This arrangement was significant in that it allowed the researcher to interact and obtain views from the community leadership and members without prior influence from the professional key informants. The consultation with the community traditional leaders formed the basis to formulate relevant interview questions used for the professional key informants after the fieldwork.

It was important that the professional key informants were members in the communities under study in order to attain contextual knowledge and experience of the *nhimbe* practice. Additionally, the experts participated in *nhimbe* at some point in their lives and this was vital to obtain real life experiences. It was also essential that the key informants were over 50 years of age for mature and elaborate experiential discussions.

4.6 **Data collection methods**

As already pointed out in section 4.2 of this chapter, for the most part, the qualitative design was used for the study, that is, about between 80 to 90% was qualitative data while quantitative data constituted about 10 to 20%. The qualitative data collection methods applied in this study enabled exploratory investigation of the practice better than the quantitative method would have done. Thus, Neuman (2006:15) elaborates on the explorative nature of qualitative data collection methods saying that "Qualitative researchers do not narrowly focus on a specific question, but ponder the theoretical-philosophical paradigm in an inquisitive, open-ended settling-in process as they adopt a perspective." As discussed earlier, a set of different but complementary qualitative methods were used in the study which include oral history, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, group discussions, direct participant observation and general observation checklist[14].

Given the relative low literacy level in the rural communities of Zimbabwe among the older generations, the researcher sought language experts who carried out forward and back translations of interview and focus group discussion guides. This was to address the anticipated language barriers in the three selected communities studied. Discussed below are details of the data collection methods used in the study.

4.6.1 **Oral tradition methodology**

With regard to oral tradition, its use was a realisation of the limited documented literature on *nhimbe*. Hence, this data collection method was employed in this study prior to fieldwork and the key informant interviews. It was imperative to find

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[14] This is a checklist the researcher used to note significant aspects of the communities studied. This included the physical environment, social, economic and spiritual activities, dialects spoken as well as distance to the nearest markets.

out *nhimbe* related stories from community elders over 70 years of age in the communities studied. The oral history was in the form of folktales, songs, most significant incidences, rhetorical questions or sarcasm and the findings obtained through the use of this method are presented in section 2.2 of Chapter Two. The researcher spent an average of two weeks in each community and a total of 18 elders were consulted made up of six per community. The data collection process was conducted through one-on-one sessions and in some instances in groups of two or three people. In fact, the researcher noted that the community elders were more comfortable to discuss when they were two or three than when alone. Each session ranged from 40 to 60 minutes. In some situations, rhetorical questions or sarcasms took even less than 30 minutes while folktales required up to 60 minutes. The quantity and quality of data provided in groups was better and more meaningful than that which was obtained from one-on-one sessions. The author observed that the elders preferred group discussions because in groups, they would help each other to recall significant aspects of the stories they shared with the researcher. Furthermore, more female participants volunteered to participate in the oral tradition discourse and they provided relatively better stories about *nhimbe* than their male counterparts. A close examination of this phenomenon revealed that it is normally more females than males who participate in *nhimbe* in the communities that practise it.

Although the researcher initially planned to tape-record the oral history data, the arrangement was not granted by the traditional community leadership. This was despite desperate explanations from the researcher why recorded data would add value to the study. Further investigation on this aspect showed that tape recording was denied because of political tensions prevailing in the country at the time and so they did not trust how the recorded data would be used. Notwithstanding this drawback, oral tradition method, among other things, was significant in that it revealed how *nhimbe* practice changed over generations. Additionally, the experience and the data obtained through oral tradition were

crucial to shape the overall study methodology. Moreover, this method also illustrated the value some people still have or used to attach to the *nhimbe* and how the practice influences people's worldviews in the communities. Chapter Five of this thesis provides more details of how *nhimbe* is viewed in the communities studied.

4.6.2 **Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were administered to community members aged 21 to 70 including councilors and selected village heads. Semi-structured interviews were relevant for this study because of the embedded flexibility in the flow of discussions.

The interviews were conducted in a conversational style for three reasons. Firstly, the researcher became less authoritative and interrogative and this allowed interviewees to open up. Secondly, a discussion style provided flexibility in the organisation of thoughts for both the researcher and the respondents. Finally, it became easier for some respondents to attend to some household chores for a few minutes since most of the interviews were conducted at the respondents' homes. The interview time with one person ranged from 50 to 70 minutes.

4.6.3 **Focus group discussion (FGD)**

Respondents were grouped into three categories to participate in focus group discussions. These were young adults aged 21 to 40, adult community members aged 41 to 91 and village heads 41 to 91 as well. This was important to establish patterns on how *nhimbe* is explained, viewed and define people's social world in these communities across generations and community leadership. A focus group discussion (FGD) had a minimum of eight and maximum of 12 participants in order to gain maximum interaction and exploratory discussions. The total number of participants in the FGDs in Gambiza, Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho

were 29, 36 and 29 respectively. On average, each FGD took between 60 to 90 minutes. .

The rationale for inclusion of village heads in the FGDs was that, as already discussed, village heads are community leaders who are supposed to be responsible for social, economic, moral and spiritual welfare of the people in their jurisdictions (Zimbabwe Traditional Leaders Act, Chapter 29:17). This legislative aspect explains the finding in this study that *nhimbe* is organised within a village and every organiser or host is obligated to notify the village head. In view of this understanding, it became prudent to have exclusive discussions with village heads. However, it should be noted that it was beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the performance of village heads as prescribed in the Act. An average of six to 10 village heads constituted a focus group discussion in each community.

4.6.4 **Direct participant observation**

It was important for the author to employ participant observation in order to immerse himself in the real life situation of the *nhimbe* practice in every community studied within the context of ethnography (Polgar and Thomas 2008:118; Neuman, 2006:378; Leedy & Ormrod 2005:137). In this study, the researcher directly participated in a total of six *nhimbes* made up of two in each community. It is important to point out that these *nhimbes* were not specifically organised for the study but were already planned for in the respective communities as part of their routine community development initiatives. This was an excellent research 'coincidence' because, prior to the fieldwork, the researcher had hoped that he would have an opportunity to directly participate and observe at least one *nhimbe* during his two-week stay in each community. The fact that the researcher was able to participate and observe two *nhimbes* indicated that *nhimbe* was still practised in the communities.

4.6.5 **Transect walks**

The researcher undertook transect walks (TW) to familiarise himself with the surroundings of the communities studied and used an observation checklist to systematically record the observations. As used in this study, TW is a planned and purposive community observation one conducts through a physical walk in the surrounding of the research interest. The aim is to discover aspects the local people would perhaps take for granted and they are less likely to talk about them with an outsider in a formalised discussion. These would include the natural environment, infrastructure (buildings, roads, water sources and so on) and some indicators of social bonds in the community like kinship ties, friendship and other. He would normally do that in the company of the host who also provided accommodation for the researcher and his assistant during the two-week stay in the community. The researcher did a total of 12 transect walks, four in each community. Each TW cycle took an average time of two hours and covered approximately a radius of four kilometres. Indeed, the transect walks helped the researcher to gain a holistic sense of the community including the social and cultural dynamics.

During the TWs, the researcher met some community elders at their homes who were not able to come to the organised interview places due to their advanced age. So the transect walks became opportunities to engage them in oral history at their homes. The transect walks were also useful in that they enabled the researcher to personally see some of the physical contributions of *nhimbe* in the communities like subsistence farms and infrastructural developments.

4.6.6 **Community validation meetings**

The researcher conducted community validation meetings (CVM) at the end of fieldwork in each community which were attended by the chief, village heads, councilor and selected community members. This was done at the end of the second week after all the data collection processes had been completed.

The purpose of these CVMs was sevenfold. Firstly, it was a platform to thank the community leadership (chief, councilor and village heads) for allowing the researcher to conduct the study in their communities for two consecutive weeks. Secondly, this was another opportunity for the researcher to express gratitude to all research participants and assured them once again that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained regarding the data they provided. Thirdly, the researcher presented summary findings of *nhimbe* to the leadership and community members as a confirmation that the study was genuine. Fourthly, this was a forum for the researcher to ask some additional questions that emerged during reflections on the data already obtained and subsequent observations made. Fifthly, it provided opportunity for research participants to give additional views which they might have thought about after interviews or focus group discussions were conducted. Sixthly, the researcher used the community validation meetings to authenticate some emerging issues in the data sets. Finally, the community meetings were farewell gatherings, a respectful strategy the researcher devised to gracefully exit the community after two weeks of stay and learning about the *nhimbe* practice and related issues.

At these CVMs, the researcher provided refreshments (drinks, bread or buns) for the audience as a token of appreciation[15] and this was not made known in advance, that is, upon arrival in the community. The traditional community leadership, that is, the chiefs and village heads provided opening and closing remarks at the meetings. Speeches community leadership gave were significant as this was also an evaluation of the research team. Some of the key issues highlighted include that the researcher followed all the required protocols before entry into the community and his research work was approved by the community

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[15] No additional incentive payments were offered to research participants in each community.

traditional leadership. In addition, the speeches from the traditional leadership included that the researcher did not commit any wrongdoing during his stay in the community. The meetings were a sign that the research team upheld the community values otherwise they would have been punished and expelled from the community before this CVM stage of the fieldwork process.

4.6.7 **Key informant Interviews**

The key informant interviews were at two levels: Firstly, these were conducted with chiefs during fieldwork and secondly, with experts in traditional practices and development twelve months after the fieldwork. The delay was necessitated by the fact that the researcher had to carry out preliminary data analysis in order to develop relevant questions or constructs for professional key informants (PKI). Video recording was used to record views from PKIs.

4.7 **Pilot-testing**

The pilot-testing of the data collection methods was conducted in Musikavanhu community over a period of one week. The researcher chose this community because it is his home area where he grew up and participated in *nhimbe* and was familiar to most of the community members including traditional leaders. Due to the fact that the researcher was known in the community, it became easy to negotiate with the leadership to undertake pilot-testing and even to have an extended stay. In total, the researcher spent three weeks in Musikavanhu inclusive of the one week of pilot-testing.

The objectives of the pilot-testing were: (a) to be sure that the translations of data collection methods were done correctly; (b) to ensure that the sequencing of questions was proper in line with the research objectives; (c) to check clarity of questions; (d) to check if the order of administering the data collection methods in the communities was suitable; and (e) to establish the average length of time

required in administering each data collection method. This assessment was critical to be certain that data consistency, validity and reliability were achieved in this study. The key findings of the pilot-testing are discussed below.

4.7.1 **The order of administration**

Although the researcher planned to interview chiefs first before anyone else in all the communities studied, the chief in Musikavanhu was busy dealing with civil cases at his traditional courts. Due to limited time available for the pilot-testing, the researcher negotiated with the chief to proceed with the other groups of research participants identified in the community including village heads and this was granted. The researcher was able to interview the chief on the third day of pilot-testing. Though this was not the initial plan, it worked out well to collect data first from other members of the community and then the chief last so that the traditional leadership could elaborate and clarify any issues at that time.

4.7.2 **Clarity of questions**

Concerning questions, it turned out that some of them were not clear owing to either the wording which resulted from translations done or just the researcher's lack of clarity in expressing his original conceptualisation. For instance, the research participants consistently provided the same responses on these two questions in the interview and focus group discussion guides: (a) *what is your understanding of nhimbe?* and (b) *why is nhimbe practised in your community*? On oral history, when people were asked to share folktales, some sang, shared sarcasm while others posed rhetorical questions. About lack of clarity in some of the questions, the researcher noted areas that needed adjustment including the need to include local vocabulary used in Musikavanhu community for effective communication on the subject matter. For instance, the term *nhimbe* is not a familiar word in Musikavanhu but *humwe*. It also emerged that in Gambiza *humwe* is a more common term than *nhimbe* while in Tsholotsho it is *ilima*.

4.7.3 **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was also pilot-tested in line with the original plan to use both qualitative and quantitative research designs for the study. The questionnaire did not bring out good data and this was an indication that the researcher had limited or vague constructs to formulate a useful questionnaire for the study.This is in line with the view expressed in chapter one that *nhimbe* had not been adequately researched and documented. As a result, the researcher removed questionnaires as data collection methods for the study.

4.7.4 **Logistics**

To have community elders at planned meeting venues for interviews and focus group discussions became logistically impossible. This was mainly due to mobility difficulties owing to their health related conditions which were also linked to them being advanced in age. Consequently, the researcher changed the plan and visited them at their homes and this was combined with the transect walks discussed in 4.6.5 above. For focus group discussions, the author provided transport for participants to the agreed venues. This logistical arrangement was effective and adopted in the other two communities. To visit elders at their homes especially when one needs their help is often seen as a show of respect in these three communities explored.

The pilot-testing yielded useful results which facilitated strengthening of the entire research methodology. Additional minor adjustments were performed even during the fieldwork. The modifications made to some of the data collection methods during the pilot-test and fieldwork stages confirmed the complexity of social research and the need for researcher's flexibility throughout the research process.

4.8 **Sampling**

This section describes the sampling applied to select communities and research participants.

4.8.1 **Selection of communities**

Purposive sampling was used to select Manicaland, Midlands and Matebeleland North provinces in order to ensure ethnicity mix in the study. In addition, the researcher used purposive sampling to select Musikavanhu community in Manicaland because this is his home area. It was important for the researcher to start in Musikavanhu to gain confidence of the study before the other two communities studied, that is, Gambiza and Tsholotsho in Midlands and Matebeleland North provinces respectively.

As for selection of wards/communities, a simple random technique was applied to select one community in each province and this was important to minimise researcher's bias in the study. The researcher wrote down names of chiefdoms found in each of the three provinces and put them in a dish, one list at a time. After the names were thoroughly mixed in a dish, he asked his research assistant to pick only one. This is how Gambiza, Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho communities were selected for this study.

4.8.2 **Selection of chiefs and councilors**

Purposive sampling was used to select chiefs and councilors for the interviews. As earlier discussed, a councilor coordinates development initiatives in a ward through collaboration with the chief and village heads. Owing to limited time and resources, the researcher requested the chief to conduct fieldwork in one ward only and this meant that the councilor automatically became a research participant. Therefore, a total of three chiefs and three councilors participated in the study.

4.8.3 **Selection of village heads**

Just like the selection of wards in each province, a simple random sampling was employed to select village heads who participated in the study. On the first day of the fieldwork in each community, the researcher requested the chief to provide a list of village heads in the ward he approved for the research. Depending on the number of village heads, the researcher randomly selected the village heads required to participate in the study with an aim to have between 6 and 12 for focus group discussions and the remainder for interviews. A total of 28 village heads participated in the study across the three communities studied.

4.8.4 **Selection of community members aged 21 to 70**

The researcher obtained a list of community members aged 21 to 70 from each village head who would have been selected as discussed in section 4.8.3 above. The researcher performed a systematic random sampling of the first 100 people on the list to select the required number for focus group discussions and interviews. The total number in this age category was 121 for the entire study.

4.8.5 **Selection of community members aged 71 to 92**

A snow-balling technique was used to select this category of research participants. In each community, the researcher requested the host to identify one community member within the age group 71 to 92 for *nhimbe* discussions. At the end of each discussion, the researcher asked the participant to refer him to another person in the community who met the age requirement. This continued until a sufficient number was reached. The total number of research participants in this age category was 37.

4.8.6 **Selection of professional key informants**

The first level of sampling professional key informants was that they had to have been born and grew up in the three communities studied. The second level of selection was the use of a snow-balling technique where the researcher identified one key informant in each community. At the end of each interview, the researcher asked the participant to refer him to another person he/she knew who would met the study requirements. This process continued until the required four key informants from each community were obtained. A total of twelve professional key informants took part in this study comprising three females and nine males.

4.9 **Chapter summary**

The chapter outlines the methodology that was employed in this study as well as the factors that influenced the choice made. In addition, communities and research participants were presented and justifications for their selection were discussed. Pilot-testing and lessons learned were discussed. Finally, the chapter pointed out the sampling techniques utilised to select communities and the various categories of research participants in this study. The two tables below outline the total number of research participants in the three communities studied and they are profiled by age and sex respectively.

Community	Age group								
	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91+	**Totals**
Gambiza	10	2	3	11	5	6	5	0	42
Musikavanhu	4	12	4	15	9	10	6	1	61
Tsholotsho	12	4	11	11	8	6	2	1	55
Totals	**26**	**18**	**18**	**37**	**22**	**22**	**13**	**2**	**158**

Table 4.3: Research participants by community and age

	Age group								
Sex	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91+	**Totals**
Female	14	9	9	17	10	10	4	0	73
Male	12	9	9	20	12	12	9	2	85
Totals	26	18	18	37	22	22	13	2	**158**

Table 4.4: Research participants by age-group and sex

Also significant in this chapter was the rationale for the choice of the methodology in the context of socio-cultural and community-based nature of the study. The next chapter is a discussion of the fieldwork experiences and lessons learned. Furthermore, data management and analysis framework applied in this study are presented in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELDWORK DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES AND EXPERIENCES

5.1. Chapter objectives

While Chapter Four focused on the overall study methodology, this chapter is devoted to the researcher's seven weeks of fieldwork experience across the three communities investigated. In other words, the chapter is a presentation of the planned and the reality of the data collection process. It has four objectives namely, to:

- Explain fieldwork procedures applied;
- Provide facilitating factors for entry into the communities studied;
- Discuss fieldwork experiences including challengesand resolutions made; and
- Describe data recording and management procedures employed.

5.2. Fieldwork procedures

This section has two purposes. First, it discusses the research assistants, how they were selected and the role they played in the research process. Afterwards, the researcher describes processes that facilitated entry into the communities studied.

5.2.1 **Research assistants**

There were two levels of research assistants who were engaged in the study categorised as principal and local research assistants. The principal research assistant (PRA) had a long-term responsibility in that he assisted the researcher for the entire duration of the fieldwork in all the three communities explored. Furthermore, the PRA also helped the researcher with transcribing the key informant interviews and data capturing. In contrast, the short-term research assistants were the local residents of the communities under the study who helped the researcher for just the period spent in their localities, that is, during the two weeks of fieldwork.

The researcher dedicated five days to extensively induct the principal assistant on the focus of the study, research objectives and data collection methods. Pertaining to the fieldwork, the PRA underwent skills training on appropriate interview techniques to use in the communities in view of socio-cultural values and normative practices that applied in each community. The PRA was also involved in the pilot-testing process conducted in Musikavanhu and this provided him with hands-on experience about the study methodology.

The principal research assistant had an Honour's Degree in Sociology and five years experience in community development related work at the time. He was pivotal in the study for four reasons. Firstly, he assisted the researcher in the field to interview and document data obtained from the various respondents noting that tape recording of any kind could not be used. Secondly, the PRA co-trained the local research assistants in each community to use the data collection methods designed for the study. In the case of Musikavanhu where pilot-testing was conducted, the local research assistants were also involved in the pilot-testing process as part of the training and familiarisation with the nature of the study. Thirdly, he helped the researcher to compile end of day summary findings and these were later used as memos during the analysis process.

Finally, the principal assistant captured data using appropriate computer applications following the training he received from the researcher. Consistency and rigor in understanding fieldwork data and processes was achieved through the involvement of the principal assistant.

As for local research assistants (LRA), four were selected in each community comprising two females and two males. The researcher consulted the contact person in each community who identified and selected the LRAs guided by the criteria the researcher provided as discussed in section (b) below. The LRAs played a vital role in the study mainly because of their familiarity with the people and community dynamics. They knew the community values, beliefs, norms and practices including the *nhimbe* practice. Moreover, the fact that the LRAs were community members partly contributed to acceptance of the researcher in the communities. Notably, a situation where communities take a researcher as a fellow villager is an enabling factor in conducting field research particularly in rural communities (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 62). As a result of including local residents as research assistants, leadership and members of the communities in each site viewed the research team as part of them. Consequently, the communities trusted the research team and believed the research was harmless to the community.

5.2.2 **Criteria for selection local research assistants**

At this point, it is important to discuss the specific criteria used to select the local research assistants beyond the requirement that they had to be members of their respective communities. As tabulated below, a total of six factors formed the criteria framework used for the selection of the local research assistants.

Criteria	Relative importance to the communities				Relative importance to the researcher		
	Very important	Important	Fairly important		Very important	Important	Fairly important
Language or dialects spoken in the community	X				x		
English Language			x		x		
Academicbackground					x		
Social science or rural development experience					x		
Gender	X					x	
Age	X				x		
Good character	X				x		

Table 5.1: Selection criteria for local research assistants

On language, it was important that each research assistant was proficient in reading, speaking and writing English and the local languages or dialects. Local research assistants in Gambiza and Tsholotsho had to be proficient in both Shona and Ndebele while those in Musikavanhu had to be proficient in *Ndau*, a *Shona* dialect spoken in the area.

Academic background and profession were other criteria used to select local research assistants. All the twelve LRAs were teachers who had a minimum of five years of work in their respective communities. It was logical to involve teachers as local research assistants for two considerations. On one hand, it was obvious that every community had schools and the teachers would be available for the task since the fieldwork was carried out during school holidays. Additionally, teachers are public figures in the community who are taken as fellow villagers in the Zimbabwe context. Furthermore, one of the four local research

assistants in each community had an academic qualification or experience in rural development.

On gender, it was prudent to have two females and two males in each team of local research assistants across the three communities studied. From a cultural perspective, the researcher's investigations about each community prior to fieldwork indicated a high possibility that in some instances it would be unacceptable for a researcher to interview a person of the opposite sex. A gender mix added to the acceptability of the research undertaking in the communities.

Age in the African context including Zimbabwe is normally associated with how people view, interpret and understand their social worlds (Beach 1980, De Beer 2006 and Mulwa 2004). For instance, a person who negotiates and holds a discussion with community leadership or elders is often expected to be mature in terms of age. It was against this background that the age groups of the local research assistants were representative of the age diversity of research participants in the communities.

The LRAs had to be of good character and relations in the community. This was important to gain trust and cooperation from the respondents. The notion of good character was also linked to the research ethics of confidentiality and anonymity which was part of the social contract the researcher made with the communities.

Generally, the LRAs met the criteria especially language or dialects, gender and good character. They performed to the satisfaction of the requirements of the study as shown by the fact that quality data sets were collected as per the study design within the planned two weeks of fieldwork in each community. However, the age and social science criteria were marginally met. This is because nine of

the 12 LRAs were aged between 35 and 45 given that the majority of the respondents were over 50 years of age. Due to low age, it became necessary in some instances to have two LRAs to interview elders. As for academic background in social science, only three met this qualification which included the principal research assistant. These criteria were compromised in the study simply because the researcher took a special emphasis on this aspect during the LRA training. Additionally, the researcher and PRA used their social science expertise and experiences to coach the LRAs throughout the fieldwork in each community.

5.3. **Gaining entry into the communities**

Hammersley and Atkinson (1980: 54) note that "the problem of obtaining access [entry] to the necessary data looms largely in ethnography." It should be noted that the term entry in this study is not restricted to physical presence or absence but all other dimensions related to granting or withholding permission, interaction, the depth and quality of data. In recent times, there has been a growing attention to people-centred approach which, among other things, emphasise the need to respect local values, structures and procedures (Mulwa, 2006 and De Beer & Swanepoel, 1998). Hence, this section deals with how the researcher gained entry into the communities particularly the role the contact people, kinship and *nhimbe* played.

5.3.1 Fieldwork contact people

The researcher liaised with a contact person in each community and this person had to be of good standing. Due to the role they play to facilitate researchers' entry into communities, some scholars call them 'gatekeepers' (Hammersley and Atkinson 1980) while others name them 'insiders' (De Beer and Swanepoel 2006). A close examination of these two terms reveals an undertone of a 'them' and 'us' notion. Gatekeeper denotes that one has to exhaustively elaborate

requirement for entry and its justification. In addition, the term insider implies that one holds exclusive knowledge and experience about his or her community to which one wishes to enter. In this study, the researcher decided to use the term 'contact people' as it signifies a sense of welcoming and acceptability. It was easy for the researcher to identify a contact person in Musikavanhu since it is his home area and had a fair knowledge of the people there. As for Gambiza and Tsholotsho, the researcher consulted his colleagues and church members to suggest contact people in those communities. In this study, the contact person in each community played the following roles:

a) Suggested suitable dates to conduct the research in the community;

b) Introduced the researcher and his team to the chief, headman and councilor;

c) Made valuable insights about the appropriateness of questions the researcher formulated in the interview guide, focus group discussion guide and oral history in view of the community socio-cultural context;

d) Assisted the researcher to know when and where *nhimbes* were going to take place in the community during his stay;

e) Provided ongoing advice to the researcher and his team on various aspects of conduct like community values, beliefs, norms and practices; and

f) Worked with the researcher and his principal research assistant for the duration of the fieldwork.

Undoubtedly, the contact people provided an important 'bridge' for undertaking the study in all the three communities studied as they played the above roles quite well. Just like the local research assistants, community members trusted that the actions of a contact person were meant to promote the life of the community rather than to harm it.

5.3.2 Kinship

The researcher's kinship and extended family relations to Musikavanhu became a major enabling factor for easy entry into that community. This is the reason why the researcher embarked the study in Musikavanhu where he was known in order to gain confidence before proceeding to relatively strange communities (Gambiza and Tsholotsho). Furthermore, the fact that the researcher is a Zimbabwean, all the three communities investigated took him as a fellow national who was curious to learn *nhimbe* practice from them. During fieldwork, this was demonstrated when they often called the researcher *mwana wedu* which literally means 'this is our own child'. In this context, the phrase *mwana wedu* also implied that the community was obliged to provide an enabling environment for the researcher to learn. It was also a community social declaration that, just like one's own child, the researcher had to receive the protection and guidance he needed to complete the study during his stay. Therefore, one can see that the notion of kinship, as manifested in this study, played a vital role for the researcher to gain entry into the communities.

5.3.3 The focus of the study

Apart from the kinship discussed above, the subject matter of the study (*nhimbe*) motivated the communities to firstly, grant the researcher permission, and secondly, to support the research. Two related aspects also emerged which facilitated the researcher's entry into the communities. On one hand, the study was part of their culture and normative practice. On another hand, it gave the communities studied a sense of pride that among all the communities in Zimbabwe, the researcher selected them for the study.

5.4. **Challenges experienced in the field and resolutions made**

The researcher encountered three main challenges during fieldwork namely: (a) *nhimbe* and how it is located within the community structures; (b) relations of contact people with members of the communities studied; and (c) local languages.

5.4.1 **Nhimbe and its link to community structures**

The fact that *nhimbe* is a traditional practice in communities means it is placed under the traditional community administrative structure as discussed in the previous chapter. Following this understanding, permission was sought from the chiefs and village heads. This became a problem in Gambiza where the ward councilor at the time felt that the researcher should have approached the local council office and not the chief for approval to conduct the study. A confrontation between the chief and the councilor ensued during one of the focus group discussions in Gambiza. This conflict is attributed to the national legal framework where traditional leaders play a subordinate role to the councilors with regards to community development especially land distribution, resource ownership and administration (Mararike 2003: 29 and Traditional Leaders Act Chapter 291:17). It also emerged that the other dimension to this challenge was that the chief and the councilor were members of two different political parties, so the political allegiance and power dynamics by the two community leaders worsened the situation. In Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho where the councilors and the chiefs belonged to the same political parties, this challenge did not arise. Eventually, Gambiza community elders intervened and resolved that the *nhimbe* study was rightfully located under the traditional structure. The resolution enabled the researcher to continue with the fieldwork in Gambiza successfully. The misunderstanding between the chief and the councilor illustrates the correlation that exists between community politics and community development. This also means that understanding community politics and involving community

leadership should be among the key considerations in any community development initiatives in the context of Zimbabwe.

5.4.2 Relations of contact people with community leadership

It emerged that contact people in Musikavanhu and Gambiza had sour relations with their chiefs and councilors prior to the researcher's presence in these communities. This could partly explain the misunderstanding which took place in Gambiza as discussed above. In Musikavanhu, the decision making process by the chief to respond to the researcher's requirements was slow and this accounted for why the pilot-testing took a week (6 days), a process which could have been completed in fewer days. Realising that they had to maintain their pronounced principle of treating the researcher as a fellow villager or *mwana wedu*, the conflicting parties in the two communities ultimately decided to put aside their differences and supported the research process as planned.

5.4.3 Language

The researcher was not fluent in Ndebele language spoken in Tsholotsho. To overcome this challenge, the researcher relied on the contact person and the local research assistants for forward and back translations throughout the research process in the community. As a result, the researcher and his team worked extra time in Tsholotsho than he did in Musikavanhu and Gambiza and obviously this was necessary to meet the requirements of the study given the limited time available.

5.5. Data recording and management

The section describes how data obtained in the study were recorded and managed. The data management is at two levels namely fieldwork and key informants' data sets.

5.5.1 **Fieldwork data**

At least two members of the research team at a time obtained data from individual or a group of research participants in the field. This was important to ensure accuracy and completeness of data and their recording. Ideally, in qualitative study like this one, it is important to tape or video record the proceedings. However, this was not possible because of political tensions prevailing in Zimbabwe at the time of the research as discussed earlier. Thus, people were not comfortable to be tape recorded because they felt that if the tape recorded information got misplaced, the information could end up in wrong hands thereby putting them to danger politically and socially. The only aspect communities allowed the researcher to photograph or videotape were the *nhimbe* activities.

As a strategy to enhance quality of data and completeness of the data collection process, the research team held debriefing meetings at the end of each day. These meetings often took an average time of between 90 to 120 minutes. The purpose was for researchers who worked together on a given day to consolidate their responses into one record using the format the researcher designed. Furthermore, the debriefing meetings were instrumental for the researcher to have daily understanding of emerging issues from the data collected.

The debriefing meetings were also platforms for research team members to share positive experiences and challenges they faced during the day pertaining to data collection and recording. At these discussions, the researcher would give advice on how to overcome challenges shared. Appropriate adjustments of data collection techniques were also made during these debriefing meetings in order to strengthen data quality and data recording.

5.5.2 **Key informants at professional level**

All the key informant interviews were video recorded and transcribed. This was paramount in order to gain accuracy and completeness of data provided. In addition, the video medium showed key informant body language and this was crucial for analysis and interpretation of the respondents' views.

5.6. **Chapter summary**

This chapter outlined the composition and selection of the research team in each community studied. In addition, factors that enabled the researcher to gain entry into the communities were discussed. Challenges experienced and how the various data sets were administered were also presented in this chapter. Overall, it is clear that the human relations between the research team and the community facilitated the study in the communities.

CHAPTER SIX

STUDY RESULTS PART I: FINDINGS FROM KEY INFORMANTS

6.1. Chapter introduction

6.1.1 Chapter objectives

The study findings are organised into two separate chapters. This chapter is exclusively dedicated to findings from the key informants consulted in the study while the next chapter focuses on fieldwork results obtained across the three communities studied namely: Gambiza, Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho.

The focus of this chapter is to examine how *nhimbe* works in practice and how it affects people's lives. The following issues are discussed:

- *Nhimbe* in terms of how it is organised and who participates in it;
- The purpose for which *nhimbe* is practised;
- Underpinnings that apply in *nhimbe* practice;
- Social or economic consequences to anyone for non-participation in *nhimbe*;
- Factors that contribute to regularity of *nhimbe* practice in the communities studied relative to the past; and
- The benefits, weaknesses and potential of *nhimbe* in community-based development discourse in terms of how the practice relates to community social and economic life.

6.1.2 **Analysis framework applied**

A total of twelve professional key informants (PK) were consulted, comprising nine adult males and three females, with an average age of 67 years. The acronym PK is used to make the informants' names anonymous in line with upholding ethical considerations as agreed between the researcher and the research participants in this study. This author selected twelve PKs to participate in the study because of one or more of the following reasons: (i) were born or grew up in the communities investigated, (ii) practised nhimbe at some point in their lives, and (iii) worked or were currently working in the communities studied. The informants were indigenous knowledge experts, development practitioners and social historians.

The data obtained from the informants through interviews was about 90% qualitative and 10% quantitative. Appropriate software applications were utilised to organise and analyse the data namely NVivo for the qualitative data, SPSS and Excel for the quantitative data sets. In analysing the qualitative data, the author was most influenced by the works of Creswell (1998), Krueger (1988), Babbie (2010) and Monette and others (2011). Five interrelated data reduction techniques and concepts were utilised during the analysis process which are: (i) contextualisation, in which Zimbabwe, rural communities, ethnic groups (*Ndau*, *Shona* and *Ndebele* people) and the different geographical areas formed the context of analysis; (ii) exploration was useful in analysing the voluminous data from the interviews; (iii) discovering patterns through determination of frequencies, causal relationships and chronology of occurrences; (iv) coding in which sets of related ideas or observations were categorised into limited number of themes to facilitate thematic analysis and interpretation.

Noting that ideas, concepts and evidence in qualitative research are mutually interdependent (Neuman 2006: 460), a flexible and appropriate analysis approach had to be used. For this reason, an "inductive reasoning approach"

was applied to achieve rigor in interpretation of data throughout the analysis procedure. Application of inductive reasoning was particularly important because it enabled the author to let concepts and ideas to emerge 'freely' from the data sets. This facilitated systematic construction of meanings, explanations and formations of concepts grounded in the data. At each level of analysis, the author adapted chronological sequence of qualitative data analysis, as suggested by Creswell (1998) and Krueger (1988). This includes perusal and reading of each transcript, consideration of words and phrases used, contexts in which views were expressed, identification of big and sub-ideas and ensuring that the analysis is in line with the objectives of the study.

6.1.3 **Arrangement of findings**

Findings are presented in the following order: (i) description of *nhimbe*; (ii) purpose of nhimbe; (iii); community-based development activities to which *nhimbe* is applied; (iv) inclusion-exclusion analysis in the *nhimbe* practice; (v) community social obligations underpinning the *nhimbe* practice; (vi) social and economic consequence for not participating in *nhimbe*; (vii) processes which an individual can use to re-engage with others in *nhimbe*; (viii) social and economic benefits of *nhimbe*; (ix) regularity of *nhimbe* in the communities; (x) factors associated with infrequency of *nhimbe* in the communities; (xi) weaknesses of *nhimbe* practice; (xii) factors that are most likely to reduce community members' motivation to participate in *nhimbe*; and (xiii) contribution of *nhimbe* to an individual's character formation and personal development. The thematic organisation of findings used was vital to achieve a systematic contrast and comparison analytical framework in the study. The key acronym in the chapter is 'PK' which stands for professional key informant(s), being the primary data sources for the findings presented in the chapter.

6.2. Description of Nhimbe practice

Variations of *nhimbe* are found throughout Sub-Saharan Africa (Kapasula 2010: 290) and to point out a few these include *Harambee* in Kenya, *Letsema* in Botswana and South Africa and *Chilimba* in Zambia. In this study, *nhimbe* is discussed within the context of Zimbabwe with particular reference to how it is practised among the Shona and Ndebele people. This is because when phenomena in a given setting are explained using contexts that are detached from the subject matter, analysis and interpretation is likely to be limited (Ani 1994, Asante 1998 and Oyugi 2004). As already noted in the literature, it is not uncommon for Africans in Sub-Saharan Africa to invoke collective actions along the lines of *nhimbe* (Gelfand 1979, Madziva 2011, Mararike 1999 and Kapasula 2011). Although the actual practice varies according to the specific contexts, it is noted that they have common features like need-driven, reciprocity, trust and participation.

As is discussed in this chapter, *nhimbe* has social, economic and political dimensions. The political aspect is evident in the fact that everyone who wishes to organise *nhimbe* must notify the village head. Additionally, it is often expected that the traditional leader gives closing remarks at the end of every *nhimbe* activity. The practice is underpinned by the concept of collective action in communities which is often required to achieve greater development results than if one (individual or household) works alone. The informants expressed that *nhimbe* is known by two other terms as tabulated below. The tick (√) means that the term is used in the community indicated.

Term	Communities studied		
	Chipinge	Gambiza	Tsholotsho
Humwe	√	√	
Ilima		√	√

Table 6.1: Other terms for nhimbe as expressed by key informants

The term *nhimbe* is commonly used in Mashonaland region which includes Gambiza while *ilima* in Matebeleland where Tsholotsho is located. As shown above, Gambiza which is located in the middle of the country uses both *humwe* and *ilima.*

> In other parts of the country, *nhimbe* is called by different names due to different dialects (PK01).

> In our Chindau dialect, nhimbe is called humwe. It is working together to lighten a difficult job at household (PK03).

As this study has discovered, despite the different names used, the practice is similar across the three communities studied. For convenience sake, the researcher used the term *nhimbe* throughout this thesis.

The discussions that follow explore various themes which emerged from the informants' responses about how they describe and view *nhimbe* in their community contexts and life.

6.2.1 **Nhimbe is a rotational community development system**

Several informants pointed out that *nhimbe* is practised on a rotational basis as community members help each other to achieve development results. This understanding was expressed in varied ways, which are worthy citing at length as they capture the complexity and nuance of this practice:

> ...the way it works is that people in a community take turns to help each other. Sometimes there could be widows in the community who can do nhimbe to achieve big things by using other people's hands; with many hands, one gets tasks done quickly. Nhimbe is a fairly common practice in Zimbabwe (PK01)

> My understanding of nhimbe is that it is a societal get together in terms of supplying labour in the process of production, mostly in farming, or whatever jobs people require to be done. ...it is done by people from the same village

mostly in the rural areas and they do it in a rotational manner depending on individual household's needs within the village (PK02).

...as far as I know, based in Masvingo [province in Zimbabwe] where I was born and worked for ten (10) years in the communities as an agricultural extension officer, nhimbe is a cooperative, collective action, working together and the participants come from within the same community and this is done in turns. You see, a person has work to be done and that person needs others to have it done quickly and usually this is a day's work (PK05).

In a village, there is only one nhimbe that should be organised at a time. Nhimbe is a self-regulating practice in the community as its practice is driven by the development needs in the community. Nhimbe can be organised or spontaneous. It is spontaneous when people come together to deal with a problem/emergency such as death. Cooperatives are an attempt to explain nhimbe (PK06).

...the word nhimbe means almost the same as mushandirapamwe [cooperative] or working together so that members of the community benefit from the practice. Members of a community help one another in turns like weeding in the field, harvesting, ploughing or any jobs that a household may have. *Chindiro chinoenda kunobva chimwe* (one good turn deserves another) (PK11).

Nhimbe is a rotational system in which households take turns to help each other on a diversity of tasks (PK01, PK02, PK05, PKO6, PK11). The work normally lasts between six (6) to ten (10) hours (PK02, PK05, PK07, PK08 and PK09) and the *nhimbe* host does not have an obligation to pay, in monetary terms, the participants (PK09 and PK12). It is a means of labour supply for development in the community. In other words, *nhimbe* is a development strategy to assist a particular household to successfully complete some work. This also reveals that households trust the availability of labour and expertise among themselves for their short-term and long-term development initiatives. The notion of trust in community development resonates with the social capital theory extensively discussed by Putnam (1993), Cornwall (2008) and Realo and Allik (2008).

The rotation system of the *nhimbe* practice is done by people who live in the same village, have known each other well for some time and are bound by common cultural views (PK02, PK05 and PK06). Essentially, it is practised by a 'relating' group of people within and not outside the village. This implies that people who practise *nhimbe* are a cooperating group and most likely have kinship ties. People who practise *nhimbe* have to be from the same village, under the leadership of the same village head. From a social and traditional standpoint, this means that community members are already united through kinship ties around a known and acceptable community traditional leader and not elected political leaders (PK04 and PK09). Kinship is an important social ingredient in community-based development (Andersson 2002, Munyuki-Hungwe 2011 and Shutt 2002). The study findings have revealed that *nhimbe* is a realisation in the community that undertaking development initiatives alone often results in limited achievement (PKO4). A household needs labour power from others in the village to have work done quickly and on a large scale (PK03) and this suggests that *nhimbe* plays a long-term development planning as well in the community. In this rotational community development system, participants do it voluntarily and joyfully (PK12) which is an indication of socialisation aspect embedded in the *nhimbe* practice.

From the preceding discussion, the motivation for people to participate in *nhimbe* and uphold the rotational arrangement lies in four key aspects. Firstly, the moral obligation push to help each other as one would also need assistance from others in the future. Secondly, *nhimbe* participants are motivated to share and learn from others in terms of knowledge, skills and experiences on development. Thirdly, food and beverage served at a *nhimbe* motivate people since during feasting they socialise. Lastly, the singing, cracking of jokes, laughters and the dancing that usually take place at the end of a *nhimbe* stimulate, entertain and sustain people to maintain the *nhimbe* tradition (PK07, PK09 and PK10). These four points underline the importance of social networks in community-based

development (Cornwall 2008, Pattenden 1999 and Putnam 1993). The study findings have also shown that social capital is one of the key theoretical foundations underpinning the nhimbe practice.

6.2.2 **Nhimbe conceived as a work party**

Invariably, the informants also described *nhimbe* as a work party at which people eat and feast in the process.

> ...at a nhimbe, food is prepared and served including beer for those who take it. This [nhimbe] is a form of a party where people enjoy themselves during and after work (PK02).

PK10 expressed this at length:

> ...at ilima [nhimbe], food is prepared and served and certain people are tasked to cook. They also serve mahewu. The neighbours bring calabash of mahewu as a pledge to somebody who has invited them to the ilima. Depending on the scale of work to be done, if the task is big, a goat can be slaughtered. If it is a small task, maybe a few chickens can be slaughtered. Usually if people know that plenty of food would be provided, they would be more motivated to participate at that particular ilima. During the course of ilima, there would be a short-break where mahewu is served. Other households can serve tea with bread or traditional baked bread in addition or in place of mahewu. After the work, people go the homestead of the ilima organiser whereby food and beer are served. Also more mahewu is served for those who do not drink beer like those who go to church. Normally traditional beer is served, but nowadays, those who can afford can buy and serve modern beer like Chibuku or Ingwebu. At this point, people would be singing and dancing (PK10).

This is buttressed by PK01 and PK02 below:

> So in helping each other, what they do, is to prepare food, brew mahewu (traditionally sweet brewed drink), beer and even provide soft drinks. The whole village works at one household's field; or whatever project you have to which you need help from others in the community (PK01).

> At a nhimbe, food is prepared and served including beer for those who take it. This is a form of a party where people enjoy themselves during and after work. Normally nhimbe is done within a day (PK02).

> A household needs labour from others in the community to have work done faster and on a large scale. In essence, nhimbe is working together on a development initiative in a community. The person [household] that calls for nhimbe prepares food for the participants (PK03).

> ...one who organises ilima [nhimbe] should provide food and beverage, that is, beer and mahewu. Usually, adults residing in the same community participate in ilima. In instances where young people participate, the person who has organised ilima has to ensure mahewu is available for them as they are normally not allowed to take beer. Some people may not take beer for various reasons like one's religious beliefs; again, mahewu would be served for them while others enjoy beer (PK04).

At a nhimbe, food and beverages (*mahewu*, beer, soft drinks and tea) are served to participants (PK01, PK02, PK03, PK04, PK05 and PK10) but it is not a pre-condition for people to do the work (PK07 and PK09). It should also be noted that beer is served after work to avoid drunkenness which can adversely affect work quality, cause injury or lead to social problems to erupt like fighting (PK04, PK08, PK09, PK10, PK11 and PK12).

> As for beer, it is usually served after the completion of the task; this is because if it is served during work some people may get drunk and not focus on the task at hand while others may even cause social problems during the work like fighting. If anyone [respected people] pushes for it during work, the serving will be limited say one cup (PK09).

> The humwe [nhimbe] I know, the common beverages served is mahewu; beer is served afterwards because if people drink and get drunk then the work does not go on well because if people drink and get drunk then the work does not go on well (PK12).

> ...one who organises ilima should provide food and beverage, that is, beer and mahewu. ...at an ilima, there is a designated person who supervises people otherwise some people would just concentrate on food and beverage with not much work done (PK04).

> ...there are implicit rules associated with the nhimbe practice; these rules are not written down but everyone knows. Food and beverages (mahewu and beer) are served at a nhimbe; usually the beer is consumed after the work has been completed, normally after lunch (PK08).

As revealed in the above excerpts, *nhimbe* is a form of a work party where people work and enjoy themselves in celebration of their immediate achievement in helping that particular household. Emotionally and socially, the celebration makes them feel good (PK02). If one does not have sufficient resources to prepare food and beverages and yet it is urgent that work has to be done, there are three options. Firstly, one can borrow from relatives or other members of the community (PK08, PK09). Secondly, it is possible that the person can appeal to the community members to come for *nhimbe* and be served food and beverages at a later date when the household can now afford these resources (PK05, PK11). The term *mundi* is usually used to describe *nhimbe* without food and beverages served (PK05).

> Sometimes if one needs work done but does not have food and beverage, it is possible that people come to work and then be served these at a later date. This type of nhimbe arrangement is called mundi in Masvingo (PK05).

> ...let's say one does not have enough food to feed the participants, he or she will approach the community members and share his or her challenges; who then help out [even without served food or beverage] (PK11).

This type of *nhimbe* arrangement implies that it is done for social credit. In other words, the host should honour the promise to provide food and beverages in the near future particularly before the same household organises another *nhimbe*. Failure to honour the promise is a high social risk which can ruin one's reputation

in the community (Leedy 2010). Lastly, sometimes community members can bring food stuff to support the household which is hosting the *nhimbe*. "The neighbours bring calabash of *mahewu* or some food stuff as forms of pledge, reverse hospitality and respect to somebody who has invited them to the *ilima*" (PK10).

The magnitude of work to be done determines both the size and type of beast to be slaughtered for the work party (PK10). At the work party, people sing, crack jokes, dance and laugh (PK04, PK10, PK11, and PK12) as they eat and drink (PK12).

> At ilima [nhimbe], work becomes lighter but also because these numbers [nhimbe participants] are singing and cracking jokes. The singing makes work easier, singing is emotional and psychological. People sing in rhythm and the rhythmic force makes people to work hard, thus, work becomes lighter. It is also that singing synchronises people's energy and brings coordination towards the task at hand. Singing energises people, yaah, you can't have an ilima with absolutely no singing, laughing and cracking of jokes (PK04).

> ...during nhimbe process, there are a lot of jokes, laughers and the work would go on quickly; this is a good way of working together. ...people sing songs and the significance of the singing is according to the particular work they are doing (PK12).

The foregoing quotations and discussion indicate that provision of food and beverages is a critical element in the *nhimbe* practice. Although some authors (Kapasula 2010, Mbenene et al. 2010, Shutt 2002 and Madziva 2011) reached the same conclusion that at every *nhimbe* food is served, this study has discovered that the feasting can also happen even days after *nhimbe* has been done, the *mundi* concept expressed by PK05. In addition, the findings on work party have shown that people who feast are the participants. In other words, *nhimbe* participants have the right to feast and rejoice which represent both a reward and recognition of work accomplished. On the aspect of feasting,

Madziva (2011) stresses that while people help each other to complete tasks; food constitutes an integral aspect of the *nhimbe* practice. Mbenene and others (2010: 5) concur with Madziva and assert that feasting "acts as a vehicle for further extension of relations among the people [in the community]". In what appears to be a contradiction to the positive role of feasting, Leedy (2010: 493) reports that missionaries who came to Zimbabwe in the 1900s to about 1960s attributed all sorts of immoral and violent behaviour in the communities to *nhimbe* practice. However, there is no evidence in this study that *nhimbe* promotes immorality and violence in communities. In contrast, *nhimbe* promotes peace, good behaviour and community cohesion. These aspects are discussed later in this chapter. On this basis, the missionaries' conclusion illustrates a narrow analysis and understanding of the *nhimbe* practice.

6.2.3 **Nhimbe is as a philanthropic practice**

Another crucial perspective informants highlighted is that the elderly, child-headed households, the sick, widows and people with disabilities in the communities have access to the much needed labour power through the *nhimbe* arrangement. One informant explicitly stated:

> "...it sometimes happens that people organise a nhimbe for a household [community-organised nhimbe] after observing a need. This scenario normally applies to vulnerable groups in the community like the elderly, the sick and today even child-headed households (PK09).

Some of the tasks mentioned where community members, through *nhimbe,* help the vulnerable include cleaning houses, cleaning the households' grounds, laundry, cooking, fetching firewood and water (PK04, PK05, PK07, PK08 and PK12). During fieldwork in Gambiza and Musikavanhu communities, the investigator participated in *nhimbe* which were organised to assist the sick and the elderly respectively with a particular focus on weeding their crops. From the

study findings, this type of *nhimbe* is community-induced or community-organised and two informants explicitly expressed below on this notion:

> ...nhimbe is voluntary; the motivation is within you to want to help others. While the initiator of nhimbe is normally the household [household-organised] for a task to be done, it sometimes happens that people organise a nhimbe for a household [community-organised nhimbe] after observing a [social or economic] need. This scenario normally applies to vulnerable groups in the community like the elderly, the sick and today even child-headed households (PK09).

> ...sometimes there could be widows in the community who can do nhimbe to achieve big things by using other people's hands; with many hands, one gets tasks done quickly (PK01).

Related studies by Madziva (2011: 229-238) indicate that Batsiranai, a community-based organisation (CBO) based in Mashonaland East province of Zimbabwe, is successfully using principles of *nhimbe* as a model to assist orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) in the communities. The informants' views, Madziva's findings and the researcher's field observations suggest that *nhimbe* is a useful community-based development strategy that assists the vulnerable groups in the communities to cope with development challenges. Hampson (1990) posits that it is quite common for people in rural communities of Zimbabwe to care for the elderly through practices like *nhimbe*. From this standpoint, it can be inferred that *nhimbe* is a community-based philanthropic practice (CBPP).

6.2.4 **Nhimbe as a socio-economic development model**

This study has shed light on the importance of social analysis to understand cultural norms of communities and how that influence strategies local people adapt for community-based development. In community development process, understanding people's culture is a key entry point because it provides insights into how they interpret their own reality (Cornwall 2008, Kajese 1987 and Nobles

1985). Findings obtained in this study suggest that *nhimbe* radiates both the sociological and economic life of a community as it manifests community ideologies through shared values and behaviours as it is explicit in the following excerpts:

> You are [referring to theresearcher] laying a whole new ground on the nhimbe study. Nhimbe is a social, economic and political rallying point for communities. It is a practice that encompasses values, ideals and social institutions for a people in a given community. Nhimbe is a form of community social and economic security within the context that it is a community obligation for people to help others in need (PK06).

> ...ilima [nhimbe] is largely practised as an economic arrangement which carries with it attributes or benefits that go beyond the economic realm. It has social and political dimensions; it recognises power in numbers. So it is an arrangement practised by people who consider themselves as a relating group, people who are familiar with each other. Ilima is not a practice done by strangers but a cooperating group or community members where there is already a social cohesion, shared vision, shared historical experiences, and shared worldview. That is, it is a practice that finds meaning within a given socio-economic and political context in a community (PK04).

> ...when people are together like this they do not only focus on the ilima task, they also share social skills; for example, the adolescents learn about sexual and reproductive health issues as well as marriage from the elders at ilima. For adults, marriage counseling is also done among other social issues. In our culture, it is not easy for a parent to talk about sexual and reproductive issues with his or her children but it is easier at an ilima for other parents to talk to your children about these issues (PK10).

The preceding responses signify that *nhimbe* is an organised community social capital aimed at helping one another on socio-economic development initiatives (PK06). The social aspect of the *nhimbe* stems from the rhythmic singing that takes place during *nhimbe* (PK04) which helps to maintain the work morale of the *nhimbe* participants to work and rejoice (PK11). Another social dimension of nhimbe is that people crack jokes to quicken and lighten the work as well as a tool for peace building (PK10). It is believed that jokes and teases are signs of a

peaceful community. They help to ease tensions and suspicions in a community (Kapasula 2010: 290 and Mbenene, Mutami and Tuvuyanago 2010: 6). The political dimension mentioned by PK06 emphasises the point made earlier that it is imperative for a *nhimbe* host to notify the village head prior to implementation. Furthermore, community politics like disputes over homestead boundaries are sometimes discussed at the end of a *nhimbe* as people would often take advantage of the gathering to discuss a wide range of issues. The quotations above also show that *nhimbe* is a cooperative or collective action community members use to work together on a given task at household level (PK05 and PK12). In the words of PK06, the socio-economic nature of *nhimbe* is that "people come together to attack a task in order to make it lighter. It is a realisation that my two hands are not enough, the task is too big, I need help from my community members." On another angle, *nhimbe* is described as a form of community social and economic security. This means that it is a social insurance that provides community social support system or safety net in development (PK06). On this, PK02 believes that *nhimbe* is a higher level of extended family support system; "*Nhimbe* is a higher level of extended family practice in Zimbabwe; it is the support given beyond one's family circle." *Nhimbe* is the opposite of individualism; it is group work as it provides community synergy which leverages on knowledge, skills and experiences among community members (PK08). Mbenene and others (2010: 5) equate the reciprocity in the *nhimbe* practice to the notion of social insurance and declare that "reciprocity is the means by which the people [in the community] effect a system of social insurance". The reciprocity phenomenon found in the *nhimbe* practice is consistent with current literature that it plays a significant role in community-based development (Putnam 1993, Kajese 1987, Foster 2000b). It seems that *nhimbe* is strongly viewed as a social contract among community members and is hinged on helping one another on short-term and long-term development initiatives primarily at household level and community in general.

> ..nhimbe taught me the essence of synergy and team work in order to achieve challenging tasks in life. Nhimbe utilizes all members' diverse skills, for example some would be weeding and some would be cooking, meaning that every community member somehow participates; has something to do towards achieving a common goal. I have learnt that if we are organised enough we can utilize the different endowments, talents, gifts and skills for the betterment of our lives and our world (PK08).

> ...nhimbe is an indigenous knowledge, the people who practise it have in the area for a long time, have a set of knowledge and skills which they use for development through nhimbe (PK02).

The foregoing quotations illustrate that *nhimbe* leverages the diverse knowledge and skills among community members to accomplish a given development task. *Nhimbe* is an important economic arrangement because it lightens difficult or big tasks at household level (PK03, PK07 and PK10). Such tasks include agricultural activities or mainstay livelihoods across the three communities investigated. Often, these activities have to be done within a limited space of time owing to the seasonality nature of farming (PKO4 and PK06). This is a phenomenon referred to by the Department for International Development (DFID) as livelihoods 'vulnerability' (1999). It is seen here that *nhimbe* is viewed as a community practice which increases the likelihood for a household to attain high farm yield and therefore to work in the fields at the right time helps to reduce livelihoods vulnerability. As the study found, *nhimbe* goes beyond meeting the economic needs of communities to facilitating socialisation among community members, that is, nurturing and sustaining social networks (Leedy 2010, Madziva 2011, Kozanayi and Nemarunde 2002 and Mbenene, Mutami and Tuvuyanago 2010). Nhimbe provides an opportunity for socialisation among young people into adulthood (Gelfand 1979), that is, they learn from elders the socio-moral values and social skills that enable them to fit well into their immediate and extended society.

6.2.5 **Nhimbe as a community apprenticeship**

The study findings have shown that during *nhimbe*, including the feasting time, knowledge sharing and skills transfer take place among the community members and this author calls this 'community apprenticeship' or 'community academy'. This suggests that in *nhimbe* practice, human capital is continuously developed and sustained over generations through community apprenticeship. The concept of passing knowledge through generations is characteristic of indigenous knowledge system (Owens 1993 and Shutle 1990).

Studies on human capital have concluded that understanding local context is vital in order to be clear of capabilities and limitations of the people who should address their own development needs (DFID 1999; Mararike and Chivaura 1998, and Whitney and Trosten-Bloom 2002). While other authors (DFID 1999 and Human Factor Journal 1998) believe that human capital development is mostly achieved through formal training guided by government-approved curricula, this study has revealed that *nhimbe* does not have documented curriculum or a framework of implementation in the communities. However, the study has illustrated that *nhimbe* is an informal and well organised community-based apprenticeship 'institution' in which knowledge; skills and experiences are shared and passed on through generations. This is succinctly stated by five informants below.

> Nhimbe is an indigenous knowledge, the people who practise it have had it for a long time; they have a set of knowledge and skills which they use for development through nhimbe (PK02).

> During nhimbe people benefit from the following: counseling, skills apprenticeship and knowledge sharing on health; among other things. One is able to carry out a big task and finish within a short period of time with the help of others in the community (PK06).

..at ilima, talents are identified and encouraged for use for the good of the community. For example, those who are good in singing would sing and this would often motivate people to work hard [boost morale]....so ilima (nhimbe) is a leadership development platform as people play different roles to ensure that work is done; i.e. forming work teams while others take on quality and supervisory roles (PK07).

...yaah, another important thing is that nhimbe promotes skills transfer as people share knowledge and skills on various tasks. For example, there are specific skills required for fencing barbed wire as much as there are skills required for shelling groundnuts, tilling the land, weeding, and harvesting different types of crops. There is a lot of teaching each other that goes on during nhimbe. The skilled people [on specific tasks] transfer their skills to others; so there is skills transfer from one generation to another during nhimbe (PK09).

...at a nhimbe some people learn skills that would become their careers/professions in the future. Like some learn short songs/choruses or even compose songs that are sung at a nhimbe (PK11).

It is apparent from the quotations above that *nhimbe* is a recognition in the community that people have a diverse and complementary set of knowledge and skills which, when used collectively, can enhance community development (PK02). Examples of knowledge and skills mentioned in this study include expertise in farming, fencing, building, winnowing, counseling, health, conflict resolution and conflict management (PK02 and PK06).

The pooling of expertise evident in *nhimbe* practice is in many ways similar to the theory of community common pool resource management (Ostrom 2000 and Wade 1987). While this latter theory focuses on shared common physical resources like land and water, the *nhimbe* practice is quite similar in that community members pool their expertise as well as their labour power. A key finding in this study is the extent to which communities view these two important features, community knowledge (or knowledge systems) and communal labour power, as common pool resources. The resources can and should be managed

by the community according to their own rules, customs, and practices. This is a new dimension the study has brought in understanding application of the common resource management theory beyond its conventional management and sharing of physical resources among community members.

In addition to the above, the study found that there is a general understanding among community members about the importance of pooling their knowledge, skills and experiences through *nhimbe* as common resources in order to enhance and sustain development initiatives. Depending on the task at hand for which *nhimbe* should be organised, a household invites a core team of people in the village who have the relevant skills and expertise (PK09). However, this does not mean that those without relevant skills are excluded. In fact, if one does not have the required skills, it is always an opportunity to attend and learn from others, hence, community apprenticeship. The findings show, to a great extent, that *nhimbe* is an indigenous knowledge system (IKS) which defines community life through skills transfer (Anderson 2002, Leedy 2010, Kozanayi and Nemarundwe 2002 and Thompson 2010). To emphasise the integral role IKS and traditional practices like *nhimbe* play in people's lives, Shutle (1990) likens these as wealth for the community which is passed on from one generation to another.

6.2.6 **Protocol in organising nhimbe**

Up to this point, very little is known about how *nhimbe* is organised in the community. The findings presented in this section illuminate this aspect.

> One has to notify the traditional leaders [village head, headman, in some cases the chief] because this is a gathering, if anything happens, the community leaders are aware. As you know, where people gather, sometimes arguments can erupt. You have to get a green light [from the village head] and then invite the target people in time so that you get a good attendance. Depending on the task you want help on, you invite people with the relevant skills (PK09).

The village head has to be notified in compliance with the traditional community leadership policy (even though it might not be documented) and moral obligation to organise *nhimbe* through the approval of the traditional leader. "One has to notify the village head of his/her intention to call for nhimbe as doing so is a moral obligation" (PK03). The policy is that every member who intends to organise *nhimbe* must inform the village head. The notification to the village head is paramount in that if anything goes wrong at a *nhimbe*, it is easier for the organiser to get support from the leadership to solve the problem as they (traditional leaders) would have sanctioned it in the first place (PK09). Once the permission has been given by the village head, the *nhimbe* organiser (host) invites people within the village including specifying the nature of the work and skills required. The host gives sufficient notice to community members like three to five days so that they can reconcile their family programmes to participate in the planned *nhimbe*.

6.2.7 **Contextual setting for nhimbe practice**

The findings have unearthed that there are pertinent factors that sustain the practice of *nhimbe* in the communities. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, people who practise *nhimbe* are those who already know each other well and are bound by shared community values (*unhu*).

> So it is an arrangement practised by people who consider themselves as a relating group, people who are familiar with each other. Ilima (nhimbe) is not a practice done by strangers but a cooperating group or community members where there is already a social cohesion, shared vision, shared historical experiences, and shared worldview. That is, it is a practice that finds meaning within a given socio-economic and political context in a community (PK04).

> Nhimbe is a social, economic and political rallying point for communities. It is a practice that encompasses values, ideals and social institutions for a people in a given community. During nhimbe, opportunities are created to deal with a wide range of issues such as counseling, skills apprenticeship, health, family and marriage. ...is a form of community social and economic security within the context that it is a community obligation for people to help others in the community [on development initiatives]...as its practice is driven by the development needs in the community (PK06).

The expressions stated above reveal that in addition to people knowing each other well, community members should already have social cohesion, shared worldviews, shared vision, shared historical experiences, uphold interrelationships and interdependence in the context of community development (Madziva 2011). The findings indicate that this does not necessarily mean shared ownership or responsibility for the management of resources in the communities; an aspect which has been discussed in section (d) above. As already pointed out, the *nhimbe* participants are a relating group who are residents in the same village which automatically means that they are under the same traditional leadership (PK04 and PK06). Additionally, people who practise *nhimbe* should have the right attitude for community development which is anchored on helping one another on socio-economic develoment. Informant PK06 emphasises the significance of the right attitude in community development and referred to the scriptures. "There was a man named Job, living in the land of Uz, who worshipped God and was faithful to him. He was a good man, careful not to do anything evil" (Job 1:1). In sharing this scripture, the informant stressed that it is important for *nhimbe* practitioners to maintain peace among themselves as a vital ingredient to sustain trust and reciprocity among community members for sustainable community development.

6.2.8 **Performance management at nhimbe**

At *nhimbe*, normally one person is designated to supervise work in terms of quality and to ensure the set performance target is achieved. The supervisor is either the host or an individual appointed by the host prior to the *nhimbe* day. In

Musikavanhu community, this supervisor is known as *gombaguru*. In addition to quality control, the *gombaguru* is also responsible for managing a team that prepares and serves food; comprising people from the same village. *Gombaguru* also ensures that people do not drink beer during work time as intoxication is likely to reduce one's performance. As earlier discussed, feasting forms an important part of the *nhimbe* practice and often the host is primarily responsible for providing food. The study found that when a host does not have adequate food to feed the participants, community members have a moral obligation to contribute.

> There are implicit rules associated with the nhimbe practice; these rules are not written down but everyone knows. Food and beverages (mahewu and beer) are served at a nhimbe; usually the beer is consumed after the work has been completed, normally after lunch (PK07).

> As for beer, it is usually served after the completion of the task; this is because if it is served during work some people may get drunk and not focus on the task at hand while others may even cause social problems during the work like fighting. If anyone [respected people] pushes for it during work, the serving will be limited say one cup (PK10).

It is apparent from the description presented in the whole section 6.1 that nhimbe is, for the most part, a support system to meet economic and social needs of families in communities through an intentional arrangement with a clear implementation guideline. Furthermore, it is obvious that *nhimbe* plays a dual role in the community life which is social and economic. Quality management is a feature entrenched in *nhimbe* and feasting forms an important part of the practice. The findings also show that *nhimbe* is a community apprenticeship institution or academy designed for knowledge and skills transfer in community-based development among community members. A close examination of the findings discussed in this section reveals that *nhimbe* is a community-based development practice induced by the community members themselves and not a state engineered rural development strategy or an idea from external development agencies.

6.3. **Purpose of nhimbe**

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that the purpose of *nhimbe* is to help one another within the village at household level on a diversity of development initiatives especially agricultural activities. The key aspects of assistance community members normally provide include supply of labour, sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences to address a specific development requirement.

Often, the help a household requires must meet a certain threshold to qualify for a *nhimbe*. In Musikavanhu community, this threshold is known as *nyandayeyo* which means one is urgently seeking unconditional help from community members to lighten a big or difficult job. The term *nyandayeyo* can be split into two parts which are *nyanda* and *yeyo* which literally means a heap of things that have befallen someone and that person shoutsfor immediate assistance. In this context, this signifies that a job has to be done within a limited space of time and any delay is likely to reduce the expected level of that household's development. In the case of agricultural activities, if weeding is not done on time, obviously the crop yield is dramatically reduced (PK02, PK11, PK12).

> ...nhimbe helps people to develop from one stage to another in the community. It increases production mostly of crops (PK02).
>
> ...the organiser is assured [by community members] that the planned work would be completed within the planned timeframe [within a day of between 6 to 9 hours]. If the weeds are cleared on time, crops grow well and you get a good harvest (PK11).
>
> ...if you look at this humwe [nhimbe] thing, it usually happens at weeding and harvesting time. If the weeding is not done in good time, the yield is reduced. If the harvesting is not done in good time, it affects negatively the harvest output (PK12).

Following the informants' reflections above, it can be concluded that *nhimbe* is premised on the concept of interdependence. This is to mean that *nhimbe*

practice is born and being practised out of a realisation and acknowledgement that naturally individuals have limited resources for any level of their personal and household development. Therefore, it is understood that *nhimbe* is a response to this limitation or scarcity whereby community members constantly depend on one another for development initiatives through pooling of their resources (intellectual, financial and material) as pointed out earlier in section 6.2.5 above.

> Ilima [nhimbe] has a potential for community development because people have always been working together. The principle of collective action is always needed in any development; that is, the interdependence for social, economic, environmental and spiritual development in life (PK04).

Central to the purpose of nhimbe is that the practice ensures food sufficiency at household level and by implication, the whole village (PK05). As noted, part of the reason why *nhimbe* is practised in the communities studied is to deal with social and economic *nyandayeyo* (shocks or emergencies) at household level (PK06 and PK07).

> I see nhimbe as a social security [insurance] network in the community; meaning that it is a community social support system. Nhimbe is different from new forms of social security networks in society like political parties and religious groups as sustainability of these is threatened when members get disgruntled with the leaders. Nhimbe can succeed or fail depending on how people uphold the community ideals in their lives (PK06).
>
> ...like I said earlier, ilima is a social way of doing things, helping each other and keeping harmony in the community (PK07).

Therefore, the purpose of *nhimbe* is to deal with social, economic and spiritual development in the community. In other words, *nhimbe* is used in short-term emergencies (*nyandayeyo*) and this is critical to reduce household vulnerability in the context of livelihoods framework (DFID 1999). Examined from the livelihoods viewpoint, it should be noted that *nhimbe* is not just about communal spirit or

good neighbourliness but a specific practice community members rely on for their household development needs. Another aspect of the purpose of *nhimbe* which comes out is that communities utilise it for long-term development planning at household level which includes planting, weeding, harvesting, building houses as well as development and maintenance of water sources in the community. In addition, *nhimbe* plays a social function in the community because the study has revealed that through the practice people uphold their socio-cultural values as it enables socialisation, transfer of knowledge and skills among community members. In fact, the practice promotes significant interaction in the community and this facilitates building and sustaining of trust, respect, solidarity and reciprocal relationships (Kapasula 2010, Gelfand 1979, Madziva 2011, Mbenene, Mutami and Tuvuyanago 2010).

6.4. **Community-based development activities to which nhimbe is applied**

Nhimbe is applied to various tasks in the community. The tasks are in two categories namely agriculture-based and non-agricultural activies.

> ...it is working together to lighten a difficult job at household level like ploughing, weeding, harvesting, shelling crops, clearing of land for farming and any such things that are difficult for a household to accomplish with limited labour and/or expertise (PK03).

> ..the tasks for which nhimbe is used include ploughing, weeding and harvesting. Normally harvest applies to crops/grain and these are labour intensive especially rapoko, sorghum and millet (PK05)

> ...the nature and form nhimbe takes varies from one form to another. Nhimbe is a form of community social and economic security within the context that it is a community obligation for people to help others in need. Some of the tasks nhimbe is used for include ploughing, planting, weeding, harvesting and building houses or any other community development need (PK06).

Three informants below clearly state other tasks where nhimbe is applied.

> In some instances, some people would call ilima for fencing or any other tasks a household would consider challenging and would want it done within a short period of time. Some of these tasks include building houses, road construction, dam construction, road clearing and so on (PK04)

> Ilima [nhimbe] is a practice or a way how people assist each other in the community; there is no money paid. It's like you have got a task, like you want to fence your field but you and your family do not have capacity to do it alone (PK09).

> ...types of tasks where ilima [nhimbe] is applied include ... molding bricks and building houses. If it is molding bricks, men are normally invited for this kind of work. Women can join to do other tasks like fetching water but the actual molding is done by men. Although there is now an understanding that all tasks can be done by either men or women, the community still believes that there are certain tasks that are too heavy for women; therefore should be done by men because of their biological makeup. Preparation of privately owned land at household level which includes cutting done of bushes and trees for farming is a men's job (PK10).

1. Agricultural activities	2. Non-agricultural activities
1.1 Land preparation	2.1 Building houses
1.2 Threshing or shelling of grain	2.2 Road construction and clearing
1.3 Sowing	2.3 Brick molding
1.4 Ploughing	2.4 Thatching of houses
1.5 Planting	2.5 Construction of schools, clinics, community civil centres and dams
1.6 Weeding	2.6 Fencing fields, paddocks, and homesteads
1.7 Harvesting	

Table 6.2: Activities for which nhimbe is used

The findings shown above contradict assertions by other authors that *nhimbe* relates only to farming (Kapasula 2010 and Leedy 2010). As far as this author knows, only Madziva (2011) and Mbenene and others (2010) attempted to present *nhimbe* as a practice that is used for a wide range of activities in the community beyond farming. This shows the versatility and significance of *nhimbe* in community-based development initiatives. On the farming aspect, key

informants were asked to estimate application of *nhimbe* on agricultural activities. The question was: *Overall, may you please estimate a percent (%) of nhimbe use on agricultural and non-agricultural activities*? The responses provided are outlined below.

key informants	Estimated % range on agriculture	Mid-point %
PK01	75-85	80.00
PK02	75-85	80.00
PK03	70-80	75.00
PK04	90-95	92.50
PK05	85-95	90.00
PK06	75-85	80.00
PK07	85-95	90.00
PK08	75-80	77.50
PK09	80-90	85.00
PK10	75-85	80.00
PK11	65-85	75.00
PK12	90-99	94.50
Estimated average % use of nhimbe on agricultural activities		**83%**

Table 6.3: Estimated % use of nhimbe on agricultural related activities

The findings above clearly illustrate that *nhimbe*, to a large extent, is applied on agricultural activities as indicated by an average informants' estimate of 83%. This finding verifies the expectation of the study that *nhimbe* practice would be linked to farming activities. The informants' claim of a high percent *nhimbe* application to agricultural production can be explained by the fact that the "economy of Zimbabwe [particularly in rural areas and specifically in the communities studied] is very much dependent on agricultural production" (Chikuhwa 2004: 244). Even during the periods 1800s and 1900s, various church missionary bodies that came to Zimbabwe included agriculture as a major component in their mission planning and establishments (Leedy 2010). In support of this, the table below shows proportion of labour force in Zimbabwe involved in agriculture as well as contribution of agricultural production to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 1980 to 1999.

Year	Proportion of labour force involved in agriculture (%)	Contribution of agricultural production to GDP (%)
1980	67.0	14.0
1984	70.0	11.4
1998	63.8	28.0
1990	68.0	12.9
1999	60.0	34.6

Table 6.4: Agriculture labour force and its contribution to GDP (Adapted from Chikuhwa 2004: 245)

Similar findings of agricultural activities in rural areas from a gender dimension reveal that about 35% of women and 45% of men are employed in agriculture sector. Furthermore, women and men with no education or only primary education mostly work in agricultural sector in Zimbabwe (ZDHS 2010-2011: 38). Additionally, 55% of people employed in Zimbabwe are engaged in agricultural-related occupations (Zimbabwe Census 2002: 3). These statistics probably clarify why this study has discovered that *nhimbe* is largely applied on agricultural activities. Findings also indicate that there is a gender dimension in carrying out various tasks within the *nhimbe* arrangement.

> ...each task is either male or female dominated. For example fencing is normally male dominated while shelling or sifting grain are female dominated; so the task determines whether one should invite more males than females or vice versa but there is no exclusive male or female tasks in the community (PK09).

The quotation above reveals that fencing is normally male dominated while shelling of grain is female dominated. In addition, molding of bricks and land preparation which includes cutting down of trees and bushes were cited as largely male dominated tasks (PK05, PK09 and PK10). This indicates that tasks in the communities studied are often gender defined. Another gender dimension the study found is that food preparation at a *nhimbe* is normally done by women although men could be involved through fetching firewood, water and serving (Kapasula 2010 and Thompson 2010).

6.5. **Inclusion and exclusion in nhimbe participation**

The study discovered that although often structured along gender lines (see Table 6.5 below) no one in the same village is excluded from participating in *nhimbe*. Even children participate indirectly when they help their parents with other chores during *nhimbe* like cleaning utensils, serving food and babysitting.

> In nhimbe, no one is excluded. The way our communities are structured is that they have social-cultural boundaries called villages. These boundaries determine who must take part who must not take part. A particular nhimbe does not go beyond a village. All the people in the village are automatically included. If for some reasons, the organiser excludes someone from participating, it becomes an issue; 'why did you leave me out?' (PK06).

As for adults, some may be technically excluded because they might not have the required skills for the task at hand. In most cases, even if they might not have the required skills they would attend for two main reasons namely to learn and socialise with others. Thompson (2010) came to the same conclusion pertaining to the aspect of inclusion-exclusion of the *nhimbe* practice:

> ...these events [nhimbe] are open to all members of the community [village], who would receive food and beer from hosts in exchange for work particularly during the demanding periods in the agricultural cycle; such as clearing new fields, weeding and threshing (Thompson 2010: 183).

In the foregoing excerpt, Thompson obviously misinterpreted the purpose of food and beer when he uses the phrase "in exchange for work". As this study found, food and beer served at a *nhimbe* are not payment but a host's show of gratitude to community members who have provided assistance. On the aspect of inclusion-exclusion, the elderly members of the community may not participate in the actual work at a *nhimbe*. They participate through their mere attendance and contributions to the social dispensation during the *nhimbe* process by way of sharing socio-moral values and giving appropriate advice. For this reason,

informant PK06 calls community elders 'honourary members' of the community and expresses this at length.

> In some cases, the elderly in the community may not have to participate in nhimbe in terms of actually doing the work because of advanced age. It is generally understood, socially, that the elderly are 'honourary' members of the community and they are informed of the nhimbe programmes that take place in the village. They are 'honourary' because they in fact have raised everyone in the village up to this age. The organiser of the nhimbe has the responsibility to give the elders beer, mahewu and food at their homesteads. Any failure to give them food and beverage while nhimbe participants feast is treated as a social 'crime' as they would feel 'kurashwa' [being neglected and treated as of less value in the community]. The elderly are regarded as reservoir of knowledge and wisdom in the community, if they grumble because of your unbecoming behaviour like not giving them food and drink, you are simply inviting socio-moral trouble (PK06).

As noted in the expression above, community members are duty-bound to respect and care for the elderly because it is generally understood in the communities studied that they (elders) had raised everyone in the community during their productive years. Furthermore, their status as elders means that they are seen widely as reservoirs of knowledge and wisdom in the community (PK06 and Hampson 1990). The excerpt above also highlights that even if they do not physically attend *nhimbe*, the organiser has a moral responsibility to give the elders food and beverages (*mahewu* and/or beer) at their homesteads. This viewpoint is supported by informant PK12 who states:

> ...my parents would urge us to prepare plenty of food to feed the humwe [nhimbe] participants whenever we organised humwe at our household. They (my parents) would even give extra food packs to some humwe participants after the humwe and the elders who would not have managed to participate (PK12).

According to informant PK06, failure to give the elders food and beverages is generally regarded as a social crime, a similar observation made by Hampson (1990). As the findings show, there is a moral obligation in communities for

people to care for the aged. If senior members notice that they are being neglected, it causes them serious psycho-social problems as explicitly expressed by the term *kuraswa* in the informant PK06 assertion above.

Another dimension of inclusion-exclusion discourse that emerged is the gender aspect. A task may determine whether one should invite males only, females only, more males than females, more females than males or both.

> One reason for exclusion could be that different tasks may require specific skills that the excluded may not have. For example planting, weeding certain types of crops, thatching, molding bricks and so on. Furthermore, in certain communities, some tasks are organised along gender lines (PK06).

The table below is this author's representation which is an attempt to interpret the inclusion-exclusion phenomenon in the *nhimbe* practice with a focus on gender roles and skills. The tick (√) stands for 'Yes' where it applies while the double ticks (√√) means that it applies relatively more to the sex indicated than the other.

	Inclusion-exclusion and gender dimension	
Nature of task	**Male**	**Female**
Heavy	√√	√
Light	√	√√
Requires specialised skills and expertise	√	√
Gender role determined tasks	√	√

Table 6.5: Gender dimension in nhimbe

Except for the gender related exclusion as shown in the preceding table, the emphasis from informants is that, structurally, *nhimbe* is a socially inclusive practice. One can also infer from the findings that the direct and indirect inclusion of the aged is an illustration of respect for elders embedded in the *nhimbe* practice.

6.6. **Community social obligations underpinning nhimbe practice**

In this study, working together is premised on the understanding that collective action, the pooling of labour power, achieves greater results than individual effort in the perspective of community-based development. Two informants concisely convey this viewpoint.

> Working together in nhimbe, is a reciprocal relationship and everyone matters in life regardless of their socio-economic status. We are there for each other (PK01).

> ...nhimbe is driven by the concepts of cooperation, collective action and working together. It [nhimbe practice] is generally understood that to be part of the community, one has to work with others in that community (PK05).

In the communities studied, life is understood to be communal and not solitary because through *nhimbe* people are socially encouraged to interact and in the process expand social networks and strengthen relationships. In the process of social interaction, they share development ideas; challenges and solutions are sought and implemented among community members.

> ...also, people socialise, they sing, it's just nice to be together and work on a task for your neighbour. ... It promotes treating each other humanely. Nhimbe promotes peace and love in the community. It promotes trust among community members (PK03).

> ...it is practised by people who recognise the primacy of the group rather than the individual and this why the [African] context is very, very critical to appreciate. Africans are a group-based people even our [social] identities are group-based, we are labeled by the identity of the group; we belong to the group. The whole concept of ubuntu is all about group identity and this is the context in which ilima is practised. People who practise ilima uphold interrelationships among them; that is the physical environment, social, economic and even spiritual relations (PK04).

> It is generally understood that community members have an obligation to help one another. ...nhimbe is a social contract among community members which is centred on helping one another (PK06).

The foregoing quotations illustrate that obligations underpinning *nhimbe* practice are implicit and informal. In fact the obligations that underpin the *nhimbe* practice are not documented. It is generally assumed that everyone knows them and one should be intrinsically motivated to enforce them at individual and household levels.

The issue of *ubuntu* PK04 raised is a widely known concept but it is not obvious how it manifests in individual or community life. For the most part, people speak loosely about *ubuntu* as "the African way", thus, treating Africans in a historic and overly homogenous way. This gives an impression that people's experiences and worldviews across Africa are similar and yet the reality is that unique circumstances and diverse cultural foundations define their lives across the continent. Some of the sympathisers of *ubuntu* who have popularised it (Asante 1998, Mbigi 2005, Mbiti 1969 and Wiredu 2004) seem to ignore the differentiations that exist across countries and, in particular, communities within the various nations in Africa. Therefore, it would seem that very little has been documented to show how *ubuntu* works in a specific context or community. The value of this study is that it explored *nhimbe*, being one variant of this often generalised *ubuntu* system, through detailed fieldwork. The study has shown that *nhimbe* is a specific application of *ubuntu* conception in the communities studied, that is, *ubuntu* ecompasses socio-cultural values that define community-based development. This is evidenced in the collective action, reciprocity, trust, solidarity and respect which form part of the *nhimbe* underpinnings as outlined in Table 6.6 below; and they are also components of *ubuntu*.

> There are implicit rules associated with the nhimbe practice; these rules are not written down but everyone knows (PK08).

> The rules are there, but in rural areas these are not written down. In addition, the rules are not legally bidding, but they are morally binding (PK10).
>
> There are some by-laws that bind people to participate in humwe (nhimbe). They have community meetings to set up by-laws and these include agreement on humwe dates and if someone does not pitch up for that humwe, there should be a genuine reason, either an apology or send a family representative. It is also expected that one who prepares or organises humwe prepares food for the participants; it isn't a must though (PK12).

Informant PK12 refers community obligations that underpin *nhimbe* practice as social 'by-laws' which suggests that one is socially and morally duty-bound to uphold them. Again, it is seen how integral *nhimbe* is to social practices. It is an inherent component of the community's sense of itself, an established institution rather than an ad hoc practice. Tabulated below are eight (8) key community social obligations which underline the *nhimbe* practice as expressed by the informants.

Community obligation	Brief explanation	Informants (PK) who articulated similar views
Helping one another	Community members are obliged to help others through sharing of knowledge, skills, experiences and labour	PK02, PK03, PK06 and PK09
Reciprocal relationship	One upholds the notion of request for help and also give help	PK01, PK04, PK06 and PK08
Cooperation	Everyone in the community is expected to collaborate with others on socio-economic development initiatives	PK02 and PK05
Respect	Regardless of one's socio-economic status and other personal attributes, everyone matters in development processes	PK06 and PK07
Mutual trust	People who participate in nhimbe have already trusted each other. It is understood that as trust increases levels of suspicion against one another decreases leading to increased interaction among community members	PK08
Punctuality	People have to be punctual in everything that takes place in the community including their participation nhimbe	PK06, PK09 and PK11
Hard working	No one in the community should work at a level which would be interpreted as laziness	PK05, PK06 and PK11
Food and beverage provision	When one organises nhimbe, it is implicit that food and beverages be served as a 'social payment' to the participants. In Zimbabwe, the Shona people have an adage which says *'ukama igasva unozadzidziswa nekudya'* (relationship is incomplete unless people eat and drink together)	PK01, PK02, PK03, PK04, PK05, PK06, PK10 and PK12

Table 6.6:Social obligations underpinning the nhimbe practice

The community obligations presented above are not legally binding but socially and morally obligatory (PK09, PK11 and PK12). If one genuinely upholds these obligations, that person is viewed as a real human being in a community. The Shona and Ndebele people describe such a person as having *unhu or ubuntu* (humanness) respectively

> It is generally understood that community members have an obligation to help one another. Everyone in the community is expected to have '*unhu*' (humanness) by respecting, reciprocating and helping each other. In Shona a person is called *munhu*, that is, 'm' + *unhu*; this means that if one does not have *unhu* then that person is not a human being in society. Why was Job in the Bible successful? It is because he had good qualities namely *kururama* (uprightness), *kutyaMwari* (God-fearing) and *kunzvenga zvakaipa* (avoided temptations). Nhimbe is a social contract among community members centred on helping one another (PK06).

A person in Shona language is called *munhu* which is a derivative of *unhu* implying that if one is void of *unhu* then that person does not deserve to be called *munhu* (a person). This suggests that *unhu* is a vital individual attribute for community development and one's participation in *nhimbe* (PK06). Studies by Madziva (2011) and Mbenene and others (2010) confirm that *unhu* is a central disposition in the whole aspect of *nhimbe* practice. In the aspect of inclusion-exclusion phenomenon discussed in 6.5 above, an outsider is expected to possess *unhu/ubuntu* in order to participate in *nhimbe* with the local community members.

6.7. **Social and economic consequences for not participating in nhimbe**

As discussed earlier, *nhimbe* is not a legally binding practice in the community. It is voluntary and every community member is bound by a moral obligation to help others on a variety of social, economic, and spiritual needs (Hampson 1990, Madziva 2011 and Thompson 2010). Consequences for not participating in *nhimbe* usually arise if one does not give convincing reasons for the

absenteeism. The consequences that are meted out to an individual emanate from an outright failure to participate, arrive late at a *nhimbe* or leave early. To arrive at a *nhimbe* late is a concept known as *kukotosa*. Normally this happens just before or on time for feasting and rejoicing.

> Some people deliberately arrive at a nhimbe just at the time when food and beverages are served, a concept known as kukotosa [to arrive when work is already done]. This is undesirable behaviour and the village head normally deals with such people. In cases where one does not take part in other people's nhimbe, community members would normally boycott by not attending his/hers (PK05).

In other words, *kukotosa* means to arrive at a *nhimbe* when work has already been done and the actor is called *mukotosi*. The *kukotosa* notion is contrary to punctuality, a factor that forms part of the social obligation in the *nhimbe* practice. Normally community members individually assess the circumstances that might have made a person to come late or fail to participate in a recent *nhimbe*. The review of the circumstances that contributed to a person's failure to participate helps one to decide whether or not to reciprocate the behaviour. Evidently, this is because reciprocal relationship is one of the key underpinnings of *nhimbe* practice as other authors have also noted in related studies (Madziva 2011, Shutt 2002 and Thompson 2010).

In the communities studied, there are three acceptable reasons for failure to participate which are sickness, deaths and if one was not present in the community at the time *nhimbe* took place. Under these circumstances, one is expected to send a family representative to take part in the *nhimbe*. In situations where the explanations for failure to participate are not convincing, five consequences are possible as described below.

6.7.1 **Reduced collaboration to non-collaboration**

In a situation where one does not participate in other people's *nhimbe*, community members would tend to reduce their collaboration with that person (Thompson 2010: 189 and Mbenene, Mutami and Tavuyanago 2010: 5). If one continuously fails to participate, the community reduced collaboration can develop to a state of non-collaboration with that individual's household. Community members will not respond to requests for help from the individual who has developed a pattern of not participating in other people's *nhimbe*. In other words, reciprocal relationship is a vital *nhimbe* practice obligation (Leedy 2010, Kapasula 2010, Madziva 2011 and Manona 2005) and community-based development in general (Cornwall 2008, Putnam 1993, Realo and Allik 2008). Four informants vividly expressed this phenonomenon.

> ...when you invite people to your ilima and you have not attended theirs for about three times, some would be hesitant to attend or even not to attend at all (PK10).

> ...if a member of the community continuously fails to participate in nhimbe, this causes community reluctance to participate in his or her nhimbe in the future (PK12).

> ...of course if you don't participate in other people's nhimbe, you risk not getting help from you neighbours when you desperately need it (PK06).

> ...collaborating with others in the community is a mutual act which surpasses one's socio-economic status. For those who might be well off in the community there are times you need help from the poor for your development initiatives (PK01).

If one does not participate in nhimbe, this is viewed to mean that one does not belong to that community.

> ...[not participating in others nhimbe] means you are refusing to belong to the community; if you don't go to their nhimbe they will reciprocate in a negative way; meaning they will not respond to your call for assistance (PK04).

> ...not taking part in nhimbe, one would be labeled a 'witch' because it is generally understood in Zimbabwe that 'when a neighbour's hut is on fire, the neighbour extinguishes it. These show the importance of coming together and helping one another like a bundle of wood. This is why J. Mbiti says 'you are because we are.' If you don't help others, you are kicking yourself outside the society. That's why I see it as a social security [insurance] network in the community meaning that it is a community social support system (PK06).

> If you don't participate in other people's nhimbe, this attracts a social sanction on you; people would not come to your nhimbe. Some people would choose not to participate in yours because you are not honouring [community] implicit rules of trust and reciprocity (PK08).

It is clear from these findings that lack of collaboration in the community is a high social risk which could result in reduced cooperation in development initiatives among community members. The findings also suggest that collaboration is a common norm in the communities studied and its withdrawal is an indication of social and economic sanction. Despite potentially extreme sanction (being labeled a witch as put forward by PK06 above), people widely appear to acknowledge and indeed celebrate their obligation to participate in *nhimbe*.

6.7.2 **Loss of social security**

It should be emphasised that not to participate in *nhimbe* is often viewed as a very serious social offence in the community. For instance, some people may not attend a funeral that would have happened in a family of an individual who usually does not participate in other people's nhimbe (PK04, PK06, PK08 and PK12). If they attend, they would not offer much help except just an exchange of a few words of condolences and leave immediately. At funerals in most communities in Zimbabwe including the ones studied, the bereaving family normally relies on community members for provision and cooking of food as well as serving it to the mourners. In addition, community members often sing at funeral to comfort the family and relativels. The excerpts below emphasise the point that, if one does not participate in other people's *nhimbes*, it is highly likely that some could reciprocate negatively including not attending a funeral.

...not only that, when it comes to funerals, a person who is not cooperating, does not cooperate with others in the community, people may not attend to a funeral that would have happened at his/her family. If they come, they would just come and say sorry [exchange condolences] and leave immediately (PK02).

But if a person did not come to your nhimbe for no apparent reason and you thought it was bad, well, you may not go to his when he calls for it. It is like a funeral, if people have noted that you have not attended funerals in the community for a number of times, some may not come to a funeral when your relative has died (PK03).

...if you don't go to their ilima, they will reciprocate in a negative way, meaning they will not respond to your call for assistance. It is like a funeral, if people have observed that you normally do not attend funerals in the community or if you do but you often don't eat, when death occurs in your household, they will come but when food is served they would probably not eat as a form of [social] punishment (PK04).

Evident in the above quotations is that failure to participate in *nhimbe* leads to serious social cost for the individual. For one to secure his or her social security in the community, the person should genuinely participate with others in socio-economic and spiritual activities in the community like nhimbe. The phenomenon is succinctly stated below.

...If you are a normal human being, you would not want to be left out of socio-economic and spiritual activities that take place in your own community (PK04).

...I see nhimbe as a social security [insurance] network in the community; which means that it is a community social support system (PK06).

It follows that if one does not participate in *nhimbe*, this directly erodes his or her social and spiritual insurance in the community. Participation is also viewed as an indicator that one possesses *unhu*, which means that the person respects and values others in the different faucets of development in the community. In other words, *unhu* is a confirmation and evidence that one upholds the community

socio-moral compass which is an 'investment' everyone should make to gain and sustain social insurance or social security in the community.

6.7.3 **Social misfit**

If it is observed that one has constantly been not participating in other community members' *nhimbe*, that person is generally labeled as a social misfit in the community. Such a person's behaviour breaks the community social fibre which results in erosion of community cohesion (Leedy 2010). PK06 vividly describes that "not taking part in *nhimbe* one would be labeled a 'witch' because it is generally understood in Zimbabwe that when a neighbour's hut is on fire, the neighbours extinguish it" (PK06). PK06 continues that "this is why J. Mbiti says 'you are because we are'. If you don't participate in other people's *nhimbe*, you are merely kicking yourself outside the society" (PK06). Expressed slightly different, PK04 says "not participating, you are refusing to belong."

The social reality in the community is that one's neighbours are regarded as relatives. In view of this, it is expected that one should not disappoint his or her 'next of kin' [neigbours]. "By not participating, you are making yourself an odd figure in the community. In fact, you don't fit in the community norms" (PK09). In this statement, PK09 concurs with PK06 who says not participating is equivalent to 'kicking oneself from the society' and PK04 who points out that 'by not participating, you are refusing to belong.' The views expressed imply social isolation and the consequences are dire.

> ...that is, if you are left out or isolated in the community, all things in your life will not go on well because very few people would come to your assistance (PK10).

> If a household is not associating with others, there are a lot of things that happen in the community to which they may not be included or involved because of their non-cooperating behaviour (PK12).

The foregoing quotations suggest that *nhimbe* provides a platform for people to extend and sustain relations in the community (Mbenene, Mutami and Tavuyanago 2010: 5). Then it can be deduced that one's failure to participate in *nhimbe* is likely to reduce that individual's social networks in the community.

6.7.4 **Waste of resources**

When a person has persistently not participated in other people's *nhimbe*, it causes some community members to 'endorse' a social sanction against that individual. If it happens that he/she organises a *nhimbe*, the individual would, as usual, prepare food and beverages for the anticipated number of nhimbe participants. On the *nhimbe* day, it is highly likely that the turnout would be below the expected number which would result in wasted food and beverages. In this regard, the consequence is a loss of resources.

> ...if you have invited twenty people and just five people turn up, obviously this is a loss of food and beverages that you would have prepared in anticipation of twenty participants (PK10).

Therefore, the person suffers on two dimensions namely that the planned task is not done and food resources are wasted due to low or no attendance. It should be noted that this situation was reportedly rare because it is highly possible that some people would have warned the person of the imminent sanction before that individual makes all the necessary *nhimbe* preparations.

6.7.5 **Diminishing social return on development**

As already noted in chapters one and two as well as sections 6.6 and 6.7 of this chapter, social capital is an anchor of the *nhimbe* practice. Social capital is a collective term which includes the way people relate to one another including the inter-personal trust, reciprocity and solidarity (Putnam 1993, Oyugi 1998 and Realo and Allick 2008). Against this backdrop, if one does not cooperate or collaborate with others in the *nhimbe* practice as discussed in section (a) above,

this obviously leads to a diminished social return of inter-personal trust and reciprocity, which, the individual or household would ordinarily benefit from community members. Thus, if a household does not participate with others in *nhimbe*, it attracts minimal support or social return from others in the community on its development initiatives. The study has shown that without extra labour power from community members, a household is less likely to achieve its development objectives particularly the agricultural production. That is, the study has revealed that if a household experiences a reducing interpersonal trust, reciprocity and solidarity, such a situation is more likely to diminish the level of assistance (social return) it would get from community members on development initiatives. PK12 succintly expressed this notion.

> The consequence will really show [be visible] at the end of the farming season by low yield. If you look at this humwe [nhimbe], it is usually organised during weeding and harvesting times. If the weeding is not done in good time, the crop yield is reduced. If the harvesting is not done in good time, it affects negatively the harvest output. I would encourage that if you are member of a community, work with others and you will reap positive results in your household development initiatives (PK12).

From the above excerpt, one can infer that failure to participate in nhimbe without convincing reasons can potentially result in loss of social capital, a state which leads to diminished household development. Oyugi (1998: 52) posits that social capital is crucial for sustainable community development. As this study has shown, community development is highly connected to how people relate to one another. As discussed above, a household that ignores *nhimbe* is likely to experience diminished return on development because of reduced assistance it would get from community members.

It is obvious from the findings that in addition to lowering the aggregate cost of labour, *nhimbe* is a way to reduce two related transaction costs. The first one is that rather than rely on formal contracts, employing additional labour as required;

the community provides voluntary labour and expertise for each other. The second one is that *nhimbe* is a way to reduce search and information costs through the pooling and sharing of local knowledge and allied knowledge systems. The community does so in good faith such that there is no formal mechanism to enforce participation. However, it should be noted that *nhimbe* tends to lock people into highly personal relationships that, from North's (1989) perspective, would make it impossible to fully develop the type of impersonal markets under capitalism development framework. It is clear from the findings presented so far that *nhimbe* works well in a society characterised by strong bonds of affection and bottom-up development discourse. One added advantage of the social networks evident in the *nhimbe* practice is the reduced transaction costs. The study reveals that out of the three communities studied; only Gambiza had relatively weak bonds of affection. Two crucial explanations are that the community is less homogenous and closer to an urban area (City of Gweru) as compared with the other two communities. It is apparent to infer that *nhimbe* would work less effective in an affective-neutral society or development under capitalism. This aspect is elaborated in section 6.10 later in this chapter.

There is also another aspect that work at the household rather than at collective level is unable to exploit the economies of scale, an economic concept widely researched (Arnold 2004 and Friedman 1994). In *nhimbe*, economies of scale resonate in that limited time spent to accomplish a task which would normally take a household longer than a day to complete. Once the task is completed, the household time is freed to focus on other development tasks.

In summary, it is clear from the five consequences discussed in this section that trust and reciprocal relationship are variables of social capital and *nhimbe* practice pivots around it. Furthermore, *nhimbe* is a social insurance for individuals and households in communities. The social insurance is an extension of extended family support system. If one upholds the reciprocal relationship in

the community then that person is regarded as a human being, that is, the person has *unhu* (PK06). It is apparent that if one normally does not participate in other people's *nhimbe*, traditional community leaders (village heads) and community elders would approach that person and advise for change of behaviour. Failure to participate in *nhimbe* results in high social cost for individuals and households in the community. On the whole, there are two distinct but related viewpoints that emerge from the findings on consequences. Firstly, knowledge about the likely social sanctions in the community contributes to the extent of 'covert encouragement' to participate. Secondly, the way in which *nhimbe* is practised is in itself an integral part of the socialisation process within these communities. *Nhimbe* is designed to produce and maintain certain types of social relationships in the communities thereby facilitating development.

6.8. **Processes an individual can use to re-engage with others in nhimbe**

The consequences discussed in the preceding section indicate that the individual would be socially, spiritually, emotionally and economically isolated in the community. The isolation reality is a push factor for some people to seek ways to reform and the community has a management system for re-engagement processes.

It has been revealed in this study that not participating in other people's *nhimbe* signifies lack of *unhu* (lack of attributes of a normal human being). The mere understanding that non-participation in nhimbe constitutes deficiency in one's *unhu,* is often a social incentive for one to reform.

6.8.1 **Reformation**

The strategic action for one to reform is that the individual should resume participation in the *nhimbes* organised in the community.

> You reform by participating in other people's nhimbe. In other words the only way you can get help from others for your own development is by helping them too (PK01).

> The reintegration process normally starts by the person committing oneself to work with others again (PK08).

> You might be sorry for yourself what you have done [not participating in other people's nhimbe] noting the help you have received from others in the past; you simply re-engage by working with others once again (PK11).

> If a person decides to reform, I don't think there is anything wrong with that; the community would accept that person. The community would be open to the person that this is what we do, this is what is expected. Like I said earlier, in a community there are sort of by-laws that everyone is expected to follow and the key one is to work with others. So you have to abide by these by-laws. If the person prepared to come and work with others, which means the person is reforming and the community would accept him or her and work with him or her. So the starting point is for that person to start participating in other people's humwe several times before they could come to his or her humwe (PK12).

Informant PK08 refers this behaviour change as 'reintegration' which denotes assimilation into the common community good, not living an individualistic and isolated life. The findings reveal that there are two other ways through which the person can reform: (i) the individual can approach the village head, apologises and seeks forgiveness. At the next *nhimbe* the village head would announce that the person has reformed and this process forms a public forgiveness from the community through the traditional leader.

> Because the person knows that engaging in further undesirable behaviour means facing disciplinary action from the village head and also people will not cooperate when he needs their help, naturally the person [household] start attending nhimbe (PK05)

> You follow the advice given by the traditional community leaders [chiefs, headmen and village heads] to you to change your behaviour to cooperate with others in the community on development issues. Failing to take

advice and reform means that you are choosing not belong to that community (PK07).

and (ii) community elders can approach the person and advise the individual for behaviour change.

> As long as you think you would never need assistance from members of the community, then you go on with your anti-social behaviour; because it [not participating in other people's nhimbe] is very anti-social (PK04).
>
> ..failing to take advice [from community elders] and reform; means that one is choosing not to belong to the community (PK07).
>
> Normally you go to the person you feel can understand you and have influence in the village to convince the community to forgive you (PK10).

Figure 6.1 below is a sketch to show how one's participation influences the reservoirs of trust and reciprocity in the community.

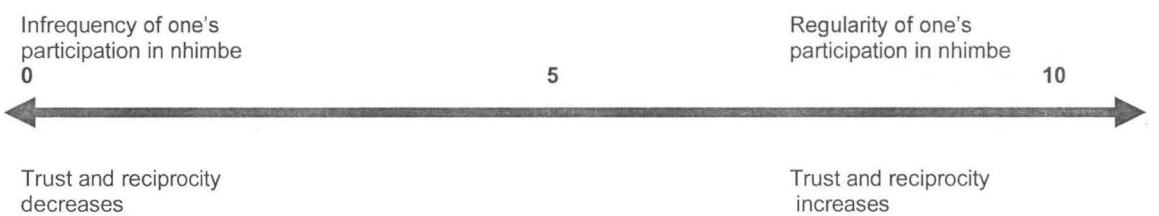


Figure 6.1: : Influence of an individual's participation on trust and reciprocity

As shown above, when one's participation increases, this tends to boost community trust, reciprocal relationship and ultimately social capital of that individual or household. By re-engaging with others, one demonstrates being genuinely part of the society. A continued reluctance to participate is a huge social cost on reciprocity and trust. If a person has shown remorse, normally the community accepts that individual and resumes working together on development initiatives.

6.9. **Social and economic benefits of nhimbe**

The questions used to explore the benefits and strengths of *nhimbe* were: (a) *What are the benefits, if any, of nhimbe to the community?; and (b) What are the strengths or the good things about nhimbe*? As the interviews progressed it became increasingly apparent that the respondents could not differentiate between how *nhimbe* benefits communities and what is good about it. The responses obtained from the twelve informants on the two questions were quite similar as tabulated in Appendix 1.

From the data shown in Appendix 1, it can be concluded that both benefits and strengths relate to what is good about *nhimbe*. In other words, from the viewpoint of the informants, benefits and strengths both point to the 'goodness' of nhimbe.

> It provides socio-economic support system in the community. Nhimbe maintains community cohesion and solidarity (PK06).

Furthermore, these findings show that there are three key goodness aspects of *nhimbe* in the community namely social, economic and capacity development.

6.9.1 **Social benefits**

Five elements of social goodness of nhimbe exist. Firstly, *nhimbe* brings a sense of belonging in the community as it breeds love, togetherness and cooperation (Anderson 2002, Madziva 2011 and Munyuki-Hungwe 2011). Secondly, *nhimbe* enables people to uphold community culture and ethos through practical expression of love, trust, respect and reciprocal relationship. Thirdly, the practice enhances community cohesion and solidarity as people help each other through working together on short-term and long-term development initiatives. Fourthly, *nhimbe* provides a platform to discuss a diversity of social issues and challenges including peace and relationship

building. Lastly, it facilitates social interaction, entertainment and networks among community members.

These elements re-affirm that *nhimbe* is a social support system in the community. Three dimensions support this proposition namely that *nhimbe* encourages community cohesion, provides a platform for people to share their social issues and in the process it facilitates conflict resolution and management.

6.9.2 **Economic benefits**

From the economic perspective, *nhimbe* encourages hard working at individual and household level. It also enables households to achieve high crop yield in the case of agricultural activities. On another dimension, when people pool their knowledge and skills on a particular project, there is high likelihood that it would succeed and be profitable.

> If people in a community work together on an income generating project, they contribute knowledge and skills and share economic profit (PK02).
>
> I have used it this season [2012-2013 farmingseason] at my farm for weeding. A lot of production could have been lost if I had not organised *ilima* because a few days after the weeding there was heavy rains which could have reduced my yield due to the weeds. Farming is seasonal and so you need to do everything in time (PK04).

In such a situation, it is expected that members of the project will share the profits thereby improving their livelihoods. *Nhimbe* is also seen as a cost-effective strategy since people get labour and expertise without economic expenses incurred. It is also an efficient community-based development strategy in that time spent to complete a task is significantly reduced.

6.9.3 **Capacity development**

Through *nhimbe*, people learn from each other on a multiplicity of knowledge and skills for development. At *nhimbe* people develop management and leadership skills as they play specific roles. For instance, communication skills including invitations of community members, allocation of duties, supervision of work, conflict management and planning of food for nhimbe participants.

> At *ilima* [nhimbe], talents are identified and encouraged for use for the good of the community. For example, those who are good in singing would sing and this would often motivate people to work hard [boost morale]. Another key benefit is that organisational and leadership skills are developed; so *ilima* is a leadership development platform as people play different roles to ensure that work is done; i.e. forming work teams while others take on quality and supervisory roles (PK07).

> Those who have knowledge and expertise in various aspects of life impart that to others during nhimbe. On another angle, people who want to learn from those talented in certain vocations do learn. In other words, I see nhimbe as a practice that provides opportunities for community members to learn from each other on a diversity of things for personal and community development (PK02).

The above excerpts show that *nhimbe* also provides a platform for learning, talent identification and promotion among community members. Following earlier discussion of a similar aspect in section 6.2.4, the capacity development finding is further confirmation that *nhimbe* is indeed a community 'academy'. For instance, some people exhibit their talents in singing, dancing, comedy, counseling, conflict management and knowledge of herbs for treating various ailments. Capacity development described here suggests that *nhimbe* is a form of community apprenticeship or vocational training done through informal education. In addition, the quotation states that *nhimbe* is also a platform for community members to cultivate and strengthen evaluation culture for development results. Evaluation culture is a subject Khosa (1994) widely researched in view of how it fosters organisational performance. The benefits and strengths informants expressed imply that *nhimbe* also acts as a career

guidance platform to some people. It is evident that *nhimbe* plays a significant role in skills transfer for development among community members.

6.10. **Regularity of nhimbe in the communities**

The informants were asked to estimate how regular *nhimbe* is practised in the three communities explored. It should be noted that the informants' responses were based on the assumption that on average there were ten *nhimbes* organised in a village per week during farming season in the 1980s when Zimbabwe got independence (April 1980). The post-colonial period especially from 1980 to about 1990, the Zimbabwe government intetionally promoted and encouraged people in rural communities to form cooperatives (*mishandirapamwe*) as strategies for community-based development (Chikuhwa 2004, Mararike 1999, Munyuki-Hungwe 2011 and Mtetwa 1992). This idealogy, though state driven, was easily accepted in the communities primarily because community members had already been historically or traditionally practising *nhimbe* whose conceptual and practice underpinnings are similar to a cooperative. PK11 alludes to this notion when she says that *nhimbe* is "...the word nhimbe means almost the same as mushandirapamwe [cooperative] or working together in the community."

The author developed this assumption about the regularity of nhimbe practice from both the Zimbabwe post-colonial development discourse and the oral tradition findings presented in chapter two of this thesis. In other words, the question sought informants to compare regularity or frequency of *nhimbe* within a week in the periods 1980s and in the 2000s. Tabulated below are the responses obtained.

Professional Key Informants	Estimated average % of nhimbe regularity between 1980 and 2010	Communities studied		
		Gambiza	Musikavanhu	Tsholotsho
PK01	60		√	
PK02	80		√	
PK03	65		√	
PK04	80			√
PK05	50	√		
PK06	50	√		
PK07	70			√
PK08	70			√
PK09	70			√
PK10	40	√		
PK11	50	√		
PK12	70		√	
Average regularity percentage of nhimbe practice	**63%**	**48%**	**70%**	**73%**

Table 6.7: Estimated nhimbe regularity in the communities studied

Based on the expressed estimations above, it can be concluded that the average frequency percentage of *nhimbe* practice in the three communities studied at the time the informants were interviewed (2012) is 63%. This implies an estimated average infrequency of about 37% since the 1980s across the three communities. When disaggregated by the communities, the perceived infrequency is notably high in Gambiza (52%) and relatively low in Musikavanhu (30%) and Tsholotsho (27%). During the two weeks of fieldwork in each community, the researcher observed or heard five *nhimbes* which took place in Musikavanhu, three in Gambiza and seven in Tsholotsho. The significance of these findings is twofold: (i) that the practice still plays an integral part of community life in all the three communities; and (ii) that the frequency of *nhimbe* practice in the communities is reducing mostly in Gambiza.

6.11. **Factors associated with infrequency of nhimbe in the communities**

The informants were asked to express their views about factors that are most likely to contribute to *nhimbe* infrequency in the communities investigated. This was in relation to the discussion presented in 6.9 above whereby respondents quantitatively estimated the requlrity of nhimbe in the three communities examined. The key question was; *What factors, if any, could potentially contribute topotential infrequency of nhimbe in a community*? Five main reasons emerged as explanations for what could cause infrequency of the practice in the communities studied. These are: (a) disintegration of extended family support system, (b) capitalism or market economies, (c) modernisation, (d) urbanisation, (e) jealousy and (f) (re)settlement. Below is a detailed discussion of these factors.

6.11.1 **Disintegration of extended family support system**

The spirit of *nhimbe* is likened to that of extended family support system as already pointed out in sections 6.2.3 and 6.7.5 that the practice is a higher level of extended family support. Within the family support system practice, it is a fact that the people involved are related. Similarly, *nhimbe* participants are related in that they come from the same village and mostly have kinship ties. Cited in Anderson (2002: 119), Holleman (1958) explains concisely the foundation of a Zimbabwean community; "...and the basis of a community [village], which is a tribe. And the unit of the tribe is the kinship." From Holleman's postulation, the important point is that kinship depends on an extended family and close personal ties, which for one or another reason seems to be declining in the communities studied especially in Gambiza. One explanation for the relative decline of personal ties in Gambiza is, in part, its less homogenous nature than the other two communities. DFID (1999: 9) concurs and adds that trust is likely to develop between people who are connected through kinship. This suggests that there is a direct relationship between extended family support system or kinship ties and the *nhimbe* practice. The study found that the frequency of *nhimbe* is gradually

decreasing across the communities studied particularly in Gambiza and this is partly explained by heterogeneity and weak bonds of affection in the community.

If one does not believe and uphold extended family values, it is less likely for that individual to practise nhimbe in the community (PK04, PK06, PK09, PK11 and PK12). Literature reveals that rural households are more likely than urban households to uphold extended family values and to care for family members and the vulnerable in society (ZDHS 2010-2011: 18-19). The disintegration of extended family support system has also resulted in the decline of family social meetings. PK06 terms these meetings as 'family board meetings' because of the importance of the socialisation that takes place and the decisions made in the process. As tabulated below, the values that underline the extended family support and *nhimbe* are quite similar as expressed by six (6) of the twelve professional key informants (PK01, PK02, PK04, PK06, PK08 and PK12). The tick (√) means that the value applies to the aspect indicated.

Values	Applicable to extended family support system	Applicable to nhimbe practice
Love	√	√
Helping others voluntarily	√	√
Reciprocity	√	√
Mutual trust	√	√
Good interpersonal relationship	√	√
Respect	√	√

Table 6.8: Comparison of extended family system and nhimbe practice

The findings above imply that there is a direct association between extended family support practice and *nhimbe* practice.

> ...you see, there are number of things, we are known as people's people, that is, we normally work together as communities; I would like to call it development. There is a disintegration of extended family system now. When you are in a village, you are related to everybody else. You even call each other by certain relational names like *mainini* (aunt), *babamunini*

(uncle), *sekuru* (grandfather), *mbuya* (grandmother), *mukoma* (brother), *taita* (sister) and so on; so you are related to everybody. The extended family system is the context under which nhimbe is practised (PK01).

As has been highlighted in the quotation above and the preceding discussion, an individual who has extended family support values is more likely to practise nhimbe regularly or uphold its principles than one without. That is, the level of one's belief and normative practice of extended family value system is directly related to the importance he or she places on *nhimbe* as a strategy for community-based development. This relationship is schematically shown below.

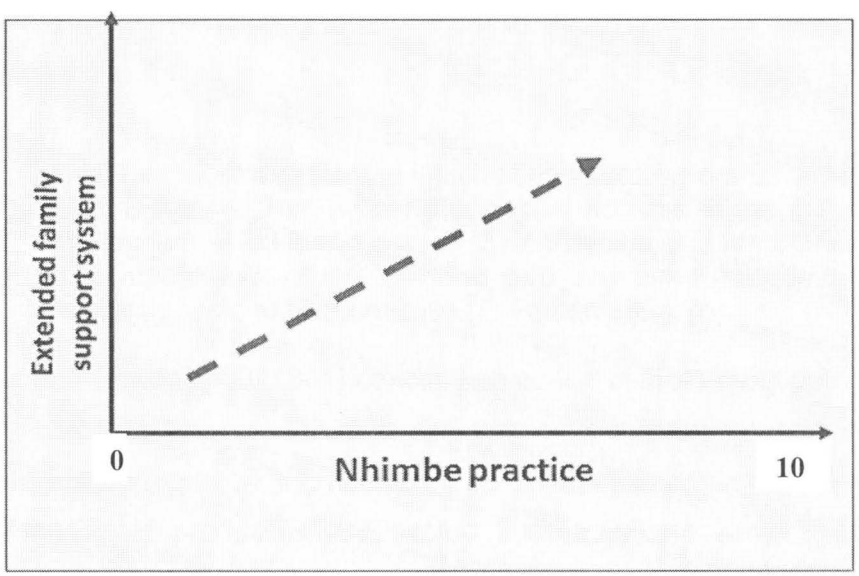


Figure 6.2: Relationship between extended family support and nhimbe practice

The caring spirit embedded in the extended family practice confirms the findings that it is easy for community members in rural areas to organise *nhimbe* and work together (Andersson 2002; Madziva 2011 and Munyuki-Hungwe 2011). This relationship is inversely proportional to development under capitalism or market economies as discussed below.

6.11.2 Nhimbe and the capitalistic economy in Zimbabwe

Scholarship on market economies concludes that capitalism emphasises individual success, competition, profit making, buying and selling of goods and services including commodities and expertise (Arnold 2004, North 1989, Oster 2012 and Schiller 2003). Rodney (1981) characterises capitalism as a "concentration in a few hands of ownership of the means of producing wealth and by unequal distribution of the products and human labour". North (1989) observes that capitalism increasingly involves impersonal bonds; it is regulated by contracts and markets and not by trust and kinship ties. Friedman (1994: 76) offers a robust description of capitalism by bringing out four explicit interrelated components:

> ...[an] economic system in which (1) private ownership of property exists; (2) the income from property or capital accrues to the individual or firms that accumulated it and own it; (3) individuals and firms are relatively free to compete with others for their own economic gain; and (4) the profit motive is basic to economic life (Friedman 1994:76).

Brux and Cowen (2002: 381) concur with earlier authors mentioned above when they conclude that capitalism is "an economic system wherein the economic decisions are made by [individuals in] the private sector via the market place and the means of production are owned by the private sector". The foregoing descriptions of capitalism create space in this study to infer that communities investigated seem to be facing challenges to balance the *nhimbe* practice within a capitalistic Zimbabwe economy. This is because impersonal relationships under capitalism tend to conflict with the need for personal relationships under collective action or bottom-up development framework in communities as manifested through *nhimbe*. The study has shown that the 'threat' of capitalism in the villages investigated is increasing. The challenge is for communities to integrate the capitalism elements into the already existing *nhimbe* practice without eroding the tenets of either *nhimbe* or capitalism. This presents an opportunity for further studies in this aspect, that is, the extent to which

communities could balance development under *nhimbe* and market economy. The following dichotomy of *nhimbe* practice and capitalism attempts to distill this integration challenge.

Nhimbe emphasises on...	**Capitalism emphases on...**
Group or community success	Individual success
Complementing one another	Competition
Helping one another without a demand for economic payment	Profit making
Sharing knowledge, skills and experiences for the common good with economic payment	Buying and selling goods and services including expertise for economic gain
Affective relationships	Affective-neutral relationships
Interdependence	Independence

Table: 6.9: Tenets of nhimbe and capitalism

The categorisation above presents a polarisation state between *nhimbe* practice and capitalism. This could explain some observed levels of divergent socio-economic ideologies in the communities studied. Consequently, the situation seems to have increased impersonal relationships among communities which potentially can reduce social capital. As noted earlier in section 6.7, reduced social capital or personal bonds imply decline of *nhimbe* practice in the community. The study found that the market economy had little impact to the practice of *nhimbe* in Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho than it is in Gambiza. This is due to the fact that Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho have strong bonds of affection and kinship ties, factors which are weak in Gambiza possibly because it is near a town (about 32km). Contrary, Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho are far from urban centres; that is, 123km and 247km respectively. It should be noted that market economies are impersonal while development under the *nhimbe* framework, as the study has illustrated, is personal.

6.11.3 **Modernisation**

The term modernisation is an economic concept which is rooted in capitalism (Chikowero 2008 and Mutunhu 2011). Economies worldwide including Zimbabwe are, for the most part, characterised by the use of money as a mode of exchange for goods and services. One informant retorts that "...monetisation [use of money] and commercialisation of expertise and natural resources in communities have resulted in the decline of *nhimbe* practice" (PK06). In his analysis of the relationship between money and social capital in community development, Oyugi (2004: 52) observes that the latter is often neglected and yet it is an important element especially in the African context. Thompson (2010: 189) in a related research in Madziva community (Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe) makes similar conclusion that the declining of *nhimbe* is tied to the spread of money and the desire to acquire it. In addition, modernisation has brought mechanisation with regards to how people now carry out various tasks in life (PK10). This denotes that "mechanisation has reduced the demand for *nhimbe* because of the less labour power required" (PK02).

As Chikowero (2008) and Mutunhu (2011) point out, modernisation is directly linked to capitalistic type of economy and the dichotomal analysis presented in section (b) above reveals an antithesis of *nhimbe* practice to modernisation. This hints that modernisation is associated with individualism and it further implies that households in a modern society would tend to receive little or no support from their relatives or community members. One of the informants in this study emotionally postulates that "...westernisation [modernisation] is disintegrating African thought which is group-based in community development" (PK4). Another informant notes that "...nhimbe is now less prevalent than in the past due to the fact that people are increasingly becoming individualistic and selfish" (PK08). In concurrence, "...there is a lot of individualism in today's Zimbabwe society; people want to work as individuals" (PK12). PK12's view is alongside Thompson (2010: 189) observation that "... they [communities] become more

concerned with income and financial returns than social prominence or acquiring influence on other members of the community through work parties [*nhimbe*] and generosity". From these sentiments, it is obvious to conclude that individualism and use of money which are both elements of modernisation are viewed to have a potential to reduce the practice of *nhimbe*. People in communities now use money to hire labour, pay for goods, services and expertise. The study found out that the more people are able to pay for goods and services thley need, the less likely they would uphold the principles of *nhimbe*. In fact, in such a situation, the magnitude and frequency of nhimbe practice goes down. The figure below is a depiction of this relationship, that is, between the *nhimbe* practice and modernisation.

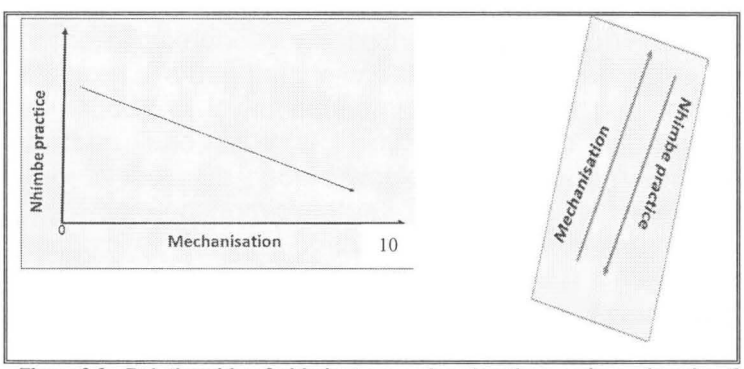


Figure6.3: Relationship of nhimbe to mechanisation and modernisation

As already pointed out earlier and noted by other authors, *nhimbe* practice goes beyond labour supply to social and spiritual benefits to the community (Leedy 2010, Gombe 1998 and Muchena 1977). In a related study which covered the period 1931 to 1965, Shutt (2002) discovered that it is possible for modern communities in Zimbabwe to maintain *nhimbe* practice despite their levels of mechanisation. He observes that "...as farmers purchased farm implements, *nhimbe* parties included the pooling of [modern] tools (Shutt 2002: 488). An ox-drawn plough was adopted in *nhimbe* for improved agricultural production in Eastern, Central and Southern Zimbabwe (Andersson 2002, Leedy 2010 and

Thompson 2010). This is quite a contradiction to the findings presented in Figure 6.3. However, what this illustrates is that mechanisation may not necessarily lead to *nhimbe* decline as multi-dimensional factors would need to be considered. So it might be an exaggeration to assert that modernisation and mechanisation can cause *nhimbe* infrequency since the data analysed for this study was not sufficient to make this kind of causal relationship conclusion.

However, one informant pointed out elaborately that differential acquisition of resources, which is a feature of modernisation, is a likely contributing factor to infrequency or weak *nhimbe* practice in the communities studied.

> With development, there is differential acquisition of resources. This difference has eroded family cohesion. If you were to go to a nhimbe at a home of somebody whose house is roofed with corrugated iron sheets, chances are that he/she will slaughter a goat for the nhimbe and you go to somebody of lower economic status, that person may not even have a chicken, and so it is likely that he/she will serve *sadza* and [basic] vegetables. So people would like to go to nhimbe at a household with high socio-economic status. This means the moment you have differential acquisition, the idea of sharing is eroded because one cannot share what they don't have. Relationships work better if there is a form of reciprocity; differential acquisition of resources erodes reciprocity (PK01).

Related to modernisation and mechanisation is the urbanisation dimension which has been on the upward trend worldwide (Rodney 1981: 134-144). Zimbabwe industrialisation and mechanisation development has been on the rise since the 1960s (Industrial Development Corporation Zimbabwe Limited 2012). This probably clarifies the reported correlation between *nhimbe* practice and the level of society's industrialisation and mechanisation. From another perspective, it would seem that *nhimbe* could be useful for farmers in the resettlement areas whereby helping one another is maintained even with mechanised farming implements. The discussion about the dynamics of *nhimbe* practice and resettlement is detailed in section 6.11.6 below. The study has revealed that the effect of modernisation is relatively higher in Gambiza than in Musikavanhu and

Tsholotsho owing to its nearness to an urban centre (Gweru). This could suggest that it is easier for Gambiza to adapt or adopt mechanisation in its development endevours than the Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho communities.

6.11.4 **Urbanisation**

As findings indicate, *nhimbe* is popular and practised in rural areas of the country. From about 1912 and most importantly after independence in 1980, there has been an exponential rate of rural-urban migration in Zimbabwe. This has led to reduced number of able-bodied members of the communities in rural areas who could continue with the *nhimbe* practice (Andersson 2002, Mutunhu 2011). Andersson (2002: 122) notes that from the 1950s, urban areas in Zimbabwe have been increasingly becoming destinations for rural populations who seek work and better conditions of life in towns. In 2002, 65% of the Zimbabwe population (about 13 000 000) lived in rural areas and this figure has gone down to 64% in 2012 (Central Statistical Office 2002 and Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency 2012). The elderly who are often left in the communities are, to a great extent, not able to organise *nhimbe* at the level and frequency it used to be prior to the 2000s. Figure 6.4 below shows the relationship between *nhimbe* practice and a community's proximity to urban areas.

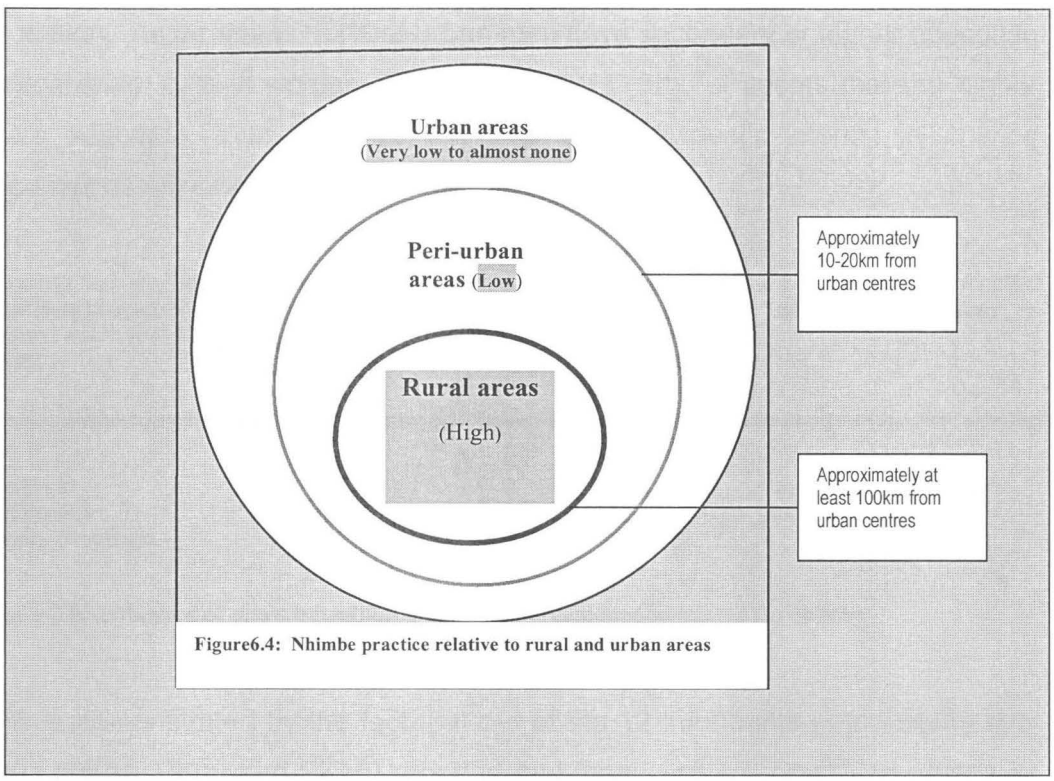


Figure6.4: Nhimbe practice relative to rural and urban areas

The diagramme above is a representation of the reality that *nhimbe* is predominantly a practice in rural areas. However, it should be noted that exploration to establish if *nhimbe* is practised or its concepts are adapted in urban settings was beyond the confines of this study. A study of whether or not concepts or variations of *nhimbe* are found in urban areas could be significant given that most of the people who reside in towns and cities, to a great extent, have rural backgrounds or relations (Andersson 2002, Bhila 1982, Shutt 2002 and Thompson 2010).

This study also found that education is an implicit 'fibre' that underpins the concepts of capitalism, modernisation and urbanisation. Of significance is how education relates to the *nhimbe* practice. Literature indicates that educational

attainment in Zimbabwe is higher among urban than rural populations. About 59% and 86% of rural and urban women respectively have secondary or higher education. As for males, 92% of urban men have secondary or higher education compared to 70% of women (ZDHS 2010-2011: 30). It seems that the higher one's education level becomes the less that individual's interest in *nhimbe* becomes as sketched in the figure below.

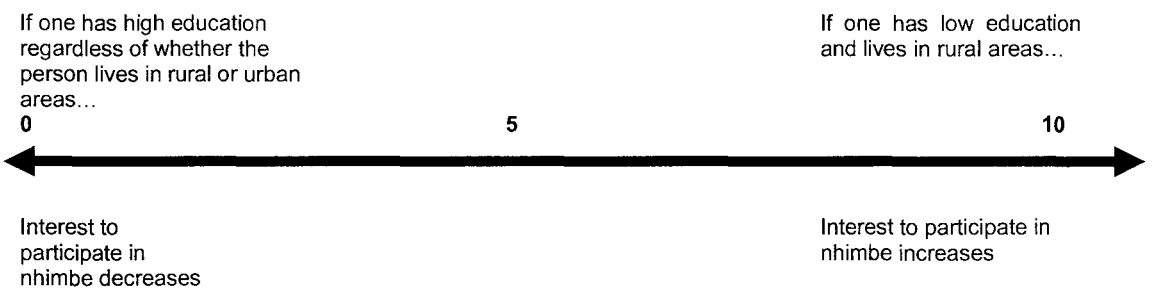


Figure 6.5: Influence of one's education and place of residence to interest in nhimbe

This is demonstrated by the fact that out of the 12 informants in this study only three (PK04, PK09 and PK10) reported that they were still practising *nhimbe* in their rural homes through practical participation and/or resource support. The question that emerges is; does *nhimbe* practice linked to one's level of education? It can be inferred from Andersson (2002) study that the young people that migrate to towns in search for work and better living conditions possess at least 11 years of education. Although findings point to existence of a relationship between level of education attainment and *nhimbe* practice, the research data was insufficient to satisfactorily resolve the correlation. In fact, this aspect requires further investigation as it was beyond the scale of the current study.

The statistics also reveal that most people who are educated are in urban areas (86% women and 92% men) through being already residents or they migrated from rural areas (ZDHS 2010-2011: 30, Zimbabwe Census 2002: 15 and

Zimbabwe Census 2012). The statistics could be an indication that perhaps nhimbe concepts might not be applicable in urban areas. This is empirical in this study where *nhimbe* is quite infrequent or weak in Gambiza than in the other communities due to the community's heterogonous nature, nearness to a city and adaptation to mechanisation in development.

6.11.5 **Jealousy**

It was mentioned that sometimes there are individuals who become jealous of others because of their achievements in life through the use of *nhimbe*. The informants revealed that jealousy can develop to a level where one decides to reduce participation and eventually stop to organise or participate in other people's *nhimbe*. One informant explains, "...some people might be jealous and at *nhimbe* they might not perform at the expected levels" (PK03). The jealous people were noted as those who normally do not participate in other people's *nhimbe* as discussed under the consequences section 6.6. Another group of people who become jealous are those who might not have good relations with others in the community. In other words, this group would normally choose not to participate at *nhimbe* organised by those they do not have good relations thereby contributing to the reduction in nhimbe frequency or magnitude.

> If someone realises that so and so will be there at *ilima*, and he or she is not in good terms with that person, then he or she will decide not to go (PK10).

It has been noted that jealousy in the community is regarded as a high social cost and can ruin one's reputation in the community (Madziva 2011: 234). Loss of reputation diminishes trust and reciprocity in the community. Consequently, a jealous spirit is more likely to result in reduced response from community members to one's *nhimbe*. .

6.11.6 **(Re)settlement**

From independence (1980) to date (2013), the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) has been resettling people throughout the country as a national strategy to alleviate congestion in some parts of the country and simultaneously re-distribute arable land to the citizens for farming (Chikuhwa 2004; Mtetwa 1992; Munyuki-Hungwe 2011; Rural Land Act: 2002, Chapter 20:18). In 2000, the Government complemented its earlier resettlement efforts by introducing Land Reform Programme (Chikuhwa 2004; Munyuki-Hungwe 2011). In the period 1980 to 1998 was the Phase I Resettlement Programme which is also known as a 'villagised resettlement scheme'. According to the resettlement policy, it is important to maintain social and cultural fabric of the people in their new communities (Goz Land Reform and Resettlement Programme 2001 and Munyuki-Hungwe 2011). In planning, "the government intended to ensure the maintenance of social and cultural fabric of settlers through settling households with common origin in the same village" (Munyuki-Hungwe 2011: 50).

However, it has been observed that GoZ has done little to maintain people's social and cultural fabric during the resettlement processes. Munyuki-Hungwe (2011: 45) expresses: "Government was [has been] criticised that it tended to focus on resettling numbers instead of people, families and communities as some settlers had [have] to server social and kinship ties in favour of movement to settlement areas". She points out that the reason for this observed distortion of the resettlement process is the introduction of the quota system which stipulates that at least 20 percent of all resettled people should be war veterans, civil servants and women from any part of the country (Munyuki-Hungwe 2011:50). Others have viewed the land resettlement programme as a politicised process and this has undoubtedly changed the social and cultural dimension of the programme (Pazvakavambwa and Hungwe 2009). Implied in the explanations given and observations made is that the resettled households do not have 'true' neighbours. This is against the fact that a bona fide African

community is identified by its geo-physical place and shared common perspectives including language and spiritualism (Asante 1998). Therefore, one can conclude that the resettlement process has made people in rural areas to become 'strangers' to one another in their new settled communities.

Up to this point, it is understood that some of the key fundamentals of *nhimbe* practice are that community members should know each other well, be a relating group, and uphold community values including mutual trust and reciprocal relationship. For the newly settled members of the community, it often takes time for these rudiments to become a way of life. On this aspect, one of the community members expresses that "...it becomes easier to practise *nhimbe* if one understands the culture of the new community." Another community member buttressed this notion and states that "it is easy to practise *nhimbe* in a new community if you have a relative who stays in that area already. He or she informs you about how things [culture and normative practices] are done in that area." Also, if the households are located far apart from each other, this tends to reduce interaction among the community members. As pointed out earlier, interaction is a key contextual factor that enables people to practise *nhimbe* in a community. "In the context of resettlement schemes, you find that many people are strangers and it is difficult to organise *nhimbe*. It is important that people take effort to know one another" (PK05). As already pointed out in 6.2.7 above as well as the discussion that will follow in 6.13.2 below, when people in a community do not know each other well this indeed becomes an unfavourable factor which leads to infrequency of *nhimbe* practice in the communities (PK04 and PK07).

The relationship between relocation (settlement or resettlement) of people and *nhimbe* practice is evident in the three communities studied. The *nhimbe* practice is equally high in Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho and relatively low in Gambiza. Ethnicity factor could be a plausible explanation for this reality. As the

study discovered, ethnic homogeneity is relatively high in Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho while relatively low in Gambiza. Gambiza is situated in the middle of the country and it was noted that the community is made up of various ethnic groups who include the *Karanga*, *Ndebele*, *Manyika*, *Korekore*, *Ndau* and *Zezuru* people who settled in the area from different parts of the country (Beach 1980: 279-307 and Pathisa 2005). This suggests that central to community life is kinship and homogeneity. When this kinship fulcrum is broken due to 'ethnic scattering' emanating from resettlement or young people migrating into urban areas, homogeneity in rural communities is eroded which, to some extent, leads to infrequent of *nhimbe* practice (Andersson 2002 and Shutt 2002). This is because common norms and social sanctions are disintegrated when members of the community do not share common values or normative practices. Norms form part of social constraints on people's behaviour in a community. Munyuki-Hungwe (2011) arrived at the same conclusion that if community members do not share a common origin, language and social norms, it is less likely for them to uphold collective action in community development. There is also a notion that people in Zimbabwe tend to pay social allegiance to people they know, respect and trust in the community which includes participation in *nhimbe* (Madziva 2011). Community homogeneity is normally bed-rocked on kinship ties and this study has shown that it includes other factors like shared values. This also means that people are more likely to interact more among themselves in ethnically or shared values driven homogenous community than it is in a heterogeneous setup. This interaction is associated with development transaction costs. North (1989: 1321) asserts that often transaction costs are very low in a community where there is a 'dense social network of interaction'. These views about kinship and homogeneity seem to explain why *nhimbe* practice is relatively low in Gambiza and high in Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho communities. The other revelation from the study is that few resettlements have occurred in Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho from 1980 to 2013 while Gambiza has experienced a reasonable level of inward migration during the same period

(Munyuki-Hungwe 2011). This implies that inward migration is probably higher in Gambiza than in the other two communities. It is clear that *nhimbe* can be strong or weak in one community and not in the other, for the most part, because of the factors conferred in this section.

6.12. **Weaknesses of nhimbe**

All the twelve (12) key informants vividly expressed that *nhimbe* has more strengths than weaknesses. "Nhimbe has more strengths than weaknesses, I mean weaknesses are far-fetched" (PK01). One informant claims that "*Ilima* [nhimbe] is more on the positive side than negative" (PK04). Furthermore, another informant declares that "...the way I see it, weaknesses are not so many and significant. "I can say 99% of it is the strength it [nhimbe] brings to the whole practice" (PK12). Analysis of these views revealed that the following is an associated negative aspect of the *nhimbe* practice although it was not widespread in the communities investigated. It should be noted that there is little evidence in the study to establish causal relationship between this factor and the practice of *nhimbe*.

6.12.1 Conflict with household plans

Some people view *nhimbe* as a practice that sometimes conflicts with their household plans. As informants pointed out that, increasingly, some community members have become less dependent on agriculture where nhimbe is extensively used. This is especially so if it is not announced in ample time for individuals to adjust their household programmes. However, situations where nhimbe would conflict with household plans were reportedly rare.

A close examination of the dimension that nhimbe sometimes conflicts with individual household plans shows that this is not necessarily an inherent *nhimbe* weakness but a reflection of poor organisational skills some *nhimbe* hosts might have in the community. On the whole, it is important to point out that this quasi-

weakness is not widespread in the three communities studied. In fact, nine of the twelve informants did not find any weakness in the nhimbe practice.

6.13. **Factors most likely to reduce individuals' motivation to participate**

The study was also interested to get views from respondents about what would typically cause one not to participate in someone's *nhimbe*. In other words, the question sought to find out factors that tend to reduce one's motivation to participate in *nhimbe*. Informants pointed out six(6) factors that could influence an individual not to participate in *nhimbe* and these are:(i) insufficient food provision, (ii) unfamiliarity, (ii) jealousy (real or imagined), (iv) bad relationship, (v) lack of reciprocity and (vi) religious or traditional beliefs.

6.13.1 **Nhimbe host is known for providing insufficient food**

As already discussed in 6.2.2 that *nhimbe* is a work party, it follows that participants expect to feast as part of the process. If a household has developed a habit of not providing sufficient food and beverages every time it organises *nhimbe*, this tends to de-motivate some people from participating.

> ...also different social economic status among the people in a community brings about one's choice of whether or not to participate. Here I mean that those who are well-off or generous tend to provide sufficient beverage and food including meat thereby attracting more people to participate in their nhimbe. Contrary, the less resourced attract less people to their nhimbe; although the philanthropic spirit of the community would normally override this (PK01).

> It is generally known in the community that certain households provide relatively more food and beer than others. In this scenario, this is where you would find that some people would tend to go more to the generous ones and less to those who are known to provide inadequate food and beverage (PK04).

One can infer from these two excerpts that food provision is a vital social element in the *nhimbe* practice (Thompson 2010: 183). Similarly, Leedy (2010: 487) observes that households without sufficient provisions for brewing beer and prepare food would often find it difficult to attract *nhimbe* participants with any regularity. As discussed earlier in section 6.1 (b), this study has brought a new dimension in understanding the work party notion of *nhimbe*, that is, if a host does not have food to feed the participants, it is possible for people to work and feast on a later date (*mundi*). This means that food is central to the *nhimbe* practice and this is consistent with Kapasula (2010: 290) who concludes that "after people have been working hard all day, everyone would gather and enjoy a feast of eating, dancing and laughter". It is obvious from the findings presented up to this point that nhimbe is both a right and an art; meaning that its success or failure is dependent on the extent to which one plans it including food provision.

6.13.2 **Community members not familiar with each other**

As was indicated in section 6.2 of this chapter that *nhimbe* is practised among a relating group. In other words, people who are already familiar with one another in the same village.

> ...you don't participate in a nhimbe organised by a person you don't know. In the context of resettlement, you find that many are strangers and it is difficult to organise nhimbe. It is important that people take efforts to know one another (PK05).

> ...it recognises power in numbers. So it is an arrangement practised by people who consider themselves as a relating group, people who are familiar with each other. *Ilima* is not a practice done by strangers but a cooperating group or community members where there is already a social cohesion, shared vision, shared historical experiences, and shared worldview (PK04)

The lack of familiarity among community members can significantly influence one not to participate in *nhimbe* as expressed above. This finding entails that if a

nhimbe host is not well known in the community, this situation is likely to attract few participants. Shutt (2002: 488) emphasises this point when he concludes that *nhimbe* includes only people in the same village which implies those who are not strangers to each other. This further suggests that these are people who have a strong bond of affection in the community. The study discovered three possibilities that lead one to be a 'stranger' in his/her own community as follows: (i) the person has just relocated into the community (inward migration); (ii) the person is not new in the community but seldom interacts with others; and (iii) the person rarely participates in other people's *nhimbe*. The study found that these three circumstances are not difficult for a person to manage towards increasing familiarity with others in the community.

6.13.3 **Bad relationship with other community members**

If the *nhimbe* organiser is not in good relations with others in the community, this is likely to repel participation.

> One would always want to be part of what others are doing in the community. Sometimes if people are not in good relationship, this might discourage one from participating (PK06).
>
> If one does relate well with others in the community. Another thing is that of witchcraft suspicion. This could be that people suspect the ilima organiser or person to be invited of witchcraft practice. Food poisoning could take place at an ilima...(PK09).
>
> If someone realises that so and so will be there at ilima, and he or she is not in good terms with that person, then he or she will decide not to go [to that particular nhimbe] (PK10).

The sentiments above indicate that bad relationships in the community increasingly erode one's level of 'social insurance' for community-based development. This is why Leedy (2010:486) reminds that to attract "necessary additional labour or inputs [including expertise]" in nhimbe practice largely

depends upon one's good relationships with individuals, households and traditional leaders in the community.

6.13.4 Failure to uphold reciprocity

When community members have observed that a particular household has not been positively reciprocating on *nhimbe* participation, this might result in low turnout when that individual hosts next time. Reciprocity is subject which has been well researched and remains a significant value for community-based development (Madziva 2011, Putnam 1993, Realo and Allik 2008) including the *nhimbe* arrangement.

> If some people in the community ignore reciprocity then this could lead to others choosing not to participate in the nhimbe of those who are known for not reciprocating the assistance they get from others in the community (PK08).
>
> If one did not participate at my nhimbe, I would feel like not participating in his or her nhimbe next time...(PK11).

In support of the centrality of reciprocity in the *nhimbe* practice, Thompson (2010: 189) affirms that where reciprocal work exists among the community members, participants are more likely to work hard. Shutt (2002: 488) uses the term 'contingent' to denote that reciprocal relationship is vital to the practice of *nhimbe* among community members while Mbenene and others (2010: 5) relate reciprocity to social insurance in the community. This is similar to social capital component in the DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Model (1999). However, the DFID model is deficient in that it does not discuss traditional community practices like *nhimbe* as social capital necessary for community-based development. In fact, it is apparent from the findings so far that *nhimbe* is an organised community social capital which is propelled by a culture of reciprocity, respect, trust and peace. It is obvious that reduced or absence of reciprocity in the community has a high propensity for reduced motivation among community membes to participate in *nhimbe*.

6.13.5 **Religious or traditional beliefs, doctrines and practices**

Different faiths and traditions have specific beliefs, doctrines and practices which are upheld by followers. Most communities in Zimbabwe have a diversity of religious faiths some of wich forbid people to work on specific days in a week. For example, the *Johane Marange* Apostolic Church does not allow its members to work on Saturdays; the *Johane Masowe WeChishanu* will not work on Fridays; whilst members of missionary churches like the Anglican, United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, United Methodist Church and the Roman Catholic Church do not work on Sundays. In the three communities studied, some of these churches have large membership. The Johane Marange Apostolic Church and the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe have huge membership in Musikavanhu. In Gambiza, it is Johane Marange Apostolic Church, Johane Masowe WeChishanu, United Methodist Church and Roman Catholic Church while United Methodist in Zimbabwe, Roman Catholic and Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) are major churches in Tsholotsho. One can see that in all the three communities, if one organises *nhimbe* on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, it is quite obvious that the attendance will be limited as most of the community members would be attending church services at their respective churches.

Likewise, a traditional practice called *chisi* is practised across all the communities studied. The practice also requires people to refrain from work on a specific day of the week. Leedy (2010: 488) explicitly describes *chisi*:

> ...a specified day each week when every household refrains from farm labour to honour the *mhondoro* [spirit medium] and its powers over agriculture [land and production].

It should be noted that the various religions and *chisi* coexist and the latter is observed by everyone in the community regardless of whether or not one belongs to a church (Mbigi 2005 and Sithole 2007). In the context of *nhimbe* practice, *chisi* forms part of the community spiritual beliefs. Against this

backdrop, it is possible that some people might not be able to participate in someone's *nhimbe* because it is done on a day when their faith or tradition does not allow them to work. In Gambiza, *chisi* is observed on Wednesday while Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho it is Friday. So this means that in organising *nhimbe* one has to know the sacred days that apply in his/her community.

6.14. Contribution of nhimbe to an individual's character formation and personal development

The study also sought to find out if participation in *nhimbe* has any influence in shaping one's character or development of personal values. Professional key informants were asked this question: *How did your participation/experience in nhimbe contribute to who you are today? In other words, how did itshape your character, personal values or career development?* Summarised below are response synthesis of how *nhimbe* influenced character formation and personal values of informants interviewed in this study. The tick (√) depicts that the character or value applies to the key informant indicated while 'x' denotes it does not apply.

Informants	Character and values											
	Respect	Reciprocity	Love	Trust	Passion to work in communities	Learning, sharing knowledge and skills	Working well with others	Cooperative and	Helping	Sense of gratification	Spirit of	Peace building (cohesion and harmony)
PK01	√	x	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	x
PK02	√	x	x	x	√	x	√	√	√	√	√	x
PK03	x	x	√	√	x	x	X	√	x	x	x	√
PK04	√	x	x	x	√	x	√	√	x	√	x	√
PK05	x	x	x	√	√	x	√	√	√	x	x	√
PK06	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	x
PK07	x	√	x	x	√	√	√	√	x	x	x	√
PK08	x	√	x	√	x	√	√	√	x	x	x	x
PK09	x	x	x	x	x	√	√	√	x	x	x	x
PK10	x	x	x	√	x	√	√	√	x	x	x	x
PK11	x	x	x	x	x	√	√	√	x	x	x	x
PK12	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 6.10: Contribution of nhimbe to character formation and personal values

The twelve (12) characters and values show above indicate two main patterns: (a) the extent to which each character/value influenced the key informants in developing their characters and personal values and (b) who among the key informants were influenced the most by the characters/values identified. The 'cooperative and synergetic' character influenced all the twelve (12) key informants while 'working well with others' contributed to value development of eleven (11) informants. 'Learning (sharing knowledge and skills)' was reflected by seven (7) informants. Five key informants were each influenced by *nhimbe* to develop values of 'passion to work in communities' as well as 'trust', 'respect' and 'peace building'.

Of the twelve (12) informants, PK12 and PK09 were influenced the most as shown by ten (10) and nine (9) values they developed as a result of their nhimbe experiences respectively. In addition, it is seen that seven different values influenced PK01 and PK02. It is also clear from these findings that two values which are 'working well with others' and 'cooperative and synergetic' influenced character building of all the twelve key informants. Furthermore, 'learning (sharing knowledge and skills)' and 'working well with others' and 'cooperative and synergetic' influenced seven key informants who are PK06, PK07, PK08,PK09,PK10,PK11 and PK12. It seems that *nhimbe* had significant impact in the lives of the informants as expressed below.

> ..nhimbe imparted in me some moral values like respect, love and passion to work in communities. It inculcated a spirit of community responsibility (PK01).
>
> It [nhimbe] molds you to be able to work with others well in the community or society. A sense that in life, I need to help others wherever and in whatever way I can. It also instills a spirit of giving in a person. A person tends to become extravert in character because of his/her participation in nhimbe (PK02).

> My experience in ilima shaped me to be able to adapt to any group in life. Developed a sense of gratification, a sense of belonging, a sense of identity, value to help one another and passionate for peace building; that is avoidance of conflicts in life (PK04).
>
> Nhimbe is a social, economic and political rallying point for communities in development. It is a practice that encompasses values, ideals and social institutions for a people in a given community (PK06).

Another informant reinforced the above at a rather lengthy exposition.

> ...yes I see that humwe shaped me into giving. I am someone who really gives, if I have. I think I got that from my humwe experience. My parents would urge us to prepare plenty of food to feed the humwe participants whenever we organised humwe at our household. I am also someone who loves people. I like being with people. I think that helped me because each time people go for humwe I would really want to go too in order to be with others. It also made me to be an inquisitive person; I always wanted to know what was being discussed during humwe. So I would ask my parents, 'what was so and so saying at that humwe we have just participated in? So really, humwe taught me to be with people, to love working in groups, to love conversations and freely interact with people (PK12).

The foregoing quotations clearly indicate how informants' experiences in *nhimbe* defined their personal lives. Based on this author's interaction with some of the informants even before this study, the personal values they articulated confirm who they really are in life. For instance, *nhimbe* contributed to PK01, PK08 and PK12 to develop their careers in community development related work while PK04 and PK06 are sociologists. Additionally, PK02, PK05 and PK07 chose their careers in agriculture related fields as a result of their experiences in *nhimbe*. This links with the findings discussed earlier in this chapter about community apprenticeship and talent identification. Prior to the study, this author never thought that *nhimbe* played such a considerable role in shaping their characters and influence their lives in the way they shared. Admittedly, it should be noted that no single source can wholly influence development of one's personal values and this study has demonstrated that *nhimbe* is indeed a very important component to this aspect but it is not the only factor for character

formation and personal value development. Furthermore, the study has shown how significant this subjective aspect is in personal development. Other studies (Leedy 2010, Madziva 2011 and Thompson 2010) and the researcher's view before doing the study, focused narrowly on the objective aspects of *nhimbe* like labour provision. Soyinka's (1976:77) observation that the community contributes immensely to character and personality formation of an individual is close to what this study has revealed on this notion. Mirriani (1999:1) and Engstrom (1976: 133-135) concur with Soyinka and point out that there are multiple sources that inculcate values in a person including parents, extended family, peers and the community. This study has illustrated that *nhimbe* is certainly a community platform in which values are developed, nurtured and strengthened. Therefore, it can be concluded that *nhimbe* plays a pivotal role in personal character formation and aslo contributes significantly to career choices as evident in the informants' responses in Table 6.8 above.

6.15. **Chapter summary**

In summary, the findings from informants revealed the description of *nhimbe* in the following manner: (a) the purpose and how it is organised, (b) who participates in it, (c) the underpinnings for its practice, (d) its strengths, (e) its weaknesses and (f) how often communities practise *nhimbe* by the time of this study. The findings have shown that *nhimbe* is mainly practised in rural areas. It was also noted that there could be a scope for it or its concepts to be adapted in urban communities depending on nature of urban migration, type of task, labour and expertise required for which it might be applied. The findings have indicated that there is a strong relationship between *nhimbe* practice and how people uphold community values (help, trust, respect, reciprocity and peace). The study findings suggest that *nhimbe* is indeed a rural community development strategy in the communities studied.

The study results from the informants have clearly demonstrated that *nhimbe* works better when the following factors exist, that is, trust, reciprocity, solidarity, homogeneity, bonds of affection, kinship ties and when a community is located further away from an urban centre. It has been noted that a single factor is not sufficient to make *nhimbe* work better in a given community but a combination. Furthermore, the findings have also shown that these facilitating factors do not necessarily work well in development arrangement under capitalism or market economy. However, absence of one factor causes a significant adverse effect to the practice of *nhimbe* in the community. In fact, when these factors are weak or absent, obviously *nhimbe* does not work well in a community leading to perhaps its collapse. The findings have shown that the factors exist, to a great extent, in Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho but limited in Gambiza. Overall, it is obvious to conclude that informants' views of *nhimbe* suggest that the practice plays important economic and social roles in the life of the communities studied. In other words, the practice is a specific application of social capital and bottom-up approaches theories within the context of community-based development in Zimbabwe rural settings. Chapter Seven that follows presents findings from the three communities investigated.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STUDY RESULTS PART II: FIELDWORK FINDINGS

7.1. Chapter introduction

7.1.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on findings from fieldwork conducted over a total of seven weeks in the period December 2009 to March 2010 across the three communities; Gambiza, Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho. The significance of this chapter is that it brings forth how community members at various levels, that is, traditional leaders, adults and young adults described *nhimbe* in relation to individual and community life. Additionally, the respondents in this chapter were current practitioners of *nhimbe* and were consulted in their own communities. The analysis follows a similar thematic framework to that used in the previous chapter.

7.1.2 Chapter objectives

Key objectives for this chapter include:

- To understand how community members themselves describe *nhimbe*;
- To understand the social and economic underpinnings that drive *nhimbe* practice in the communities;
- To ascertain factors that make *nhimbe* strong or weak in the communities;
- To profile the age at which the study respondents first participated in *nhimbe*; and
- To determine the role *nhimbe* plays in the social and economic life of communities.

The data obtained from community members through interviews and focus group discussions was about 80% qualitative and 20% quantitative. As stated in Chapter Four of this thesis, traditional leaders were consulted as key informants since they are custodians of culture and normative practices in the communities.

7.1.3 **Arrangement of findings**

The findings are arranged in the following manner: (i) description of *nhimbe* from traditional leaders, adult and young adult members of the communities; (ii) purpose of *nhimbe* as expressed by traditional leaders and community members (adults and young adults); (iii) other terms used for *nhimbe* in the communities studied; (iv) analysis of respondents'age when they first participated in nhimbe; (v) success factors of *nhimbe* practice; (vi) steps or processes taken to organise *nhimbe* in a community; (vii) inclusion-exclusion analysis in the *nhimbe* practice; (viii) social and economic obligations that underpin the nhimbe practice; (ix) social and economic consequences to households that do not participate in *nhimbe*; (x) processesan individualtakes to re-engage with others in the *nhimbe* practice; (xi) social and economic benefits of nhimbe; (xii) factors for *nhimbe* adaptability in communities; (xiii)factors most likely to reduce community members' motivation to participate in *nhimbe*; (xiv) weaknesses of *nhimbe*; and (xv) contribution of *nhimbe* to community members' character formation or personal development. The following are key fieldwork related acronyms used in this chapter.

Acronym	Full text
GZ	Gambiza
MSK	Musikavanhu
TSH	Tsholotsho
M	Male
F	Female

Table 7.1: Fieldwork related acronyms

7.2. Nhimbe description

The description of *nhimbe* is presented in three categories: (i) traditional and elected community leaders; (ii) adult members of the communities; (iii) disaggregated analysis of traditional leaders, adult and young adults in each community; and (iv) young adults only. These are discussed below.

7.2.1 Traditional and elected community leaders

The interview findings outlined below came from 40 interviewees who comprised traditional chiefs, elected community development government officials (councilors) and village heads who were aged between 79 and 91. In the table, *n* stands for the number of interviewees from each community studied.

n = 40

Description	Number of respondents who described nhimbe			Total mentions	
	Gambiza n = 9	Musikavanhu n = 19	Tsholotsho n = 12		%
Working together on a community development initiative to accomplish work in an easier and faster way	8	17	8	33	83
Helping one another on a development initiative for no financial gain	7	13	12	32	80
Work party	5	15	11	31	78
Seeking for help on a specific work without paying for the labour	7	12	9	28	70

Table 7.2: Nhimbe descriptions from community leadership

The findings above clearly show that the community leaders across the three communities studied describe *nhimbe* in a similar way. A close examination of the results tabulated indicates that *nhimbe* is viewed as both a supply and demand driven practice. This means that the drive to participate in *nhimbe* is in two ways; one seeks assistance from community members on specific development tasks (demand driven) or a person voluntarily provides his/her knowledge and expertise (supply driven) to carry out a development initiative for which nhimbe has been organised. Below is how some of the leaders expressed

their understanding of *nhimbe* and the demand-supply driven nature of the practice is evident.

> ...so I would say that *ilima* [nhimbe] is best described as *izandla ziyagezana* [hands wash each other] (TSH-23-F77)

> Whenever I hear the term *nhimbe* I also think, apart from work, about food and drinks normally served like beer and mahewu (MSK-21-M62)

> Even if one has lots of money, he/she cannot conduct the funeral alone; you need others (K-MSK-23-F89)

> A person may not have cattle for ploughing therefore he/she brews beer or *mahewu* and invites those with cattle to help him do the ploughing (MSK-28-M59)

> The humwe convener calls for help (*nyandayeyo)* and they ask; *ndeyeyi* [what kind of help]? Nhimbe is specific to determine the form and type of assistance one requires e.g. weeding calls for hoes and not ploughs (MSK-24-M87)

Three things are apparent from these excerpts. Firstly, that *nhimbe* is a manifestation in the community that indeed people acknowledge and, most importantly, genuinely believe that they need each other in life as explicitly denoted by the expression *izandla ziyagezana*. Secondly, food provision is an integral social component of the *nhimbe* practice. It emerged that if one does not have sufficient or no food at all but the person needs development assistance under the *nhimbe* arrangement, community members often contribute the required food stuff at no cost if requested. This finding is quite analogous to what informants stated in 6.2.2 of the previous chapter. Lastly, when one organises *nhimbe*, it is normally for emergency work or livelihoods shocks. This is depicted by the term *nyandayeyo* which is a *Ndau* dialect development idiom used in Musikavanhu community to signifiy that help is urgently needed. Furthermore, the study found that *nhimbe* is also for planned collective expenditure of labour power, equipment and expertise for developmental purposes in the community. Therefore, *nhimbe* exists to serve both purposes in the community, that is, *nyandayeyo* and planned collective development.

It came out that the more a community uses *nhimbe* in a planned fashion the less the likelihood the practice is used for livelihoods emergencies. This was a widespread finding in all the three communities investigated, and it points to the centrality of *nhimbe* in community life. The study found that Tsholotsho uses *nhimbe* in the most planned manner followed by Musikavanhu and Gambiza being the least. A close scrutiny of this notion (*nhimbe* for planned development) reveals that village heads in Tsholotsho and Musikavanhu were found to be relatively more passionate, involved and committed to *nhimbe* practice than those in Gambiza. In addition, bonds of affection are comparatively stronger and homogeneity higher in Tsholotsho and Musikavanhu than in Gambiza community. Another significant finding which differentiated the three communities on this aspect of *nhimbe* for planned development and *nyandayeyo* is polarisation of community members along political party affiliations, a point highlighted in section 5.4 of Chapter Five. In order of the severity of political related polarisation, it was high in Gambiza, moderate in Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho being the least of the three communities. This perhaps explains why *nhimbe* in Tsholotsho is largely for planned developmental initiatives because there is relatively low political polarisation among community members. The low political polarisation found in Tsholotsho and Musikavanhu suggests relative peace in these communities, a factor which facilitates progressive collective community development (Madziva 2011: 262, Miruka 2013 and Mutunhu 2011). This finding implies that the extent to which community members affiliate to different political parties can in itself facilitate or constrain *nhimbe* practice in a given community. The discussion that follows is a consolidated analysis of adult community members' description of *nhimbe*.

7.2.2 Nhimbe description across the three communities

Tabulated below are the aggregate interview findings obtained from adult community members that participated in the study. A total of 74 respondents across the three communities were interviewed.

n =74

Nhimbe description	Mentions	
	No. of times	%
Work party	55	74.3
Seeking for help on a specific work without paying for the labour	45	61.1
Helping one another on a development initiative for no financial gain	35	47.3
Working together on a community development initiative to accomplish work easier and faster	30	40.5

Table 7.3: Nhimbe description by adult community members

The results outlined above are quite similar to the interview findings from traditional and elected leaders presented in section 7.2.1 above. This congruency could be, more likely, an indication that *nhimbe* is a way of life for people in these communities as well as that the practice has been passed on through generations. The next section examines *nhimbe* description from the focus group discussions conducted in the three communities.

7.2.3 Nhimbe description disaggregated by community leadership and members

Complementary to interviews, the focus group discussions (FGD) were used to get views from traditional leaders and community members who were not involved in the interviews as discussed in 7.2.1 and 7.2.2 above. These were conducted separately with village heads (VH), adult members of the communities (Ad) and young adults (YAd). The adults including the village heads were aged between 43 and 91 while the young adults ranged from 24 and 32 years of age. The results are organised in terms of views expressed in each community disaggregated by village heads, adults and young adults as presented below.

Nhimbe description from focus group discuions	Communities and respondents								
	Gambiza			Musikavanhu			Tsholotsho		
	[16]VH	Ad[17]	YAd[18]	VH	Ad	YAd	VH	Ad	YAd
Helping one another on a development initiative for no financial gain	√	√√	√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√	√
Working together	√	√	√	√√	√√	-	√√	√√	√
Helps to accomplish work faster and easier	-	√	-	-	√	√	√	-	-
Asking for assistance without paying for the labour or other resources provided for the work	√	-	-	√	√	√	-	√	√
Work party	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√

Table 7.4: Focus group discussion findings from village heads, adults and young adults

Key: '√√' *denotes that the issue was strongly/emphatically said by this group within the respective community.*

It can be seen from the findings tabulated above that the notion of helping one another on planned developmental purposes was strongly emphasised by all the three communities. Notably, this came out from the focus group discussions conducted with the village heads and adult community members. Working together was emphatically expressed in Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho but not in Gambiza. This is further evidence of the important role bond of affection, homogeneity and extent of community members' affiliation to different political parties play in the *nhimbe* practice as pointed out in (a) above. Also to note from these findings is that all the communities powerfully stated that *nhimbe* is 'work party' which resonates with earlier discussions about the centrality of the feasting ritual entrenched in the practice. This is a sharp contradiction to Thompson (2010: 188) who reports that there is no solid food provided at a *nhimbe* organised for weeding or harvesting. Indeed this study is an antithesis to Thompson's assertion as all respondents across the three communities studied affirmed that provision of solid food and beverages is at the centre of the *nhimbe* practice for any type of task.

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[16] VH = village head
[17] Ad = adult
[18] YAd = young adult

Selected expressions from Gambiza community in describing nhimbe

What comes to my mind about nhimbe is that it brings *unhu* (humanness) and the spirit of togetherness in the community; as people work together and help each other (GZ-F81).

The gathering usually should be for a day unless the task is not achieved, it can be finished on the next day (GZ-M53).

Kana pasina doro hapana nhimbe (if there is no beer then I don't see how nhimbe can be possible) (GZ-F59).

[Nhimbe is about] helping each other with a motive of love and unity (GZ-F79).

People work together and after the work, they eat and drink [GZ-F59).

Selected expressions from Musikavanhu communityin describing nhimbe

People work together and after the work, they eat and drink (MSK-F69).

I always wish if I can help others because I know that next time I will also be helped (MSK-M59).

Selected expressions from Tsholotsho community in describing nhimbe

Depending on the task at hand, ilima can be organized along gender and age dimensions. For example, girls are for harvesting, cultivating crops is for women and men and boys are for ploughing (TSH-F43).

Even if the task requires special skills, it is important to invite everyone even those without the necessary skills [for the tasks at hand] for they can learn from others play other [complementary] roles such as assisting the skilled at a given ilima (TSH-F58).

On *ilima*, one specifies the task at hand, and invites the people he/she likes and they are experienced to carry out the task (TSH-M67).

Obviously, the foregoing excerpts show four viewpoints about *nhimbe*. Firstly, that it has a gender dimension. Throughout the fieldwork in all the three communities, the researcher observed that when participants feast, they normally sit in a circle arrangement which symbolises solidarity, transparency and a sense of accomplishment. At feasting time, male and female participants often sit separately which is an indication of gender underpinnings in the social and economic lifeof the communities studied. The study has also shown that during feasting people socialise and they share knowledge and skills, that is, skills transfer takes place in the process. The division of labour along gender proposition mentioned here is also put forward by Thompson (2010: 176) who observes that vegetable garden related tasks are normally women's responsibility in most Zimbabwean rural communities. This is regardless of whether the vegetable garden work is on a household plot or communal land. Notably, households in the communities investigated are on privately owned land (Zimbabwe Traditional Leaders Act, Chapter 29:17).

Secondly, *nhimbe* is regarded as a community apprenticeship platform, a perspective which concurs with the informants' analysis of the practice discussed in section 6.2.4 of Chapter Six. This means that during *nhimbe* people exchange knowledge, skills and experiences among themselves which in itself significantly contributes to the reproduction of community values and beliefs.

Thirdly, that food and beer are important social elements of the practice. In fact, in the Shona and Ndebele culture, the sharing of food enhances social relations and this is succinctly captured in the Shona proverb which says that *ukama igasva hunozadziswa nekudya*. As Tavuyanago and others (2010: 5) put it, this Shona proverbial expression means that "relationships are on their own never adequate, they are only made adequate by people sharing food." The authors go on to say that a person who shares food with his/her neighbours is always held in

great esteem in the community and this resonates with the researcher's fieldwork experience across the three communities.

Lastly, while no one is coerced to participate in *nhimbe*, everyone feels to want to be part of the practice (TSH-39-M67). The voluntary spirit could be an indication of the strong bonds of affection and personal relationships that exist in the communities and this might also show how these factors are integral ingredients of the *nhimbe* practice. Having discussed *nhimbe* description from the views of village heads, adult members and young adults, below is specific analysis with a focus on young adults.

7.2.4 Nhimbe description from young adults

Responses from twenty (20) young adults aged between 24 and 32 were analysed separately. The resultant synthesis is presented in Table 7.5 below.

Nhimbe description from young adults' interiviews	Communities and respondents			Total mentions	
	Gambiza n = 4	Musikavanhu n = 4	Tsholotsho n = 12	n	%
Work party	1	0	10	11	55
Seeking for help on a specific work without paying for the labour	0	0	9	9	45
Helping one another on a development initiative for no financial gain	2	4	1	7	35
Working together on a community development initiative to accomplish work easier and faster	3	3	0	6	30

Table 7.5: Nhimbe description from young adults

In their articulation about *nhimbe*, some of the young adults expressed as follows:

It is pulling together of effort to complete work (GZ-F30)

Nhimbe is doing work in numbers so that a task is completed in a short space of time (MSK-M28).

> Food and beverages are only served to the ilima participants (*sadza*, beer, tea and so on (TSH-M24).
>
> An individual asks for help from other members of the community to do a particular work, and then on turn he/she appreciates them by giving them food and alcohol but not money [TSH-M38].

It is quite evident from the findings presented in the table above and the foregoing quotations that community members view *nhimbe* as a work party for development and in the process people feast. In addition, they specifically state that the work party means supply of labour power to help one another on household development initiatives. A big turnout of participants is always expected at every *nhimbe* as this provides the needed leverage for completing a huge task within a short space of time. Following a discussion on how community members (village heads, councilors, adult and young adults) described *nhimbe*, the next section is a presentation of the respondents' views about why *nhimbe* is practised.

7.3. **Purpose of nhimbe practice**

Through the interviews, the investigator sought to establish what community members felt was the key purpose of *nhimbe*. A total of sixty-four (64) community members were interviewed comprising 39% from Musikavanhu, 18% from Gambiza and 43% in Tsholotsho. The average age of the respondents was 51 and they ranged from 43 and 71 years. Table 7.6 below is a synthesis of the responses obtained.

n = 64	Mentions	
Purpose	**No. of times**	**%**
To share resources in the community to accomplish a specific work	45	70.3
To nurture and maintain community solidarity	17	26.6
To improve households' standards of living	8	12.5
To share and learn from others	1	1.6

Table 7.6: Purpose of nhimbe

> In order to work together and produce more food [MSK-M45]
> Sot that work becomes easier (GZ-F31).
>
> To help those who are struggling in the community and in the process this promotes unity among the people (MSK-M45).
>
> The main idea is to help a household in trouble for development (GZ-F81).

The community findings above are consistent with informants' views that *nhimbe* is a social insurance in the community used to respond to the *nyandayeyo* of livelihoods challenges as well as for planned developmental purposes. The acknowledgement that communities are often likely to face development challenges is a subject DFID (1999) extensively discusses and terms these 'vulnerabilities' or 'shocks'. As already discussed earlier, *nyandayeyo* is a community response to vulnerabilities or shocks within the livelihoods context. A close scrutiny of the findings shown above indicates that *nhimbe* has two functions. The first one is that it is a shock-absorber and the second is that *nhimbe* is indeed a 'bankable' practice the communities studied use in planning and implementing their social and economic household development initiatives. The findings clearly demonstrate that *nhimbe* helps communities to nurture and strengthen their resilience in various socio-economic development shocks. In addition, *nhimbe* is a bottom-up development model in the communities explored. The function of *nhimbe* as a shock-absorber is a shared feature in all the three

communities investigated. However, the pracitical aspect of it being a model for development planning was quite noticeable in Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho. The respondents' (MSK-M45 and GZ-F81) expressions above suggest that *nhimbe* is also a community development strategy used to assist the vulnerable members of the community. One respondent stressed that the purpose of *nhimbe* is to "To help those who are struggling in the community and in the process this promotes unity among the people" (MSK-M45). Another respondent gave a similar view about the purpose of *nhimbe*; "...the main idea is to help a household in trouble for development" (GZ-F81).

The use of *nhimbe* to assist the vulnerable people in the communities is a perspective which resonates with the key informants' views in section 6.2.1 of the previous chapter. This demonstrates a broad-based application nature of *nhimbe* in the communities. Just like what the informants expressed, communities studied use various terms for *nhimbe* and this is the focus of the next discussion.

7.4. **Other terms used for nhimbe**

Through interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher sought to know if there were any other terms used for *nhimbe* in the communities studied. Table 7.7 below profiles the terms obtained with an indication of preferrence level in each community.

Communities studied	Preferred terms used for nhimbe		
	Most preferred	2nd most preferred	3rd most preferred
Gambiza	Humwe	Ilima	Chigambe
Musikavanhu	Humwe	Mukote	-
Tsholotsho	Ilima	-	-

Table 7.7: Nhimbe related terms

Except for Tsholotsho, the term *nhimbe* is known and used in Musikavanhu and Gambiza. The differential preference of terms used is due to language and different dialects that exist in the country (Beach 1980 and Nyathi 2005). The most preferred terms mentioned here are similar to the informants' views presented in section 6.2 of Chapter Six. Now that the description and purpose of *nhimbe* have been discussed, the presentation that follows looks at how old respondents were when they first experienced *nhimbe*.

7.5. Analysis of respondents' age when they first experienced nhimbe

7.5.1 Adult community members

Forty (40) adult community members were asked about at age they first experienced *nhimbe* in their lives. This included when they first heard or their first practical participation in the practice. The age of the respondents ranged from forty-three (43) to ninety-one (91) and the majority were aged fifty-nine (59). Tabulated below is the resultant analysis of the responses obtained across the three communities studied.

n=40		Communities			Sub-Total
		Gambiza	Musikavanhu	Tsholotsho	
Age groups (years) when first experienced nhimbe	<5	0	0	0	0
	5-10	4	12	6	22
	11-15	5	7	6	18
	>15	0	0	0	0
Total (n)		**9**	**19**	**12**	**40**

Table 7.8: Age when respondents first experienced nhimbe

The findings above indicate that the majority of the respondents first experienced *nhimbe* when they were between 5 and 10 years of age. This is 22 out of 40 or 55% while 18 (45%) mentioned that their first experience was when they were aged between 11 and 15. This implies that *nhimbe* is a well accepted practice or it is a way of life in the communities investigated. This also means that by the age of 15 the sample population knew about *nhimbe* in their communities. The table below is an examination of the same respondents disaggregated by sex.

n=40		Sex		
		Male	Female	**Sub-Total**
Age groups (years) when first experienced nhimbe	< 5	0	0	0
	5-10	15	7	22
	11-15	9	9	18
	>15	0	0	0
Total		**24**	**16**	**40**

Table 7.9: Adults first nhimbe experience by sex

It is clear from the findings above that more males knew about *nhimbe* earlier than females. This is because 15 of 24 males (62.5%) in the 5 to 10 age group knew about it compared to 7 of the 16 females (29.1%).

7.5.2 Young adults

Twenty-six (26) young adults aged between 24 and 32 with an average age of 28 were also asked about when they first experienced *nhimbe* in their lives. Summarised below are the responses given across the three communities explored and the data is disaggregated by sample size and sex.

n = 26

Age group (years) first experienced nhimbe		Communities and respondents					
		Gambiza n=10		Musikavanhu n=4		Tsholotsho n=12	
	Sub-total	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 – 10	15	2	2	3	1	4	3
11 – 15	10	3	3	0	0	0	4
16 – 20	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
>20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total respondents	**26**	**5**	**5**	**3**	**1**	**4**	**8**
Total females	**14**						
Total males	**12**						

Table 7.10: Young adults first nhimbe experience by community and sex

Like the adults, the majority of the young adults first heard about *nhimbe* or experienced it when they were between 5 and 10 years of age. This is 15 of the 26 (57.6%) followed by 10 (38.4%) in the 11 to 15 age group. On the sex distribution, the results indicate that more males (75%) knew about *nhimbe* earlier than females (42.8%) calculated as 9 out of 12 and 6 out of 14 respectively. This demonstrates that there is no difference in terms of exposure to *nhimbe* between adults and young adults in the study sample. On average, results are consistent that males seem to experience *nhimbe* earlier than their female counterparts in both adult and young adult groups investigated. This confirms findings in Gelfand's (1979) earlier study which highlighted the inherent socialisation role the practice plays in the community life.

In addition, the findings show that *nhimbe* promotes, to a great extent, a sense of self-worthy or self-determination in both the individuals and the communities. Both socialisation and community identification indeed illustrate that *nhimbe* is more than just occasional work parties but integral part of life for people as it defines who they are and how they fit into their community from socio-cultural and economic perspectives. From these findings, it can be inferred that *nhimbe*

plays a broad social role including community apprenticeship in the communities studied. In this study, it was also important to find out factors that often make *nhimbe* to achieve the intended objectives at any given household and these are discussedbelow.

7.6. **Success factors fora nhimbe**

A total of thirty-eight (38) community respondents from the three communities were asked to express their views about what would normally contribute to a successful *nhimbe*. Of the 38, the respondents from each community were 15 (Tsholotsho), 13 (Musikavanhu) and 10 (Gambiza) aged between 35 and 70, the majority being in the 40 to 50 age range. Primarily, the question sought to find key factors that should exist and be put into action in order for *nhimbe* participants to achieve the *nhimbe* organiser's intended development results. In other words, the focus was to establish the social success factors for any *nhimbe* in a community. A close analysis of the responses revealed seven (7) key success factors as presented in the table below.

n = 38	Mentions	
Success factor	**No. of times**	**%**
The nhimbe organiser must be a trustworthy person in the community and should also display good public relations at the nhimbe	21	55.3
The nhimbe organiser must have given clear work requirements to the participants prior and during nhimbe	19	50.0
Participants must possess the right skills in relation to work requirements	14	36.8
Availability of adequate amount of food and beverage for the participants	13	34.2
Punctuality and high attendance	8	21.1
Equal treatment of all participants at the nhimbe	5	13.2
Singing of songs and cracking of jokes throughout the nhimbe process	3	7.9

Table 7.11: Success factors for nhimbe practice

To emphasise the importance of food, love and trust as success factors for *nhimbe* practice, two community members expressed their viewpoints this way:

> There should be sufficient quantity and good quality of food and beverages. Some people do not have food at their homes; such people may view humwe as a place to satisfy themselves (GZ-M65)

> The love and trust for one member within the community makes *ilima* successful. Nhimbe is done to further unite the villagers (TSH-M62)

From the tabulated findings and the two quotations above, four dimensions are apparent. Firstly, trust among community members is paramount.

Secondly, community members need to nurture and sustain good relationships, an indication that social capital is significant. Miruka (2013: 152) asserts that "social capital is most useful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations" and *nhimbe* facilitates or strengthen network of social relations in the communities.

Thirdly, clarity of tasks to be done is vital to ensure participants' focus and commitment.

Lastly, sufficient and quality food provision is a significant ritual and integral component of *nhimbe* across the three communities explored.

The study has also shown that the food aspect has an implication to attendance and performance; that is, feasting naturally motivates participants to work hard and as already noted earlier, in the process, socialisation and skills transfer take place. Another viewpoint which the current literature does not sufficiently discuss is the role feasting at a *nhimbe* plays in cultivating and nurturing *unhu* in the community. To reiterate, *unhu* is a Shona term which encompasses good attributes of a person in society to include character, personality and

interpersonal relationships. In the Ndebele language, *unhu* is *ubuntu* and the phrase *ulo ubuntu* is used to describe a person who has the desirable societal ethos or ethics. One respondent stresses that " ...*nhimbe* brings *unhu* (humanness) in the community" (GZ-F81). In other words, *unhu* is pivoted to the extent one upholds the socio-moral compass of his/her community. The study, as discussed in this chapter and chapter six, has clearly demonstrated that *nhimbe* plays an important role in the molding of *unhu* within the communities investigated. Having discussed the success factors of nhimbe, the following discussion centres on how one organises *nhimbe* in a community.

7.7. **Steps or processes taken to organise nhimbe in a community**

The key question was: *What steps or processes are involved in organising and implementing nhimbe in your community*? The respondents were both community traditional leaders and adult members of the communities studied. An examination of the responses obtained showed similarities between how traditional leaders and community members described the steps across the three communities. As a result, it was not necessary to disaggregate the findings according to the category of the respondents. A respondent from Gambiza and another from Musikavanhu attempted to summarise the steps this way.

> The first thing is to notify the village head then brew beer and prepare food. The participants are invited a few days before the *humwe*. Sometimes it is not necessary to inform the village head because he knows that *humwe* is a normal practice in community, he can only be invited (GZ-F81)

> Prepare beer and food; beer is central [nhimbe practice] and it is for the elders. Then one notifies the local leadership and there should be a pot of beer specially set aside for the leader. You send out invitationsto village members with specific details about the nhimbe [you intend to have](MSK-M53).

The excerpts above and the researcher's fieldwork observations reveal that there are seven key (7) steps in organising a *nhimbe* as detailed below.

Step 1: Seek authority

If one intends to organise a *nhimbe*, the individual has to ask for permission from the village head. This is important for two main reasons namely to respect one's traditional village leader and to ensure, through the village head, that there will be always one *nhimbe* organised in any given day within the village. In some instances, it is not permissible for one to organise *nhimbe* on certain days of the week like on a *chis*[19] or national public holidays.

Five reasons were cited to explain why one may not be granted permission to hold a nhimbe on a proposed date. These are: (a) there is another nhimbe planned on the same date, (b) there is a death in the village, (c) the traditional leaders have a community function in the village, (d) government has a function in the village and (e) the day falls on a *Chisi,* a sacred day in the community in which no one should work. *Chisi* forms part of the traditional norms and practices which characterise most rural communities in Sub-Saharan countries including Zimbabwe (Mbigi 2005 and Mbiti 1999). If these reasons do not apply at the time one plans to have a *nhimbe*, the permission is normally granted.

Step 2: Invitations

Upon given permission by the village head, the individual invites members of the village. Vital information in the invitation includes date, place and nature of work. To specify nature of work is important to ensure that people know the knowledge and skills required as this enables them to plan for the right personnel and bring the right equipment for the work. In addition, people who possess the needed expertise for the work are often informed on time.

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[19] A sacred day set aside by the traditional chief in the community in which no one should work particularly farming activities

Step 3: Preparation of food and beverages

Following the invitations, the person has to plan for food and beverage in advance including beer, *mahewu* or both. This is important because provision of food and beverage is both a symbol and an expression of one's utmost gratitude to the *nhimbe* participants for work completed. As earlier noted, feasting provides and opportunity for people to socialise. It should be pointed out that this step can occur concurrently with Step 2 described above.

Step 4: Appointment of a monitoring and evaluation officer

At least a day before the *nhimbe*, the organiser appoints someone to monitor and evaluate the *nhimbe* proceedings for performance and management of participants' morale. In Musikavanhu, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) officer is known as *gombaguru* and the study found that there is no special name given to this role in Gambiza and Tsholotsho communities. Normally the *gombaguru* is a relative or a close friend of the benefiting household. Most importantly, a *gombaguru* must be a mature and respected member of the community. On the day and prior to commencement of work, *gombaguru* explains the nature of the work and performance target to all the participants. Depending on the nature of work, the *gombaguru,* with the help of experienced and skilled participants, divides the work and groups people according to the skills they possess. As for the unskilled or semi-skilled participants, they are strategically assigned to work in groups with the skilled and experienced participants to facilitate skills transfer in the process. This is a confirmation of the community apprenticeship role *nhimbe* plays in the communities as discussed earlier. For high attendance and numerous work groups are necessary, it is quite possible that there could be more than one *gombaguru* for efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation of all the proceedings throughout the *nhimbe* process.

The *gombaguru* concept illustrates how performance evaluation is institutionalised or cultured in the communities studied through the *nhimbe*

practice. Khosa stresses the centrality of embracing performance evaluation culture for development and goes on to say that it has to be "deeply ingrained in organisation members" (Khosa 1994: 228). This study has indeed discovered that evaluation culture is 'ingrained' in both the *nhimbe* practice and participants for improved development performance as evidenced through the role of *gumbaguru*. Furthermore, the *gombaguru* role is in itself a skills transfer strategy in the communities because community members gain managerial and leadership skills in the process.

Step 5: Working

After the appointed M&E officer has explained the nature and the expected target to the participants, the work begins earnestly. Mid-way, normally four hours after commencement of work, participants take a short break during which refreshments are served in the form of *mahewu*, fruits, tea, or beer in small quantities. The short break has special names in Musikavanhu and Gambiza which is *chikurura mabhachi* while Tsholotsho uses the term *isikhulula amabatshi* and both terms mean the same. The study found that, to a less extent, Gambiza also uses the term *isikhulula amabatshi*. The two terms literary mean that one removes his or her jacket because he/she is now feeling hot due to the hard work so far performed. In this context, the *chikurura mabhachi* time symbolises a process whereby *nhimbe* participants rest and re-energise themselves for the second and final half of the work at hand.

Step 6: Feasting and socialising

This step happens after work has been completed usually after 1pm and takes place at the *nhimbe* organiser's homestead. At this stage, people feast as food and beverages are served. People also sing and dance including cracking of jokes and bursting of laughters in celebration of work done. The singing, dancing and cracking of jokes play dual roles which are celebration and entertainment. In the process, some people seek counseling from elders and friends on a variety of

social, economic and spiritual issues. Also, during this time learning continues among the *nhimbe* participants. As already discussed in 7.2.3, cracking of jokes and laughter are informal social strategies for peace building in the communities (Kapasula 2010: 290 and Mbenene 2010: 6). These aspects point to the wider significance of *nhimbe* as a ritual for the construction and maintenance of a community socio-cultural fibre.

Step 7: Vote of thanks and closing remarks

During this step, the *nhimbe* host expresses gratitude to the community members who came to help. Following the thanksgiving by the host, the traditional leader who is often the village head or his/her representative gives closing remarks. The key elements of the closing remarks include praising community members for working together in peace and helping one another on development initiatives. The traditional leader also takes this opportunity to make important community announcements. After the vote of thanks and closing remarks have been given, people are free to stay and continue socialising or leave for their respective homes. Figure 7.1 below is a summary of the steps in the foregoing discussion.

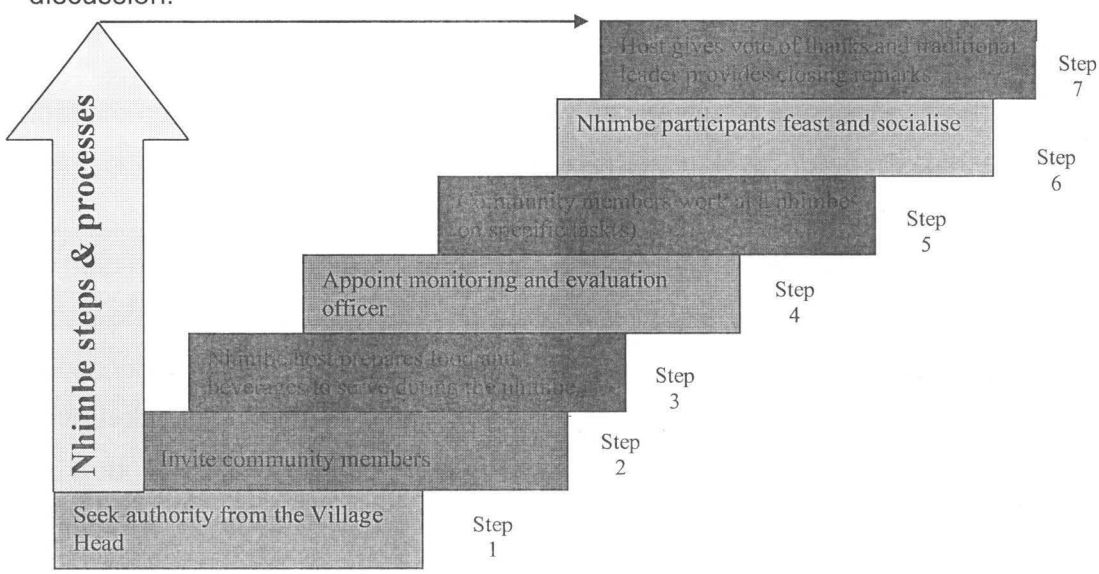


Figure 7.1: Steps and processes in organising nhimbe

During participant observation process in the fieldwork, the researcher observed and experienced these steps which are involved in organising *nhimbe* as presented above. A close examination of these steps reveal community self organisation. General claims have been made in the current literature (Chambers 1997, Owens 1993 and Uphoff 2004) that rural communities are self-governing; this study has shown that *nhimbe* is a specific practice that facilitates and sustains development self-governance in the communities investigated. Having looked at how *nhimbe* is organised, the next discussion focuses on who is included or excluded to participate in the *nhimbe* practice

7.8. **Inclusion-exclusion analysis in nhimbe participation**

Community members were asked about *'who is eligible to participate in nhimbe?'* The following is a summary of the responses provided. Responses obtained indicate that upholding or ignoring community values (*unhu*) is a determinant of who is included or excluded in the *nhimbe* practice respectively.

7.8.1 **Inclusion**

An analysis of the findings on the inclusion resulted in a set of four determinants that are considered vital for one to 'qualify' to participate in *nhimbe*. Firstly, some respondents expressed that one has to 'radiate love' for each other in the community and this is an indicator that it would be highly possible for that person to help others even through the *nhimbe* arrangement. Secondly, one has to be a trustworthy individual and should also trust others. Thirdly, a person has to recognise importance of reciprocal relationship and practise it. Thompson (2010: 189) holds that where reciprocal work relationships exist, people are more likely to work hard and produce quality work at *nhimbe* processes. In relation to Thompson's assertion, the fieldwork findings in this study revealed that reciprocity was high in Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho and reducing in Gambiza. Again, a combination of homogeneity, mechanisation, bonds of affection, kinship

ties and relative distance from urban centres are contributing factors for the levels of reciprocity in these communities. Fourthly, all able-bodied members of the village who can provide labour and their expertise to complete a task qualify to participate in *nhimbe*. It was stated that even though some elders may not physically participate, they are invited to provide wisdom, supervision, babysitting and also restrain members who might misbehaviour during the *nhimbe* process. The involvement of elders in *nhimbe* is consistent with the views from the informants discussed in 6.4 of the previous chapter. Finally it was mentioned that individuals outside the community can also participate in *nhimbe* provided they uphold the community socio-moral values (*unhu*).

The last point above seems to contradict the findings presented so far in this chapter which clearly show that *nhimbe* is organised within a village and subsequently the participants are the residents. The explanation for the proposition of participation by outsiders is that if anyone outside the community comes across a *nhimbe* in transition to his/her destination or is visiting and the individual wishes to participate, the person is not forbidden to do so. Of course, this is provided the person is willing to offer the help required in the form of labour, expertise or wisdom pertaining to the task at hand. In addition, the individual should uphold community values of love, trust, respect and peace (the *unhu* concept). So while outsiders are normally not part of the *nhimbe* participants, there are instances where they participate in the activities including the feasting afterwards. This happens when an outsider is trusted through a member of the community to whom he/she is related and this resonates with the importance of personal relationship in community-based development as found in the literature (Anderson 2002, Mararike 2003, Miruka 2013 and Munyuki-Hungwe 2011). Additionally, the finding also confirms the primacy of trust in community development (Blois 1999, Cornwall 2008, Putnam 1993 and Realo and Allik 2008). This means that if a related community member is not trusted, automatically the outsider is also not trusted to participate in the *nhimbe*.

Therefore the finding suggests that an outsider is accepted to participate in *nhimbe* on account of a trusted member of the community. The author observed instances of outsider participation in Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho which is, in part, an indication of high levels of trust among community members in these two communities. Although the study found that people in the communities generally accept help from fellow villagers or outsiders for labour power and expertise, it was noted that they would normally not accept outsider assistance if the person is likely to influence people to deviate from their *unhu* (community values).

These determinants demonstrate that community social obligations, common norms and sanctions all underpin the *nhimbe* practice. It is also clear that while *nhimbe* is confined to members of the same community (village), there are exceptions to accommodate outsiders provided they uphold *unhu* of the local community. Clearly, the findings demonstrate that *nhimbe* is a social institution that facilitates social sustainability in the communities.

7.8.2 **Exclusion**

Some people may not qualify to participate in *nhimbe* because of one or a combination of four reasons. Firstly, some tasks are gender ascribed.

> Depending on the task at hand, ilima can be organized along gender and age dimensions. For example, girls are for harvesting, cultivating crops is for women and men and boys are for ploughing (TSH-32-F43).

Secondly, they are young and as such they do not have the physical ability to do the work although they can accompany their parents to *nhimbe* and carry out light some work like fetching water, firewood, washing utensils, serving food and babysitting.

Thirdly, that it has been observed and concluded that they do not uphold community *unhu*.

Lastly, they are aged which means they might not be able to physically work and even walk to the *nhimbe* venue. This aspect has been extensively discussed in the inclusion section above as well as section 6.5 in Chapter Six.

7.9. Social and economic obligations underpinning nhimbe

During fieldwork, community members were asked to cite social obligations they felt underpin the *nhimbe* practice. The interview data was obtained from a total of twenty seven (27) community members comprising three (3) traditional chiefs, nine (9) village heads, three (3) councilors and twelve (12) adult members. The respondents were aged between 79 and 91.

n=27

	Mentions	
Obligation	No. of times	%
Collective action	20	74.1
Helping one another	9	33.3
Reciprocal relationship	5	18.5
Love	4	14.8
Mutual trust	2	7.4
Respect	1	3.7

Table 7.12: Underpinnings of nhimbe practice

It is noted that the findings presented above clearly show that love, trust and respect have low frequencies. This is despite the fact that these values have so far in this study gained prominence as important ingridients in the *nhimbe* practice. The explanation could be that the high frequencies on collective action, helping others and reciprocal relationship imply that a person who possesses these values automatically has love, mutual trust and respect. This is implied in the three respondents' expressions below.

> ...I participate in nhimbe because of love; that is, love your neighbour as yourself and therefore help others when they are in need (Tsh-M55)

> Everyone knows that at one point in life he or she needs help from others and each person has an obligation to help others. No one is forced to help but it is expected that people should help each other (MSK-F59)
>
> People need to display real love, team spirit without jealousy (MSK-F53).

The key features of the foregoing excerpts are collective action, reciprocity, love, trust and respect. These are similar to the informants' views about the underpinnings of *nhimbe* practice detailed in Chapter Six. Like the informants, community members consulted pointed out that there are consequences an individual or household faces for not participating in a given *nhimbe* without giving genuine reasons. This is the focus of the discussion that follows.

7.10. **Social and economic consequences for not participating in nhimbe**

The views were obtained from three (3) traditional chiefs, six (6) village heads and four (4) adult members of the community aged between 40 and 70 through interviews.

n=13

	Mentions	
Consequence	No. of times	%
Boycott or come late	11	84.6
Attend but deliberately under-perform	4	30.8
Deliberately send family members who have limited or no skills required for the work at hand	1	7.7

Table 7.13: Consequences for not participating in nhimbe

It is obvious from the findings presented above that; naturally, community members tend to reduce their level of assistance (civic boycott) they provide to a household which persistently fails to participate with others (without giving

genuine reasons) in the *nhimbe*. Below is how some of the community members expressed this civic boycott notion.

> ... if I know that someone does not participate in other people's nhimbe, then I will not participate in his or her nhimbe too (GZ-M65).
>
> ...if people do not attend other people's nhimbe, then I am de-motivated to attend theirs too (MSK-F89).
>
> ...people take note of those who come late, and in turn they will deliberately come late as well when they are invited to theirs (MSK-F89)

The results summarised in Table 7.13 and the three quotations above suggest that it is a norm in communities to apply 'social sanctions' to individual households that have reputation of not working with others in the community. However, the study discovered that failure to participate in *nhimbe* is a rare occurrence across all the three communities investigated. As the study found, this is because community members clearly understand the negative implications for not participating and how quite detrimental it is to their socio-economic life. In fact, given close inter-personal relationships and the reality of close supervision, there are limited opportunities or incentives for one to be a 'free rider' in the community development initiatives. This suggests a direct relationship between close development dependence and *nhimbe* practice within communities. The phenomenon is quite similar to the common resource management (CRM) theory which states that the CRM is more likely to be strong in communities whose livelihoods greatly depend on a particular limited common resource (Ostrom 2000 and Wade 1987). The diversity of knowledge and skills among community members are limited resources because an individual cannot singularly have them. In discussing the consequences, the respondents were asked to share what steps one would normally take to re-engage with others in the *nhimbe* practice. The aspect of re-engagement is the focus of the next section.

7.11. **Process of how an individual re-engages with others in nhimbe**

The term *re-engage* connotates that one used to work with others in *nhimbe*, at some point he/she reduced or stopped and later decided to participate again. On this re-engagement perspective, the author interviewed there (3) traditional chiefs, six (6) village heads and four (4) adult members of the community who were aged between 40 and 70. The examination of the responses given indicates that there are two options one can use to re-engage with others in the *nhimbe* practice.

7.11.1 **Giving apology**

The person apologises to the person whose *nhimbe* he/she failed to participate. In addition, the person should also apologise to the traditional village head. As an expression of the depth and seriousness of the appeal, sometimes the person provides a pot of beer or *mahewu* or even chicken to the village head. Normally, the apology is accepted and the village head warns the person to desist from the non-cooperative behaviour henceforth.

7.11.2 **Resumption of participation in nhimbe with others**

Noting the negative consequences non-participation brings to a person, the individual is compelled to resume participation with others. In the community, resumption to participate in other people's *nhimbe* is interpreted as a way an individual seeks forgiveness even though the person might not have verbally expressed it. In most cases, the community would forgive the person and lifts the social sanctions without any formal discussion about the issue.

The study found that there was no difference in the views expressed across the three communities concerning the re-engagement process. It is apparent that community members are always ready to reform and the community has a known system through which people can express their desire to re-engage with

others in the *nhimbe* practice. The sustained practice of *nhimbe* in the communities and the voluntary disposition to re-engage clearly shows that *nhimbe* has benefits to individual and community life.

7.12. **Social and economic benefits of nhimbe**

Summarised in the table below are views obtained from traditional chiefs, traditional village heads, adult members of the community and young adultsabout how *nhimbe* benefits the communities.It should be noted that a respondent could mention more than one benefit or strength.

n=74	**Mentions**	
Benefit	**No. of times**	**%**
A platform for people to learn and enforce community moral values (*unhu*)	73	98.6
Promotes peace and good public relations in the community because people often interact with each other and work together	57	77.0
Knowledge sharing and skills transfer among members of the community	52	70.3
Promotes high level of community development results (i.e. food security, construction and maintenance of roads, construction and maintenance of bridges/foot paths, construction of schools, construction of clinics, etc)	48	64.9
A platform for conflict resolution and reconciliation (e.g. marriage counseling and conflicts between families)	46	62.2
Alleviates/lightens a household's workload when people work collectively	37	50.0
A community apprenticeship for organisational and leadership skills (i.e. coordination, communication and public relations) especially for the convenor and gombaguru	31	41.9
Inculcation of hardworking in life	27	36.5
Fosters team spirit for development	25	33.8
A platform for community announcements including rainmaking festivals (known as *makoto* or *marombo* in Musikavanhu), illnesses, deaths, marriage ceremonies, birthdays, etc)	13	17.6

Table 7.14: Benefits of nhimbe

It is evident from the findings displayed above that learning (community apprenticeship), socialisation, community socio-moral valuesenforcement, peace building and community strategy for development feature prominently as key

benefits of *nhimbe*. On the aspect of community apprenticeship and socialisation, two respondents vividly expressed.

> ...I also participate because during the gathering we learn from others. There is also an opportunity to eat and socialise with others (MSK-M62).
>
> I participate if I feel pity for the host, more so in order for me to drink beer and socialize with others. I am also someone who is trustworthy and the trust in me forces/compels me to participate (TSH-M76).

With low frequency but significant were the mention of conflict resolution and team spirit as other benefits *nhimbe* brings to the communities. It should be pointed out that the frequencies tabulated do not necessarily suggest the levels of importance of the benefit but rather they reflect the interrelationships that exist. In other words, no single benefit is sufficient to address the social and economic development needs of the communities investigated. Further to understanding the benefits of *nhimbe*, the researcher was keen to establish factors that make *nhimbe* most adaptable in the communities.

7.13. **Factors for nhimbe adaptability in communities**

The Table 7.15 below outlines views obtained from traditional chiefs, village heads, adult members of the community and young adults about factors that make *nhimbe* to be successfully adaptable in the communities. A total of 58 respondents contributed their views on this aspect.

n= 58	Mentions	
Adaptability factor	**No. of times**	**%**
Internally driven and uses existing knowledge, skills and resources to advance community development initiatives	38	65.5
It is anchored on community value system, simply *unhu*	24	41.4
It fosters collective action in community development	17	29.3
It provides community members a platform for learning on development initiatives and other issues in life	11	19.0

Table 7.15: Enabling factors for nhimbe adaptability in communities

The factors presented above show that *nhimbe* is community-driven, uses the local knowledge and skills and it functions within the context of local community values. The community values which are summarised in the *unhu* concept imply that *nhimbe* is a practice that cultivates and sustains love, peace, respect, trust and mutual relationship in the communities as emphasised in the excerpts below.

> ...It is important that nhimbe be used because it provides a cultural dimension in development. There is *unhu* in nhimbe practice. Nhimbe provides a basic foundation for development in our community (MSK-M62)

> ...humwe [nhimbe] contributes to development because it promotes working together which is vital to development in the community. Nhimbe is a way of life for us in the community. In African culture we do things communally; therefore nhimbe is one of our traditional practicesthat fosters this communal way of life for community development (MSK-F58).

A close examination of the fieldwork findings discloses that *nhimbe* adaptability across the communities studied lies in the bottom-up nature of the practice. In other words, it is apparent that the local social contexts particularly community socio-moral values feed into its design and implementation. This implies that if external (outside the community) rules were to guide the *nhimbe* practice; sustaining it in the communities would likely be difficult because of a possible contradiction between top-down and bottom-up value systems (Cornwall 2008, Kajese 1987and Miruka 2013). Furthermore, *nhimbe* would probably cease to be a way of life for people in the communities owing to, increasingly, detachment of community members from their development process when it is externally driven

(Puttenden 1999, Madziva 2011and Owens 1993). Obviously, this was a point strongly expressed by respondents MSK-M62 and MSK-F58 as presented above including other community members interviewed in the three communities. The study found that *nhimbe* adaptability in the communities is closely associated with individuals' motivation to participate in the practice and this is the thrust of the discussion that follows.

7.14. **Factors most likely to reduce individuals' motivation to participate**

The data was obtained from 62 respondents who comprised traditional chiefs, traditional village heads, adult and young adult members of the community across the three communities. The majority (41) were adults aged 43 to 65 and 21 young adults of 24 to 32 years of age. Outlined below is a summary of factors that tend to reduce one's motivation to participate in *nhimbe*.

n=62

De-motivating factors	Mentions	
	No. of times	%
A Community member fails to participate at various nhimbe and never give genuine reasons or apologise	27	43.5
Bad relations among some community members	24	38.7
Religious beliefs, if beer is served some people may not attend	12	19.4
Conflicts between families in the community	10	16.1
Some members of the community often send family members who have limited or no skills for the work requirements	5	8.1
Some members of the community always come late to other people's nhimbe	3	4.8
Just being jealous of one's progress in development	2	3.2
If nhimbe is not authorised by the traditional leaders	1	1.6

Table 7.16: Factors that reduce individuals' participation in nhimbe

The findings above point to two related factors which potentially contribute to reduced interest among community members to participate in *nhimbe* namely lack of reciprocity and bad relations or conflict in the community. To emphasise this viewpoint, below are some expressions from four respondents.

> I would not participate in someone's nhimbe if our families do not get along with each other (TSH-M62).
>
> If the convener has bad public relations in the community, I will not participate (TSH-M65).
>
> I would not participate if the convener often does not participate in other people's nhimbe (GZ-M62).
>
> I do not participate if the [hosting] family is known for serving insufficient and poor quality of food and beverages (MSK-M83).

From these findings, five key factors emerge which could contribute to reduced motivation among community members to participate in *nhimbe*. Firstly, situations whereby some community members fail to participate in other people's *nhimbe*. On this aspect, the study found that the notion of failure is not a widespread occurrence in all the communities studied. Secondly, bad relations or conflicts among families, to some extent, these were observed in Gambiza and further analysis indicates that the tensions were political as alluded to in 7.2.1 (a) and discussed in Chapter Five. Thirdly, a reducing sharing of knowledge and skills among community members normally discourages those who share theirs through the *nhimbe* arrangement. The study established that this viewpoint is linked to the Zimbabwe market economy and as North (1989) points out, there is an inverse relationship between bonds of affection and market economy development arrangement. This aspect came out slightly more prominent in Gambiza than in Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho. Fourthly, the findings illustrate that lack of reciprocal relationship is a potential factor that can reduce one's participation in *nhimbe*; a dimension which infrequently occurs in the communities investigated. Fifthly, dictates of one's religious or traditional beliefs are other factors that would cause one not to participate in someone's *nhimbe* at a given time. Lastly, some people are jealous of one another's development. Empirical work suggests that good relations among people in a community are vital foundations for *nhimbe* and if these are weak or absent the practice is likely

to decline (Andersson 2002, Thompson 2010 and Mbenene, Mutami and Tavuyanago 2010).

It has become clear from these discussions that *nhimbe* promotes community cohesion although this does not imply a causal relationship but interdependence. This is because it has been ascertained that for *nhimbe* to thrive people should already have good relations in the community and concurrently that cohesion is nurtured and strengthened through *nhimbe* (Madziva 2011: 234). The factors associated with one's reduced motivation to participate in *nhimbe* presented here are quite similar to the informants' viewpoints discussed in Chapter Six. Other significant factors highlighted include ill-health and insufficient food provision. It should be noted that one respondent mentioned unauthorised *nhimbe* as a possible reason for de-motivation. Earlier, it was pointed out that every *nhimbe* is sanctioned by the village head. Therefore, the notion of an unauthorised *nhimbe* might suggest that there are some people who breach the requirement to seek permission from their village heads or it is not a valid reason altogether. Having examined factors that can de-motivate one to participate in *nhimbe*, the study was also keen to find out the inherent weaknesses of the practice.

7.15. **Weaknesses of nhimbe**

Communities stated weaknesses of *nhimbe* in terms of what they felt were undesirable characteristics of the practice. As outlined in the table below, two aspects were mentioned from fifty (50) respondents who comprised traditional chiefs, traditional village heads, adult members of the community and young adults.

n=50	Mentions	
Undesirable aspect	**No. of times**	**%**
Nhimbe inherently encourages beer drinking in the community	8	16.0
Nhimbe encourages laziness	6	12.0

Table 7.17: Weaknesses of nhimbe

About beer drinking, one community member in Tsholotsho elaborated.

> Some people get drunk and cause conflicts, some may sleep at the nhimbe organiser's house thereby neglecting their family responsibilities; some may not even be fit for work the following day due to 'hang-over' (TSH-36-M65, Jan 2010).

The aspect of laziness was intensely explained by one adult member of the community in Musikavanhu who retorted:

> ...I see nhimbe as something that encourages laziness because I have noticed that some people tend to shift their development responsibility onto their neighbours. That is, they know that if they don't work on their tasks, they can organise nhimbe and invite neighbours to work for them (MSK-M83, December 2009).

There is no significant difference between the views of informants and community members investigated about the weakness of *nhimbe*. Generally the respondents agree that in some way *nhimbe* encourages laziness and the study found that this is a minor problem in all the three communities studied. It is noted that jealousy was mentioned by informants but not community members which could be an indication of triviality of the issue in the communities.

7.16. **Contribution of nhimbe to community members' character formation**

Just like the informants, fifty (50) community respondents across the three communities were also asked if *nhimbe* influenced their personal values and development. They comprised 37 adults aged between 43 to 82 and young adults whose ages ranged from 26 to 32 years. The figure below is a synthesis of the responses they provided.

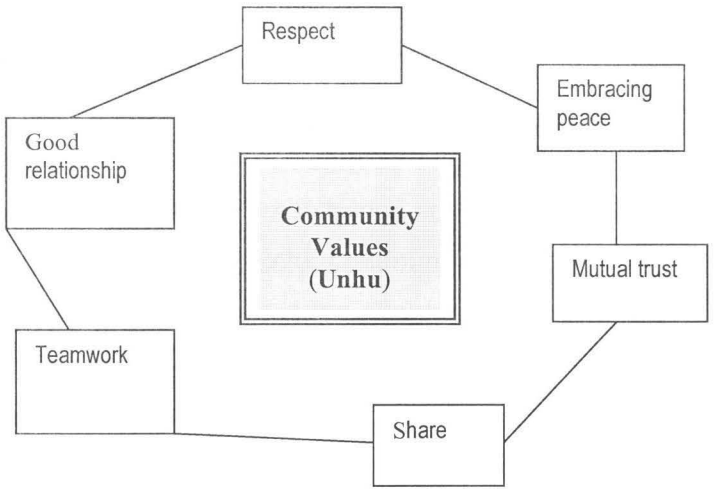


Figure 7.2: Contribution of nhimbe to character formation

It is clear from the values above that *nhimbe* has a great influence to members of the communities in their personal social development. It is noted that respondents explicitly believe that these values (trust, respect, teamwork, good relationship and peace) play an important role in community development. This is consistent with earlier studies elsewhere on social capital and the crucial role it plays in community-based development (Putnam 1993, Miruka 2013 and Whitney and Trosten-Bloom 2002). Although Putnam's emphasis was on trust and reciprocity, this study has revealed that in addition, respect and peace building are highly regarded values every community member should uphold as well for sustainable community-based development. This is a finding which featured prominently in all the three communities studied. It is an indication that both respect and peace are highly regarded and they define community life. Peace building and conflict transformation are widely researched subjects and it has been concluded that peace promotes while conflict reduces any kind of development in society (Africa Community Publishing and Development Trust 2010; Nyathi 2005 and Rodney 1981; and Whitney and Trosten-Bloom 2002).

From this standpoint, it is obvious that there is a positive relationship between peace (community cohesion) and *nhimbe* practice in the communities studied. In

other words, the practice is stronger in a peaceful community than in a conflict ridden community. One respondent stated, "...nhimbe builds community harmony as it enables people to deal with various issues of [social and economic] development" (GZ-M26). Mbenene and others (2010: 7) have also come to the same conclusion that *nhimbe* brings social cohesion among community members and it is strong in a peaceful community. This is quite consistent with the *unhu* concept discussed earlier in the chapter. *Nhimbe* is viewed as a 'social test' that if one participates in it, the person's relationship with others in the community and beyond would, to a great extent, be desirable. To emphasise this perspective, one of the community members pointed out that "nhimbe teaches you to respect, to love and to live with others in harmony".

7.17. **Chapter summary**

The findings presented in this chapter have shown the following: (a) community members play a dual role in *nhimbe*, that is, they seek for it or supply labour power including the related skills; (b) *nhimbe* responds to emergence livelihoods (*nyandayeyo*) and, importantly, it is for long term development planning in the community (bankable practice); (c) *nhimbe* is a community apprenticeship (academy) through which skills transfer takes place; (d) the practice promotes and sustains *unhu* in the community; and (e) various factors contribute to a strong or weak *nhimbe* in a community. The findings have also revealed that *nhimbe* is highly adaptable in communities mainly because it is a bottom-up practice hinged on the socio-cultural values of the community.

It is noted that community respondents and informants' views are quite similar in a number of ways. For instance, both have revealed that there is a strong relationship between *nhimbe* practice and how people uphold their community values or *unhu* (help, trust, respect, reciprocity, solidarity and peace). In other words, *nhimbe* is a manifestation of how people's culture plays a role in their own

community-based development. The fieldwork study results are clear that the practice of *nhimbe* goes beyond kinship ties to the *unhu* conception. While human capital has been widely discussed in the literature, this study has demonstrated how this phenomenon is applied at rural community level for development. In *nhimbe* practice, households trust the availability of labour and expertise from community members for their development initiatives. The knowledge and skills are continuously developed and sustained over generations through community apprenticeship or academy that take place during *nhimbe*. Although community members attributed, in some way, jealousy and laziness in the communities to *nhimbe*, it became clear that these have miniscule negative effect to its continued practice.

On the whole, the findings show that *nhimbe* is a way of life in the communities as it plays an integral role in their social and economic development. Pertaining to the social aspect this includes the fact that *nhimbe* facilitates or sustains upholding of community cultural capital, skills transfer and building of *unhu* among community members through the socialisation entrenched in the practice. On the economic perspective of *nhimbe*, the findings have indicated that it is used in short-term emergencies (*nyandayeyo*) and long term development planning. In other words, *nhimbe* is indeed a manifestation of social capital and bottom-up development theories found in the current literature (Kajese 1987, Putnam 1993, Miruka 2013, Mulwa 2004 and Realo and Allik 2008) and it defines individual and community life. Principally, *nhimbe* is anchored on balancing community *unhu/ubuntu* and community-based development discourse.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND THEORY FORMULATION

8.1. Chapter introduction

8.1.1 Introduction

The findings presented in chapters six and seven have provided insights into what is *nhimbe* in relation to community and household life within the context of community-based development. In particular, the way and the extent to which *nhimbe* functions as organised social capital embedded in community cultural capital, and the ways in which it contributes to economic and social development in the communities studied are some of the issues that emerged from the study findings presented in the previous two chapters.

8.1.2 Objectives

Therefore, the main intentions of this chapter are to:

- Synthesise the study findings;
- Establish the extent to which the findings resolved the problem statement research questions and hypotheses;
- Discuss some contradictions to otherrelated studies;
- Present implications of the study incommunity-based development practice;
- Discuss theoretical contributions of the study to community development practice discourse; and
- Outline the theory developed as a result of the study findings.

8.2. **Nhimbe practice and its rationale**

In chapter one, the researcher was curious to know what is *nhimbe*, why it is practised and what are its economic and social benefits to the communities. The study has clearly established that indeed *nhimbe* is a collective action for community-based development. Essentially, it is a short-term and long-term needs-based community development (NBCD) model anchored on the reservoirs of reciprocity, trust, respect and solidarity within the community. Fundamentally, there are three major reasons why the communities studied practise *nhimbe*, namely; to foster or sustain both economic and social development as well as to share knowledge and skills. From the study findings, it can be seen that *nhimbe* plays a dual role to the communities as discussed in the sections that follow.

8.2.1 **Economic dimension of nhimbe**

Three major economic benefits of *nhimbe* as evident in the study findings are: labour power supply, transfer of knowledge and skills (community apprenticeship) and sustainable maintenance of food security at household level and, by implication, in the community as a whole. Seen from another viewpoint, *nhimbe* is a community strategy for planned development (long-term) and also to minimise internal and external livelihoods vulnerability (shocks) at household level in the short-term (*nyandayeyo*). The food security aspect resonates with the response this researcher' mother gave when he was 13 years old in the conversation regarding the reasons for *nhimbe* practice. To reiterate, she said, *"If we don't meet our targets, you know what it means; it means you will not have food to eat; do you like to experience such a situation*?" It is apparent from the findings that food security emerged as one of the key economic reasons why *nhimbe* is practised in the communities. Notably, food security featured as a key economic benefit to all the communities investigated.

8.2.2 **Social dimension of nhimbe**

When it comes to the social reasons why *nhimbe* is practised in the communities, three related dimensions have emerged from the study. The findings clearly show that during *nhimbe*, people socialise and in the process, socio-moral values (*unhu*) are nurtured and sustained among community members. The other social perspective of *nhimbe* is that it maintains community solidarity or cohesion through the regular interaction the practice entrenches in the people. In section 1.2 of Chapter One, the researcher, based on his personal experience in nhimbe, also wondered *why almost everyone in the community felt strongly socially obligated to help each other*. On this aspect, it came out that *nhimbe* is a social inclusive practice and it can only be exclusive to individuals who do not uphold the community values or *unhu*. Most importantly, *nhimbe* is viewed as a social insurance in the community. The attributes of this social insurance phenomenon are reciprocity, trust, solidarity, respect and peace. As the study findings further revealed, if one does not participate in *nhimbe*, his or her community social support system or social insurance is significantly reduced. In fact, the study has indicated that there is no social incentive for community members not to participate in *nhimbe* as social insurance is highly valued in the communities studied. All these aspects show that *nhimbe* is an organised social capital (SC) embedded in the community cultural capital. Finally, the discussion in section 2.2 of Chapter Two and Thompson's (2010) postulation leads one to conclude that *nhimbe* is an indigenous knowledge system in the communities. This social proposition manifests in that, as already discovered in Chapter Seven, *nhimbe* facilitates transfer of knowledge and skills through generations. In other words, *nhimbe* is a community institution or academy for knowledge management among community members at no financial cost.

With regard to the regularity of *nhimbe* practice in the communities studied, the study has indicated that without active involvement of traditional leaders there is a high likelihood of a weak *nhimbe* norm in a community. This means that

traditional leadership is an integral factor for a strong or successful *nhimbe* practice. By implication, this also suggests that traditional leaders play important roles in community-based practices, that is, as stakeholders, administrators and beneficiaries of development. In fact, their involvement acts as a practical demonstration of community patriotism to development (CPD) agenda within the communities. Community patriotism (CP) is a term this author has developed from this study and it means a show of practical love, allegiance and social attachment to both economic and social life of one's community. Indeed, *nhimbe* practice resonates with the 'affective labour' concept advanced by Muehlebach (2011:67) and Munyuki-Hungwe (2011:113) which states that community members voluntarily help each other in development initiatives as an expression of social bonds and love for one another. In this study, the CPD notion is not only reflected in the traditional leaders alone but also among the community members as shown through their active and sustained participation in the practice. Without a doubt, CP is one of the important local dynamics internal or external development actors should seek to understand in order to achieve success in community-based development (CBD).

Another important dimension that came out in this study is the inverse relationship that exists between market economy or mondernisation and how strong *nhimbe* is practised in the communities. Even though this is the fact, the study also found that despite Zimbabwe being a market economy, inter-personal relationships, trust, solidarity and strong bonds of affection define life of the communities investigated. This is an indication that social capital is a bed-rock of life in these communities; notwithstanding the country being a market economy or progressively a modernised society. Hence, the study found that *nhimbe* is an important practice which defines and sustains economic and social life in the communities. The unique aspect about SC in this study is that it is embedded in the cultural framework of the communities. Notably, the study disclosed that the community members' patriotism to their own culture (CPOC) was strong. On

this, one of the community members expresses that "...it becomes easier to practise *nhimbe* if one understands the community culture." Another community member buttressed this notion and states that "it is easy to practise nhimbe in a new community if you have a relative who stays in that area already. He or she informs you about how things [culture and normative practices] are done in that area."

Both quotations further explain the resilience of social capital within a Zimbabwe market economy as shown by the existence of close relationships, strong bonds of affection, reciprocity, trust and solidarity found in the communities studied. Obviously, this finding is a sharp contradiction to the understanding of development under market economy arrangement where, for the most part, impersonal relationship is high while reservoirs of reciprocity, trust and solidarity are relatively low (North 1993, Putnam 1993, and Realo and Allik 2008). Therefore, in addition to the revelation that SC in these communities is directly linked to the culture, it is clear that strong CPOC leads to resilient social capital in a community. This implies that community culture (CC) is yet another crucial element of local dynamics that internal and external development actors alike should seek to understand for successful and sustainable CBD. Clearly, the study findings have demonstrated that culture is pivotal to sustain socio-moral framework, a necessary foundation for community development. This conclusion is similar to findings made by Nobles (1985: 4) who states that "culture provides general design for living and patterns for interpreting [people's] reality". As the literature indicates, being sensitive to local dynamics increases relevance and impact of community development (Foster 2000b, Nobles 1985, Owens 1993: 241).

From the preceding discussions, it is apparent that in addition to its contribution to economic and social life of the community, *nhimbe* also plays an apprenticeship role. This has confirmed the author's speculation prior to this

study that *nhimbe* goes beyond it being just an arrangement through which community members help one another on farming activities in an ad hoc fashion. Furthermore, the discussion has illustrated that positive relationships exist between community patriotism and sustained community development agenda on the one hand, and, social capital and community culture on the other.

8.3. **Determination of the study aims**

The research problem that guided the study was: *While nhimbe has been practised approximately since at least the 1800s and it is generally known as a work party (Anderson 2002, Kajese 1987, Kapasula 2010, Leedy 2010, Shutt 2001), not much is known beyond this particular materialistic aspect. Nhimbe is little known in terms of its economic and social contribution to community life in specific Zimbabwe rural communities.* Given the foregoing syntheses in section 8.1 above, it is obvious that the research problem was fully resolved in this study. In addition to understanding its economic or materialistic nature, the study discovered that socialisation and community apprenticeship are equally significant roles *nhimbe* plays in the communities.

As outlined in Chapter One, seven research questions applied in this study. The discussion that follows is an exploration of the extent to which each question was resolved through the data obtained and analysed in the study.

Question 1: What is nhimbe?

As pointed out in section 1.4, the study was exploratory and this was important to broadly establish what *nhimbe* is in the context of community development across the three communities studied. Key dimensions to address this question included establishment of when it started, who started it, who participates in it, how it is organised and its uses in the community. Certainly, the findings

presented in chapters six and seven sufficiently resolved this question as detailed in sections 6.2 and 7.2 respectively as well as the preceding discussions in this chapter. Although the study findings do not point to the exact period or date when *nhimbe* started in the communities, it can be inferred from the related studies by Holleman (1952), Kajese (1987), Leedy (2010), Shutt (2002) and Thompson (2010) that *nhimbe* was already practised in Zimbabwe around the 1800s. Furthermore, research participants over the age of 90 told this author that they were born when *nhimbe* was already practised in their communities. From this analysis, it can be deduced that *nhimbe* has been practised in Zimbabwe as a community-based development strategy for over 200 years now, that is, by the time this study was conducted.

Question 2: What is the purpose of nhimbe?

Pertaining to the reason why *nhimbe* is practised in the communities explored, this question was satisfactorily answered as was already discussed in sections 6.3 and 7.3 of chapters six and seven respectively. To reiterate, the key purpose of *nhimbe* is to help households in a village mostly on agricultural activities and in the process people learn from each other on a wide range of social, economic, spiritual, leadership and management issues. Apart from the economic reason, it is important to point out that socialisation and apprenticeship are equally significant aspects of *nhimbe* practice in the communities studied. On a social perspective, the net effect of *nhimbe* is nurturing and maintaining community solidarity, cohesion and peace as guided by the community socio-moral framework entrenched in the people's culture. As mentioned in 8.2.2 above, culture in CBD is a necessity because it is in itself a "general design for living and patterns for interpreting [people's] reality" (Nobles 1985: 4). Therefore, the cultural capital found in the *nhimbe* practice helps to define and maintain community life.

Question 3: What are, if any, community obligations that drive people to participate in nhimbe?

With regard to underpinnings of the practice, the analysis consistently revealed that there are indeed socio-moral obligations or community values (*unhu*) that drive people to practise *nhimbe*. As sections 6.6 and 7.8 in chapters six and seven illustrate as well as postulated by Gombe (1998) and Hamutyinei and Plagger (1987), the most revered community obligations are collective action, reciprocity, mutual trust, respect, solidarity, peace and helping each other. Again, these social obligations confirm the prominence or visibility of SC in the *nhimbe* practice. To a great extent, the question, *What are, if any, community obligations that drive people to participate in nhimbe?* was fully addressed.

Question 4: What are the economic and social benefits of nhimbe in communities?

As discussed earlier in sections 6.9 and 7.12 of chapters six and seven respectively, it emerged that the respondents discussed benefits and strengths of *nhimbe* interchangeably. For convenience, the concepts of benefits and strengths are jointly referred to as 'goodness' in this study. It is clear from the analysis that the goodness of *nhimbe* is in three forms namely social, economic and community apprenticeship. On the social front, chapters six and seven discuss in great detail how *nhimbe* shaped respondents' character and development of personal values as presented in sections 6.14 (chapter six) and 7.16 (chapter seven). This illustrates that *nhimbe* benefits people at three levels namely the community, household and the individual. It can be inferred that the contribution of *nhimbe* in people's lives goes beyond the immediate community and indeed the question was adequately addressed.

Question 5: What challenges are associated with the nhimbe practice?

The challenges implied in this question are the inherent weaknesses of the nhimbe practice. Generally, the findings have shown that respondents across the three communities, for the most part, viewed *nhimbe* positively. As pointed out in 6.12 and 7.15 of chapters six and seven, it is apparent that the weaknesses are not significant and have miniscule effect to the *nhimbe* practice. The insignificant weaknesses mentioned though are: (a) that some people become jealous of one another when they realise others have developed relatively better than themselves through the use of *nhimbe*; (b) the tendency by some people to rely on *nhimbe* for almost every development initiative in their households which leads to a conclusion that, to some extent, it encourages over-relience on community members; (c) its high frequency or regularity especially during farming season coupled with its rotational nature has a tendency to disrupt individual households' plans or routines; and (d) that *nhimbe* promotes beer drinking particularly among the young people. However, on the beer drinking notion, the study found that young people normally drink *mahewu* at *nhimbe*.

In fact, this study argues alongside Leedy (2010:493) who observes that boys and girls in Zimbabwe rural communities are not allowed (as guided by moral framework) to consume alcohol but would be served *mahewu* at *nhimbe*. It has also been noted that even Christians participate in *nhimbe* among beer drinkers but they too consume non-alcoholic beverages like *mahewu* (Leedy 2010: 495). The fact that young people are not allowed to consume beer as well as that Christians participate in *nhimbe* among those who drink beer further confirms that the practice is inclusive and guided by the community socio-moral compass including respect of each other's beliefs. To a large extent, the question was sufficiently addressed.

Question 6: If nhimbe was to be introduced to a community where it has not been practised, what should be considered the most?

Indeed, the findings have demonstrated that *nhimbe* is grounded and dependent on very close inter-household bonds and, most importantly, socio-moral compass embedded in the community culture. For this reason, it would be extremely difficult to imagine *nhimbe* to operate outside these parameters (inter-household bonds and community values) and even less so in heterogeneous urban areas. As already discussed in Question 3 above, it is important to emphasise that the communities studied possess these attributes, that is, inter-house bonds and the upholding of community values. However, it should be noted that the levels of strength or density of the inter-house bonds and adherence to community values varied across the three communities studied as clearly conferred in chapters six and seven. This is an indication that culture is fluid and more importantly, the communities exist in an open social society. For this reason, community life is bound to be influenced by multiple internal and external factors. The open society notion explains the differences in the levels of inter-house bonds and adherence to community values found in the communities investigated. As the study findings have indicated, it is highly possible that community members can create and sustain these social values (trust, reciprocity, respect, solidarity and peace) without necessarily bonded through blood relations. However, it is important to highlight that when familial connections and interactions become weak, the regularity of *nhimbe* practice is consequently reduced in a community.

Therefore, the most important considerations to introduce *nhimbe* in a community are to understand the dynamics of inter-house bonds and the underpinning socio-moral framework. Thus, this question was adequately resolved by the data analysed in this study.

Question 7: What are the potential future benefits of nhimbe in Zimbabwe community-based development?

From a social viewpoint, the potential of *nhimbe* came out clearly but limited on how this can be applied to a wide economic development in the community. Socially and morally, the benefits include community solidarity, community cohesion, peace, trust, reciprocity and respect as these were stated as crucial threads of community fibre or social capital. To some extent, the analysis has indicated that if the acceptable social principles are in place and people live by them, they create an enabling environment for economic development in communities.

The potential future benefit of *nhimbe* is likely to be a low cost indigenous community development strategy entrenched in the cultural capital of the practice. This resonates with Owens (1993:241) who asserts that "...indigenous organisations [like *nhimbe*] have the best potential to implement participatory [low cost] development initiatives that respond to the genuine local needs". The proposition of local participation is supported by Madziva (2011: 265), Uphoff (2004: 73) and earlier put forward by Chambers (1997) and Kajese (1987). It is obvious that *nhimbe* is forcefully identified with the community and it is a people-centred, culturally framed and sustainable model for community-based development (Madziva 2011: 260). The low transaction cost phenomenon in development has been extensively discussed by North (1993). Low cost in the sense that because of high levels of trust, transaction costs are dramatically reduced in development process. This study has shown that *nhimbe* is a specific example of a community practice that facilitates this low cost in CBD. It should be noted that limited discussion on the potential or application of *nhimbe* in urban areas was intentional in this study because the practice is rooted in rural areas. On the whole, the key potential future benefit of *nhimbe* to community-based development in Zimbabwe is its rootedness in the community culture. In other

words, its bottom-up nature, for the most part, promotes ownership and sustainable community-based development in the communities (Madziva 2011, Mulwa 2004 and Hampson 1990). While the future benefits are clearly inferred from the analysis conducted, it was beyond the scope of the study to establish the extent of *nhimbe* contribution to transaction costs. For this reason, the study partially resolved this question.

Regarding study hypothesis, the main proposition which guided this study is: *Nhimbe practice is a holistic community-based development model which incorporates social, economic, spiritual, political, leadership, management and gender issues*. From this central supposition, two sub-hypotheses formed the specific arguments throughout the investigation which are: (a) *Nhimbe promotes community involvement in development initiatives*; and (b) *Nhimbe encourages sustainability of development initiatives in communities since it is a community-based practice*.

Pertaining to the main hypothesis, it is apparent from the findings presented that social, economic, spiritual, political, leadership, management and gender aspects are ingrained in the *nhimbe* practice. This is illustrated in sections 6.2 and 7.2 of chapters six and seven respectively. Therefore, the major argument in this study is fully supported by the data obtained and the analysis applied.

As for the two sub-hypotheses, they too are sufficiently supported by the study because the description of *nhimbe* has, undoubtedly, shown that people are driven by community socio-moral values to help each other through their involvement in the practice. It is noted in this study that *nhimbe* is a common indigenous knowledge property, a well accepted practice in the community and that it conforms and sustains the local normative framework. The analysis leads to a conclusion that *nhimbe* promotes community ownership and encourages sustainability in community development initiatives. This confirms the expectation

of the study that *nhimbe* would be linked to community involvement and sustainable development as evidenced through dimensions of socio-moral, economic, spiritual, geo-political or community administrative structure (role of traditional leaders), management and gender. The positive relationship between development practices or models which are rooted in communities to the notion of sustainable development was also found in recent scholarship.

> Indigenous organisations [practices] have the best potential to implement participatory [sustainable] development initiatives that respond to the genuine local need (Owens 1993: 241).
>
> Development agendas that are brewed outside of the community imply no participation at all even though community members can gather under a tree and endorse an activity (Madziva 2011: 265).
>
> Spaces [development strategies] that people create for themselves, whether networks of neighbours or people who work together, women's groups or larger and more complex social movement, have entirely different character from invited spaces [external development strategies] (Cornwall 2008: 275).

The above quotations essentially have one thing in common, which is, the centrality or importance of local ideas to sustainable community development. As alluded to in the earlier discussions particularly section 8.2.2 and Chapter Three, development project/programme situational analysis, design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting are likely to be effective if the local dynamics are considered. Additionally, being sensitive to local dimensions fosters community buy-in, ownership and project/programme continuity or sustainability. Noting the increasing need to focus on local ideas towards promoting sustainability in community-based development initiatives, Kajese (1987) emotionally retorts at length:

> Are international NGOs really serious about participation and self-reliance [sustainable development] at the grassroots level [communities]? Do our NGO partners in the North appreciate the fact that for village people, participating and self-reliance does not mean being present and working

on something when the thinking and ideas have originated from outside them and their situation? (Kajese 1987: 81).

The foregoing excerpt hinges around involvement of local people in their own development agenda, an aspect that has featured prominently in this study. The author brings the notion of involvement to mean local people's contribution of ideas to address their development situation. While local participation is noble for buy-in, ownership and reduced costs especially if the people possess the required knowledge and skills, this should not mean an outright exclusion of external actors. As already pointed out in chapter three, it is quite possible that the local people might not possess all the knowledge and skills required. In that instance, external actors' knowledge and expertise would be required to ensure a development initiative is successful and produces the desired results. Therefore, local participation phenomenon cannot be generalised but understood that it is context-dependent.

Generally, the findings in this study resonate with the convictions put forward by authors above particularly on the local participation and collective action discourse. Pattenden (1999) concurs with them when he asserts that it is important to identify and support local collective actions to ensure internally sustained momentum for community-based development. Similarly this thesis has demonstrated that as a holistic and socially inclusive practice, *nhimbe* is one of the valued collective development actions in the communities.

8.4. **Contribution of the study to the existing literature on nhimbe**

When it comes to how the study has contributed to literature, five perspectives emerged which deserve a discussion in view of earlier *nhimbe* related studies. Firstly, Leedy (2010: 493) posits that *nhimbe* is a source of violence and immorality in the communities because of the beer drinking that takes place.

While beer still forms an important element of feasting at a *nhimbe* and sometimes disagreements erupt between individuals, there is little evidence in this study to suggest that beer is a source of immorality in the communities. This could be an indication that things are now different compared with the period and context to which Leedy focused his research. Viewed differently, it could also mean that the findings and analysis in this study were inadequate to establish the causal relationship between beer drinking at a *nhimbe* and immorality in the community. Secondly, in their analysis of *nhimbe*, Madziva (2011: 11, 32, 53) and Kajese (1987) give an impression that *nhimbe* is exclusively a Shona traditional practice and yet it is also found among the Ndebele people in Zimbabwe as is the case in Tsholotsho. Thirdly, most authors who have written about *nhimbe*, for the most part, give a sense that it is just an economic practice (Andersson 2002, Leedy 2010, Hampson 1990, Kajese 1987 and Shutt 2002). This study has clearly shown that socialisation is indeed a significant component of *nhimbe* practice in the three communities explored. Fourthly, the study has discovered that community apprenticeship is explicitly embedded in the practice and this has not been discussed in the current scholarship on *nhimbe*.

8.5. **Theoretical contribution of the study in development practice**

Apart from contributing to the *nhimbe* related literature as discussed in 8.4 above, this study has also contributed five (5) dimensions to community-based development practice as discussed below.

8.5.1 *People-centred or bottom-up approach in development*

The study has brought to fore the current proposition about bottom-up approach in ways that are unique to communities studied. In particular, *nhimbe* has certain characteristics which community members highly value for their own development. Most significantly, the study has shown that *nhimbe* is a concrete example of local thinking and action or participation for CBD and not just the

general claims found in the current literature (Chambers 1997, Foster 2000b, Kajese 1987, Madziva 2011 and Mulwa 2004). While the bottom-up approach is held to be appropriate in certain types of communities, this study has highlighted both the advantages of this theory in general and the fact that it works best in specific types of communities. Notably, bottom-up approach is not a general developmental model but a situation-specific one focusing on what works well for the people in question rather than have a 'one size fits all' approach for everyone. As the study disclosed, *nhimbe* works well for people in a community because the practice enables them to pool together their resources (material and expertise) to achieve short-term and long-term development needs at low transaction costs. The fact that it is anchored on the community culture which defines the socio-moral compass underpinning its practice, *nhimbe* is essentially a norm in the communities. Equally significant about this study is that no one is superior to the other in the *nhimbe* practice because community members generally regard it as a common property (Madziva 2011:279 and Kajese 1987: 180). In fact, as a community-based development practice, *nhimbe* presents a new thinking about actualising people-centred approach in development at community level. Indeed, *nhimbe* is an important evidence of the widely talked about notion of the need to be sensitive to local dynamics (Chambers 1997, Mulwa 2004 and Owens 1993) and how to leverage them for successful CBD.

8.5.2 *Appreciative Inquiry (AI)*

The *nhimbe* study presents a somewhat radical perspective about how to appreciate and understand local people's strengths, knowledge, wisdom, ability and potential in the context of community development. In other words, the study has revealed the importance of contextualising development analysis through examining strengths, limitations and potential of specific local practices in a community. Influenced by AI in this study, a community contextual analysis (CCA) process called SLiP (strengths, limitations, insights and potential) has emerged as illustrated below.

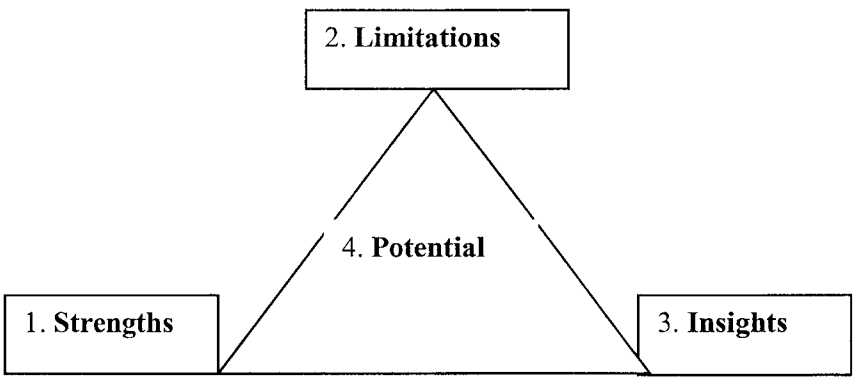


Figure 8.1: SLiP Model for CCA

The CCA borrows from the SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) technique. It should be noted that CCA is the concept while SLiP is its specific analysis tool. Similar to SWOT, SLiP begins with what the community is already good at (strengths) in dealing with its development situation. The significance of the SLiP is that the next step in the analysis process which focuses on identifying gaps that relate to how a community should resolve its development needs (limitations) followed by the insights of the situation (insights). It should be pointed out that the insights are conducted preceding the strengths and limitations identified. The final analysis step in the SLiP Model is to establish community ability levels to solve its needs (potential). Fundamentally, SLiP is an empowering (appreciative inquiry) model. It enables people in a community to appreciate who they are (culture, norms and practices), their role and significance in resolving own development challenges rather than to impulsively depend on outside thinking, ideas, creativity and solutions.

8.5.3 *Indigenous Knowledge Capital for Development (IKCD)*

Regarding indigenous knowledge system (IKS), the study has contributed to a new and related concept called Indigenous Knowledge Capital for Development (IKCD). The author calls it IKCD because of three reasons: (a) *nhimbe* is a cultural capital; (b) it is a shock-absorbing and long-term bankable development

strategy in the community; and (c) the practice has community apprenticeship entrenched in it. The study has shown that community culture underlines the *nhimbe* practice through embodiment of socio-moral values and social sanctions (positive and negative) that apply in a given community. Furthermore, *nhimbe* is an indigenous knowledge capital because it is an internal community development practice which has been passed on through generations (Gombe 1998, Muchena 1977, Leedy 2010, Kapasula 2010, Shutt 2002 and Thompson 2010). It has been demonstrated in chapter six that *nhimbe* is a form of a shock-absorber or a livelihoods coping strategy as it is organised when tasks are beyond households' development ability. *Nhimbe* is an indigenous knowledge capital in the community because people take advantage of the learning opportunities that avail themselves or entrenched in the practice.

8.5.4 *Social Capital*

The study has shown that *nhimbe* is indeed an organised SC in the community. Additionally, SC is both a characteristic and the heart that sustains *nhimbe* practice in the communities. Normally, SC is discussed and applied, for the most part, with the emphasis that trust and reciprocity are the key attributes (Putnam 1993, Realo and Allik 2008). In this study, SC goes beyond trust and reciprocity to include community apprenticeship, allegiance, help, peace, respect and solidarity. As for respect, this is similar to findings made by Chinouya and others (2003) and Madziva (2011) who conclude that it is a significant attribute to one's moral compass in the community. Additionally, it should be pointed out that allegiance and solidarity are analogous findings Madziva (2011) found with regards to the underpinnings of *nhimbe* in the communities. Regarding trust, a person radiates it through behaviour and specifically as expressed in one's actions in life (Blois 1999 and Lazar 2000). In the context of this study, the trust related behaviour was found through community members' participation in *nhimbe*. In summary, these eight *nhimbe* related SC attributes are illustrated in Figure 8.2 below.

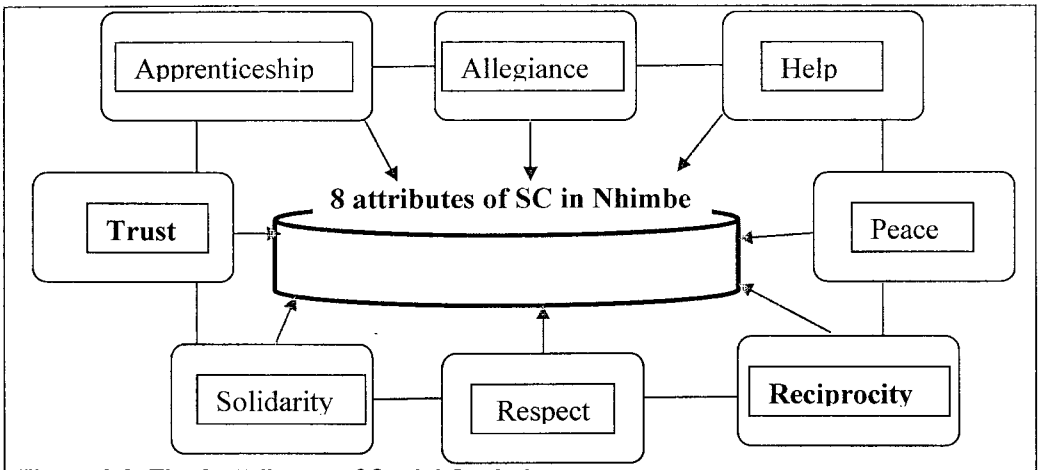


Figure 8.2: The 8 attributes of Social Capital

The Figure 8.2 above illustrates the fluidity of SC conception, that is, its form is context-dependent. In this study, the context is homogeneity, culture, proximity to the nearest urban centre, the importance of activities *nhimbe* is used and the community socio-moral compass. In fact, there is, to a great extent, direct relationship between socio-moral framework and SC of a community. To demonstrate this, on the one hand, help, peace, respect and solidarity make up the socio-moral code of the communities studied. On the other hand, they are attributes of SC in the same communities. Without a doubt, the study has revealed that the nature of SC is likely to be linked to the socio-moral code of the community and this varies across communities.

While reciprocity and trust have been studied extensively (Asante and Abarry 1996, Putnam 1993, Realo and Allik 2008) with regards to how they contribute to community development, very little has been studied in terms of how these two are related to the peace factor in the community. It has been discovered in this study that the radius of each of these (reciprocity, respect and trust) increases or decreases in relation to the level of peace in a community. This author's field experience in Gambiza as detailed in chapter five particularly section 5.4 is the key evidence to this proposition. Figure 8.1 below is a schematic representation

of how the level of peace in a community influences reservoirs of reciprocity, respect and trust.

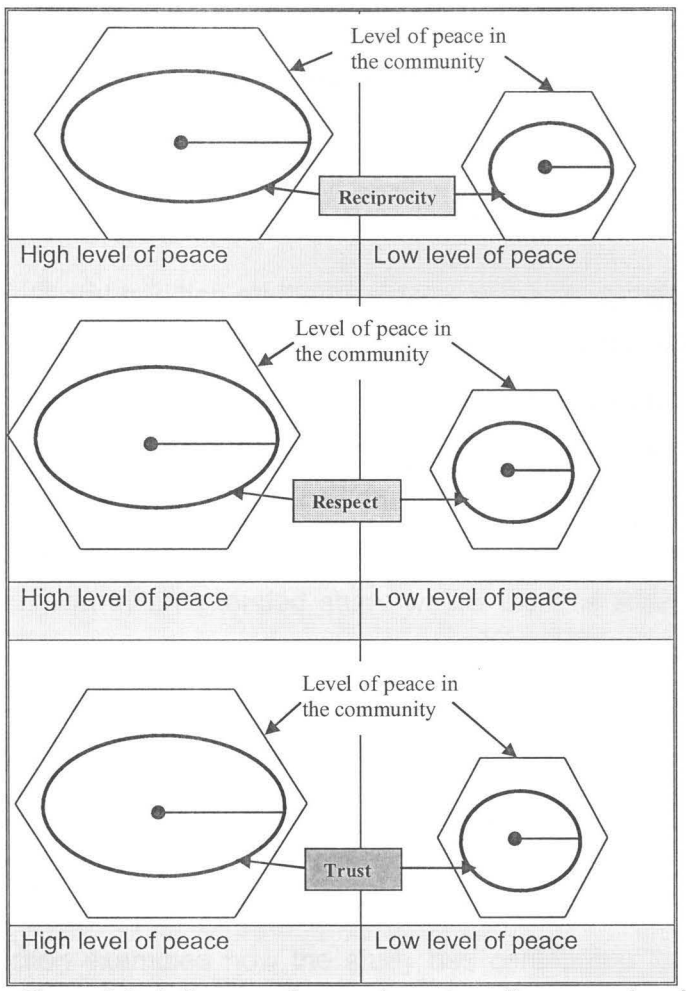


Figure 8.3: Influence of peace to reciprocity, respect and trust in the community

The Figure 8.3 above shows that the reservoirs of reciprocity, respect and trust are proportionate to the level of peace in a community. As discussed in sections 5.4 and 7.2.1 of chapters five and seven respectively, to some extent, the political polarisation the researcher experienced in Gambiza was a factor to the observed weak *nhimbe* practice in that community. Although there is little evidence in the study to establish a causal relationship between peace and

nhimbe practice, it can be inferred from the Gambiza experience that the two are indeed linked and inversely related. Woven together, the presence of the foregoing values as presented in Figures 8.2 and 8.3 above induces community members to collectively work together through their involvement and participation in *nhimbe*. This is an explicit expression or evidence of social capital couched in the *nhimbe* practice.

8.5.5 *Oral tradition*

The use of oral tradition method (orature) in the study has indeed shown that in the absence of significant literature on a subject matter, orature is quite a useful research strategy to start building understanding or argument on a phenomenon. As evident in this study particularly section 2.2 of Chapter Two, orature findings became significant pre-cursor to the methodological design which guided the investigation as detailed in Chapter Four. Most significantly, this study has illustrated that in an intended study where there is little literature, the use of orature can indeed be the first step in data collection. Above all, orature findings could become solid foundation for the researcher to confidently and effectively formulate the research design. Therefore, while the application of oral tradition is often discussed in general terms, it has been used in this study on a specific practice (*nhimbe*) and in particular communities.

This section examined how the study has contributed to the theories of social capital, people-centred and appreciative inquiry. Furthermore, the discussion explored the role the study has played in understanding indigenous knowledge system as well as orature from community-based practice and social research perspectives. Overall, the analysis has shown that *nhimbe*, a community-based practice, is a practical example of how these theories and concepts work in specific communities.

8.6. **Study implications**

The study findings presented in Chapters Six and Seven and the theoretical contributions as discussed in the preceding sections have important implications for community-based development practice. The implications of the study are fivefold: households, traditional leaders, government of Zimbabwe, development practitioners and development studies.

8.6.1 **Households**

Concerning households, *nhimbe* allows for the nurturing and strengthening of cultural capital at household level through the upholding of socio-moral values and normative practices. It also shows the social and economic benefits that accrue through the strengthening of these values. As the study has disclosed, by implication, when cultural capital is strengthened at household level, community solidarity and cohesion are sustained, these being the key factors for community-based development. However, the reality is that communities are open social systems which are susceptible to external positive or negative influence. This suggests that although *nhimbe* plays a significant role in households' economic and social being, it is not a sufficient fibre to maintain community life due to the highly likely influence of external factors like modernisation.

8.6.2 **Traditional community leaders**

As noted in section 8.3 in this chapter and 7.7 of Chapter Seven, *nhimbe* demands an active role of traditional leaders (village heads) pertaining to its administrative and implementation processes. This implies that traditional leaders should ensure how socio-moral values and culture link to development in their communities. This resonates with current literature that traditional leaders are custodians or gatekeepers of culture and normative practices (Gelfand 1979, Gombe 1998, Madziva 2011, Mararike 1999 and Hampson 1990).

8.6.3 Government of Zimbabwe

For Zimbabwe, *nhimbe* presents an opportunity for the government to review the role community-based practices could play in the development agenda of the country. This is important because the study has already shown that understanding local context and dynamics including the community practices is integral to community-based development discourse. Without or with limited government's understanding of the practices and indeed, the social and cultural capitals that exist in the communities, there is high likelihood that the policies and strategies made might not be appropriate or effective for successful community-based development.

From the review of the related literature, it emerges that this research is the first elaborate academic research on *nhimbe*. This implies that further studies on *nhimbe* and other similar traditional community practices should be conducted. Noting deficiency in this area, Madziva (2011: 301) fears that "...Southern [Sub-Saharan African] development ideas such as *nhimbe* face being academically ignored". Madziva's postulation suggests that very little has been done to consider or incorporate traditional or community-based practices like *nhimbe* in development studies curricula. There is no doubt that academic focus on community practices would be of great value in CBD discourse. This is because the study findings have powerfully demonstrated that CBD through *nhimbe* is primarily anchored on people's culture as manifested in the socio-moral values or obligations that underpin its practice. Most importantly, culture and socio-moral values are evolving realities which require sustained academic focus to keep up with this fluidity to ensure successful or effective community-based development initiatives.

For individual or institutional development practitioners, understanding community practices and the related SC valued in the communities is vital to increase programme buy-in, ownership and sustainability at community level.

Most significantly, when development agencies understand and apply the *nhimbe* model, the input cost to a development project is likely to be low since the community members are already motivated and voluntarily share their resources (material and expertise) for CBD. The success or failure of community-based development projects/programmes could, to a great extent, depend on how local practices or community socio-moral values are considered in project cycles of given development initiatives within communities.

8.7. **Theory formulation from the nhimbe practice**

The study contribution to community development practice has, as discussed in the preceding sections, resulted in a *nhimbe* related theory. This investigator calls it Organised Community Cultural Capital for Development (OCCCD or OC^3D) theory, the ^{3} being the three Cs in the name. The proposed OC^3D is a synthesis and graphical representation of the implication and the role people's culture plays in their own community-based development agenda as established through the *nhimbe* practice. While theories of the potential strength of local cultures in community development have recently taken currency (Foster 2002a, Owens 1993), the studies have not been specific to socio-cultural practices like *nhimbe* is in this study. In fact, within the communities studied, people regard *nhimbe* as a cultural capital since it is entrenched in their cultural norms and community socio-moral compass (CSMC). In addition, the study findings have indeed indicated that the respondents highly value certain aspects of *nhimbe*; hence, they regard it as a principal model for their CBD. The derivative formation of this theory from the *nhimbe* practice as the study has found is sketched on the next page.

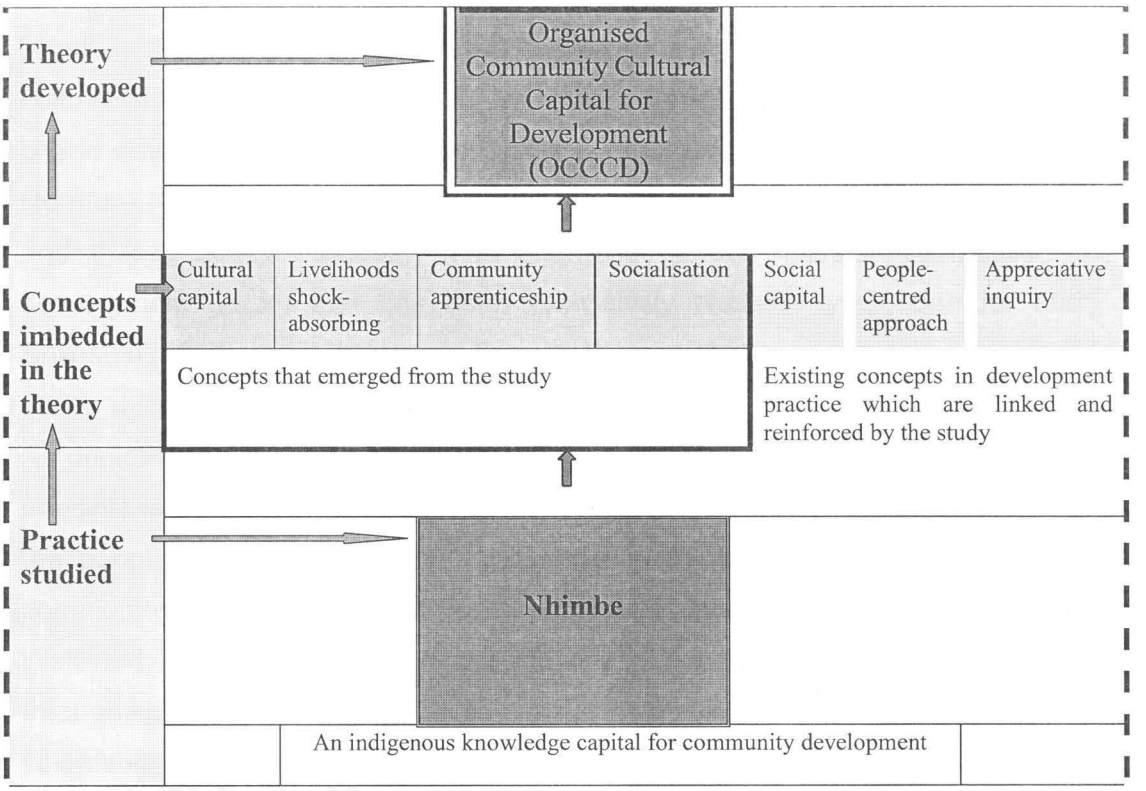


Figure 8.4: Nhimbe related theory

8.7.1 *Justification for the OC³D theory derived from the nhimbe practice*

Evidently, *nhimbe* is a theoretical foundation for the OC³D theory because of five perspectives: (a) within a village, there is one *nhimbe* organised at a time; (b) every *nhimbe* is sanctioned by the village head; (c) tasks are communicated and the related work requirements are made known in advance; (d) there is planning and preparation of food; (e) at every *nhimbe*, a monitoring and evaluation officer is designated for performance management and general welfare of the participants; and most importantly (f) *nhimbe* is couched in the people's culture, socio-moral framework and normative practices.

8.7.2 *Principles of OC^{3}D Theory*

Primarily, the OC^{3}D is an interpretive social capital entrenched in the community culture and draws its conceptual framework from the bottom-up community-based development, an approach which is extensively discussed in the current literature (Chambers 1997, De Beer and Swanepoel 1998 & 2006, Mulwa 2004 and Wilcox 2000). Equally, it is anchored on the appreciative inquiry, a development theory that has been extensively studied by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) and Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010).

As depicted in Figure 8.4 above, OC^{3}D is guided by seven principles. The first principle is that sustainable community-based development should be rooted in the people's cultural framework and socio-moral code. The second is that community members are the most important players to address their own livelihoods shocks (short-term or *nyandayeyo*) and long-term development needs through collective actions. The third principle is that community members should voluntarily share and learn from each other (community apprenticeship) and this enables the passing on of knowledge and skills through generations. The fourth is that socialisation is a critical component of CBD which should be intentionally and explicitly considered. The fifth principle is that development practitioners should seek to understand social capital from the context of the community since its form can vary depending on the local socio-moral values and normative practices; that is, local dynamics. The sixth is that community development is a collaborative effort which requires participation of stakeholders through their input (financial, material and expertise) at appropriate levels of a given initiative. The final principle is that the local people have certain strengths and potential to resolve their own development situations, hence, the need to identify existing local ability (appreciative inquiry) for any CBD undertaking in a community.

8.7.3 *Strengths of OC^{3}D Theory*

The OC^{3}D theory recognises the centrality of people's culture and traditions in development. Most significantly, the theory notes that culture is a fluid notion and practitioners should foster context-driven community development, that is, they have to avoid one size fits all tendency.

It recognises the notion of organised development for increased rate of success or attainment of desired results in a community. In other words, the theory reminds and encourages development practitioners about the importance of planning for effective development results.

OC^{3}D is a realisation that diversity in its various forms exists within communities and it is important to seek understanding of the community differentiations for successful CBD. From the study, some of the types of community differentiations include levels of homogeneity, language, socio-economic development, traditional leadership support, inter-house bonds and kinship ties.

The theory encourages consideration of social inclusiveness in CBD discourse because of its emphasis on local participation in terms of input of ideas, knowledge, skills, experiences and material resources for development.

The OC^{3}D is flexible and obviously contextual. It takes into account the community structure or organisation including culture as critical considerations to inform the local development strategy. This is denoted by the term 'organised community cultural capital' which forms the key phrasing of the theory.

8.7.4 *Factors essential for the success of OC^{3}D Theory*

Three factors are essential for the success of OC^{3}D in a community:

Community contextual analysis is important in order to understand the socio-cultural constitution of the community and the related local dynamics. This should be done using relevant analysis tools like the SLiP technique proposed in this study as shown in Figure 8.1 in the preceding section.

Practitioners should have an appreciative inquiry mindset, that is, in any community there are aspects that work well for the social and economic life of the people. If these are understood and applied, it can contribute significantly to CBD.

Community leaders' involvement or support is vital since they are supposed to be the key socio-cultural informants. In fact, this study has found that traditional leaders' community patriotism significantly motivates people to participate in CBD. This is analogous with the current literature which states that traditional leaders have been identified as the fulcrum of rural community development in Zimbabwe (Hampson 1990, Madziva 2011 and Mararike 1999).

8.8. **Key characteristics of nhimbe**

From the study, ten (10) characteristics of nhimbe surfaced across all the three communities studied. The first characteristic is that *nhimbe* is an economic and social needs-based community development practice. Thus, people use it to respond to livelihoods shocks (emergencies) and for long term economic and social development in the communities.

The second characteristic is that *nhimbe* is a well organised community development practice participated by members of the same village.

The third characteristic is that only one *nhimbe* is conducted at a time in a village and the work lasts for about seven (7) hours (6am to 1pm). The rest of the day is reserved for feasting and socialising.

The fourth is that traditional leaders play an active role and every *nhimbe* has to be approved by the village head.

The fifth characteristic is that the major socio-moral values (*unhu*) that underpin *nhimbe* practice are reciprocity, trust, respect, solidarity and peace.

The sixth is that as long as one upholds the community unhu, no one is excluded from taking part in *nhimbe*. Expressed differently, as long as one upholds the value system (*unhu*), the practices that evoke the value system will not exclude anyone.

Seventh, related to *unhu*, people who practise *nhimbe* have strong bonds of affection.

Eighth, *nhimbe* is a practice through which community socio-moral values and norms (*unhu*) are shared, enforced, practised and sustained. In other words, *nhimbe* is an institution for social sustainability in the community.

Ninth, *nhimbe* is a community apprenticeship or community academy which facilitates knowledge and skills transfer.

Finally, *nhimbe* is a culturally institutionalised capital which is guided by the community socio-moral and spiritual framework.

Noting the increasing focus on people-centred approaches, social capital, recognition of indigenous knowledge systems and cultural capital, traditional practices like *nhimbe* deserve attention in respect of their potential contribution to community-based development. The principles of *nhimbe*, its contributions and challenges discussed in this study are all important considerations towards locating the role of traditional or community-based practices in community-based development. This requires a participatory approach whereby government, private sector, civil society and academics work together to promote studies in traditional practices within the realm of community development. The envisaged promotions and studies would be crucial to providing evidence and theoretical foundations about the merits and disadvantages of the traditional practices in community development. It is important to point out that a sustained analysis of these practices is vital to effectively guide their applications in community-based development. Without a multi-sectoral approach to seek understanding and application of traditional or community-based practices like *nhimbe*, it is quite possible that they will remain in the periphery of the overall community development discourse and academic thrust in the country.

8.9. **Chapter summary**

To begin, the chapter synthesised the *nhimbe* practice particularly as a culturally institutionalised capital including its rationale in the communities. Next, was the discussion of the major findings which included: (i) the economic dimension of *nhimbe*; (ii) the social dimension of *nhimbe*; (iii) determination of problem statement, research questions and hypotheses; (iv) the contribution of the study to the literature; (v) the theoretical contribution of the study in community-based development practice; (vi) the study implications; (vii) the formulation of the *nhimbe* related theory; and (viii) key characteristics of *nhimbe*.

As pointed out throughout this chapter, people-centred approach, social capital, and appreciative inquiry have gained currency in development practice (Mararike 1999, Kajese 1987, Owens 1993, Muehlebach 2011 and Mutunhu 2011) and indeed these theories are explicit in the *nhimbe* practice. Certainly, the findings have shown that *nhimbe* is a culturally institutionalised practice; hence, the OC^3D theory has been developed. Next is the final chapter of this thesis and it focuses on the conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

9.1. Introduction and chapter objectives

The findings have been presented in Chapters Six and Seven then discussed in Chapter Eight. Chapter Six was a presentation of the views from the key informants about *nhimbe* while Chapter Seven focused on fieldwork findings from the three communities studied, that is, Musikavanhu, Gambiza and Tsholotosho. In Chapter Eight, the researcher consolidated the two sets of findings including the extent to which the study aims and theoretical foundations were resolved. This chapter provides a final synthesis of the study. Specifically, the objectives of this chapter are to:

- Provide an overall summary to the study;
- Give recommendations as informed by the study findings and the literature reviewed; and
- Offer suggestions for further research.

9.2. Conclusions

9.2.1 Nhimbe and how it reflects current development theories

Without a doubt, the study was exploratory and it aimed at understanding the *nhimbe* practice including its contribution to community-based development within the specific rural communities of Zimbabwe. Most significantly, the study extensively described *nhimbe* in terms of its purpose, how it is organised, who

participates in it, its underpinnings, associated social sanctions applied in the practice and how it defines individual and community life. Notably, the study established that *nhimbe* is an internal affective rural community development model used for a variety of initiatives especially agricultural activities. In other words, it is a specific practical example of a bottom-up or people-centred approach in CBD couched in the community culture.

In fact, this study has revealed that *nhimbe* can be described in ten related ways. The first one is that *nhimbe* is a needs-based community development model. The second description is that it is a community strategy for planned development (long-term) and to minimise vulnerability shocks (internal or external) at household level in the short-term (*nyandayeyo*). The third is that *nhimbe* is a social insurance in the community which is hinged on the reservoirs of social capital. The fourth description is that *nhimbe* is an organised social capital entrenched in the community life, that is, it is culturally framed. The fifth is that it is a community institution or academy for knowledge management and skills transfer among community members. The sixth description is that *nhimbe* is a collective development action in the communities. The seventh is that it is an act of interdependence among the community members. The eighth description is that it is an expression of love in the community. The ninth is that it is a common property, that is, no individual can claim ownership of the practice but the whole community. Finally, *nhimbe* is a social support system or social insurance in the community, it being an extension of the extended family support system.

From its underpinnings, it can be seen that the smaller and more homogenous the community as well as the more important a development situation, the greater the likelihood of community based practices work successfully. Indeed, this is similar to findings made by Ostrom (2000) and Wade (1987).

Equally important, the study was also an analysis of the theories within which *nhimbe* naturally and explicitly expresses itself as a community-based development practice in the three communities studied. On this dimension, it is clearly seen that the study findings consistently affirmed three theories which are, ranked in their order of most relevance, social capital, participation and appreciative inquiry. The extent to which these three theories feature or reflect themselves in the *nhimbe* practice is summarised here in turn.

Firstly, nhimbe is an explicit expression of social capital primarily because of the eight attributes presented in Figure 8.2 of Chapter Eight as well as the strong social bonds (close relationships) that anchor the practice in the communities. It is important to point out that these strong social bonds are internally developed through a combination of blood relations, shared culture and community values. In fact, it came out vividly that there is a positive correlation between levels of social capital and the strength (frequency and magnitude) of *nhimbe* practice in the communities investigated. The fact that strong bonds are the backbone of *nhimbe*, illustrates that the practice works well in affective communities like those studied and less in affective-neutral ones or market economies. Without a doubt, this means that *nhimbe* is not a practice used as a one size fits all CBD model but instead it works strongly in specific communities, that is, those with the characteristics similar to the ones found in this study.

Secondly, on the theory of participation, it emerged that everyone in the community is involved in the *nhimbe* practice at various levels. One, village heads actively provide administrative and moral support as well as to ensure that the practice is driven by community values and cultural framework. Thus, in the *nhimbe* model, traditional community leaders are indeed important actors of development in their communities and this implies that community leadership involvement is integral in community-based development. Two, the ordinary community members' participation is quite evident through the contributions they

make in the practice like the sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences as well as the physical work and socialisation. Furthermore, participants provide necessary equipment or tools required at every *nhimbe* and this obviously reduces input costs of the work. This is a practical example of North's (1993) general conception about factors that reduce or increase transaction costs in development discourse. In fact, it is important to point out that community members are the key actors of the *nhimbe* practice. Three, the elderly participate in a unique way. While they may not be able to physically work, they provide wisdom and share experiences accumulated throughout their years of active participation in *nhimbe*. In addition, the community elders (CE) share their knowledge of the community socio-moral code and culture at a *nhimbe* as part of their wisdom indulgence. Another way CEs participate is that they feast with others and tell folklores and these two form an important aspect of the socialisation embedded in the *nhimbe* practice. Also significant to note is that elders babysit children while the parents do the work and this too is a social act which contributes to reduced transaction costs in the development process as community members do not have to hire paid child minders. Four, young people (minors) play a part in the *nhimbe* practice because they also babysit children as their parents work at a *nhimbe*. Additionally, they carry out various chores assigned to them by their parents and elders during the *nhimbe* process. Furthermore, young people sing, dance and play drama at a *nhimbe* as part of entertainment which is normally done after completion of work. Young people's interaction with the elders provides a sustained opportunity for them to learn *unhu*, an integral moral constitution of the CBD in the context of the communities studied. Finally, children participate simply by going with their mothers or guardians to *nhimbe*. The involvement of everyone as discussed here is clear evidence why nhimbe contributes to participative or bottom-up development in the communities studied.

Lastly, *nhimbe* is an example of how appreciative inquiry is formed, nurtured and sustained at community level. AI is particularly evident in *nhimbe* as findings have shown that the practice is a localised and culturally-institutionalised mechanism for CBD. As discovered in the study, people in the communities explored affirm their socio-cultural identity as an integral part for community social and economic development. In other words, they appreciate who they are and this forms both a strength and potential in their development endevours. The notion of self-appreciation is further demonstrated by the fact that *nhimbe* has been practised since around the 1800s or earlier. The study has illustrated that when affirmation of people's self-worth exists through their sharing of knowledge, skills, experiences and cultural capital, this becomes a positive force for successful CBD. Having drawn conclusions on the descriptive findings of *nhimbe* and the theoretical arguments advanced, the next section summarises how the study was resolved.

9.2.2 **Resolution of the study**

As stated in section 1.5 of Chapter One, the aim of the study was to explore what *nhimbe* is in the context of community-based development in Zimbabwe. Specifically, the study was guided by six related purposes: (i) to describe *nhimbe* towards understanding the practice; (ii) to determine the purpose of *nhimbe* practice in the communities; (iii) to ascertain the extent to which *nhimbe* is an inclusive community practice; and (iv) to establish how *nhimbe* contributes to economic and social life of the three communities studied; (v) to find out the socio-moral obligations that underpin the *nhimbe* practice; and (vi) to systematically document the practice. As pointed out in section 9.2.1 above, indeed the study adequately explored *nhimbe* as a community-based practice including analysis of its contribution to economic and social life of individuals and communities. Clearly, *nhimbe* is a social inclusive community practice. The study also achieved one of its key objectives, that is, to systematically document the practice as evidenced through the findings analysed and presented. Most

importantly, the documentation of *nhimbe* is a significant contribution to literature in development, culture, sociological and anthropological studies.

As for the study hypotheses, the main study proposition as presented in Chapter One, section 1.6 is that *nhimbe practice is a holistic community-based development model which incorporates social, economic, spiritual, political, leadership and gender issues.* The proposition had two related sub-hypotheses as follows: **(a)** Nhimbe promotes community involvement in development initiatives; and (b) *Nhimbe encourages economic and social sustainability of development initiatives in communities since it is a community-based practice.* As the discussion in section 8.3 of Chapter Eight shows, it is clear that for the most part, the data obtained, analysed and presented sufficiently resolved the research propositions initially put forward in this study.

When it comes to research questions as outlined in section 1.8 of Chapter One, seven key research questions formed the basis of inquiry in this study. Just like the hypotheses, it is conclusive from the discussion in section 8.3 of Chapter Eight that the first five research questions, to a great extent, were adequately resolved through the data obtained, analysed and presented in the study. However, the last two questions were partially resolved and this is an indication that further *nhimbe* related research could be required.

9.2.3 **Summary conclusions**

Overall, twelve (12) key conclusions emerge from the study as follows:

Firstly, *nhimbe* is a community-based collective assistance action or an act of interdependence that nurtures and sustains economic, social and spiritual life of communities for short-term (vulnerability shocks) and long-term development planning needs. It is a normative practice in the villages couched in the

community socio-cultural framework and has been passed on through generations since approximately the 1800s. For this reason, *nhimbe* is a form of an indigenous knowledge capital for community-based development.

Secondly, due to language and different dialects that exist in the country, various terms are used to refer to *nhimbe*. In Gambiza, *humwe*, *ilima* and *chigambe* are used; in Musikavanhu are *humwe* and *mukote*; and in Tsholotsho, only one term is used which is *ilima*. Other terms used in other parts of the country include *hoka*, *hala*, *jangano* and *jakwara*. The use of the different terms across communities confirms the entrenchment of *nhimbe* practice in community socio-cultural framework. Furthermore, this demonstrates that the practice is sensitive to local dynamics including language or dialects spoken in a particular community.

Thirdly, *nhimbe* is related to extended family support system (EFSS). In other words, people with EFSS values are more likely to give significance to *nhimbe* and participate in it than those without.

Fourthly, *nhimbe* has similarities and differences with other related practices reviewed in this study namely *Milpa* in Mexico; *Study Circle* in Sweden; *Harambee* in Kenya and *Chilimba* in Zambia. The similar features are as follows: (i) knowledge and skills sharing take place during the practices; (ii) they are philanthropic actions community members use to assist each other on economic and social life; (iii) they are social inclusive practices; and (iv) the practices are passed on through generations. Part of the *nhimbe* origin is its rootedness in agricultural activities and this is quite similar to the Milpa practice. Furthermore, unlike the other practices, feasting and socialising are integral aspects that constitute the practices of *nhimbe* and milpa. In terms of the dissimilarities, *nhimbe* differs significantly from the other practices in three ways: (i) it is organised and practised by members of the same village; and (ii) it is a

community requirement that people should seek approval from traditional leaders (village heads) to organise it; and (iii) except for *milpa* and *chilimba*, its primary beneficiaries are households rather than individuals.

Fifthly, from the theoretical dimension, *nhimbe* is most related to social capital and bottom-up development theories in terms of its practice. As for development practitioners who seek to understand local resources and dynamics like *nhimbe*, appreciative inquiry is the most appropriate approach to use.

Sixthly, key factors for a strong *nhimbe* in a community are homogeneity, close knit communities, upholding of community *unhu*, a community is further away from the nearest town (more than 100km), strong inter-household bonds and strong involvement of traditional leaders.

Seventhly, factors for a weak *nhimbe* in a community include heterogeneity, large size communities, dispersed households, weak inter-household bonds, significant differential economic and social status among community members, lack of a shared community *unhu* and limited or weak traditional leaders' involvement.

Eighthly, cooperation between traditional leaders and politicians is a paramount ingredient for successful community-based development. In other words, practical demonstration of community patriotism by community leaders at all levels is likely to sustain development agenda in the communities.

Ninthly, community sociology (CS) which includes socio-moral framework, norms and practices forms an integral context for local development.

Tenth, *nhimbe* is one of the local dynamics which provides crucial insights for effective or successful contextualised community-based development in communities that practise it.

Eleventh, an important contribution of the study to literature is that *nhimbe* is not just a work party but that socialisation and apprenticeship are integral components of the practice. Furthermore, while the literature gives an impression that *nhimbe* is used only for livelihoods emergencies, the study concurs but it has also established that the practice is also used for long-term development planning at household level.

Finally, a *nhimbe* related theory has emerged called Organised Community Cultural Capital for Development. The basis for the formation of the theory being that the practice is couched in the socio-cultural framework of the community. In fact, the findings clearly show that *nhimbe* plays a significant role in community self-definition, reproduction of relationships and sustenance of values.

In summary, the study conclusions above covered the following about *nhimbe*: the synthesis of the descriptive findings; the theoretical foundations that guided the study; the resolution of the study specifically the purpose, hypotheses and research questions; and the synthesis of the study. It is obvious from the study findings that *nhimbe* plays three important roles in the lives of individuals and communities studied which are economic, socio-spiritual and apprenticeship. In view of the findings and these conclusions, the recommendations that emerged from the study are presented in 9.3 below.

9.3. Recommendations

Five (5) recommendations made in this study are directed to the following stakeholders: communities and their traditional leaders; government of Zimbabwe; policymakers in development studies; local and international development agencies.

9.3.1 Fostering community *unhu* and peace as key factors in the nhimbe practice

The study findings have shown that *nhimbe* is more easily practised in some communities with close shared bonds (Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho) than heterogeneous ones (Gambiza). The findings are similar to those made by Ostrom (2000) and Wade (1987) in which they conclude that common property resources practice works successfully in smaller and more homogenous community bound by resources people regard as important, needs their protection and management for livelihoods. Most significantly, the findings have clearly indicated that there is a direct relationship between community values (*unhu)* and bottom-up or people-centred approaches in community-based development. That is, smaller and more homogenous communities often are able to draw on reservoirs of trust, reciprocity, solidarity, allegiance, respect and peace, all being elements of *unhu* in the communities studied. These *unhu* elements form the overall notion of social capital leading to a conclusion that the two (*unhu* and social capital) are synonymous. As discussed earlier, the presence of high levels of social capital normally helps to lower transaction costs and allow people to work together in ways that mobilise labour power as well as expertise within communities effectively and cheaply. As the study found, these values are an asset for livelihoods strategies within the framework of CBD.

Furthermore, the study found that it is difficult to practise *nhimbe* in a polarised community. That is, a community which is less homogeneous; has less shared consensus and values; less social capital and less active traditional leaders. For

these reasons, it is strongly recommended that communities that currently practise *nhimbe* or wish to do so should ensure that community *unhu* is shared to everyone and understood. Among other ways, the sharing can be done through the regular communal meetings and informal social gatherings in the communities. Most importantly, community conflict management and resolution mechanisms should either be strengthened or developed as peace is a vital factor for community-based development through the *nhimbe* arrangement or other.

9.3.2 Sustained traditional leaders' role in community-based development

Community traditional leaders being custodians of community culture and normative practices (Madziva 2011 and Owens 1993), indeed play a significant role in promoting and sustaining community-based development practices like *nhimbe* in their jurisdictions. A culture of collective effort, shared consensus and values evident in the communities investigated particularly Musikavanhu and Tsholotsho clearly shows that local dynamics are paramount considerations for successful community-based development. As was noted in Chapter Five sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2, sometimes there is limited cooperation between traditional leaders and elected political leaders in the same community on development agenda. This obviously reduces progressive development in communities. Therefore, traditional leaders should ensure that community cultural capital (socio-moral values, norms, beliefs and practices) is enforced and sustained including that political dynamics are effectively managed in the interest of sustainable community development. Based on the current government administrative structure, the Ministry of Local Government, Urban and Rural Development would be the most appropriate ministry to exploit this recommendation.

9.3.3 Government resettlement programme

Regarding rural resettlement, when the government resettles people in any part of the country, it should take serious considerations about kinship ties, traditional leadership and neighbourliness. The study has already found that kinship ties, bonds of affection, traditional leaders and neighbours play integral roles in development initiatives at household and community levels. Also, the study has established that apart from work at a *nhimbe*, people discuss and resolve a diversity of social issues and this is sometimes done through music, dance and cracking of jokes. The social solidarity or cohesion in a community is often possible among people who have shared history, values and worldviews (Madziva 2011, Mararike 1999 Munyuki-Hungwe 2011 and Thompson 2010). This denotes that government resettlement policies and implementation frameworks may need to take cognizance of the importance of social bonds in community-based development. In addition, it would be essential for the government to promote and financially support research and documentation of traditional practices like *nhimbe* with a view to develop comprehensive livelihoods development strategies in rural communities. Together, the Ministries of Lands & Rural Resettlement and Local Government, Urban & Rural Development would be the most appropriate government structures to implement this recommendation.

9.3.4 Local and international development agencies

Noting that, to a great extent, *nhimbe* is being practised in the three communities investigated, it would be crucially important for local and international community development agencies that work in these communities to recognise and understand it as a vital local context or dynamics. In other words, the development agencies should take note of the contribution of local practices and *unhu* (community values) in community-based development. In addition, this study has demonstrated that the community development practitioners should actively utilise the significant roles community traditional leaders and elected

politicians play in the overall development agenda of a community. To recognise and involve community leaders at appropriate aspects of development programmes or projects are indeed key elements of the local sensitivity in community-based development. As the study findings showed that *nhimbe*, being a people-centred approach (local context sensitivity) promotes buy-in, ownership and sustainable development in the communities explored. In fact, this study argues alongside Chambers (1997), Foster (2000b), Kajese (1987), Madziva (2011) and Mulwa (2004) that community development agencies should, for the most part, be guided by the local context in their practice to avoid a one size fits all scenario. The Ministry of Local Government, Urban and Rural Developmentcan play a significant role to guide local and international development agencies to understand the local contexts or dynamics for successful community-based development.

9.3.5 **Policymakers in development studies**

The study has revealed that community sociology (unhu, beliefs, norms and practices,) plays a major role in community-based development discourse. Against this understanding, policymakers of tertiary education in Zimbabwe may need to review the contribution of traditional practices like *nhimbe* in community development agenda. The assessment should lead to a conclusion about how traditional community practices fit or contribute to undergraduate and postgraduate development studies. The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education should be the key player in this review process.

9.4. **Suggestions for further research**

Following the presentation of the findings, the discussion of findings, the implications of the study, contribution of the study, theory formulation, conclusions and recommendations, four areas for further research are suggested.

9.4.1 Application of nhimbe in government development projects

As the study has found, *Harambee* and *Study Circle* are also used at national level for large scale development. For this reason, the government of Zimbabwe could look into how it can utilise *nhimbe* for capital projects in the country like building of schools, health centres and other civic amenities in the communities countrywide. This means that the proposed study would examine application of *nhimbe* at a higher level of community development than its current use as established in this study.

9.4.2 Nhimbe in urban areas

As already discovered that *nhimbe* is predominantly practised in rural areas, it would be essential for someone to conduct research on how/whether it or some of its principles could be applied in urban communities. The study would also investigate the relationship between *nhimbe* and modernisation or modernity in view of the discussions presented in section 6.11.3 of Chapter Six on this aspect.

9.4.3 Genesis of nhimbe

The findings in this study partially addressed the origin of nhimbe. Owing to this, it is suggested that a historical study of *nhimbe* could be conducted. The study could focus on, among other elements, where, when, who and how it started.

9.4.4 Human capital

While one of the roles *nhimbe* plays in the community is the knowledge management and skills transfer (community apprenticeship), the study was limited to establish how the practice could contribute to the human capital phenomenon. This suggested research is against the backdrop that promoters of the human capital phenomenon argue that ingredients for societal development should go beyond education, technology and skills to include

social-moral values of a community (Adjibolosoo 1994 and Mararike and Chivaura 1998). Furthermore, the literature on this notion claims that consideration of socio-moral values in the development discourse ensures significant and sustained human capital development in communities (Adjibolosoo 1994, Ofori-Amoah 1995, Mararike and Chivaura 1998 and Mulwa 2004). For this reason, one could study the extent to which *nhimbe* might contribute to human capital development in the communities.

9.4.5 Potential future benefits of nhimbe in community-based development

Like the genesis of nhimbe, this study was limited in addressing the extent to which communities that practise *nhimbe* could economically and socially benefit from it in the future. For this reason, it is recommended that a study be conducted to establish the future potential economic and social benefits of *nhimbe* in view of the market economy and increasingly modernised Zimbabwe society.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Benefits or Strengths of Nhimbe

Respondent PKO1	
Benefits	**Strengths**
• Promotes community good rather individual good • Breeds love, cooperation and togetherness in communities • One feels a sense of belonging • Promotes a sense of ownership – common property • Brings a spirit of caring for one another • Promotes togetherness • Makes it easier to work from micro (household) to macro (community or national) level	• Promotes a spirit of feeling for each other • People are involved in own development • Promotes sustainable development • Promotes ownership • Promotes togetherness • Pooling together skills • Cost effective as people share knowledge, skills and learn from each other • Relationship building • Collective action encouraged

Respondent PKO2	
Benefits	**Strengths**
• Knowledge and skills sharing on projects for economic gain • People develop from one stage to another • Increases crop production	• Gain informal education • Encourages togetherness • A community development strategy • Leadership development process

Respondent PKO3	
Benefits	**Strengths**
• Increases yield • People learn together • People socialise • Getting help from a neighbour	• A person does not live an isolated life • Promotes treating one another humanely • Promotes peace, love and trust • People discuss various issues of life and socialise

Respondent PKO4	
Benefits	**Strengths**
• Enhances productivity at household level • Cost-effective and efficient community development strategy • A platform to resolve issues	• Sustains community harmony • Gaining of new knowledge and skills • Gives group rather than individual worldview in development

Respondent PKO5	
Benefits	**Strengths**
• Uses readily available labour and expertise at no cost • Promotes bumper harvest	• Promotes relationship building among community members • A platform for conflict resolution and reconciliation • Helps a community to uphold its moral values

Respondent PKO6	
Benefits	**Strengths**
• Provides opportunities for counseling, skills apprenticeship, knowledge and experience sharing • Deals with a wide range of social, economic, spiritual and political issues • Big tasks are completed in reduced time • Crop yield increases	• Provides socio-economic support system • Maintains community cohesion and solidarity

Respondent PKO7	
Benefits	**Strengths**
• Leadership and organisational skills developed • Talents are identified and encouraged • Social issues discussed • People get to know each other well • Promotes community cohesion	• Working together • Sharing knowledge and experiences • Helping each other • Keeps harmony in the community

Respondent PKO8	
Benefits	**Strengths**
• Increases productivity of crops and other tasks • Working in big numbers and finish tasks quickly	• Community cohesion • Community Psycho-social support system • A form of social interaction and entertainment

Respondent PKO9	
Benefits	**Strengths**
• Increases crop production • Encourages skills transfer • Promotes conflict resolution and reconciliation • Builds and sustains community relations	• Peace building, conflict resolution and reconciliation • Skills transfer • Community cohesion

Respondent PKO10	
Benefits	**Strengths**
• Crop yield increases • Peace in families and communities • Sharing of knowledge and skills • Learn and share social skills	• It values human diversity • Brings cohesion • Promotes community resource ownership • Platform for Learning and sustaining community culture • People get to know each other better in the community • Encourages people to treat each other equally regardless of one's socio-economic status

Respondent PK11	
Benefits	**Strengths**
• Work is completed in a short space of time • Crop yield increases leading to good harvest • Encourages working together • People learn skills that later positively influence their career path like I am a school teacher	• Encourages people to work hard • People get to know each other well • Platform to share challenges and problems in life including children's behaviour • Knowledge, skills and experiences are shared • A model to help vulnerable groups in society

Respondent PK12	
Benefits	**Strengths**
• Time taken to accomplish a task is significantly reduced • Promotes bumper harvest in communities	• Promotes working together • A platform to know each other's personalities and character • Improves interpersonal communication and public speaking skills

APPENDIX 2: Oral Tradition

Objective: This method was used to obtain data about nhimbe from the elderly members of the community prior to full scale fieldwork and key informant interviews. Each respondent could use one or more of the following methods:

	Methods	Indicate methods used by putting an 'X'
1	Folklores	
2	Songs	
3	Most significant incidences	
4	Rhetorical questions/sarcasm	

Data obtained:

Profile of the Oral Historian

Date_____

Name of community_____

District_____

Province_____

Sex	
Male	Female

Age of respondent_____

Name of Household_____

APPENDIX 3: Interview Guide for Adult Community Members

Introductory statement: I am a PhD Development Studies student at Witwatersrand University in South Africa. The purpose of my study is to gain an understanding of nhimbe. I have selected you to take part in this research because of your knowledge and rich experience in the practice. Therefore, I seek to learn from your real life experiences with the practice. Information you provide will be kept in confidence and your name will remain anonymous throughout the analysis and presentation of the research findings.

1. Nhimbe has been practised for many years now. When you hear the term nhimbe, what comes to your mind?
2. How do you describe nhimbe to someone who does not know it?
3. How did Nhimbe originate?
4. How old were you when you first experienced nhimbe?
5. Who introduced nhimbe to you for the first time?
6. Thereafter (i.e. after hearing about Nhimbe for the first time), did you hear different versions of nhimbe from other people (i.e. apart from those you mentioned in question 5 above)?
7. For how long has Nhimbe been practised in your community?
8. What steps would you take to have Nhimbe done at your household?
9. Why do you participate in nhimbe?
10. What would most likely discourage you from participating in nhimbe?
11. Apart from the specific task at hand, what else takes place during the Nhimbe gathering?
12. What factors contribute to a strong nhimbe practice in this community? [also get views about frequency or regularity]
13. What factors contribute to (if any) to weak nhimbe practice in this community?
14. In your view, if a person moves out of his/her community, how easy is it to continue practising Nhimbe in the new community?
15. How has Nhimbe, if any, contributed to development of your personal values or character formation?
16. What are the benefits of nhimbe in this community?
17. What are the weaknesses of nhimbe?
18. In your community, what practices are similar to nhimbe?
19. In your community, what practices are similar to nhimbe?
20. Do you think Nhimbe should continue to be practised in your community?
21. Do you feel obliged to tell development agencies who want to initiate development in your community about nhimbe?

Appendix 4: Interview Guide for Young Adult Members of the Community

Introductory statement: I am a PhD Development Studies student at Witwatersrand University in South Africa. The purpose of my study is to gain an understanding of nhimbe. I have selected you to take part in this research to learn from your experience in the practice. Information you provide will be kept in confidence and your name will remain anonymous throughout the analysis and presentation of the research findings.

1. Do you know Nhimbe? [This is a screening question; only those who answer 'Yes' become research participants]
2. How old were you when you first experienced nhimbe?
3. Who told you about nhimbe for that first time (i.e. mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, etc)?
4. Thereafter (i.e. after hearing about Nhimbe for the first time), did you hear different versions of nhimbe from other people (i.e. apart from those you mentioned in question 3 above)?
5. Have you participated in Nhimbe?
6. When was the last time you participated in Nhimbe?
7. How is Nhimbe organised?
8. Apart from the specific task at hand, what else takes place during the Nhimbe gathering?
9. Why do you participate in Nhimbe?
10. What would most likely discourage you from participating in nhimbe?
11. What are the consequences for not participating in nhimbe?
12. How has Nhimbe (if any) contributed to development of your personal values or character formation?
13. What factors influence frequency of nhimbe in your community?
14. In your community, what practices are similar to nhimbe?
15. Do you feel obliged to tell external people (to your community) and organizations who want to initiate development in your community about nhimbe

APPENDIX 5: Interview Guide for Village Heads and Councilors

Introductory statement: I am a PhD Development Studies student at Witwatersrand University in South Africa. The purpose of my study is to gain an understanding of nhimbe. Apart from your knowledge and the rich experience you have in the practice, it is crucially important that I interview you primarily because of your leadership position and development role you play in the community. I should point out that information you provide will be kept in confidence and your name will remain anonymous throughout the analysis and presentation of the research findings.

1. I understand that nhimbe has been practised for many years now, what it is?
2. How did Nhimbe originate?
3. How old were you when you first experienced nhimbe?
4. Who told you about nhimbe for that first time?
5. Since then, have there been any changes/variations in the way nhimbe is practised?
6. For how long has Nhimbe been practised in your community?
7. What steps would you take to have Nhimbe done at your household?
8. Who participate in nhimbe? [to bring out who is included and who is excluded]
9. What motivate people to participate in nhimbe? [to bring out nhimbe social obligations or underpinnings]
10. What would most likely discourage one from participating in nhimbe?
11. What are the consequences for not participating in nhimbe?
12. Apart from the specific task at hand, what else takes place at nhimbe?
13. What factors contribute to a strong nhimbe practice in this community [also get views about frequency or regularity]?
14. What factors contribute to (if any) to weak nhimbe practice in this community?
15. In your view, if a person moves out of his/her community, how easy is it to continue practising nhimbe in the new community?
16. In your view, if a person moves in your community, how easy is it for that person to continue practising nhimbe?
17. In your view, if a person moves in your community and had never practised nhimbe, how easy is it for that person to start practising it?
18. How has Nhimbe (if any) contributed to development of your personal values or character formation?
19. What are the benefits of nhimbe in this community?
20. What are the weaknesses of nhimbe?
21. In your community, what practices are similar to nhimbe?
22. Do you think Nhimbe should continue to be practised in your community? Give reasons.
23. Do you feel obliged to tell external people and organizations (to your community) who want to initiate development in your community about nhimbe? Give reasons.

APPENDIX 6: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Adult Community Members

Introductory statement: I am a PhD Development Studies student at Witwatersrand University in South Africa. The purpose of my study is to gain an understanding of nhimbe. I have selected you to take part in this research because of your knowledge and rich experience in the practice. Therefore, I seek to learn a great deal from all of you throughout this discussion. I should point out that the information you provide will be kept in confidence and your name will remain anonymous throughout the analysis and presentation of the research findings. On the card I have given you, kindly write your sex and age. For instance, if you are a female aged 70, then you simply write 'F70'. I kindly request that every time you make a contribution, please raise your card to enable me note the respondents and their respective views.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. What are other terms commonly used in this community to mean the same as 'nhimbe'?
2. Of the terms mentioned in (2) above, which is the most preferred one in this community?
3. When did nhimbe practice start?

B. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF NHIMBE

4. What is nhimbe?
5. Why is nhimbe practised in this community?
6. What steps does one take to organise nhimbe?
7. Who participates in a nhimbe?
8. What sanctions are given to a household for not participating in nhimbe with others?
9. What procedure or processes one undertakes to re-engage with others?
10. Think of a memorable nhimbe in which you participated. Why is it memorable to you?
11. If you move out of this community, how easy would to continue practising nhimbe in your new community?

C. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

12. What are the benefits of nhimbe practice?
13. Apart from the nhimbe activity to which people have been invited to undertake, what else takes place at a nhimbe?
14. What are the weaknesses associated with the nhimbe practice?

D. CONCLUSIONS

15. Has the spirit of nhimbe changed over the years? [*probe for reasons why it has changed or not changes*]
16. If nhimbe practice is stopped, what could be the effects to the community?
17. What other views do you have about nhimbe?

APPENDIX 7: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Young Adult Community Members

Introductory statement: I am a PhD Development Studies student at Witwatersrand University in South Africa. The purpose of my study is to gain an understanding of nhimbe. Therefore, I seek to learn a great deal from all of you throughout this discussion about nhimbe. Please note that the information you provide will be kept in confidence and your name will remain anonymous throughout the analysis and presentation of the research findings. On the card I have given you, kindly write your sex and age. For instance, if you are a female aged 35, then you simply write 'F35'. I kindly request that every time you make a contribution, please raise your card to enable me note the respondents and their respective views.

A. INTRODUCTION

18. What are other terms commonly used in this community to mean the same as *nhimbe*?
19. Of the terms mentioned in (2) above, which is the most preferred one in this community?

B. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF NHIMBE

20. What is nhimbe?
21. Why is it practised in this community?
22. What steps does one take to organise nhimbe?
23. How does the practice of nhimbe relate to the community values and culture?

C. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

24. What personally motivate you to participate in nhimbe?
25. What are the benefits of nhimbe to the community?
26. Apart from the nhimbe activity to which people have been invited to undertake, what else takes place at a nhimbe?
27. What are the weaknesses associated with the nhimbe practice?

D. CONCLUSIONS

28. If nhimbe practice is stopped, what could be the effects to the community?
29. What other views do you have about nhimbe?

APPENDIX 8: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Village Heads

Introductory statement: I am a PhD Development Studies student at Witwatersrand University in South Africa. The purpose of my study is to gain an understanding of nhimbe. I have selected you to take part in this discussion because of your knowledge and rich experience in the practice as well as that you are community leaders. Therefore, I seek to learn a great deal from all of you throughout this discussion. I should point out that the information you provide will be kept in confidence and your name will remain anonymous throughout the analysis and presentation of the research findings. On the card I have given you, kindly write your sex and age. For instance, if you are a female aged 70, then you simply write 'F70' on the card. I kindly request that every time you make a contribution, please raise your card to enable me note the respondents and their respective views.

A. INTRODUCTION

30. What are other terms commonly used in this community to mean the same as 'nhimbe'?
31. Of the terms mentioned in (2) above, which is the most preferred one in this community?
32. When did nhimbe practice start?

B. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF NHIMBE

33. What is nhimbe?
34. Why is it practised in this community?
35. What steps does one take to organise nhimbe?
36. Who participates in a nhimbe?
37. What sanctions are given to a household for not participating in nhimbe with others?
38. What procedure or processes one undertakes to re-engage with others?
39. How does the practice of nhimbe relate to the community values and culture?
40. If a new household moves into your village, how do they get into the practise of nhimbe with others?

C. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

41. What are the benefits of nhimbe practice?
42. Apart from the nhimbe activity to which people have been invited to undertake, what else takes place at a nhimbe?
43. What are the weaknesses associated with the nhimbe practice?

D. CONCLUSIONS

44. Has the spirit of nhimbe changed over the years? [probe for reasons why it has changed or not changes]
45. If nhimbe practice is stopped, what could be the effects to the community?
46. What other views do you have about nhimbe?

APPENDIX 9: Participant observation

Objective: The researcher used this data collection to document his experiences in each nhimbe he participated across the three communities studied.

1. **Task**

a) Name of the hosting household: _____
b) Activity for which nhimbe was organised: _____
c) Time
   i. Time nhimbe started:_____
   ii. Time nhimbe ended:_____

2. **Nhimbe participants**

a) Is there a designated nhimbe coordinator/supervisor? Yes/No
b) If 'Yes' to the question above, what unique name is given to this person?
c) If 'No' to question (a) above, how is the nhimbe process coordinated/supervised?
d) If a coordinator exists, what are his/her specific duties/responsibilities?
e) Participants' age range: *from*_____years to_____years
f) Number of females_____
g) Number of males_____
h) Number of elders attending but not working due their advanced age:_____females_____males
i) Number of children attending: _____females_____males

3. **Knowledge and skills sharing**

a) What are the knowledge and skills being shared at the nhimbe?
b) Is the sharing of knowledge and skills done at particular times during the nhimbe process?
c) Does the sharing of knowledge and skills follow a certain pattern? For instance:
   - Among males only
   - Among females only
   - Along age groups
   - Relatives or friends
   - Other_____

4. **Steps/rituals observed during nhimbe**

Step/ritual	Significance

5. **Entertainment**

a) Is there any form of entertainment at a nhimbe? Yes/No
b) What kind of entertainment?
c) Who perform the entertainment?
d) What is the significance of the entertainment?
e) Is there a particular time when entertainment is done?

6. **Food and beverages**

Aspect	Significance
What type of food is served?	
What type of beverages is served?	
Is there a particular time when food and beverages are served?	

7. **Other observations**

APPENDIX 10: Traditional Practices Interview and Desk Review Guide

Introductory statement

I am a PhD Development Studies student at Witwatersrand University in South Africa. The purpose of my study is to gain an understanding of the role/contribution, if any; traditional community practices around the world have in community-based development. You have been selected to take part in this research because of your knowledge and experience in your home country traditional practice. I seek to learn from your real life experiences with the practice. Your explanations and analysis of the practice will enable me to address the purpose of the study as stated. Information you provide will be kept in confidence and your name will remain anonymous throughout the analysis and presentation of the research findings.The traditional or community-based practices investigated are tabulated.

Name of practice	Country	Interview conducted	Desk review conducted
Chilimba	Zambia	x	x
Harambee	Kenya	x	x
Milpa	Mexico		x
Study Circle	Sweden	x	x

1. What is the vernacular term from which the practice was derived?
2. What is Study Circle? In other words, how do you explain the practice to someone who hears it for the first time?
3. What is the purpose of the practice?
4. Has this purpose changed over the years? Please explain.
5. How did it start? How long ago?
6. Did it start in a particular geographical/ethnic group? What are the explanations for this?
7. What are the key guiding principles of the practice?
8. Have the principles changed over the years? If so what has changed? Why the change?
9. Who is included to participate in this practice?
10. What are the criteria for inclusion?
11. Who is excluded to participate in this practice?
12. What are the criteria for the exclusion?
13. What are the steps involved in implementing the practice in a community?
14. What are the benefits of the practice in the context of community development? (In other words, what do people like about it; what has been its positive impact in their lives?)

15. What are its weaknesses in the context of community development (in other words, what do people don't like about it; what has been its negative impact in people's lives?).

16. Why do people continue to participate /use this practice?

17. What are its potential future benefits, if any, in the context of community development?

18. May you please add any other views you have about this practice.

Your profile

Respondent code			
Sex		Female	Male
Age group	40-50	50-59	60+
Profession/work			
Area(s) of expertise			
Date:			
Interview start time:			
Interview end time:			

APPENDIX 11: Transect Walks (TWs)

Objective: The Transect Walks were used for purposive community observation in the communities studied through a physical walk. The aim is to discover the things local people would perhaps take for granted and are less likely to talk about them with an outsider in a formalised discussion.

	Checklist	Observations
1	Crops grown in the community	
2	Social activities in the community	
3	Economic activities in the community	
4	Extent of households' dispersion in the village	
5	General development level of the community	
6	**Other**	

APPENDIX 12: Interview Guide for Professional Key Informants

1. What is nhimbe? In other words, how do you describe it?
2. What is the purpose of nhimbe (why is it being practiced)?
3. What are the community obligations that underpin the nhimbe practice?
4. In view of community development, what are the benefits, if any, of nhimbe to the community?
5. What were and/are the weaknesses of nhimbe?
6. What would discourage one from participating in nhimbe?
7. Are there any consequences to any member who chooses not to participate in nhimbe?
8. If at some point one decides to participate in nhimbe again, what steps does that person take to re-engage with others?
9. What factors make a strong nhimbe in a community? [*Also to get views about frequency or regularity*]
10. What factors make a weak nhimbe in a community?
11. What are the benefits of nhimbe?
12. How did your nhimbe experience contributed, if any, to personal values or character formation?
13. What are the potential future benefits of nhimbe in Zimbabwe community development?
14. May you please estimate the percentage (%) use of nhimbe on agricultural activities

APPENDIX 13: Research Respondents

Respondents by community and age group

	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91+	**Total**
Gambiza	10	2	3	11	5	6	5	0	42
Mskavanhu	4	12	4	15	9	10	6	1	61
Tsholotsho	12	4	11	11	8	6	2	1	55
Total	**26**	**18**	**18**	**37**	**22**	**22**	**13**	**2**	**158**

Respondents by gender and age group

Sex	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91+	**Total**
Female	14	9	9	17	10	10	4	0	73
Male	12	9	9	20	12	12	9	2	85
Total	**26**	**18**	**18**	**37**	**22**	**22**	**13**	**2**	**158**

Respondents by gender and community

	Gambiza		Musikavanhu		Tsholotsho	**Total**
Female	20		28		25	**73**
Male	22		33		30	**85**
Total	**42**		**61**		**55**	**158**

Respondents per data collection tool used

	Gambiza		Musikavanhu		Tsholotsho
Interviews	18		23		24
FGDs	29		36		29
Number of FGDs	3		3		3
Oral tradition	6		6		6

APPENDIX 14: Profile of Professional Key Informants

Specialisation	Respondent	Sex	Age-group	Home District	Province
Population and community development	PK01	F	50-60	Chipinge	Manicaland
Environment and agriculture	PK02	M	50-60	Chipinge	Manicaland
Traditional leadership	PK03	M	80-90	Chipinge	Manicaland
Arts and culture	PK04	M	60-70	Matobo	Matebeland South
Agriculture	PK05	M	50-60	Bikita	Masvingo
Social science	PK06	M	60-70	Buhera	Manicaland
Environment and community development	PK07	F	70-80	Tsholotsho	Matebeleland North
Agriculture	PK08	M	40-50	Gambiza	Midlands
Entrepreneurship	PK09	M	40-50	Umguza	Matebeleland North
Natural resources management	PK10	M	40-50	Nkayi	Matebeleland North
Arts and culture	PK11	F	50-60	Gutu	Masvingo
Gender and community development	PK12	F	60-70	Chipinge	Manicaland