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Migrant Communities' Coping with Socio-Political Violence:

A Case Study of Zimbabwe Action Movement in Johannesburg, South Africa

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Forced Migration Studies

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Abstract

This dissertation is based on a qualitative study conducted in Johannesburg to explore the meanings that a group of Zimbabwean migrants attach to experiences of socio-political violence, called *Gukurahundi.* Violence has been shown to have traumatic consequences, but the meaning of the trauma is mediated by the context in which it occurs further on meanings have been shown to be central to the healing strategies and mechanisms employed to cope with the effects of the violence. Text from in-depth interviews and songs composed by participants in this study formed the narrative text of experiences of violence that was analysed using narrative methods. Key interpretations of the *Gukurahundi* violence found in this study were framed in political terms and coping strategies employed were also political. Coping is linked to the meanings attached to experiences and thus responding to socio political violence requires a consideration of the context and the meanings attached if it is to be relevant.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Forced Migration Studies in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____

(Name of Candidate)

_____day of_____, 2010

Preface

I began this research as a Ndebele, more precisely a Kalanga woman, because I was taken aback by the outspokenness and passion with which people that have participated in this study talked about *Gukurahundi*. As a child I never heard much about *Gukurahundi*. It was not a subject openly spoken of. This study has brought a new perspective to many experiences I had as a child while growing up in Matabeleland. I remember my grandmother who always referred to ñthat timeò when she was beaten up until she lost her hearing. I remember being warned never to marry a Shona man because they can never be trusted, as most of the perpetrators of *Gukurahundi* were Shona.

After I commenced this study I decided to informally interview my parents, out of curiosity though I did not expect them to have any dramatic experiences related to *Gukurahundi* because they had never talked about them. To my surprise my father related his experiences of how just one decision is what saved his life. My mother related the horror of seeing people being led away and knowing she would never see them alive again.

As one of the interviewees said to me *Gukurahundi* is still there and living in us. *Gukurahundi* lives though it is inconspicuous and continues to haunt the many that lost their relatives and friends.

This dissertation is my contribution in my own way to a memorial of *Gukurahundi*.

To the many sons and daughters that were silenced forever.

To my grandmother.

To members of ZAM, someday may someone hear your voices.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost my sincere gratitude goes to the Zimbabwe Action Movement members who gladly agreed to participate in this study and gave of their time to be interviewed and share with me their stories. I would like to mention by name Bongani Ncube who was the link between me and members of the ZAM, your creativity and boldness inspire me.

I would like to acknowledge the exceptional and invaluable guidance with patience offered by my supervisors Dr I. Palmary and Dr L. Nunez. You have patiently guided me through this journey. I would not have been able to come this far without your expertise and counsel, thank you.

To my colleagues and friends Barbra, Kathryn and Godfrey for being there for me to bounce off my ideas and urging me to go on when I thought this was beyond me.

Last but not least, to my husband, for your faith in me, understanding when I needed time to work and your support in transcribing and bouncing off ideas about the translation of texts, thank you.

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List of Abbreviations

CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
SADC	Southern African Development Community
PF ZAPU	Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African Peopleôs Union
ZAM	Zimbabwe Action Movement
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African Peopleôs Union
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe Peopleôs Revolutionary Army
ZSG	Zimbabwe Support Group

1 Chapter One: Introduction

This research report is based on a study conducted to interrogate the meanings attached to experiences of socio-political violence and the kind of responses these meanings would elicit for healing to occur. It is based on the premise that meanings attached to experiences are based on their interpretation of them and thus may not be the same from one individual to the next. Further on, the subjective meanings attached to experiences have been found to be central to healing in cases of the experiences having been traumatic (Uehara, Farris, Morreli, & Ishisaka, 2001). It is from this basis that in this research an interrogation into the meanings that a group of Zimbabweans attach to *Gukurahundi* has been conducted.

This research is based on a case study of Zimbabwean migrants, who call themselves Zimbabwe Action Movement, in Johannesburg, who identify as victims of the violence that occurred in post independence Zimbabwe, known as *Gukurahundi*. In-depth interviews have been conducted with members of Zimbabwe Action Movement (ZAM), as well as an analysis of songs written by some of the members and the organisationôs documents. As a researcher in this study I share some commonalities with the members of ZAM, these include language, the Zimbabwean and Ndebele identities as well as some of the experiences of *Gukurahundi.* This report is thus a reflection of my understanding of the issues as expounded by ZAM members to me. I have made sense of some issues based on my personal understanding of the Zimbabwean situation, however, reflective distance has been built into the methodology of this study in the form of support from the Forced Migration Studies Alternative Perspectives on Trauma Project who have read through the interviews and commented on my interpretation of them. The rest of this chapter shall give a background of the events that occurred in Zimbabwe before, during and after *Gukurahundi*. This is by no means a comprehensive overview of what occurred, however it is meant to give a contextual background to this study. A brief introduction to the Zimbabwe Action Movement and their activities in South Africa is also given at the end of the chapter.

Outlining the history of events surrounding *Gukurahundi* is somewhat conflicting with the theoretical view of history held in this study. A historical account is seen as an interpretive act and this means that there can be no one way to chronicle the past and no one objective and true account of the past. The historical background that follows below therefore does not represent an undistorted version of events as they occurred but serves to highlight the context within which the events focused on in this study occurred. Various reports that have chronicled the events surrounding *Gukurahundi* have been used as sources of information for example the Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice Report (CCJP, 1997) and other literature that has been written.

1.1 *Gukurahundi*

Gukurahundi refers to a period in post-independence Zimbabwe, that is, from 1982- 1987, where there was socio political violence in the Southern parts of the country mainly inhabited by the Ndebele[1] people. To give background to the circumstances that preceded this violence I shall give a brief overview of the pre-independence scenario in Zimbabwe. Zimbabweôs nationalist struggle began in the 1950s and the first nationalist movement in the country was led by Zimbabwe African Peopleôs Union (ZAPU). A split in ZAPU occurred in 1963 leading to the formation of Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African Peopleôs Union (PF ZAPU). The split took place along ethnic lines and was a result of leaders wanting to strategically position themselves for leadership take over once the war ended. This resulted in the two formations acquiring ethnic identities, ZANU took on a Shona ethnic character while PF ZAPU took on a Ndebele ethnic character. At independence ZANU won the elections and became the ruling party of Zimbabwe, however PF ZAPU was included in the new government. PF ZAPUôs leaders were given seats in the new governmentôs parliament and the PF ZAPUôs military wing was consolidated into the national army. There were however violent clashes between the PF ZAPU & ZANUôs military wings as they were being consolidated into one national army. Arms caches were found at former PF ZAPU properties leading to the arrest of PF ZAPU leaders (CCJP, 1997; Eppel, 2004; Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). This led to some already disgruntled PF ZAPU army wing members abandoning integration into the national army and choosing to

[1] Ndebele refers to different ethnic identities considered to fall under the broad umbrella of Ndebele in Zimbabwe , i.e. Ndebele, Kalanga, Tonga, Sotho and Venda

take up arms against the government. It is estimated that about two hundred PF ZAPU military wing members formed this group, later referred to as Dissidents (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). To quell this dissent the government then deployed the army as well as a special military wing called The Fifth Brigade. This is the army that was involved in committing the atrocities against civilians in *Gukurahundi*. The period is termed *Gukurahundi* from the name that was given to the Fifth Brigade. *Gukurahundi* is a Shona term which literally translated means ñthe early rain that washes away the dirtò. The official position in the deployment of the army that committed the *Gukurahundi* atrocities was that it was a government effort to quell dissident activity (CCJP, 1997), however the army committed atrocities against civilians. The Fifth Brigade was composed of mainly Shona members and is said to have used political and ethnic reasons to justify the violence. It is said that in certain places they forced the people to speak Shona (Eppel, 2004). It is said the Fifth Brigade ñtold victims that they were being punished because they were Ndebele ï that all Ndebeles supported ZAPU, and all ZAPU supporters were dissidentsò (Eppel, 2004,p45)

The atrocities committed against civilians include beatings, torture, murder, rape, detention and disappearances (CCJP, 1997; Eppel, 2004). People witnessed the killing of family members and in some instances were ordered to perform the killing themselves. Curfews were imposed in the provinces, preventing people from travelling from rural areas to urban areas. A food embargo was imposed in Matabeleland North in 1984 leading to starvation. Camps were set up where civilians were detained, tortured and killed (CCJP, 1997; Eppel, 2004). The most notorious of these camps is said to have been the Bhalagwe Camp which was in the Matobo district of Zimbabwe (CCJP, 1997; Eppel, 2004). People who were detained at the Bhalagwe Camp report of deaths of up to fifty people occurring on a daily basis with bodies being ferried away from the camp to unknown destinations or buried within the camp areas in shallow graves they were forced to dig (CCJP, 1997; Eppel, 2004). The CCJP (1997) report on *Gukurahundi* summarises the effects of the violence on the people in Matabeleland to include permanent disabilities, ranging from paralysis, blindness, deafness, miscarriage, impotence, infertility, and kidney damage, to partial lameness and recurring back and headaches. The report goes on to say

> ñIn addition to the physical injuries, it is clear from interviews that large numbers of people..... suffered some degree of psychological trauma, leading in extreme cases to insanity, and in many cases to recurring depression, dizzy spells, anxiety, anger, or a permanent fear and distrust of Government officialsò (p. 56).

Estimates of the fatalities from the *Gukurahundi* range from one thousand up to twenty thousand people (Abrams, 2006). As with many cases of organised violence it is difficult to determine the actual numbers of people who lost their lives. The CCJP (1997) report, the most extensive report to date on the violence, reports on the challenges of accounting for all deaths that occurred during the time.

Gukurahundi was officially initiated as an effort to bring order to the Matabeleland areas that had been destabilised by dissidents, however 95% of the atrocities committed against civilians during the conflict are attributed to the army unit that was deployed by the government and only 5% of the atrocities are attributed to the dissidents (CCJP, 1997). The perpetrators of the majority of the atrocities that occurred during *Gukurahundi,* therefore many have argued, are the government as the army was under the authority of the state in its operations (Eppel, 2008).

1.2 The 1987 Unity Accord

Gukurahundi came to an end with the signing of the 1987 Unity Accord. The Unity Accord is regarded by many to have been a compromise by PF ZAPU which was forced to enter into it to stop the killings of Ndebele civilians (Eppel, 2009). The terms of the Unity Accord were such that PF ZAPU had to become one party with ZANU, on its signing therefore PF ZAPU and ZANU became one party ZANU PF. Eppel (2009), in her comparison of the Unity Accord and the Global Political Agreement of 2008 between MDC and ZANU PF, notes how PF ZAPU had no choice but to enter into the Unity Accord because of the power relations between PF ZAPU and ZANU at the time and the lack of international support for PF ZAPU. She further notes how in the eleven points that made up the Unity Accord document, no concessions were made to PF ZAPU except that the violence occurring in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions would stop. She sums up the unity accord to have meant to PF ZAPU,

ñyou cease to exist and we will stop killing youò (Eppel, 2009, p8), that is, PF ZAPU had to become part of ZANU for the *Gukurahundi* violence to stop. The Unity Accord does not make any mention of any steps to be taken for reparations to the victims of the violence. However, Muzondiya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007) say there were expectations from the Ndebele after the signing of the Unity Accord, that there would be affirmative action in terms of development projects since their regions had lagged behind in economic development during the *Gukurahundi* days. Instead, following the signing of the unity accord a blanket amnesty was granted to all those who had been involved in the violence. This amnesty was publicised as benefiting the former ZAPU dissidents, however as earlier stated, it is argued that 95% of atrocities were committed by the government, via the army deployed and therefore the amnesty benefited the army and government more than the dissidents.

If one would consider the signing of the Unity Accord, as a symbol of reconciliation between the perpetrators of violence and victims in *Gukurahundi,* there are some deficiencies that can be observed from the way it was conducted. As already stated there is no mention of the violence and its effects on those who were affected (Eppel, 2009). Scarnecchia (2008) says there has not been a public admission of the scale and intent of the violence as well as its ethnic character. The nature, reasons for the violence and its effects have not been acknowledged in the public domain. But there were expectations from the Ndebele after the signing of the Unity Accord, that there would be affirmative action to counter the effects of the *Gukurahundi* violence (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007, p.286).

For example, Robert Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe, who was also president at the time the atrocities took place, is quoted as having said the atrocities were a ñmoment of madnessò (Eppel, 2004). This statement while acknowledging the occurrence of *Gukurahundi* insinuates that *Gukurahundi* was temporary and internal to the soldiers on the ground who committed the atrocities and not a state ordered mission. For example it may mean that what occurred was the result of army personnel who did not follow orders, that is, instead of targeting dissidents they attacked civilians. It does not fully account for the events of *Gukurahundi* which occurred over a period of five to six years and seemed to have had some form of strategy to them. The setting up of camps for example which were well resourced and

the way disappearances were executed, all point to a well thought out process. In this regard therefore *Gukurahundi* remains largely unacknowledged for the many victims who experienced it. Surveys conducted show that *Gukurahundi* is considered to have been more painful in the lives of the Ndebele, than the liberation struggle (Eppel, 2004). Estimates of up to 80% of the rural communities of Matabeleland are said to have been directly affected by *Gukurahundi* (Eppel, 2009).

The signing of the Unity Accord is commemorated through an annual national holiday, the National Unity Day which is on the 22nd of December. This is commemorated without any mention of the victims or the violence that happened resulting in the need to sign the accord (Michelle, 2008; Mpofu, 2008b). The National Unity Day is commemorated on the contrary as a celebration of coming together of ZANU and PF ZAPU. The events that occurred prior to its signing it seems are ñforgottenò. This highlights the act of remembering as entailing forgetting at the same time (Brockmeier, 2002). The National Unity Day is commemorated to remember the coming together of the two parties yet, the violence that resulted in the need to sign a Unity Accord in the first place is not remembered. This is another example of the way *Gukurahundi* is not acknowledged in the public domain.

1.3 Zimbabwe Action Movement

Zimbabwe Action Movement (ZAM) is a group of Zimbabwean migrants living in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Zimbabwe Action Movement was formed as a breakaway group from the Zimbabwe Support Group (ZSG). The ZSG was formed to provide support to the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a Zimbabwean opposition party that emerged in 1999. The ZSG is seen by members of ZAM to have been insensitive to issues of *Gukurahundi* and tribalism which were of significance to ZAM members. This led to ZAM members breaking away from the ZSG and forming the ZAM. ZAM members call themselves a pressure group, that is, they do not align to any one particular political party however they have as their goal to influence political parties in Zimbabwe. The excerpt below from the interview with Thembi illustrates this:

Why did you form ZAM?

> We formed ZAM to be a pressure group to motivate the youth and also to address our issues to political parties whether it is an opposition party or it is in power. To pressurise that what they do not address directly, we address directly just as they are.
>
> **What kind of things were they not addressing directly?**
>
> E.g. the *Gukurahundi* issues. The opposition party talks about it but does not talk about it in the way we would want them to. (Thembi)

From the above excerpt ZAM members want a particular way of talking about *Gukurahundi* which political parties are not doing. ZAM members push for recognition of issues of *Gukurahundi* in Zimbabwe and how they have affected the Ndebele people. This strong drive to recognize *Gukurahundi* as a significant issue in Zimbabwe requiring attention saw the ZAM being seen as divisive because it brought on issues that were not considered universal to all Zimbabweans but only relating to the Ndebele and seemingly pitting the Ndebele against the Shona[2]. ZAM members however believe it is important that *Gukurahundi* is recognised and acknowledged and thus continue as an organisation despite this opposition[3].The broad aim of ZAM is to bring change to the government of Zimbabwe. In the words of one of the members it is ñto bring democratization of Zimbabweò[4]. ZAM members feel this objective has been partly achieved in the Government of National Unity (GNU) between MDC and ZANU PF forming Zimbabweôs current government. They still, however, wait to see if issues of *Gukurahundi* will be effectively dealt with by this new government.

The ZAM membership is composed of men and women whose ages range from 20- 50 years. The majority did not directly experience the violence, their experience is related to what they witnessed happening to their relatives and neighbours as they were young when it occurred, that is, aged below 10 years. Some of the members were not yet born when *Gukurahundi* occurred however they have been told of what happened to their relatives and so identify with it. Most of the ZAM members came to South Africa in the 1990ôs before Zimbabweôs economic situation had deteriorated to its current state. However they attribute their move to South Africa to the inability to find any viable opportunities for their livelihoods in Zimbabwe. In many rural areas of Matabeleland, migration to South Africa has traditionally

[2] Personal ccommunication with Bongani & Manuel ZAM leaders
[3] Personal ccommunication with Bongani & Manuel ZAM leaders
[4] Interview with ZAM member

been viewed as one of the most viable livelihood options. The ZAM members are characteristically employed in low paying jobs such as security guards and in domestic work. The highest educational level reached by those I interviewed was form four (Oôlevel), this is equivalent to grade ten in South Africa, and is a recognised qualification for entry into tertiary institutions such as teachersô colleges or technical colleges in Zimbabwe.

The ZAM organise different activities to reach its goals. They have conducted activities such as marches to bring awareness of the plight of Zimbabweans and protest to the international community to take notice and help Zimbabweans. For example they marched to the Pan African Congress in Midrand and presented a petition to the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee of the African Union in April 2006. This petition outlined the predicament of Zimbabweans as a result of human rights abuses by the Zimbabwean government as well as their welfare in South Africa[5]. ZAM also hold activities to raise awareness of Zimbabweanôs plight to South African citizens in the form of film shows where they show documentaries of events that occurred in Zimbabwe dating back to the 80s. While international attention has been placed on the violence that occurred in Zimbabwe post the formation of MDC, ZAM showcases documentaries of violence that occurred in Zimbabwe starting from the 80s which include *Gukurahundi*. The objective of these shows is said to be to ñhighlight why Zimbabwean youth had so much invaded South Africaò[6]. ZAM puts an equal emphasis and at times seems to conflate current events with the *Gukurahundi*. For example a flyer advertising one of their film shows reads:

> Screening of Operation ñ*Murambatsvina*ò ñ*Gukurahundi* Documentaryò[7]

Operation *Murambatsvina* refers to a Zimbabwean government program in 2005, in which informal settlements were destroyed leaving many people homeless. In the invitation to the screening, *Murambatsvina* and *Gukurahundi* are positioned in a way that makes them seem to be equal in significance. ZAMôs goals thus relate to the present political situation of Zimbabwe and at the same time place emphasis on issues of *Gukurahundi*.

[5] ZAM letter requesting donations towards the march
[6] ZAM letter requesting use of municipal facilities for their shows dated 26 November 2006
[7] Flyer inviting people to a ZAM event held on 4 November 2006

ZAM has a drama group called *Ithemba lamaNguni*, the name *Ithemba lamaNguni* literally means, ñHope for the *Nguni* peopleò[8]. The group writes and performs dramas as well as songs and poetry. The dramas and songs focus on *Gukurahundi*, tribalism and development in Zimbabwe more precisely the underdevelopment of Matabeleland. The drama group was formed by members of ZAM who want to contribute through the arts to a better tomorrow for the Ndebele people. The group has recorded two CDôs of their music and poetry. They showcase their dramas in different public gatherings in Johannesburg.

1.3.1 Why a study on ZAM?

In this research I chose to do a study on ZAM because they stood out quite uniquely from many other Zimbabwean migrant groups in Johannesburg with their stance on *Gukurahundi*. As a Zimbabwean myself, the first thing that drew my interest was to find a group of Zimbabweans so outspoken about *Gukurahundi* which in Zimbabwe, from my experience, is hardly ever talked about. I wanted to find out what place *Gukurahundi* had in their lives. Why they choose to identify with *Gukurahundi*? What benefit there is, if any, in identifying as a victim of *Gukurahundi*. My study is nested within a broader study on alternative approaches to trauma being conducted by the Forced Migration Studies at the University of Witwatersrand. Since members of ZAM identified with a period of violence, it presented a good case study for a community based model of dealing with the effects of violence.

[8] Nguni here refers to the Ndebele as they are believed to be of Nguni descent

2 Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter briefly outlines the theoretical framework within which this study is situated. The discussion begins with a brief review of the phenomenological paradigm within which the study is situated. This is followed by a discussion of literature pertaining to the trauma of violence and its intergenerational transmission. The way silence and remembering and forgetting are theorised in this study is outlined in relation to experiences of violence. Identity is outlined, from a constructionist perspective, in relation to ethnic and national identity and the concept of home, as they have been expounded as key meanings of the violence of *Gukurahundi* by the ZAM members. Ending off this chapter is a focus on memorialisation and reparation as responses to violence to guide a consideration of what form of memorialisation and reparation can be relevant to the meanings of violence expounded by the ZAM members.

2.1 Situating this Study

This thesis is an interpretive work focused on the meanings that ZAM members attach to their experiences of *Gukurahundi*. It is therefore situated within a phenomenological paradigm. Phenomenology seeks to understand from the perspective of the individual who has the experience, the meanings they attach to it (Burch, 1990). Phenomenology allows for the researcher to gain insight into the subjective understanding of individuals. It is based on the personal perspective and interpretation of the events they experience. This study is focused on the meanings that individuals ascribe to a past event, *Gukurahundi*. A narrative perspective of history is taken where history is not fixed, determined and eternally standing still but is a reconstruction of the past in light of subsequent events (Freeman, 1993; Ricouer, 1984). In this regard, therefore, this study is focusing on the experiences of *Gukurahundi* in light of present day events in the lives of the participants. It is this subjective evaluation of the past by the participants in this study that is of interest. History is interpretive and subject to revision by another, the meaning of events that occurred in the past may be interpreted differently by different individuals, because, in interpreting the events of the past, people ascribe the important or significant events for them (Freeman, 1993; Ricouer, 1984). The values and judgements of the narrator determine what story is told (Riessman, 1993). This

means the meaning attached to events determines if they are significant events which are retained and made sense of through narrative or which are discarded and left out of the scheme of things. The narratives from the ZAM members are taken as their subjective interpretation of *Gukurahundi* in light of their present experiences. The subjective interpretation allows us to glimpse at the meanings they attach to the experience.

2.2 The Effects of Violence

The effects of violence on people can be understood in various ways. Violence is widely shown to have traumatic consequences, but the meaning of the trauma is mediated by the context in which it occurs (Palmary, 2005). The contextualised understanding of peopleôs trauma helps in understanding what is required for people to attain closure. On the other hand, the trauma of violence experienced by one generation can be passed onto the next generation. The next generation, whom we may call second generation victims of the violence may take on the role of seeking justice, compensation or correcting the wrong for what occurred to their parents (Volkan, 2001). The passing on of trauma from one generation to the next is given different names, however all allude to the concept that a person who has experienced trauma can expose another family member to that trauma even though the family member did not directly experience that trauma (Weingarten, 2004). In this study the phrase intergenerational transmission of trauma used in Weingarten (2004) is adopted. Weingarten (2004) identifies various mechanisms through which children may be exposed to the trauma of their parentsô experiences to include biological, familial, societal and psychological. Of interest to this study are the familial and societal mechanisms in which silence is said to play a crucial role, that is, it is not just when the trauma is verbally communicated to children that it is passed on but silence can equally do the same, that is, ñsilence communicates a wealth of meaningsò (Weingarten, 2004,p51). The silence can be at individual, family and national level, and may be due to an inability to form a coherent narrative about the event or the inability to face up to the effects of the violence.

When one generation does not repair the damage caused by the trauma the next generation may feel entitled to do this (Volkan, 2001). This theory of intergenerational transmission of trauma sheds light on the actions of people who while not directly affected by violence,

identify as victims and take up the cause of correcting the effects of the violence. Volkanôs interpretation of the passing of trauma from one generation to the next as chosen traumas is most relevant to this study. Chosen trauma as expounded by Volkan (2001), posits that groups share a mental representation of a traumatic event during which the group suffered loss or experienced helplessness, shame and humiliation. Over time he postulates that the historical facts of this shared memory are no longer important but that members of the group are linked together through sharing the chosen trauma. Chosen traumas he says, can therefore become ethnic markers when it is no longer the actual event that is of significance but the meaning it holds to the group. Further on Volkan (2001) postulates that these chosen traumas can be reactivated. A full reactivation of the chosen trauma may result in what he calls a time collapse. A time collapse causes the past event to be felt as if it occurred ñyesterdayò, old events and new events are condensed into one. Conflict is said to have capacity to reactivate chosen trauma however under normal political and social conditions they are recalled during anniversary and commemoration activities. Borrowing from this theory of chosen trauma therefore one can posit that where groups identities are linked to a past trauma, there is a chance of a reactivation of that trauma leading to a time collapse and a conflation of past trauma with present events.

2.3 Silence

As earlier stated silence has a role in the passing of trauma form one generation to the next. There are varying ways to theorise silence, it can be considered as an absence of communication, on the other hand silence can be a communicative act in itself (Sheriff, 2000; Weingarten, 2004). If we view social memory as a politically motivated representation of the past that requires collective forgetting, silence may not always signal a lack of knowledge about an issue, it may on the other hand be an adaptation to power by less powerful groups whose ideology is not accepted (Brockmeier, 2002; Olick, 1998) premised on that those with power are able to silence any views divergent from their own. In this sense therefore silence may be relative in that there is a louder dominant ideology that causes other ideologies to be silent as power plays a role in what is remembered collectively or what is silenced (Brockmeier, 2002; Olick, 1998). Sheriff (2000) theorises silence as cultural censorship. Silence as cultural censorship he argues is not a signifier of absence of knowledge about an issue but it is a choice. In highlighting agency of the community not to speak about issues

that they are well aware of, Sheriff (2000) says the choice to be silent does not mean insignificance of the issue or acceptance of dominant ideology but is a form of forgetting. People may therefore choose to forget within the struggle of what is considered politically and socially memorable. In considering silence as cultural censorship therefore it is not so much the political power that determines what is said and not said however it is the collaboration within a community that is aware of issues but chooses silence as an adaptation or a resistance to power. For example silence enforced by cultural censorship may represent a defence, people may choose to be silent about their trauma as a way of containing the effects that its narration may bring (Sheriff, 2000).

Silence may also be due to the fact that society is overwhelmed at the prospect of facing up to the effects of the violence (Weingarten, 2004). In this sense silence can be viewed as a marker of liminality, where liminality refers to a point where people have not attained closure over the past. Closure refers to the point where the past event is not seen as unfinished business but loss has been incorporated into the functioning of everyday life (Hamber & Wilson, 2002). If without closure, peopleôs lives can be found to be focused on the traumatic event in their lives and immersed in it, for example in trying to make up for the loss of relatives through revenge, or marked by a quest to find out the truth of what and why things happened. People without closure can be said to be part of society but also removed from society, torn between keeping the memory of the dead alive and being part of the living (Danieli, 1995; Hamber & Wilson, 2002; Summerfield, 1995). Danieli calls it the *conspiracy of silence* which works by intensifying the profound sense of isolation, loneliness, and mistrust of society that survivors of violence feel (Danieli, 1995). Where violence may bring rapture between survivors and society, survivors feel that society will never comprehend the depth of their experience and thus do not speak of their experiences. This rapture between survivors and the rest of society therefore keeps survivors in the status of victim in that their lives do not return to the state they were before the violence and at the same time do not reach a level of normalcy. The above discussion highlights the complexity relating to understanding silence. Silence may be chosen as a coping strategy, at other times silence may be enforced on those with less power by more powerful groups and at other times may not necessarily be chosen but be a result of not having the ability to narrate oneôs experiences. In this regard therefore there are different kinds of silence. There is silence because there is no

awareness of issues, there may be silence because of a lack of power and silence as a result of a conscious effort to forget.

2.4 Remembering and Forgetting

The events we remember out of history are not a representation of what occurred but an interpretation of the events. Memory therefore taken from this point of view is not merely a recounting of history but an interpretive act of making sense of history (Brockmeier, 2002; Freeman, 1993; Olick, 1998; Posel & Simpson, 2002; Ricouer, 1984). Memory as an interpretive act means those events that are considered significant and meaningful are incorporated into memory while some events are left out. Freeman (1993) says historical knowledge should never be judged according to its correspondence to events of the past but as an interpretation of what those events mean as memories of the past are not memories of facts but of imaginings of the facts. Events in the past, that are considered meaningful, are pieced together in a trajectory that justifies the present and enables a projection into the future. In this sense memory provides meaning through which people can make sense of their present as well as anticipate or project what the future could or should be. In considering remembering and forgetting therefore it is crucial that we see that what is chosen as a memory is not always a fact of what occurred but an interpretation of the facts. There will be contestation over what is considered valuable memories or not valuable. There are struggles over what is considered socially memorable and what is not (Sheriff, 2000). Brockmeier (2002) says it is not just an issue of what is remembered but the kind of knowledge and its effects on behaviour and character that is of greater significance. The struggles over what to remember and what to forget are thus driven by what effects the memory is perceived to have. In contestations over what is forgotten and what is remembered therefore there is a possibility that some versions of what the past was will not be admitted as truth. The varying interests over the present lead to these contestations of what is remembered.

When considering remembering or forgetting traumatic events such as violence, contestation is rife. The uncovering of truth, a certain way of remembering, may be a priority to some, while others may want a closure of the past and moving on, a certain kind of forgetting. In some contexts victims who have not attained closure and have questions about why certain

events occurred, want to remember the past in a truth telling opportunity in order to make sense of the past. In some cases forgetting the past may be chosen as the best way to move on (Hamber, 2001). The way the past is remembered, as earlier stated, is an interpretive act. Experiences of violence are subjective and may not be remembered in a way that fits into the collective narrative created of the events. This creates challenges therefore where survivors of violence want the truth of their experiences acknowledged, that is the need for a public witness to oneôs experiences (Summerfield, 1995). The public recognition of suffering gives it meaning, coherence, and historical significance for the individual (Hamber & Palmary, 2009).

There are multiple versions of the truth and there should be space for these different versions of the truth to be heard for survivors to have closure on their experiences. Hamber (2002), while talking about truth commissions shows how they allow for the establishment of new truths such that the argument that such atrocities never occurred can never be made again. Truth telling or having the space to tell oneôs version of the truth entails an acknowledgement of the event occurring from the audience. In many instances perpetrators are able to silence the events and pretend as if they never occurred. When survivors have their version of the truth recognised it may also represent an acknowledgement of the event by perpetrators. Truth is said to represent one of the many forms of closure for individuals. However what constitutes the truth for an individual may not correlate with what is collectively acknowledged of those events. Therefore it is not always the case that when there have been endeavours to seek out the truth of past events and remember, all victims will be gratified. Rather, there is a chance that there will be people who will be left with the feeling that their truth has not been acknowledged. In talking about the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Posel (2002) says there are challenges of having an official truth that everyone will consent to, in the end victims have to live with the truth chosen by arbitrators. Furthermore, the truth also may not necessarily lead to closure or healing, Sigworth (2008) says that

> the truth needs to be conceived as a process emphasizing the need of survivors to tell their stories, to be listened to, and to have their experiences validated, rather than as a means to an end in which the truth is primarily a product intended to

> serve as an authoritative record of atrocity or as a basis for punishing the guilty (p. 9)

In this regard therefore the quest to remember and have the past brought to the fore and made a part of history should not be seen as a quest to find one official view of the past to which everyone has to subscribe. It must however be seen as a process that engenders peopleôs multiple versions of the past space to be heard and acknowledged. This is not without its own challenges as it may not be pragmatic to have all versions of the truth acknowledged. For example South Africa initiated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission post the apartheid era in a bid to bring reconciliation to its segregated society. The commission which was set up on the premise that truth telling would bring healing or at least some form of closure for victims and survivors of the regime was fraught with challenges as there can be no one truth to which everyone consents to (Posel & Simpson, 2002).

Truth may also be required in the form of an apology where the perpetrator accepts responsibility for the atrocities and shows remorse for having committed them. An apology signifies a perpetratorôs acceptance of guilt for the disappeared or dead and thus absolving survivors of any guilt they may feel for the loss of a loved one. Hiroshi Wagatsuma and Arthur Rosett (quoted in Hamber & Palmary, 2009) argue that there are four elements required for an apology to be meaningful, these are ñ(1) the hurtful act happened, caused injury, and was wrongful; (2) the apologizer was at fault and regrets participating in the act; (3) the apologizer will compensate the injured party; (4) the act will not happen again; and (5) the apologizer intends to work for good relations in the futureò. The meaningful apology therefore entails more than just an admission of guilt but also an effort to right the wrongs that were committed and work towards a better future where the mistakes of the past are not repeated. An apology from this perspective therefore also signifies a commitment to reconciliation in that it is said to have the element that apologisers are willing to work for good relations on the future.

2.5 Identity: Nationality and Ethnicity

A constructionist perspective of identity underpins the discussion which follows in this section, that is, identity is understood as a product of interactions with ñothersò (Benhabib, 1992). In this regard identity is not categorical or fixed, but it is constructed in linguistic exchange and social performance and thus fluid, that is, it shifts in different contexts (Schiffrin, 1996). National and ethnic identity are, therefore, not viewed as static categories but fluid in which people continually reposition themselves based on whom they are in interaction is with. The context within which certain identities are reified and claimed is thus important in understanding what the function the claiming of these identities hold. It is from this perspective therefore that identity is explored in this study as a fluid construct which is produced in specific contexts with specific meanings.

Ethnicity refers to the social reproduction of basic classificatory differences between categories of people which, if sufficiently powerful, can provide people with their social status (Eriksen, 1991; Nagel, 1994). Ethnic identity may reflect an individual choice however it is not entirely voluntary as there are a limited choices of ethnic identities available to an individual and there are forces that are exogenous to the individual that may also influence ethnicity (Nagel, 1994). The state has become the dominant institution in society with great influence and so state institutions and policies have great influence on ethnicity (Nagel, 1994). In this regard, ethnic identities are politicised and policies and political institutions regulate ethnicity in various ways for example through affirmative action policies. Affirmative policies that recognise certain groupings as deserving special treatment, work to affirm that particular groupingôs identity. For example in South Africa, the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy may serve to re-ascertain what it means to be black in South Africa and at the same time reassign certain groups that identity, for example, certain people of Chinese descent in South Africa are recognised as ñblackò of which ñblackò means previously disadvantaged groups. As such ethnic identities are fluid and continually constructed and reconstructed in different settings. An ethnic identity may be chosen due to the perceived benefits accruing from such an identity. Taking from the example above the South African Chinese who may consider the ñblackò ethnic identity ascribed to them in the BEE policy as beneficial will claim that identity. This identity may not be beneficial in all

contexts and therefore, there will be times when one claims the identity and times when they do not. In Zimbabwe, for example it may be of greater benefit to identify as a Ndebele at a certain time and at other times as a Kalanga. The identity seen to accrue the greatest benefits is chosen and in this regard identity is not fixed but fluid and will shift in different circumstances.

Post-colonial nations like Zimbabwe, inherited states which had been governed along ethnic lines making ethnicity important for its citizens. Some of the colonial laws that reified ethnicity in the colonial era have been carried over into the post-colonial states (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). In this regard the colonial background in Zimbabwe has an influence on what ethnic identities mean, however it did not invent ethnicity as Zimbabwe was multiethnic in the pre-colonial era composed of Shona speaking groups the Karanga, Korekore, Manyika, Ndau and Zezuru. The Ndebele comprised different sub-ethnicities as well to include, Ndebele, Kalanga, Tonga, Venda and Shangani. Colonialism politicized these ethnic identities and polarized and reinforced ethnic divisions that had prior been fluid (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). For example the Rhodesian colonial state divided the country into ethnic administrative units, Matabeleland for the Ndebele, Mashonaland for the Shona speakers (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). Shona and Ndebele groupings have thus become important in relation to matters of the state than the sub-ethnic identities such as Kalanga, Manyika etc.

The post-colonial state of Zimbabwe has not done away with some of the policies it inherited from the colonial state that reified ethnicity. Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni say:

> The nationalist governmentôs state-building project has paid little attention to the ethnic configuration of the inherited state, as well as the structures and institutions which enacted and reproduced ethnicity (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007,p.280).

Colonial laws for accessing land for example in which access to land was structured according to geographical place of origin reinforce ethnic identities and have not been changed but continue to regulate peopleôs access to land according to their ethnicity

(Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). Ethnicity also rears its head in Zimbabweôs development policies. There is unequal development of the provinces and the marginalisation of particular ethnic groups in politics, economy and society (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007).

Ethnicity is used in political access and mobilisation, as Brass says,

> "the state. . .is not simply an arena or an instrument of a particular class or ethnic group. . .the state is itself the greatest prize and resource, over which groups engage in a continuing struggle" quoted in (Nagel, 1994, p.159).

Another significant conceptualisation of identity in this study is that of national identity. Anderson (1983) defines a nation as an imagined political community, which is limited and sovereign. In this sense membership of the nation is bounded and not everyone and anyone can have free access to it. Secondly the nation as a community, intimates that all members of the nation have equal rights, that is, there is equality in citizenship and access to whatever is considered a benefit of membership of the nation. According to Anderson (1983), the nation is a construction in the minds of its members. National identities are said to be constructed and deconstructed through commemoration, narratives and symbolisation (Cerulo, 1997). However, because of its instrumentalism in defining access to resources membership of a nation is reified. Members of a nation hold a claim to certain rights from the state, such as access to food, education, employment, health care amongst a host of other needs. Membership of a nation has thus come to represent access to basic life requirements and the state is expected to provide these basic needs to all members equally.

While the concept of a nation is frequently cited as a myth (see Anderson, 1983) it is a highly valued entity in the world today. It leads to displaced people being viewed as liminal in the *nation order of things*, occupying a space in which they do not really belong (Malkki, 1992). This concept of a territorialisation of identity in nationalism has been challenged in certain instances where migrating people form linkages across the borders, that is, when they have

transnational practices (Levitt & Nyberg-Sorensen, 2004). Peopleôs lives do not conform to the boundaries set out by nation states in the form of borders. In transnational practices people continue to have ties with their country of origin and can be found to have an influence on events unfolding there, that is, though they are not physically present within the national borders they continue to carry the identity of that nation and to be involved in activities pertaining to that nation. Migrants and displaced people may have social fields[9] that do not necessarily overlap with the borders that form national boundaries(Levitt & Nyberg-Sorensen, 2004) . This transnational behaviour of migrants therefore does not conform to the nation order of things. It is possible therefore for migrants to be actively involved in the politics or development issues of their countries of origin even though not physically present there. An example of transnational activity is discussed by Malkki (1992) in which the experience of displaced Hutu Burundians in Tanzania led them to imagine a Burundian state. These Hutus who were housed in a camp continually engaged in constructing and reconstructing their history as a people in which they saw themselves as transient in their exile and going back to a homeland in Burundi. Burundians who were not in the camps on the other hand had a different experience. Malkki (1992) terms them cosmopolitans in that they did not have an essentialist view of a home that is found only in Burundi. This discussion highlights the effect that the experience of being a migrant can have an effect on peopleôs notions of nationality and their identity. The Diaspora experience may reify the longing for a home and cause imaginings and reconstructions of where and what home is.

2.6 Imaginings of Home

Gupta & Ferguson (1992), Moore (2000) and Terkenli (1995) have argued that the concept of home is a social construction which can be used to preserve, express and communicate identity (Cuba & Hummon, 1993). Terkenli (1995) says collective and individual regions of home are constantly constructed and reconstructed and meanings are intentionally attached to them as a result of changing social contexts. Terkenli (1995) expounds on the concept of home to have a spatial context, that is home is a space and can be a small space such as a chair or a geographic region, for example, the country of birth. Further to the concept of home as a space, are social and habitual conditions that invest meaning onto the space and

[9] Social fields are a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices and resources are unequally exchanged, organised and transformed (Levitt & Nyberg-Sorensen, 2004).

cause historical time to be central in the idea of home. For example, the country of birth is home because of the history it holds that gives meaning and continuity to current life. Lastly, there is the social component in which the home establishes social relations that validate an individual as a human being. From this view therefore home has a significant place in peopleôs lives by giving meaning, validation and continuity, that is, home secures peopleôs distinctiveness and purpose. Terkenli (1995) says

> the nature of home itself: a refuge in the world, a cosy warm place in juxtaposing to its immense, unknown surroundings where people may degenerate themselves. (p.331)

The concept of home from this perspective is therefore one of a haven that protects and secures the essence of oneôs existence. For example displaced people are said to construct home as a symbolic anchor for the dispersed community (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992) and ethnicity and nationalism are powerful in this construction of home (Terkenli, 1995). It is the threat to oneôs losing their home in displacement that causes the construction of the home as a way of preserving what the home represents.

2.7 Memorialisation

Memorialisation refers to the construction of memorials such as, plaques, museums and monuments. Other memorials include days of commemoration, naming of streets, schools, towns and cities etc, to preserve the memory of the past (Sigsworth, 2008). As already discussed memory is theorised as an active process of making meaning of past events. Memory is therefore not fixed and will at times be contested. The way people remember the past is a choice that is made in order to justify present engagements. Memorials therefore will also be contested and struggled over as they represent a way in which the past is remembered. It is through making sense of the past that the present can be understood. Naidu (2004) says:

> memorials have become a means of reï claiming an oppressed history; remembrance in honouring those that have died or that have been victimised during conflict; as well as reï constructing social identities (p.4)

Memorials may also serve as vehicles of reconciliation as memorialisation allows a country to develop a common and shared memory which creates a sense of unity and reconciliation

(Naidu, 2004; Olick, 1998). The reframing of the past through a memorial may allow the victims and perpetrators to come together and form a new narrative of the future. However there are some challenges with symbolic reparations in the form of memorialisation in that while aimed at a collective, they tend to focus on individuals and in some cases exclude certain groups (Hamber & Palmary, 2009; Naidu, 2004). Memory is socially constructed and collective memory tends to be in favour of the ideas and values of the dominant groups (Naidu, 2004). Memorialisation efforts in some Southern African countries, for example, have been linked to the nation building project and thus used to propel the ideals of the ruling elites (Hamber & Wilson, 2002). Certain groups may be marginalised and not consulted in the setting up of memorials that are meant to serve them. Memorials tend to be used to advance the nation building project, Naidu (2004) has argued that memorialisation projects in South Africa have been used to meet the political agenda of the ruling party ANC alienating and marginalising other groups that were involved in the struggle against apartheid. In Zimbabwe the ruling party ZANU PF has silenced the role played by other nationalist movements in the countryôs independence struggle and glorified its own role. This has seen hegemony of Shona cultural symbols in the memorialisation projects, for example, the Shona spiritual medium Nehanda to the marginalisation of other groups within Zimbabwe such as the Ndebele. Memory opens up a symbolic space of meaning that can bind individuals to each other (Brockmeier, 2002), in national narratives for example when the collective history and personal memory are brought into the same discursive space it engenders a sense of belonging. However as a result of the contested nature of memory it can equally be divisive.

The discussion above has focused on how representation of the past is contested. Memory has a role in fostering belonging by facilitating meaning making that binds groups together. In national remembering, the collective history has the ability to foster belonging among the different groups within the nation. When the memories of certain groups are not encapsulated into the collective therefore there is the chance that such groups may feel isolated from the collective, as they do not share in the meanings that the collective memory ascribes.

2.8 Reparations

Reparations are measures aimed at recognising or publicly acknowledging the harm done to individuals and communities during periods of conflict or repression (Sigsworth, 2008). Hamber & Palmary (2009) say that reparations are the things done or given as an attempt to deal with the consequences of political violence, benefits that are given to people who have suffered atrocity. Reparations are said to play an important role in healing, bereavement and addressing trauma as they can symbolically acknowledge and recognize a personôs suffering (Hamber, 2000). They allow spaces for mourning, individual and collective recognition of victims and promote national reconciliation processes (Naidu, 2004). Reparations can be compensatory, restitutionary, rehabilitative and/or symbolic in nature, and can be individual or collective. While reparations may be given as a form of paying back for loss or damage done, they can never bring back the loved ones who have died or disappeared. Hamber (2000) calls this ñrepairing the irreparableò. Reparations therefore face the dilemma that they may never be accepted as enough by survivors or victims.

There are different forms of symbolic reparations, Hamber & Palmary (2009) say apology may constitute symbolic reparation. Other symbolic reparations include reburials, memorials such as museum, renaming of streets, establishment of remembrance days and erections of statues and monuments. Reparations may symbolise the memory of a loved one as well as symbolise something about the one giving the reparation such as the admission of guilt (Hamber & Palmary, 2009). In this regard, therefore, symbolic reparations need to be given in cognisance of the meanings attached to the violence as they symbolise what was lost as well as the person giving the reparation. For example where violence is understood to have been intentionally targeted, an apology may be the required symbolic reparation while if people lost their lives in a conflict considered legitimate for example fighting to defend the nation a memorial may suffice. On a macro level reparations can represent societyôs willingness to deal with and part from the past (Hamber, 2000), in that they represent an acknowledgement that the events occurred and there is a commitment to right the wrongs of the past.

Hamber & Palmary (2009) highlight three important factors in the process of reparations and these are the process, discourse and broader social context. In the process of reparation survivors or victims need to be involved. In some contexts there is also a need for the state to be involved as well as for it to give the assurance that such events will never be repeated. In granting reparations it is not so much the object delivered in reparations, for example the money, that is significant but the process that occurs around the object, that is, what the process of reparation symbolises to the targeted audience (Hamber & Wilson, 2002). Therefore the interpretation of what the process of the reparations means is central. The Mothers of the Disappeared, in Argentina, for example refused the reparations given for their missing relatives as they saw it as accepting ôblood moneyô. They saw it as a bid by the government to buy their silence about their disappeared sons (Hamber & Wilson, 2002). It is vital that the uncovering of truth accompanies any reparations project. Reparations have to be coupled with a truth recovery process as they may be seen as an effort to buy survivorôs silence if this is not done (Hamber & Wilson, 2002). Another factor to be considered entails the messages that surround the reparations process. Hamber & Palmary (2009) say, there is need to recognise the suffering and pain endured, and for apologies to be given as well as the creation of space for people to narrate their experiences. Lastly, the broader social context involves paying regard to the socio economic context of the affected. In contexts of deprivation and underdevelopment it is important that reparations be tied to social development projects (Hamber & Palmary, 2009). In some contexts symbolic reparations need to be linked to processes that seek to improve the daily socio-economic conditions of victims (Naidu, 2004). In cases where survivors are living in poverty, reparations inadvertently need to respond to the socio economic context or else they will not be seen as significant by those they are targeted at. Therefore financial reparations cannot be the only form of reparation as they will serve momentary purposes while on the other hand symbolic reparations alone will not suffice (Naidu, 2004). It is therefore a balance between both symbolic and financial reparations that is needed for reparations to achieve their full potential.

This review has attempted to map out the theories within which the narratives of members of ZAM have been analysed and within which this research is situated. It seeks to foreground that trauma can be transmitted from one generation to the next generation if it is not resolved,

even when it is not verbally communicated. The next generation may then take it upon themselves to seek redress for the injustice suffered by the previous generation. The experiences and meanings attached to violence are highly contextual and so in understanding the needs of those seeking redress, the specific context within which violence occurred and the meanings attached to it are central. There are various priorities that may be outlined among which, can be the representation of the past atrocities in the collective history. There may be contestation over how the past is to be represented as memory is a subjective interpretive act. Other priorities in seeking redress may be the need for reparation. Reparations however face the ultimate challenge that they seek to repair the irreparable. In this sense therefore reparations may never be accepted as sufficient by victims, however understanding the meaning of violence may assist in knowing the appropriate forms of reparation required, that is, understanding what it is that needs to be repaired. The following chapter is a discussion of the methodology used in conducting this study. It is followed by chapters focusing on the meanings, priorities and concerns brought about by ZAM members in relation to their experience of *Gukurahundi*.

3 Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Narrative Methods

The study is nested within a phenomenological theoretical framework which seeks to understand the meanings of experiences from the perspectives of those being studied. The phenomenological paradigm allows for the subjective meanings attached to experiences to be captured from the understanding that meanings of experiences are comprehended retrospectively as one reflects on the past (Burch, 1990). As such, a narrative methodology has been adopted in the analysis of text. From the narrative perspective the meaning of events in peopleôs lives is constructed through storytelling by linking the past to the present (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989). Narrative is interpretive, in constructing narratives there is interpretation of events and not all events of the past are narrated but only those considered significant to the present. The narrative method in this regard therefore allows the researcher to consider how ZAM members link their past to the present, the events in their past that are significant to the present. This study is focused on a past event and it is the meanings that people attach to that past event that are of interest. Uehara et al (2001) say a narrative is a chronological ordering of events in the tellerôs life including an evaluation of what the experiences mean. Riessman (1993) further says a personal narrative is a subjective interpretation of events and not an exact recording of what occurred. Narrative analysis therefore enables a reading of narratives as a subjective point of view of the events being described. The subjective view is based on the values and interests that the narrator holds. Therefore narrative analysis allows for the values and interests of the narrator to be brought to the fore. A methodology that is cognisant of the subjective views is important in this research because it is concerned with the subjective view that participants attach to their experiences. The meanings attached to oneôs experiences are not universal across all experiencing the phenomena but will vary from one person to the next.

The subjective realm within which narratives are constructed is further highlighted in that the past is not static but can be reconstructed in light of present circumstances (Freeman, 1993; Ricouer, 1984). Narrative analysis allows for a recognition of this subjective realm in the way the past is recollected, as such in this research the stories told by ZAM members are not taken as an absolute recollection of the actual events as they occurred, however as an interpretation of that past, bringing to the fore the significant events of the past and linking them to the

present. In this respect, therefore, the present context within which the ZAM members remember their past has an influence on how they view the past and what is significant out of that past. The present context of ZAM members as migrants as well as the political events occurring in Zimbabwe at this time are important in the analysis of the ZAM memberôs narratives and have been considered. Sideris (2003) says, ñindividuals narratives are situated in particular interactions but also in social, cultural and institutional discourses which must be brought to bear to interpret themò (Sideris, 2003,p61). Particular notice has therefore been paid to the prevailing social, cultural and institutional discourses in Zimbabwe as well as South Africa in order to situate the ZAM membersô narratives and understand them.

Narratives are told to serve different purposes, in this research, ZAM members shared their stories with me as participants for an academic study. The perceived audience for the research influenced the kind of narratives they then produced. Many saw participation in the research as a chance to be heard by an academic audience they would not normally have access to and so formed narratives with this audience in mind. Some of the participants saw participation in the research as a chance to have their story of *Gukurahundi* recorded and passed onto future generations. This is reflected for example in the interview with Thembi she says she would like her name to be used in the report so that future generations can know that she once existed and the values she stood for. A detailed explanation of the research and its purpose was given to all participants prior to participation and obtaining consent as well as after consent had been obtained, however participants still remained with other expectations of what the research could do and these influenced the kind of narratives produced. This denotes that the meanings that were constructed in this study are a result the interaction between myself as a researcher and the members of ZAM interviewed and highlights the collaborative nature entailed in meaning making (Koschmann, 1999).

Narratives have been used to collect people's experiences of violence and suffering (Uehara, et al., 2001). Uehara et al (2001), discusses how narratives of atrocity do not always have a coherent structure because there are no meanings within the limits of everyday experience to attach to such kind of suffering. Therefore while narratives involve a chronological ordering and linking of events to include what the experience means to the narrator if there is a lack of words to describe the meaning of atrocity, such stories become an anti-narrative where the

narrator fails to tell a coherent story of a past event but continues to tell the story as if it is in the present (Uehara, et al., 2001). At times certain stories just cannot be told because there is no way to express what has been experienced and no way to find meaning for it. Uheara et al (2001) also discuss how if there is no healing from an atrocity it can be difficult for a person to tell of the experience in a narrative. This study is focused on experiences of violence. The narrative methodology allows for the researcher to pay attention to not only what is said but what cannot be said as well. As Uehara et al (2001) link the inability to form a narrative with a lack of closure or healing. Analysis of ZAM membersô narratives for coherence has been conducted, ability to have coherence in the narrative considered with attention being paid to particular issues which have been left out of the narratives or spoken of in symbolic terms.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Interviews, Songs and Organisational Documents

Purposive sampling has been used in the selection of participants for this study. Purposive sampling was used because it is those who have experienced the phenomenon under study that are of interest (Burch, 1990). ZAM members were thus selected as participants for the study. ZAM has an active membership of two hundred and fifty Zimbabweans and of these seventy five participate regularly in events. A list of names and with contact details of twenty five of the seventy five participants were was availed to the researcher by the organisationôs secretary. Of the twenty five about half said they were not able to participate in the study due to their work schedules. From those who were interested in participating in the study, five were then interviewed. The researcher was able to interview five as others were not able to meet during the day and for security reasons the researcher could not conduct interviews at night. Two females and three males were interviewed their details are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1 **List of In-depth Interview Participants**

Name	Age (years) & Sex	Age (years) when *Gukurahundi* occurred	Arrival in South Africa	Role in ZAM
Bongani	32 Male	5	1991	Organising Secretary & Member of Drama Group
Thembi	33 Female	6	1997	Member of Drama Group
Jabu	28 Male	2	1997	Member of Drama Group
Bokani	30 Male	3	1999	Member
Dudu	25 Female	Not yet born	2001	Member

Other data used in this study came from the ZAM drama groupøs CD of songs and poetry as well the organisationøs documents made available to the researcher. These included a copy of the organisationøs constitution, letters and flyers advertising the organisationøs events. The ZAM drama group, *Ithemba lamaNguni,* also recently cut a CD[10] of their songs and poetry. The researcher purchased this CD titled *Inkulu lendaba* which when translated means ñthis is a big matterò. The CD has a total of twelve songs and the table below gives a brief summary of the songs and the messages they carry.

Table 2 **List of Songs from *Inkulu Lendaba***

Song Title on CD	Translated Song Title	Main Theme of the song
Iphupho	The Dream	This song speaks of a person who is away from home and has a dream in which his father reminds them not to forget home and the importance of a home
Amaganyana	Animals of Prey	This song talks of the natural beauty of Zimbabwe that has been eroded by animals of prey into a desert.
Hungry Lions	Hungry Lions	In this song ZAM members say they escaped colonialism only to be led by ôhungry lionsò who are leaders only for their personal gain and not for the masses
Inkomo Zikababa	Our fatherøs cattle	In this song the image of the Ndebele as livestock that has been led astray by a wayward herder is used to show the predicament of the Ndebele in Zimbabwe under the leadership of ZANU PF.

[10] Released in November 2009

Song Title on CD	Translated Song Title	Main Theme of the song
Ngekuzikhohlwe	One can never forget who they are	In this song ZAM members state that they will never forget *Gukurahundi.*
Hango	Work	This song is a celebration of the return of migrants to Zimbabwe. It is sung from the position of those who remain behind while others migrate to South Africa
Silandela amaqhawe	We follow our heroes	In this song ZAM members commemorate political and musical heroes also including their group within this list. Some of the heroes commemorated in Zimbabwe are included and as well as some names not recognised as heroes in Zimbabwe.
Amabalengwe	The spots of a hyena	This song traces the genealogy of ZAM members to Ndebele warriors who fought the whites when colonisers arrived in Africa and says they are equally able now to face the current obstacles.
Iqiniso	The Truth	This song talks about how ZAM members will stand for the truth regardless of the danger this may entail. This refers to the truth pertaining to *Gukurahundi.*
Inkulu lendaba	This is a big matter	This song calls for those with the ability to form memorials to, memorialise Ndebele history to include *Gukurahundi* and the difficult experiences of being a migrant.
ULobhengula	King Lobhengula	In this song the Ndebele are traced back to being subjects of King Lobhengula. King Lobhengula is chosen as a symbol of Ndebele culture.
Usizi	Grief	In this song, ZAM members pray to God to walk with them because the life of a migrant is a difficult one.

Four songs were selected from the CD to form part of the text for analysis. The songs were selected based on those whose lyrics were closely related to the themes that came out of the interviews with ZAM members. The four songs which were selected are;

- *Inkulu lendaba "*this is a big matterò,
- *Ngekuzikhohlwe " you can never forget yourself",*
- *Iphupho* ñ the dreamò and
- *Iqiniso* ñthe truthò.

In depth interviews were conducted with the ZAM members that agreed to participate in the study. The average interview length was about one hour to ninety minutes. One interview with Jabu was the longest with duration of three hours. The in-depth interviews were conducted in Ndebele however all participants mixed Ndebele and English in their narratives. The in-depth interviews were recorded in audio and transcribed into text and analysed. In-depth interviews were chosen as the method for data collection as they allowed for the researcher to hold face to face conversations with the participants and get their understanding of the effects of *Gukurahundi*. Verbal consent to have interviews was given as well as consent to record the interviews for transcription. An interview guide was used with key themes that the interviews covered however an inductive approach was taken allowing participants to introduce issues that were most relevant for them (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005). Interviews allow for the participantôs own framework of meanings to be expressed and so were useful in uncovering meanings ZAM member attach to *Gukurahundi*. The text from transcripts of the in-depth interviews and selected songs as well as the organisation documents were theorised as narratives and analysed through narrative methods.

3.3 Narrative Analysis

After transcription sections that were of interest to the researcher were selected, and re-transcribed, that is, the audio was listened to repeatedly paying attention to pauses to identify the way the story was being told (Riessman,1993). The analysis focused on identifying the four components of a narrative Labvov (quoted in Riessman, 1993). Labvov lists the components of a narrative as an orientation, complicating action, evaluation and resolve. The orientation is the part of the narrative that gives a background to the events. It may focus on when and how events occurred. The complicating action focuses on what went wrong; this is the part of the narrative that highlights the events that are central to the plot. In the evaluation the narrator tells of what they made of the complicating action. What effect if any it made in the scheme of things. The resolve brings the story back to the present; it links the story being told to the present life of the narrator. Not all five components were found in the sections selected for analysis. The excerpt from an interview below will be used to illustrate how the components of a narrative were identified in the transcripts during the analysis. The O denotes the orienting portion, **C** is the complicating action, E is the evaluation and R is the resolve.

Q **Ok ummm so how do issues about *Gukurahundi* fit in?**

A 001 I think as I said the *Gukurahundi* is still there and is living in us **O**

002 because we have not come free O

003 as someone I was almost eh ..., I was almost 7 when I first, **O**

004 *Gukurahundi* came to our place in 1984 and **O**

005 Iôd seen them in 1983 yea O

006 but in 1984 they came **O**

007 my grandfather, he was a very old man, O

008 and my father also was sick, he had TB he wasnôt healthy you see, O

009 and then one of them beat up my grandfather and they kicked him, C

010 he broke a rib C

011 so my father was sick anyway and O

012 so I looked at my grandfather as the bread winner and O

013 he was powerful you see more than my father O

014 and then after that my grandfatherôs rib was broken and O

015 he stayed for 2 months then went to the hospital and O

016 they found that maybe the damage was a lot and he died. **C**

017 Then my father was left and he was sick also anyway he died in 1987 C

018 So till today for me at school I was very very intelligent and E

019 unfortunately because I am a twin you see **O**

020 my mother couldnôt afford to send us to school, **C**

021 so I ended in primary school you see, **C**

022 then I had to stay home because I was stressed **O**

023 I didnôt get time to go to school C

024 I didnôt get that opportunity. **C**

025 Then I came to Johannesburg in 1995 you see, **R**

026 so that affected me till today because E

027 I still believe when I came in 1995 **E**

028 it was hard for me to go back to school **E**

029 because I had two younger siblings C

030 I felt that they should have an opportunity better than mine **C**

031 I tried by all means to pay for them at school and C

032 at that time I was alone, my elder brother was there but **C**

033 he also left in 1977 going to Zambia **O**

034 we didnôt know where he was, you see, **C**

035 so I felt that I must first educate the younger ones **C**

036 but now Iôve educated them most went up to Aôlevel **R**

037 others they are doing temporary teaching. **R**

038 So I didnôt have that good opportunity to go back to school, **E**

039 so I felt that *Gukurahundi* ah, it shaped my future a lot. **E**

040 If it wasnôt for them at least my father **E**

041 if he would have been alive E

042 or my grandfather would have lived **E**

043 I wouldnôt have been maybe... he would have tried to send me to school, **E**

044 but because my mother was alone and I was a twin **C**

045 so to me it shaped my future *Gukurahundi* **E**

046 till now I havenôt rested so itôs difficult E

The orientation introduces the listener to the story; in the excerpt above the ZAM member tells of the first time he encountered the *Gukurahundi*. The orientation introduces the background to the story and what happens next. The complicating action, tells of what happened when they encountered the *Gukurahundi*, the death of his grandfather and father and his inability to go to school etc. The complicating action represents the events that derailed the normal progress of his story. In the evaluation the narrator shows the significance or effect of the complicating action. The evaluation shows how *Gukurahundi* has been a significant factor leading to the way the rest of his life turned out. The effects of *Gukurahundi* are seen to leave a lot of issues hanging, for example his life may have turned out differently because his father or grandfather may have sent him to school had they been alive. The resolve is the action that he then decides to take as a result of the events that he has narrated. The narrator talks about how he decided to come to Johannesburg and worked hard to educate his siblings and this leading to himself not getting the opportunity to be educated.

3.3.1 Song Analysis

The audio recordings of interviews were transcribed into text and analysed as narratives in the same way that text from interviews was analysed. Further to this, the song analysis also included attending to the tempo, mood, language and style of the music. Also considered in the analysis was if songs were collective or individual and the audience to which they are directed, the ordering of the songs and choice of who sings which parts and which parts are spoken in poetic prose while some are sung. Some of the meanings of the songs, which are

within for example the rhythm were not captured in the translation as it was not possible to translate with the same rhymes. A comparison of what is said in the songs with what is said or not said in the interviews has been considered, for example it may be easier to say certain things in a song than in a conversation.

3.4 Translation and my Position

Interviews were conducted in a mixture of Ndebele and English languages. It is of note that when I negotiated for the language to use in interviews with members of ZAM and they all requested to be interviewed in Ndebele and not English. This request to use Ndebele language in the interviews was justified by the assertion that they were not educated, as Ndebele people and therefore not able to speak English. This was further followed by a celebration of my role as a Ndebele researcher, in that I would be able to translate their voices into a language that is more universally recognised than Ndebele, English. In all my interactions with the ZAM members they expressed gratitude at having ñone of themò[11] that is myself as a Ndebele who was educated and part of the community of educated people but also a part of the Ndebele people. In my translation of the interview scripts of the ZAM members, therefore I was bridging a barrier between the community of Ndebeles and the academic community, that is, according to their view of me. Venuti speaks of communities that are created by translation of literature (Venuti, 2004). In this instance, ZAM members imagine an academic community, which is also real, which they are not able to access and see my role as a researcher, as one who is bridging the gap between them as Ndebele non-academics and the academic community who will be exposed to my study.

ZAM members requested to use Ndebele in the interviews however as the interviews progressed the conversations were not strictly in Ndebele however words would be borrowed from English and the narratives produced were of mixed language. The text below is an example of the language mixing that occurred.

> ama Human Rights
>
> even laba abantu bama human rights

[11] I was regarded as óone of themô because I am Ndebele. There were varying degrees to which I was a part of the group because I was seen as an insider and at the same time as an outsider because I am a University Student therefore óeducatedô of which they claim not to be.

I would like to condemn them

ngiyaba condemn angazi kangaki

The translated text reads as follows;

The human rights

even these people from human rights organisations

I would like to condemn them

I donôt know how many times I condemn them

In the above quote, the word 'condemn' is used because no direct equivalent for the word can be found in Ndebele. In other instances the participant would say something in Ndebele and translate that to English for emphasis, as shown below

Ngokubona kwami kwakuyindlela yokuthi **bachithe** amaNdebele

Or else ngithi ukuwa destroyer amaNdebele

In the first sentence the Ndebele word for destroy which is *bachithe* is used and then it is translated to English by the participant in the following phrase and she says *destroyer*. Though English was used in the interviews I still had to translate the interview transcripts into text in English using the above quote for example a translation of the quote would be as follows

from my point of view it was meant to destroy the Ndebele

in English I could use the word destroy

As I translated the ZAM memberôs interview transcripts I had challenges as it is not always possible to find the exact or words that are equivalent to those used by the ZAM members in English. Systems of ideas and signs for them differ between languages and so some of the meanings in the Ndebele transcripts may not have been transmitted into the English transcripts (Schleiermacher, 2004). This challenge was most pronounced in my transcribing of the songs and poems from the CD. The poems and songs were performed in Ndebele and in some cases with a mixture of Ndebele and English. The meaning of the songs that is expressed by the rhythm and alterations of tone could not be easily captured in the translation. Schleiermacher (2004) calls this the fidelity of rhythm and melody and the

fidelity of grammar and dialect. It is at times not possible to have both of these in the translated text. In this case I chose to translate the meanings that are in grammar leaving out the tone and melody of the songs and poems. It was not possible to translate the poems with the same rhyme found in the Ndebele versions, for example in the quote below

> Ikhaya likhaya, noma likhatshana
>
> Likhaya ikhaya ngitshuôngakhalôukhalale

The translated text reads as follows:

> Home is home even when it is far
>
> Home is home even if you cry and give up

The English version of this segment of the poem does not have the rhyme that is produced by the K, in the Ndebele version. The musical elements of a language reveal themselves in rhythm and alterations of tone which may hold higher meaning (Schleiermacher, 2004). In this case therefore the meaning is translated however without the accompanying changes in tone and rhyme that is in the original. This therefore means that some of the meanings of the songs and poetry that are within the rhythm and tone may have been lost in the translation. In translating the interview scripts, songs and poems I have endeavoured to transmit the same impression I received of the original texts. It has not been possible that I find words or phrases that cohere exactly to some of those used by the ZAM members in the interviews and in their songs. Where this has occurred I have endeavoured to find as close as possible a word or phrase in English, for example the phrase *amathambo amhlophe* which is used in the song *Inkulu le ndaba* literally means ñwhite bonesò however it also means the remains of those that were not properly buried. I have in the analysis used the cultural meaning and not the literal meaning of the phrase (see Behar, 2003).

The following chapters detail the meanings that ZAM members have narrated in relation of their experiences of *Gukurahundi.* Chapter four discusses, the Zimbabwe Action Movement and its role in the construction of the meanings of Gukurahundi. Chapter five focuses on the silence surrounding *Gukurahundi* experienced by ZAM members as well as the kind of remembering they call for to break this silence. Chapter six outlines the meanings of

Gukurahundi in relation to the Ndebele ethnic identity and also ends with the strategy for coping that ZAM members adopt in the form of reclaiming the Zimbabwean identity.

4 Chapter Four: Zimbabwe Action Movement

4.1 Political Moment of the Formation of ZAM

Since the signing of the Unity Accord in Zimbabwe, ZANU PF, the ruling party has not had a real formidable opposition party to challenge it. In 1999, the formation of Movement for Democratic Change therefore presented possibilities of new hope in the Zimbabwean political arena. The MDC was seen as a real threat to ZANU PF and a real hope for those who were opposed to ZANU PF. ZAM emerged in response to a political moment in Zimbabwe where there seemed to be real potential of change in the politics of the nation. This moment may have been seen as an opportunity to re-direct the nation building project. Groups that felt sidelined in the previous national ethos may have seen this moment as an opportunity to input into the new nation building project, correcting the mistakes of the past era in this new dispensation.

ZAM members initially came together as part of Zimbabwe Support Group (ZSG) which was a support group for members of MDC. The ZSG proved not to be a perfect fit for the needs of some of its members who members wanted an

> unapologetic stance on issues of *Gukurahundi* and tribalism in Zimbabwe (Interview, Bongani)

As a result there was a breakaway by some members of the ZSG to form ZAM. The goals of ZSG were the same as those of the ZAM however *Gukurahundi* proved a significant enough issue to cause a breakaway. Many papers written on the crisis in Zimbabwe have talked about *Gukurahundi* as unfinished business, however there is always the compromise that *Gukurahundi* victims are asked to make, that is, to deal with the more recent issues prior to *Gukurahundi* issues (Plessis & Ford, 2008). For example, in calling for a truth and reconciliation commission in Zimbabwe, Eppel (2004) says the commission would have to focus on the violence that occurred post 2000 then when those issues are over, focus on the *Gukurahundi* atrocities. ZAM members however see the *Gukurahundi* as significant as the post 2000 violence and needing equal focus. The break away from the ZSG signifies the urgency with which a solution to *Gukurahundi* is being sought by ZAM members in that they chose not to focus on current violence and once this has been dealt with bring up issues of *Gukurahundi*. They wanted an equal focus on the issues of *Gukurahundi* and saw this as a

pre-requisite to then deal with current issues. Borrowing from the Volkanôs (2001) theory of chosen trauma one could postulate that current events occurring in Zimbabweôs political and economic arena have led to a reactivation of the trauma of *Gukurahundi* leading to a conflation of the past with the present ills.

In the following quote, for example Bokani says other organisations shy away from the real problems of Zimbabwe. *Gukurahundi* is considered the ñrealò problem, and other organisations are shying away from the real problem when they are focused on the current issues prevailing in Zimbabwe. For the ZAM members *Gukurahundi* is the real problem and not the current issues.

> So ZAM I always respect it as an organisation the first that I joined it was a very straightforward organisation they were not shying away from the real problem (Interview, Bokani)

From a ZAM perspective therefore *Gukurahundi* represents the *real problems* of Zimbabwe that political parties are shying away from. Everything else comes secondary to *Gukurahundi* which is primary to all problems in Zimbabwe. This is also reflected in ZAM activities to highlight the plight of Zimbabweans. ZAM held public meetings where they used images to showcase the violence of the Zimbabwean government against its own people. They presented images of events dating back to the 80ôs, starting off with the *Gukurahundi*. *Gukurahundi* from the perspective of ZAM members is central to all other problems that are now plaguing the state.

Members of ZAM expound the objectives of the formation of ZAM broadly to be the democratisation of Zimbabwe, which is to bring a change to Zimbabweôs political leadership. This goal is seen across the board of the various Zimbabwean Diaspora groupings. However, for ZAM there is a strong focus to also address historical issues of *Gukurahundi* and this is seen as a prerogative to moving on with the national building process. *Gukurahundi* is seen as Zimbabweôs unfinished business that is leading to a failure by Zimbabweans to progress in the nation-building project. Issues of *Gukurahundi* therefore are coming up at a time when Zimbabwe is at a transition point politically and perhaps this provides space to influence outcomes in the country. This transition provides ZAM members an opportunity to correct

the historical wrongs of *Gukurahundi* and chart a new course for the nation of Zimbabwe where the *Ndebele* and *Shona* are equal citizens.

> I think another thing we can say is that I thank MDC, because I always felt that if Tsvangirayi was a *Ndebele* he wouldnôt be alive today but because he belonged to that tribe it was difficult because Mugabe sees that I will separate my own tribe, we felt it minimised the brutality of ZANU so ZANUé ... if there was no MDC and we as ZAM came out and talked about *Gukurahundi* ... but now MDC minimised that ZANU brutality against us. (Interview, Bongani)

MDC is seen to have heralded a new era in Zimbabwean politics by diluting the brutality of the state against the *Ndebele* people. The above quote shows that for people who were affected by *Gukurahundi* there has always been a constant threat of that violence re-occurring. It is also said that ZANU PF has repeatedly used threats of bringing back *Gukurahundi* in its election campaigns (Eppel, 2004). This shows the strategic moment for ZAM to bring up issues of *Gukurahundi*. MDC presented a safety net for people to then speak out about *Gukurahundi* without the fear that it would recur. This also highlights the nature of memory as based on the present. The present context of MDC diluting the brutality of ZANU PF allows for a specific way in which the ZAM members can invoke the memory of Gukurahundi. The present context determines the kind of memory of *Gukurahundi* that ZAM members expound.

The view held by ZAM members, that *Gukurahundi* is central to problems occurring in Zimbabwe, is found in various writings on the current crisis in Zimbabwe. The way *Gukurahundi* was treated it is said, set the precedence of impunity for perpetrators of violence and human rights abuses that prevail in the country (Eppel, 2004; Plessis & Ford, 2008). A culture of silence and denial has been seen over the years from the government of Zimbabwe pertaining to violence perpetrated by the state (Abrams, 2006) and amnesties have been granted to perpetrators of violence as was seen with the *Gukurahundi*. Further, to this *Gukurahundi* is seen to be affecting the political situation in a profound way as the quote below shows:

> **Q. Apart from what you've told me about what happened to you what else about *Gukurahundi* can you tell me?**
>
> ***A.*** *Gukurahundi* shaped politics in Zimbabwe because the thing is even the division in MDC if you read a lot had something to do with *Gukurahundi* so it always shapes politics, it shapes

> it. Some people will rather trust someone in ZANU because he is a *Ndebele* than to trust a *Shona* in MDC (Interview, Jabu)

ZAM members view *Gukurahundi* and the present ills occurring in Zimbabwe as a continuation of events. The present political issues of Zimbabwe are viewed from a lens of *Gukurahundi*, where current problems happening in Zimbabwe are seen as occurring because *Gukurahundi* was not properly responded to. According to ZAM members, the division of the opposition party MDC into two factions is ascribed to ethnic differences which occur because of *Gukurahundi*. Zimbabweans do not trust each other across the ethnic lines and therefore are failing to form a united front to remove the current government because of these ethnic differences. The emergence of MDC heralded a new era for Zimbabweans as the MDC was seen as a ñsaviourò from the ZANU PF government. The split of MDC into two factions is very significant with regards to the hopes that many had placed on it.

The MDC divided into two factions in 2005 as a result of infighting along regional and ethnic fault lines, as well as disagreements over strategy, accountability and violence (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). The two factions now command regional support which has significantly affected its influence. Ethnic ties here are shown to transcend political affiliation as postulated by Ndengwa (1997), that in postcolonial states, a dual citizenship occurs, there is ethnic citizenship and national citizenship. People operate in the two parallel modes of citizenship which at times may oppose each other. Ndengwa (1997) shows how ethnic citizenship may lead nationally elected leaders to serve one particular ethnic group, that is, when ethnic citizenship commands greater allegiance. From the ZAM membersô perspective, in Zimbabwe ethnic citizenship commands greater allegiance because of *Gukurahundi* and this is seen to be detrimental to the nationôs progress as its people are divided and unable to project into the future as a united front. *Gukurahundi* is said to have cemented the feeling of being *Ndebele* (CCJP, 1997; Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). The *Ndebele* identity may thus come first before the Zimbabwean national identity. Therefore, in cases where national politics seem to be challenging the *Ndebele* ethnic identity, *Ndebele* ethnicity may take precedence. According to the quote above, one would rather trust a *Ndebele* person in ZANU than a *Shona* person in MDC. In this regard *Gukurahundi* is not in the past but it is continuing to affect Zimbabweans in the present, in the form of rifts between the ethnic

groups and political parties. From this view *Gukurahundi* never ended but continues as its effects are still affecting Zimbabwean politics. The power of *Gukurahundi* to affect the present from ZAM memberôs perspectives is linked to the failure to respond to *Gukurahundi* in the correct manner.

4.2 The Role of Zimbabwe Action Movement

The ZAM is regarded as an organisation that was tackling the ñreal problemsò of Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Action movement therefore is an organisation that was relevant to the lives of its members and provided a platform for its members to address issues that they found other organisations were not willing to focus on.

> Yah it helped me a lot because we are a group of people thinking the same way and we grew up the same way and you were deprived the same way youôll always console each other. I felt my case was one of the worst but when I find there are other people who saw their parents at the same time being buried alive others you see so I said so Iôm the better of these people you see it wasnôt bad as .... I never thought but other people they faced bad things you see (Interview, Bongani)

ZAM also played a role in bringing together people who had similar experiences. This created a platform where people could share experiences and provide support to each other. In the above quote Bongani says that being part of ZAM changed their view of their experiences when they found that others had had worse experiences. The ZAM therefore resulted in people viewing their experiences as not so adverse. Hamber (undated) talks about self help groups that come together to provide support and services to victims or survivors. The goals of these self help groups are diverse and can be to provide support to survivors while other groups are formed with political goals of advocating for recognition and acknowledgement in the post conflict phase. The ZAM was formed with a focus on current political events in Zimbabwe, however linking these current politics to the past has brought together people with a shared experience of *Gukurahundi*. In this regard ZAM has performed some of the functions of self help groups such as providing:

ÅñA forum for joining together and recognizing that others have had similar experiences and have common problems;

ÅA place for friendship, companionship and emotional support;

ÅA safe place to recount events and break the cultures of silence that are common in conflict situations;

ÅA possible vehicle for social change and for lobbying and advocacy to get authorities to address their and other victimsô needs;

ÅA means of raising awareness about exclusion and the ñforgotten victimsò of a conflictò (Hamber, , undated, p.84)

The ZAM members have considered the other members of the ZAM as a source of support. ZAM members have broken the culture of silence currently prevailing in Zimbabwe with regards to *Gukurahundi*. They have gone against the norm in their demands for an acknowledgement of *Gukurahundi*. Members of ZAM attribute activities such the formation of their drama group *Ithemba lamaNguni* where they write songs, poetry and drama to their membership as the quote below shows:

> ZAM it played a big role a very very big role today it had influence also on us as *Ithemba lama Nguni* ñ hope for the Nguniò, so that now we recognise we have a role a magnificent role to play in our country you see (Interview, Bongani)

The ZAM also contributed to its memberôs reclaiming their Zimbabwean identity and becoming involved in the politics of Zimbabwe. In the above quote Bongani says, ZAM made them realise they have a ómagnificentô role to play in their country which connotes a sense of nobility with which having a role to play in oneôs country is viewed. ZAM therefore, facilitated that its members come together and pursue the noble goal of highlighting the plight of Zimbabweans and *Ndebele* through their music, poetry, documentaries and drama. In this regard ZAM played a facilitative role for its members to pursue activities relating to *Gukurahundi* among other things.

5 Chapter Five: The Silences surrounding *Gukurahundi*

5.1 Silence at the Community level

In this section the discussion will focus on the different kinds of silence associated to *Gukurahundi* as expounded by ZAM members. The silence is perceived to operate at three different levels. There is silence that is experienced at the *Ndebele* community level, which the ZAM members encounter as enforced by the *Ndebele* older generation. A second level of silence is said to be experienced at the national level, where the Zimbabwean community as a whole as well as the government are not acknowledging *Gukurahundi* and its effects. The third level of silence they say is at an international level where the international community seems to have ignored *Gukurahundi* and its victims. The discussion will commence with a focus on silence at the community level, then at the national level and lastly at a global scale.

> Even our parents never talked you know what we used to get from them. You find that maybe we are sitting with my grandmother and mother in the evening one time they chat theyôll never mention it by name they just say that time you see, my grandmother will always shout quiet quiet quiet. However, my mother is one person maybe she wanted us to know in future but my grandmother she was afraid that we were too young... Iôd say if my grandmother had defeated my mother by saying keep quiet we wouldnôt have known some of these things because for us what weôd seen we were very young, we just had seen soldiers killing people (Interview, Bongani)

In my experience *Gukurahundi* is not commonly talked about within the *Ndebele* community, there is a kind of silence that surrounds it. For example when people talk about *Gukurahundi* one may refer to is as ñthat timeò without making any direct reference to the name *Gukurahundi,* as the above quote also shows, it is spoken of indirectly. As such the silence of *Gukurahundi* is not in an absolute absence of any talk about *Gukurahundi* but an absence of open discussion about the subject without some form of restraint on what one can or cannot say. After I began this study, I conducted informal conversational interviews with friends and family members to hear of their experiences and views of *Gukurahundi*. Most profound of these were conversations held with my parents, who shared with me their experiences of *Gukurahundi.* I found it perplexing why I had never been told of these events, yet other events that occurred during the same period are openly narrated and I have heard about them. There seems to be a self-imposed silence from the elders within the *Ndebele* communities as it were, in relation to issues of *Gukurahundi*. A self regulated way of talking about

Gukurahundi that restricts what is told and at times seems to deliberately leave out certain events from stories.

> We want the truth, from the start my sister right where the problem started even if the elders may silence us and say young men donôt talk about those things they will offend certain people that is what divides people how can it offend someone when I am the victim I should be able to say everything in the open so that I can truly relate to you (Interview, Jabu).

The quote above from the interview with Jabu highlights the frustration that he feels as a young person when elders sensor what can and cannot be said. From the perspective of Jabu quoted above, elders silence any talk of *Gukurahundi* because they fear offending ósomeoneò and this someone seems not to be a victim of *Gukurahundi,* one could postulate this ñsomeoneò to be *Shona*. The older generation, according to Jabu, have not freely chosen silence, but are silent due to fear. It is possible that the silence may be a result of fear, since those viewed as the perpetrators of *Gukurahundi,* that is ZANU PF, are currently the ruling party in Zimbabwe. In this regard powerlessness is leading to the silence from the Ndebele older generation. Literature shows that power plays a role in what is considered socially memorable or not (Sheriff, 2000). The Ndebele as a less powerful group in Zimbabwe may therefore not be able to influence what is socially memorable, and influence a memorialisation of *Gukurahundi* and so are silent about *Gukurahundi.* Secondly, the silence may be a compromise chosen in order not to upset relations with the *Shona* who are not victims of *Gukurahundi.* In this regard it can be argued that the Ndebele have chosen silence as the best way forward in order for peaceful relations to prevail in Zimbabwe. This view nexuses into the theory of silence as cultural censorship, where silence is chosen by a community (Sheriff, 2000). Looking at the time when *Gukurahundi* occurred, it was soon after independence from colonial rule. It is possible that the *Ndebele* chose to be silent about *Gukurahundi* in order to give Zimbabwe, as a budding nation, a chance to develop. The *Ndebele* may have chosen not to disrupt the nation building project by bringing up the past of *Gukurahundi*. Silence may also be chosen to contain the effects that narration would have (Sheriff, 2000) and therefore, it may not have been just a compromise or fear that led to silence it may also have been chosen deliberately because people did not want to relieve the pain in narration. Lastly, the silence surrounding *Gukurahundi* from the Ndebele older generation may be a result of a lack of capability from the elders, that is, those who directly experienced the violence, to narrate their experiences. Certain traumatic experiences may be

beyond the scope of narration, Uehara et. al (2001) for example contend that people may be unable to construct coherent narratives of traumatic experience and instead form what they call anti-narratives. In this regard therefore the Ndebele elderly generation may not be able to form a coherent narrative about their experiences of *Gukurahundi* and therefore are silent. The quote above also highlights the differences in generational priorities in relation to *Gukurahundi.* The elders want silence with regards to *Gukurahundi* but the younger generation, in this case, the ZAM members want to talk about *Gukurahundi,* they view victims as deserving the right to speak. Summerfield (1995) calls this the need for a public witness, so that memories of loved ones are not thrown into oblivion as if they never existed.

5.2 Silence at the National level

At a national level, this discussion will focus on the public discourse that prevails in Zimbabwe in relation to *Gukurahundi.* A quote from the, then Speaker of Parliament in Zimbabwe John Nkomo has been chosen as an example of public discourse in relation to *Gukurahundi:*

> We must be careful when handling such issues because they affect national unity symbolised by the unification of ZANU PF-PF and PF- PF ZAPUé . *Gukurahundi* has always been steeped in tribal overtones pitting the *Ndebele* against the *Shona*, and no one wants to revisit such as divisive era[12]

This is a response to a bill that was proposed to address *Gukurahundi*, the *Gukurahundi* Memorial Bill. In 2007, Jonathan Moyo, a Member of Parliament for Tsholotsho one of the districts in Zimbabwe which was affected by *Gukurahundi* proposed a bill to compensate victims of *Gukurahundi* as well as to make it a crime for one to deny the occurrence of *Gukurahundi*[13]. The bill also called for the establishment of a *Gukurahundi* national memorial board and museum. This bill did not receive much support and was never passed

[12] http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=64321 accessed 13/10/2009

[13] **http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-01/2007-01-02-voa56.cfm?moddate=2007-01-02 accessed on 15/09/09**

into law however it sparked a lot of debate in the media (see for example Mpofu, 2008a). The debate had two camps with one camp supporting the bill as something long overdue, and the other seeing it as bringing division to Zimbabweans.

This quote is indicative of the common official response to matters of *Gukurahundi* in Zimbabwe. It has been popularly said that those who want to talk about *Gukurahundi* are bringing division to Zimbabwe. When the Speaker of Parliament says, ñ*no* one wants to visit such a divisive eraò he insinuates that he is speaking as a representative of all Zimbabweans, also as a government official, he seems to be saying this is the official standpoint on this matter. Therefore, he represents that official standpoint that says Zimbabweans do not want to revisit *Gukurahundi* it has to be left in the past. Responses to any talk about *Gukurahundi* have also been responded to as bringing up old wounds that were dealt with in the 1987 Unity Accord (CCJP, 1997). ZAM membersô outspokenness about *Gukurahundi* therefore is in defiance of public discourse in Zimbabwe which sees any talk about *Gukurahundi* as divisive to the nation. This defiance of the officially imposed silence about *Gukurahundi* is further highlighted in one of the songs composed by a ZAM member, titled the truth. An excerpt of the song lyrics follows below:

> They could beat us for doing this
> They could arrest us for doing this
> They could kill us for doing this
> They can beat up a thousand
> But they cannot beat up the truth
> They can arrest a thousand
> They can kill a thousand
> But they cannot kill the truth (Song, The truth)

In this song, ZAM members without directly referring to what they are talking about, they sing about *Gukurahundi* in relation to their current activities. In this way the ZAM members find a way to talk about *Gukurahundi* without directly referring to it. They highlight how talking about *Gukurahundi* entails going against the officially sanctioned stand and the risk it involves which is being beaten up, imprisoned or killed. The Zimbabwean government has

been seen to respond as such to any who dissent or oppose it. The violence that has been experienced by MDC supporters is proof of this. Eppel (2004) says the Zimbabwean government has since the 1980s enacted laws and enforced state repression to make access to any ótruthô but theirs almost impossible on a daily basis within and without Zimbabwe. The song mirrors this state repression of versions of the truth that dissent from those of the government. For example, the results of an inquest commissioned to investigate the *Gukurahundi* atrocities, the *Chihambakwe* Commission, were never made public (CCJP, 1997). Participants in this study are of the opinion that, there has been a strong drive from the ruling party to forget the atrocities and move on with the nation building project. *Gukurahundi* has been swept under the carpet and there is a pretence that Zimbabweans have dealt with the issues and moved on with their lives. For example the absence of the mention of *Gukurahundi* even in events directly linked to the atrocities such as the National Unity Day[14] bears testimony to a form silence around *Gukurahundi*. Efforts to silence any talk of ethnicity including the events of *Gukurahundi* in Zimbabwe have been seen under the political rhetoric of a united Zimbabwe while there are ethnic tensions within the population (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). ZAM members on the other hand come with the divergent view of wanting to remember the events of *Gukurahundi* and to have them publicly acknowledged.

The ZAM members have different opinions about the causes and intentions of the atrocities that occurred in *Gukurahundi*. One view is that *Gukurahundi* was meant to destroy the *Ndebele*, while on the other hand the *Ndebele* are seen as unfortunate victims in political affairs. Where ZAM members see *Gukurahundi* to have been a move to destroy the *Ndebele,* they believe that *Gukurahundi* was meant to remove the *Ndebele* from Zimbabwe. As one respondent said:

Q **So from your point of view what do you think caused *Gukurahundi*?**

A I donôt know if the government thinks of it but from my point of view it was meant to destroy the Ndebele in English I could use the word destroy and to intimidate them so that when they bring their strategy they remember that by the way something once happened.

Q **To intimidate them of what strategy?**

[14] The National Unity Day is a Zimbabwean national holiday designated to commemorate the signing of the 1987 Unity Accord

> A Like now they should be afraid when the government says go to the right they go, if the government says left everybody does that for people not to feel free, so that there is that fear that if thereôs an announcement on radio that today people should not drink water, nobody does even if nobody is going to see you in your house. Thatôs the kind of intimidation I am talking about for them to rule the way they are doing now so that if they say today this is the party we are voting for, for sure, they know that if you donôt you are dead (Interview, Dudu)

So some of the ZAM members view *Gukurahundi* as something that was intended to destroy *Ndebele* people, from the view that *Gukurahundi* was meant to destroy the *Ndebele*, this can be destruction at different levels. There was the physical destruction of homesteads and infrastructure and the physical killing of people. While at another level *Gukurahundi* may have been meant to destroy the spirit of the *Ndebele* so that they would be submissive to whatever the government wanted to do, so it would not face any opposition as expounded in the quote above.

The ZAM member quoted above further goes on to say:

> they just did it and left it like that hanging in the air (Interview, Dudu).

The quote above says they just did it, referring to *Gukurahundi* and left it like that hanging in the air. This gives a sense of unfinished business, that there is expectation that something else is to follow. In this sense *Gukurahundi* is left hanging in the air it is not concluded, and the people who were affected by it have been left suspended as well. *Gukurahundi* was therefore left hanging in the air to be a constant reminder to the *Ndebele* that any ómisbehaviourô would be dealt with in the same fashion as *Gukurahundi*. From this perspective, the silence surrounding *Gukurahundi* is an intentional one meant to keep the *Ndebele* in that state of submission because of fear of it recurring. Different literature points to the ethnic character that *Gukurahundi* took on, resulting in it being viewed as an effort to destroy the *Ndebele* (Eppel, 2004; Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). As already argued, the ethnic nature of *Gukurahundi* has repeatedly been silenced by fears that it would bring division to Zimbabweans. This leaves the *Ndebele* as silenced victims of a regime that is in power and has not acknowledged their guilt for past atrocities.

The silence surrounding *Gukurahundi* at a national level is at times from the perspective that the signing of the Unity Accord was a sufficient symbol of departure from the past and so any

talk of *Gukurahundi* is opening up a past that has been dealt with. This requisite to move from the past may be driven by political goals to move to future projects of nation building. In Zimbabwe after *Gukurahundi* political goals to present Zimbabwe as a united nation may have taken precedent to any focus on *Gukurahundi*. Zimbabwe was a young nation coming out of colonialism and focus was on the nation building project. Any focus on *Gukurahundi*, such as a truth recovery process on *Gukurahundi* may have been seen to divert from the nation building goals and so were not pursued.

> If a *Shona* person would agree when I say no lets not talk about *Gukurahundi* we will talk about it tomorrow what if tomorrow a *Ndebele* becomes president why did you not talk about it, it means you are waiting to become president so that you can kill me also why didnôt you talk about it (Interview, Jabu).

The quote infers that if the victim does not come up to talk about their experiences they may be nursing the hurt and waiting for an opportunity to revenge, creating a cycle of violence. In this quote, the ZAM member talks about the *Shona* indirectly by putting the *Shona* in the position of the *Ndebele* and the *Ndebele* in the position of *Shona*. He implies that the *Shona* are averse to talking about *Gukurahundi* and as a result, this raises suspicion among the *Ndebele*. It is difficult to trust what the *Shona* will do as one does not know what they may be thinking. Taken from the perspective that silence communicates (Weingarten, 2004), therefore, in this instance silence is read to mean there is a plot being conceived and leads to mistrust. On the other hand as well in the above quote, the ZAM member may be saying that the *Shona* should welcome the *Ndebele* who want to talk about *Gukurahundi* because it means they are not retaliatory but want to be reconciled, where the silence of the Ndebele is taken to mean that the *Ndebele* are plotting their revenge. Danieli (1995), speaks of the *conspiracy of silence* (emphasis in original) between victims and society, where victims do not tell of their experiences because they feel no one will ever comprehend their distress and how this *conspiracy of silence* intensifies victimsô profound sense of isolation, loneliness, and mistrust of society. The silence perceived in Zimbabwean society may be leading to the questioning of the value of the Ndebele and their belonging to Zimbabwe, as they feel isolated from the Zimbabwean community. It is also possible the silence is a form of forgetting where narration may be seen as causing harm (Sheriff, 2000). The response to the *Gukurahundi* Memorial Bill by the speaker of parliament, which alludes to a fear of the effects of talking about *Gukurahundi* fits into this view of silence. The Zimbabwean community sees narration of *Gukurahundi* events having a potential to divide Zimbabweans and therefore would rather be silent as a form of forgetting.

5.3 Silence at the International level

Silence about *Gukurahundi* at an international level is highlighted in the following quote

> we see pictures coming from Harare, journalists are flocking to Harare but we do not hear anything, from Bulawayo and Matabeleland we didnôt hear them talk about, the 20000 people of Matabeleland who were killed (Interview, Jabu)

This quote refers to the world focus on Zimbabwe in the new millennium. There has been untold media focus on Zimbabwe and the violence perpetrated by the government against MDC supporters. ZAM members then question the silence that occurred during the *Gukurahundi* atrocities. There is a comparison between the past international community response to events that occurred in Zimbabwe, that is in *Gukurahundi* and the present violence against farm owners and members of the MDC. There was no international outcry against the *Gukurahundi* atrocities. On the contrary, Zimbabwe and its president were hailed as successful. Honorary degrees were conferred on the Zimbabwean president. The current response to violence occurring in Zimbabwe in the new millennium has seen the world condemning the Zimbabwean government and its president. This disparity in the responses is questioned by the ZAM members and seen as a further silencing of the victims of *Gukurahundi*. The silence about *Gukurahundi* that ZAM members are objecting to is not just that of the government or the *Ndebele* elders but the broader international community is also questioned over its silence about *Gukurahundi*. In this excerpt, the ZAM member links the past events of *Gukurahundi* to present events happening in Zimbabweôs political arena. He views *Gukurahundi* from a lens of the present and interprets the events of the past based on what is currently occurring. The world focus on Zimbabwe currently, reflected in journalistsô an interest in getting news from Zimbabwe is juxtaposed to what occurred during *Gukurahundi.* Literature shows that the past is made sense of as a result of what is happening in the present (Freeman, 1993). In this regard this ZAM member is judging the response to *Gukurahundi* based on the response given to current violence occurring in Zimbabwe.

As earlier stated, ZAM members have different opinions about the causes and intentions of the atrocities that occurred in *Gukurahundi* one opinion being that *Gukurahundi* was a politically motivated move to destroy ZAPU as a party so that Zimbabwe would not be ruled

by a socialist party[15]. ZANU PF is said to have used *Gukurahundi* to thwart PF ZAPUôs support base, which was mainly the *Ndebele* people. This notion is stretched further to explain why there was no attention from the global community to the atrocities of *Gukurahundi,* in that PF ZAPU was a socialist party and during the Cold War none of the NATO superpowers would have allowed a socialist party to rule. ZANU PF was therefore used to thwart socialism in Zimbabwe when destroying PF ZAPU. The quote below shows this:

> I think Zimbabwe is just a battle field of the world super powers so it was just a battle field of the worldôs super powers because of the USSR supporting ZAPU and NATO believed that they mustnôt allow a Socialist to rule in Zimbabwe because ZAPU was supported by socialistsé .. instead of crushing Socialism itself they crushed people who worked in Socialismé who unfortunately were *Ndebele*ôs mostly, so thatôs what caused *Gukurahundi* (Interview, Bokani)

As a result of ZAPU being socialist the *Gukurahundi* atrocities did not receive any international recognition because the world was against socialism. In this sense the atrocities were condoned in the name of opposing socialism. This international silence may also be explained by the advancements in technology, for example today it is difficult for the Zimbabwean government to prevent news from travelling to the international community as what occurred in *Gukurahundi*. The international community, it is said, only heard the government version of what was happening in *Gukurahundi* and it is only the people in the areas that were affected by *Gukurahundi* that know the full scale of the atrocities (Eppel, 2004). The government is said to have ensured that information did not leave the areas in which atrocities occurred (Eppel, 2009). One can thus argue that victims of *Gukurahundi* therefore faced with a nation and international community that has not acknowledged the full scale of their experiences partly because the perpetrators are in power and have been able to silence any version of the truth of *Gukurahundi* that is divergent from theirs.

The above discussion on silence has endeavoured to outline the different levels of silence that ZAM members expound to exist in Zimbabwe pertaining to *Gukurahundi*. The reasons for the silence are varying, it may be a choice taken in compromise for the nation building project by the Ndebele. Secondly the silence may be the result of inability to narrate the trauma of *Gukurahundi*. Thirdly it may have been a result of a power struggle, where contestation over what is socially memorable may result in the silence of the less powerful,

[15] ZAPUôs received its support during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe from Russia.

where the Ndebele occupy the position of powerlessness in relation to the ruling ZANU PF in Zimbabwe. Finally the silence may have been a form of forgetting, due to the fear that talking about *Gukurahundi* would bring division to Zimbabweans.

5.4 Apology

> By this time we should be brothers and friends with the *Shona* but we canôt because nobody has brought people together to identify the real problemé é once you open up your mouth and say here is the problem people say you are a tribalist am I a tribalist to say my mother was killed? Am I being a tribalist? (Interview, Jabu)

The above quote insinuates that the *Ndebele* and *Shona* are not ñfriendsò. Friends here can be taken to mean people who are in a relationship of trust. The above quote therefore, says that there is no trust between the *Shona* and *Ndebele* in Zimbabwe because dialogue about the past is not accepted. Instead public discourse sees the past as a matter that has been put to rest. It is important therefore to consider that when ZAM members emphasize reconciliation when talking about *Gukurahundi* it is partly in response to public discourse that views any talk about *Gukurahundi* as ñrevisiting a divisive eraò and ñpitting the *Shona* against the *Ndebele*ò. Political rhetoric in Zimbabwe says Zimbabweans are united, which is refuted by ZAM members when they emphasize the need for reconciliation. It has been argued that ethnic tension is rife in Zimbabwe and has been since its independence in 1980 (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). For example, the *Shona* have been accused of taking the places of *Ndebele* students in colleges and taking *Ndebele* jobs (Eppel, 2004). However the government of Zimbabwe is said to have ignored ethnicity in its nation building project and has in the same regard turned a blind eye to *Gukurahundi* issues (Eppel, 2004; Mpofu, 2008b).

ZAM members are challenging this public stance that Zimbabweans are united and have put *Gukurahundi* behind them when they demand apology, acknowledgement and reconciliation. This brings to the fore the contested nature of truth, Posel (2002), argues about the difficulties of having a truth that everyone consents to. ZAM members in this regard do not consent to the truth of public discourse in Zimbabwe pertaining to *Gukurahundi*.

The ZAM members talk about reconciliation as a pre-requisite to nation building and apology as a pre-requisite to reconciliation. The analogy of reconciliation without truth paints a picture of what it means for the ZAM members to be expected to reconcile and be part of a ñunited Zimbabweò without truth and apology for the events of *Gukurahundi*.

> reconstruction without truth or without ... is like cooking for people using a pot that has just been used to cook poison you see because people they feel that we must reconcile but they donôt apologise you see so how can people forgive each other whilst the perpetrators are not apologising you see (Interview, Bongani)

The Zimbabwean nation is seen as putting the cart before the donkey in wanting to reconstruct the nation without the prerequisite of apology. It is a futile exercise where food which is meant to nourish and give life becomes poison and takes away the very life it was meant to give. This quote shows the importance that ZAM members place on apologising for the events of *Gukurahundi*, it is so imperative such that without it any further actions are seen as futile, poison, which will ultimately lead to the death of the very thing one seeks to build. The apology is said to signify an admission that a harm was committed, the apologiser is at fault, is willing to compensate the injured party, the act will not happen again and the apologiser intends to work for good relations in the future (Hamber & Palmary, 2009). ZAM membersô strong call for apology therefore may allude to a requirement for admission of the occurrence of *Gukurahundi* which would recognise the Ndebele as victims, there may be a perceived benefit from recognition as a victim (Enns, 2007; Ochs, 2006). As shown also apology assures the victim that the atrocity will not happen again and there are intentions to be reconciled.

It also highlights the contested nature of memory (Freeman, 1993), the ZAM members want to remember *Gukurahundi* and have an apology given for the events. In Zimbabwe relating to *Gukurahundi,* public discourse says it is a matter of the past that should not be remembered but forgotten for the nation to move on. The governmentôs version of the truth is also that Zimbabweans are united, reconciled after *Gukurahundi* based on the signing of the Unity Accord. ZAM membersô interpretation of the same events however sees *Gukurahundi* as

> alive and living in us (Interview, Bokani)

Still requiring to be remembered and dealt with. These contesting views on *Gukurahundi* show the different priorities that may emerge after a conflict. The recovery of truth and

acknowledgement of loss and pain suffered may be priority to some while for others the past needs to be left in the past and forgotten. Hamber & Wilson (2002) discuss how individual psychological needs may not always be in sync with the national psyche. This will therefore result in contestations, the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo in Argentina,* for example, refused reparation as they were not at that stage in their psych though the nation felt ready to move on. The national projects of responding to the violence may be led by the need to put closure to the past and move onto nation building while survivors may not be at the point where they can put closure to the past thereby creating conflict.

5.5 Remembering *Gukurahundi*

Zimbabwe has a number of memorialisation projects, for example, there is a national heroesô acre, which is a site where those deemed to be heroes of the nation are buried. There are various days of commemoration such as Independence Day, Heroes Day and Unity Day. In recent years, there have been musical galas in honour of different national heroes. The process leading to recognition of a hero status entails members of the central government conferring that status on a person after their death. The process of conferring hero status has not been without its challenges as there have been contestations on those deserving and not deserving of that status. There have been outcries from the *Ndebele* about some *Ndebele* leaders that were not conferred with the status of national hero. They argue that the different memorialisation projects have been used by the ZANU PF to glorify its role in the liberation struggle and silence the role of other liberation movements such as ZAPU. This marginalisation of other groups by memorialisation projects that tend to represent the roles of the hegemonic group, or group that is in power at the time have been seen for example, in South Africa (Naidu, 2004). In Zimbabwe the role of other national movements has been silenced by the glorification of ZANUôs role as well the use of cultural symbols that represent the *Shona* culture and *Shona* culture has been conflated with the national culture (Eppel, 2008). This, as highlighted in literature, may lead to the marginalisation of the *Ndebele* and the concretising of the feeling of not belonging to Zimbabwe among the *Ndebele*. In this regard ZAM members place an importance on correcting the way Zimbabwean history is remembered. The quote below expounds on this:

> if we donôt talk about these things ourselves weôll be failures not only for our part but even to our children because theyôll be taught propaganda at school that ZANU did this ZANU did this (Interview with Bokani)

ZAM members are therefore, embarking on memorialisation to correct the wrong versions of history that the public domain is promoting. It is an endeavour to have their version of history recorded for future generations. This reflects the subjective and interpretive way in which memory works (Freeman, 1993; Ricouer, 1984). The ZAM members want their subjective interpretation of history to be passed onto to their children. They do not view the current portrayal of history as accurate.

The ZAM memorialisation project is further linked to the silence of *Gukurahundi* earlier discussed as shown in the quote below:

> I continue having hope on those things that one day the world will hear our voice because I felt with *Gukurahundi* things were not done much because you hear about the Rwandan genocide, you can hear about the Holocaust but never ever you can hear about *Gukurahundi* except from the victims themselves the *Ndebele.* (Interview, Bongani)

As a result of this silence ZAM members are embarking on activities to make *Gukurahundi* known. In keeping with Zimbabweôs culture of the use of music in memorialisation the *Ithemba lamaNguni* have recorded a CD of music and poetry which they are selling. I have chosen to discuss a selection of songs from the *Ithemba lamaNguni* CD. These songs were composed by the group, recorded onto CD at a studio and are being sold to the general public. The title of the CD is *Inkulu lendaba* which translated means ñthis is a big matterò. *Inkulu lendaba* as a title of the CD therefore denotes an issue that is significant and cannot be brushed aside or under the carpet. The CD has twelve songs, see Table 2 for a brief outline of the songs. The CD highlights the history of the Ndebele from the perspective of the ZAM members, as descendents of King Lobhengula who were valiant warriors that have been forced out of their home, Zimbabwe, because they are now under a leadership that is self serving and not concerned about the welfare of its people. Narratives may be formed to justify present engagement (Riessman, 1993), and so from a narrative perspective, the CD, presents the history of the Ndebele to justify their present condition as migrants. At the same time the CD also presents alternative symbols for the culture of the Ndebele in Zimbabwe, King Lobhengula and also suggests a different set of heroes from those currently recognised in Zimbabwe. This further highlights the subjective nature of remembering, where ZAM members interpret the past from a different perspective and have a different view of what is

socially memorable from what is currently recognised as memorable in Zimbabwe (Brockmeier, 2002).

5.5.1 *Inkulu lendaba*, "This is a big matter"

Following is analysis of a song that directly alludes to memorialisation, *Inkulu lendaba,* "this is a big matterò. The song begins with sombre singing unaccompanied by music then followed by a section with upbeat music and finally a poem recited by a male voice accompanied by music.

> These hands are red with the blood of our fathers
>
> Are you going to plead guilt to your crimes?
>
> These white bones belong to our siblings
>
> Are you going to plead guilt to your crimes?
>
> This is a difficult matter
>
> The one remaining behind will have to talk about this issue
>
> Others are talking in their graves

The above except is the sombre, quiet part of this song, it is talking about the lives lost in *Gukurahundi.* The mood of this part of the song may have been chosen to highlight the gravity of the matter they are talking about seeing they are referring to the effects of *Gukurahundi.* The song begins with a question whether those who committed atrocities are willing to admit to their guilt. The admission of guilt by perpetrators of violence is required for the survivors to be absolved of the guilt of having survived (Hamber & Wilson, 2002). In this song therefore ZAM members are still looking for the admission of guilt from perpetrators. They may still be walking with unresolved issues because they have not obtained justice for their losses as the guilty have not been held liable.

The phrase of ñwhite bonesò is imagery for remains that were never properly buried. This was the case with many of those who were killed in *Gukurahundi*. The need for the proper burial is highlighted in the South African TRC where requests for memorialisation were in line with exhuming bodies. Naidu (2004) calls this the need to be reunited with the bones of the deceased. Hamber & Wilson (2002) also reflect on the need for people to mourn with a

body in Ireland. Many of the victims of *Gukurahundi* did not receive proper burials and their families were not allowed to hold vigils in mourning as is the tradition in Zimbabwe.

Eppel says;

> the 1980s massacres involved deliberate desecration of cultural needs surrounding death, making the honourable public recognition of these deaths almost impossible. Five Brigade made a point of forbidding mourning and on occasions forced people to take part in grossly disrespectful behaviour, such as dancing and singing on the shallow graves of the newly murdered. In other cases people were threatened with death ï and were in fact killed ï if they cried for the dead (Eppel, 2004, p.52) .

In this song therefore talking about white bones that belong to their brothers shows that ZAM members have not had closure in the events of *Gukurahundi*. They have not been able to afford their brothers a descent burial. The ZAM members here may be highlighting the fact that because the survivors were not able to observe the burial rites for their relatives they are consumed by the need to observe them. They are left in this space where they still wait for those who disappeared. Hamber & Wilson (2002) talk of families that refused to move houses or even alter anything in their houses because they were still waiting for their disappeared relatives. In *Gukurahundi* some of the relatives may have been forced to desecrate cultural rituals for burial of people killed in *Gukurahundi* (Eppel, 2004) and this song may be alluding to this.

> The one remaining behind will talk
>
> The rest are talking in their graves

The above are the bridging lines between the poetic segment of this song and the parts which are sung with music. There is an irony presented here in that people are said to be talking in their graves. This connotes that many people were silenced while alive and are only speaking once behind the grave, though the grave is the biggest marker of silence as those who are dead cannot speak. It may be a metaphor to express the powerlessness of the dead as their words can not be heard but depend on those left behind to continue their legacies. This may also be a signifier of the gravity of the matter at hand that even beyond the grave it speaks.

The phrases may also mean that the only memorial that remains of people that were affected by *Gukurahundi* is their graves. This therefore entrenches the need for one to write the history of the *Ndebele* so that it is not lost with time.

This bridge which is fraught with meaning introduces the poetic segment in which, a male voice in a style reminiscent of Mzwakhe Mbuliôs [16] asks one who has a pen and is able to write down the history of Zimbabweans.

> The one remaining behind will talk
>
> The rest are talking in their graves
>
> But you who have a pen write it down
>
> Write it on the heart where no one can erase it
>
> Write it on the minds where the oppressors wonôt see it
>
> Write it on stone so it can be read for years
>
> Write it in the books so our children can read it
>
> Write it down this is a big story
>
> Itôs the story of the sons of Zimbabwe
>
> Who have become visitors in their fathersô homes
>
> Itôs about the daughters in-law who have never met their mothersô in-law
>
> Itôs about grandchildren who have never met their grandfathers
>
> Write it down this is a big matter
>
> Write it on the soil and on the anthills
>
> Write it on the sticks and leaves
>
> Write it on the stones and hills
>
> Write it on the valleys and
>
> You who has a pen write it down
>
> You who know how to write, write it down
>
> Write it down this is a big matter
>
> Itôs about the *Ndebele* people who were killed and nobody cared
>
> Itôs about Zimbabweans who are oppressed by their leaders
>
> Itôs about Zimbabweans being killed in South Africa

[16] Mzwakhe Mbuli is a South African poet, known as the ñpeopleôs poetò who was banned by the apartheid regime but continued to perform his music and thus was viewed as a hero in the movement for justice in South Africa. See also www.mzwakhe.org

Itsô about Zimbabweans who are ill treated in Botswana

Write it down this is a big matter

Write it on the grass and trees

Write it on the hills and mountains

Write it on the streams and rivers

Write it on the water and air

Write it down and up

Write it in the day and night

You who has a pen and you who knows how to write

Write it down

The poet asks for the one to write the story of Zimbabweans. The call to ñwriteò may denote an immortalising of the version of history that ZAM members ascribe to. In the same way that a written contract is binding and difficult to deny once one has signed on the dotted line there is no way out, the poet calls for a writing which can not at any time be denied. Once written it stands eternally. A sense of desperation is transmitted when the call to write is for one to write anywhere possible, in the air, on leaves, sticks, stones etc. This gives a sense of the significance ZAM members place on having their story acknowledged. It must be acknowledged in every place possible even on stones, sticks and leaves. The significant issues they want remembered are *Gukurahundi*, their feelings of non-belonging to Zimbabwe and the unpleasant experience of being a migrant. This poem contests for the ZAM memberôs version of history, in a style that invokes activism and the defiance of unjust authority. The ZAM members are putting across a message of being in a struggle in the Mzwakhe Mbuli poetry style chosen in this poem.

5.5.2 *Ngekuzikhohlwe,* One can never forget who they are

The following song is also an invoking of the memory of *Gukurahundi* as one that the members choose not to forget. It begins with a solo singer who pleads for people not to take them lightly as they sing because the songs are coming from painful hearts. This introduction part of the song has a sombre mood, probably to show the gravity of the matter at hand. It is then followed by singing accompanied by music with a beat that can be danced to. This is a collective song that claims that the memory of *Gukurahundi* will not be forgotten even if

ówhersô forget. One can postulate these ñothersò to be the Shona, Zimbabwean nation or the international community that is seen to be silent pertaining to *Gukurahundi.*

> Donôt take us lightly when we sing this song
> Our hearts are painful
> We are growing old in foreign lands
> Our hearts are painful
>
> Do you tell your children the truth?
> Do you teach your children their history?
> Others may forget
> But we will never forget
>
> We will never forget *Gukurahundi*
> We will never forget our brothers died
> We will never forget Bhalagwe
> Come that day we will never forget

This song begins by asking listeners to take the singers seriously because it is coming from a painful heart as the singers are forced to grow old in foreign lands. Listeners are then asked if they teach their children their heritage not just any heritage but the truth, because others may forget but the singers will never forget. They will never forget *Gukurahundi* and Bhalagwe where their brothers died. This song stresses ardently that the singers will never forget the events that occurred in *Gukurahundi*. This is because of the pain that it caused which the singers still have in their hearts because of their brothers who died.

The song begins with an assertion that the singers carry painful hearts. This may be a strategy to reify the enormity of the matter they talk about by saying it is coming from a painful heart. The heart is central to life and so if the heart is painful it means all of life is affected and one is not functioning as they should be. This takes what they talk about to a greater level of significance in that it encompasses every part of their lives. The issue that is of such gravity is the memory of *Gukurahundi* and its effects which will not be forgotten. This song too alludes to the passing on of history to future generations, however it is not just history but the ñtruthò.

It is again the ZAM version of history that is to be memorialised and passed onto future generations.

The singers state that they will keep the memory of *Gukurahundi* alive. Again, this is their version of the memory of *Gukurahundi*. It is a conscious effort a choice that they make not to forget their brothers and sisters who died in the *Gukurahundi* and not to forget what happened in *Gukurahundi*. In this song *Ithemba lamaNguni* are saying that there is a constant effort to forget *Gukurahundi* but they will not forget it. They choose to defy the national stance of forgetting and adamantly declare that they will not forget. There is a conscious effort put to remember *Gukurahundi*. The song also talks about teaching children their history, the truth. So there is a claim of the need to have certain truths passed onto subsequent generations so that they may know who they are. It is only through the past that the present can be understood. Therefore the need for a memory of *Gukurahundi* in this song is highlighted. The *painful hearts* may also signify the internal graves that they carry of their loved ones whom they lost in *Gukurahundi*. This song therefore is a type of memory of their brothers whom they have not been able to properly mourn or bury.

We are growing old in foreign lands

The phrase used in the song which is translated to ñwe are growing old in foreign landsò is *sigugela emazweni nje*. While its literal meaning is the one given in the translation, that is, ñwe are growing old in foreign landsò, the phrase also connotes that this is an unpleasant experience, one which is not to be envied. People who grow old in foreign lands are not envied, they are ridiculed and there is a name given to them in Ndebele which is defamatory, ñ*umgewu*ò which means one who has forgotten their home. In this song therefore, ZAM members talk of their migrant status in South Africa as something they are not enjoying. This status of being a migrant is further attributed to *Gukurahundi*. The song says their hearts are painful because they are *growing old in foreign lands*. The singers lament the fact that they are living in foreign lands. This signifies that there is a better place for one to grow old in and they are not in that place. It also denotes that it is not their choice that they have to grow old in foreign lands. As a result of *Gukurahundi* they find themselves as foreigners. Certain people may choose to forget but they will not forget because *Gukurahundi* is a significant force in their lives that explains why they are where they are. The calls for the truth of *Gukurahundi* are linked to this in that if they were to forget *Gukurahundi*, they would not

have a coherent narrative to justify the present. Principal in this song is the need to remember in order to make sense of the present.

6 Chapter Six: Identity and Belonging

6.1 Is Ndebele Zimbabwean?

The response that was given to the *Gukurahundi* atrocities by the Zimbabwean nation as well as the international community leads to questions about the value of the *Ndebele* people. The international community is questioned as to their response and the response of human rights organisations. The response to *Gukurahundi* is now questioned in comparison to the way the world has focused on the violence that has occurred in Zimbabwe in the ólandgrabô by the war veterans and the violence of the government against MDC supporters. In this sense the present events are shaping the way the past is viewed and narrated.

> Why are they sanctioning Mugabe today, because there was *Murambatsvina*? What about 20 000 people he killed? Why did they not sanction him from the word go? Are we the animals? People of Matabeleland are we the animals? We have even heard them condemning war veterans that were killing animals in the farms they took (Interview, Jabu)

The ZAM member quoted above speaks of *Murambatsvina* also known as Operation Restore Order, which occurred in 2004 when the Zimbabwean government destroyed informal settlements leaving people homeless. The United Nations sent a delegation to investigate this operation (United Nations, 2005). Recently there have been outcries from the international community about the rights of animals in farms that were seized by war veterans in Zimbabwe[17], and yet *Gukurahundi* did not receive such attention from the global community. It is from this background therefore that ZAM members question the worldôs response to *Gukurahundi*. The way the world responded to *Gukurahundi* brings about questions of the value of the *Ndebele*. The world is seen to be responding to the loss of the lives of animals and yet they were silent during *Gukurahundi*. This brings questions of whether the animals have greater value than the lives of the *Ndebele*. At a local level again, in Zimbabwe the silence surrounding *Gukurahundi* and the lack of reparation measures lead to a questioning of the *Ndebele* belonging to Zimbabwe.

[17] See for example, www.africancrisis.co.za, one of the websites that has published images of animals being mistreated by war veterans in farms they seized in Zimbabwe

> When you ask for forgiveness from someone you should know that you wronged them and how big is the damage you caused them and how can you correct it so that this person can forgive you. Even though government cannot bring back those who died but he must try to heal the wounds of those who remain behind maybe by taking care of them (Interview, Thembi).

This did not occur and leads to questions of whether the *Ndebele* are valued and have dignity as Zimbabweans as well as members of humanity. The response to *Gukurahundi* is juxtaposed to responses to the current violence occurring in Zimbabwe where international media houses and human rights organisations have reported on. ZAM members further compare *Gukurahundi* to the Holocaust and the Rwandan Genocide. The apparent lack of recognition of *Gukurahundi* events is not just seen in Zimbabwe but also from an international level. The lack of recognition of the Ndebele as victims, which would accord them the treatment that victims deserve, is understood as a measure of the value attached to the Ndebele. If they were valued as part of humanity and Zimbabweans, the ZAM members expect that there would have been an apology and some form of reparation for the damage done. Since this did not occur, it is viewed as a judgement on the value and belonging of the *Ndebele* to Zimbabwe, to mean the *Ndebele* are not welcome and valued as part of the Zimbabwean nation.

> Do I have enough dignity in this country? If I am a person why do I have to live in this way? So those people who were victimised were just forgotten, (Interview, Thembi)

There is a cry to be accorded the status of victim from the members of ZAM. The status of victim renders the victim deserving of sympathy, support and outside help (Enns, 2007). ZAM members have not been accorded this status of victims. They have just been expected to move on with their lives as if nothing happened. This makes them question their value as a people. They have been expected to push aside their experiences of *Gukurahundi* for the benefit of the nation. This is seen as a judgement on the value of the *Ndebele* because it would not be so if they were equally valued as Zimbabwean citizens. Their priorities would be accommodated in the national agenda. The ZAM members therefore question their belonging to Zimbabwe because the national agenda and discourse does not accord them space to be heard and for their priorities and requests to be acknowledged and responded to.

The value of the *Ndebele* people as Zimbabweans as well as part of the global humanity is questioned. *Gukurahundi* occurred, up to 20000 people were killed and some disappeared and nothing was done in response to a loss of such gravity. There were expectations from the *Ndebele* that a public acknowledgement of the loss would occur. This acknowledgement would serve the purpose of bringing together perpetrators and victims to a place of dialogue and reconciliation. This did not occur and has led to a sense of non-belonging. Since *Gukurahundi* is viewed as an effort to destroy the *Ndebele*, not being able to achieve closure from the event thus leaves one in a position where there is constant threat that they will be annihilated. They therefore have to conduct their lives as people living in a place where they do not fully belong to. I would call this living as a visitor as the quote below shows;

> when I grew up our grandmothers they used to tell us even if we were young maybe singing at around ten years of age singing at night we were always told that no this country has its owners, lelilizwe leli lilabanikazi (this country has its owners) we must stop it means that somehow someone owned our country as we were young (Interview, Bokani)

The feeling of non-belonging to Zimbabwe from the above quote is passed onto the next generation in simple daily activities such as reprimanding children. In the above quote the narrator tells the story in a way that it highlights the innocence and freedom with which as children they were living. He talks about singing like it is a natural activity that all children do, however as a result of *Gukurahundi* they were not allowed to grow up innocently like other children. Instead they were taught to know that ñsomeone else owned their countryò. He says ñsomeone else owned our countryò which sounds contradictory in that in saying ñour countryò he equally takes ownership of the country too. This contradiction may highlight the refusal to accept that someone else owns the country and to claim it as his own, even though he is taught otherwise.

The phenomenological paradigm within which this study is situated privileges the construction of meanings by those who have experienced the phenomena under study (Burch, 1990). In this study therefore, the meanings that ZAM members construct are of interest. At the same time apposite to meaning making is that meanings are co-constructed in interactions (Koschmann, 1999). The meanings that ZAM members have shared in this study

are thus their subjective view of their experiences constructed in interaction with me as a researcher. As a researcher my interpretation of the meanings outlined by ZAM members is influenced by my experiences. It is from this perspective therefore that I give a brief overview of ethnicity in Zimbabwe. It is my interpretation which is significant in the meanings I make of the narratives formed by the participants in this study. It is therefore not an objective accurate reflection of the history of ethnicity in Zimbabwe but an interpretation based on my position as a Zimbabwean, *Ndebele* and Kalanga woman and interests in this research. This discussion is also underpinned by the constructionist understanding of ethnicity as an identity that is produced in interaction with others. The meaning of the *Ndebele* ethnic identity is therefore produced in the interactions that have occurred in Zimbabwe amongst different ethnic groupings. Therefore I briefly retrace ethnicity in Zimbabwe, in order to identity the different interactions that have endowed the Ndebele ethnic identity with its current meaning and feeling of alienation felt by ZAM members from the Zimbabwean state. The events I outline in this discussion are those in my opinion that have had impact on the meaning of the *Ndebele* ethnic identity for the participants of this study. In this regard I have interpreted the events from the history of Zimbabwe in the process of outlining them (Freeman, 1993).

The 1950s to the 1960s saw a rise in nationalist movements that were agitating for the freedom of Zimbabwe from colonial rule. At this point ethnicity was used to mobilize against colonialism. Different cultural groupings were used to mobilize support for the nationalist movement. 1963 represents an important time in the history of inter-ethnic relations in Zimbabwe because it is the year when the nationalist party in Zimbabwe divided into two parties, the divisions occurred along ethnic differences. After this split, ethnicity continued to be used to mobilize support for the two nationalist movements and the two nationalistsô movements took on ethnic characters ZAPU and its military wing ZIPRA recruiting mostly people from *Ndebele* ethnic identity and ZANUôs ZANLA increasingly recruiting the *Shona*. There were tensions between the two parties with political leaders using ethnicity to position themselves to the extent of assassinations. *Gukurahundi* occurred soon after independence and can be seen as a continuation of the tensions that date back to the pre-independence time. However at this point it was not clashes between two parties as was the case before independence. ZANU now had control of the state machinery and was able to use it against

ZAPU. It has been argued that *Gukurahundi* cemented the feeling of being Ndebele (Eppel, 2008; Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). The interaction between the Ndebele and Shona in *Gukurahundi* thus shaped the Ndebele identity as victims of a state. Further on ZANU and its military wing ZANLA were magnified as the sole liberators of Zimbabwe totally obliterating any contribution made by ZAPU and other players. *Shona* heroes and historical monuments were used to imagine the nation while *Ndebele* heroes and history were marginalized. Despite ethnicity being so prominent in the pre-colonial and post colonial Zimbabwe, Zimbabweans continue to be silent about ethnicity, as the quote below states;

> The postcolonial government of Zimbabwe has largely remained reluctant to engage ethnicity as an issue in both politics and the economy, particularly with regard to addressing historical and contemporary factors that continued to make ethnicity an important issue in peopleôs lives. (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007)

Historical and contemporary issues that make ethnicity important in Zimbabwe include *Gukurahundi,* colonial laws of identity registration that link one to their ñplace of origin[18]ò and in this regard link ethnicity to access to land for example. Despite these glaring ethnic issues in the identity registration for example the Zimbabwean government has not changed the laws but continues to use them. This makes access to the state to be ethnically driven as people are bound to the area they were born in and if it experiences underdevelopment have no way to move to another place. Ndebeleôs are therefore óboundô to Matabeleland even if it is marginalized from the state and have no recourse such as moving to another district. In this sense the Ndebele ethnic identity is a marker of alienation from the state.

The marginalisation of the *Ndebele* from Zimbabweôs nation building project therefore further enhances their complaint as victims of *Gukurahundi.* However, in a different way from other *Ndebele* Zimbabwean Diaspora groups that have called for a separate *Ndebele* State in Zimbabwe the ZAM are reclaiming the Zimbabwean identity.

> Nationness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time (Anderson, 1983, p.3) p3.

[18] The Zimbabwean identity document number has a code which links one to a district of origin as well as chief and village head and one has right to claim land from a chief in that region and not any other.

There are several groups that have been formed in the Diaspora by young *Ndebele* Zimbabweans to promote a distinct *Ndebele* political identity (Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). All these reinforce a *Ndebele* identity and agitate for a separate *Ndebele* state. In contrast to these other Diaspora groupings, ZAM lays a claim to the Zimbabwean identity and agitates for recognition of the *Ndebele* as citizens of Zimbabwe. This need by other *Ndebele* Diaspora groupings to form an autonomous *Ndebele* state is evidence of the imagined or real feeling of not belonging and marginalisation of the *Ndebele* in Zimbabwe as result of *Gukurahundi*. In occupying a liminal space in the *nation order of things* in the Diaspora as foreigners they imagine a place of belonging which is the autonomous *Ndebele* state (Malkki, 1992). On the contrary the ZAM members react to this liminal space by reclaiming their identity as Zimbabweans. They may have felt marginalised and not belonging to Zimbabwe and in the Diaspora they further feel that they do not belong, they are not South Africans therefore this reinforces their claim to the Zimbabwean identity. The Zimbabwean identity is reclaimed in the transnational activities that they have been involved in. ZAM members are actively involved in political issues occurring in Zimbabwe. They have also endeavoured to form a memory of their culture and history through song and poetry. It is all done to pass on the history of the *Ndebele* to future generations and ensure that *Ndebele* people are not assimilated into *Shona* culture in Zimbabwe or to the culture of South Africans.

6.2 Lost Opportunities in Education

> unfortunately I have little education if I had better education I would lead the youth of Zimbabwe back to that country and believe me with all my heart (Interview, Jabu)

Other present effects of *Gukurahundi* that members of ZAM talk about are the lost opportunities to gain an education. *Gukurahundi* is said to have caused the members to lose the opportunity to gain an education because they lost breadwinners who would have been responsible for sending them to school and paying the fees. Another way in which *Gukurahundi* affected the ZAM members from gaining an education is because schooling in the region was disrupted during *Gukurahundi* and in some places it was not resumed for some time after the end of the violence. Teachers closed schools in many rural areas to seek

refuge in the urban centres[19]. Some schools were destroyed as part of the violence. After the violence ended, *Gukurahundi* is seen to have continued in that the government did not initiate a reconstruction of the schools as well as initiating development projects in the regions affected by *Gukurahundi* which had lagged behind the development that occurred in other districts when Matabeleland was under the conflict. Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007) say that people in Matabeleland expected affirmative action in terms of development projects since their regions had lagged behind in economic development during the *Gukurahundi* days. The government did not initiate any such program and thus *Gukurahundi* continues in that its effects were not responded to.

This lack of education of the *Ndebele* attributed to *Gukurahundi* is further seen to have intergenerational effects in that those who were not educated because of *Gukurahundi* now have occupations that cannot afford them to send their children to school. This is seen as a cycle that will be difficult to break. Those who hold these views about the effects of *Gukurahundi* on their lives want the government to compensate victims of *Gukurahundi* by providing educational grants for those who were affected by *Gukurahundi*.

> Even though government cannot bring back those who died but he must try to heal the wounds of those who remain behind maybe by taking care of them. You find such people failed to get education, people who are 33years old like me, they are not educated the way they could have been because their parents were no longer there. And then if I am not educated the way I should have, eh today I fail to educate my children because I am not educated, the job I am doing affords me to eat only. So you see that the poverty is passing over to my children and to my childrenôs children and it means we will always be poor (Interview, Thembi).

The above quote highlights the dilemma of reparations as an effort to ñrepair the irreparableò(Hamber, 2000). Thembi says the government cannot bring back the dead but can provide some form of compensation. The lack of education is linked to the inability to get good employment which then leads people to lead lives of poverty. *Gukurahundi* is therefore seen to have affected memberôs ability to be educated which can be passed on to next generations which also results in poverty. *Gukurahundi* is therefore seen to cause an intergenerational cycle of poverty. Other members of ZAM who see themselves as having lost the opportunity to obtain an education because of *Gukurahundi* have strived hard to ensure that their siblings and children obtain an education and do not undergo the same

[19] Communication with my father who was a teacher at the time

disadvantage that they have experienced. In this instance those affected by *Gukurahundi* have focused their efforts on correcting the mistakes of *Gukurahundi* by breaking the cycle of poverty it causes. Generations that were not affected by *Gukurahundi* experience the effects of the violence in their inability to get an education. This intergenerational transmission of poverty as a result of a lack of education is linked to *Gukurahundi* by participants in this study and can be seen as a form of the intergenerational transmission of trauma (Volkan, 2001; Weingarten, 2004).

Education has come out as a highly valued issue for the members of ZAM. Being educated or not being educated is considered as a measure of dignity. The lack of education is also seen as limiting because they cannot reach certain audiences such as the international community, with their message of *Gukurahundi* and the current crisis in Zimbabwe, because they cannot speak English well. The articulation of the effects of *Gukurahundi* as lost opportunities for education for the ZAM members therefore span beyond just being educated, but education symbolises various things. For example they talk about educational requirements to hold public offices, which then leads to *Shona* speaking people holding positions in government departments in Matabeleland regions which could be held by the *Ndebele* had they had the opportunity to be educated. The importance of education to ZAM is further seen in the striving they do to ensure that future generations do not have to endure what they have endured.

Education for the ZAM members therefore represents access to good employment. Good employment represents an exit from a life of poverty and the ability to afford good education for your children so that they access good jobs and not live in poverty etc, the chain reaction continues. Education also represents the ability to access audiences that an uneducated person cannot reach. The ability to speak ñgoodò English which from the perspective of ZAM members comes from a good education gives one dignity and a voice that can be heard. ZAM members see their lack of education as an impediment to their being heard and taken seriously. It is interesting to note that all ZAM members interviewed have a certain level of education. The highest level of education attained is Oõlevel. Oõlevel is a recognised qualification for people to be accepted into colleges for professional courses such as teaching

and nursing in Zimbabwe. ZAM members with Oôlevel qualifications still profess that they are uneducated. This may be a reclaiming of the label that is commonly given to *Ndebele* people in Zimbabwe that they are uneducated. It may also be strategy to highlight the plight of *Ndebele* in general and not literally meaning the ZAM members are uneducated.

It has been generally said that the *Ndebele* are uneducated in Zimbabwe. It is a common joke that *Ndebele* young peopleôs aspirations are to go to South Africa and do menial jobs. In this sense ZAM members ascribe to this discourse that they are not educated though they do have a recognised level of education. In ascribing to this popular discourse however, ZAM members invoke the past atrocities of *Gukurahundi* to explain their current status of being uneducated. ZAM members therefore want to remember the past of *Gukurahundi* in order to justify their present status and engagements. It is not by choice that they are uneducated and migrants.

Gukurahundi is said to have affected members in that, because of a lack of education for those who were directly affected by *Gukurahundi,* they then resorted to migrating to South Africa. ZAM members also say migrants from South Africa are said to have gone back to Zimbabwe driving cars and were the only role models that ZAM members were exposed to. As a result participants looked up to the migrants and also pursued ócareersô as migrants. This is attributed to *Gukurahundi* in that *Gukurahundi* caused them not to be educated and so they resorted to migrating and thus generations following on behind saw migrating as the way to go and did not pursue any other career in Zimbabwe because they did not feel welcome in Zimbabwe. This lack of role models is further seen as a result of the marginalisation of the Matabeleland region such that there were not enough schools as there was no reconstruction after *Gukurahundi*.

At another level education represents ZAM membersô access to the state. *Shona* people in Zimbabwe have been appointed to public offices in Matabeleland regions and the justification for this has been that they have education qualifications, which locals in the region do not have. The state is said to be the

> greatest prize and resource, over which groups engage in a continuing struggle (Brass, 1985 in Nagel, 1994, p165)

ZAM members therefore respond to this lack of access to the greatest prize and resource, the state, by invoking the memory of *Gukurahundi* and its effects on their attainment of levels of education that would ensure their access. Education represents a host of things for ZAM members, it represents dignity, access to the state and the exit from poverty for current and future generations. However from the perspective of ZAM members, because of *Gukurahundi* opportunities for education have been lost and thus, the effects of *Gukurahundi* are untold and continuing to reach out to future generations.

Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatheni (2007) and Eppel (2004) have argued that *Gukurahundi* cemented what it means to be Ndebele. In the above discussion, the ZAM narratives on identity and belonging expound on what meanings of the Ndebele ethnic identity were cemented by *Gukurahundi*. From the ZAM narratives, the Ndebele ethnic identity means, one is uneducated and as already stated; lack of education represents lack of access to the state, no dignity and poverty. The Ndebele ethnic identity therefore represents the above. Further, the Ndebele ethnic identity is understood to mean one who does not belong to Zimbabwe. It is from this interpretation of the violence of *Gukurahundi* that the ZAM members then lay claim to the Zimbabwean identity.

6.3 Reclaiming the Zimbabwean Identity

The section below will focus on the song, *Iphupho* ñThe dreamò. The song begins with a lone narrator calling to his peers to tell them about a dream he has had, in the background to this is the sound of strong wind blowing. This is a collective song where in the chorus, backing singers respond to the lead singer by singing to the song as if they all had the dream being talked about. The music accompanying the singing has an upbeat rhythm and the main thrust of this piece is to highlight the importance of having a home.

Lead singer	When I am quiet like this
	I think of my dream which troubles me
Backing singers	My dream, hereôs my dream

Lead Singer	I dream of my father
	Saying my child listen to me
	You can cross the Limpopo
	You can cross the Red Sea
	But wherever you go, you must always remember home
Backing singers	My child, wherever you go always remember home

The singer chooses to use the image of a father speaking to his children in a dream. The choice of a father, communicating the importance of a home may be to highlight the paternal nature of identity that oneôs identity is derived from their father. The concept of home, it has been argued can be used to preserve and express identity (Cuba & Hummon, 1993). The father here therefore symbolises the paternal source of identity. Secondly the use of the dream communicates the intervention of a higher world than the physical. Dreams are what the spiritual world uses to communicate with us. A greater power is calling people to always remember their home. The concept of home is theorised as a space (Terkenli, 1995) and the spatial context of home in this song is highlighted in the images portrayed when talking about one who crosses the Limpopo river and the Red Sea. It means one has moved away from the space home. The father in the dream is talking to a child who has moved away from the space they call home. The Limpopo River forms a border between Zimbabwe and South Africa, therefore those who have crossed the Limpopo River are in South Africa. This song is therefore directed at the child who is outside the national borders, in South Africa to remind them that they are not at home in South Africa their home is elsewhere. In this regard, the national territory of Zimbabwe is the space this song reifies as home.

The section below is a poem recited by a female member of the group:

Home is always home even when itôs far

Home is home even if you cry and give up

Look at the intelligent they cry heading home

Even the religious are praying to go home

Itôs difficult to grow up without a home

The one who gets hurt in the fields cries heading home

Even the diligent when they tire they go home

This Christmas, rich guy remember home

The elders are talking back home

The big man looks troubled because he is thinking of home

Encourage the delinquents to remember home

Enjoy in the land of plenty but remember home

Enjoy but donôt grow old without a home

Itôs only the forgotten one who does not have a hone

Itôs only the forsaken one who forgets home

The poetic segment then expounds on why a home is important. A female recites this poem highlighting the importance of home. The mother is said to be the first home that one belongs to (Terkenli, 1995). The woman reciting a poem on home therefore reifies the notion of home as a place of nurturing, a motherland. Countries of origins are at times referred to as motherland. The choices made in who recites which parts in this song therefore are fraught with meaning. A lot of allegory is used to show why belonging and having a home is important. A home is important because when one grows old that is where they go, when one gets hurt home is the refuge. It is important even for those who are enjoying the pleasures of a foreign land to remember their home. Home is shown as a place where every person from different walks of life should head to at some point in their life, having a home is portrayed as a universal quality that all people should have. The diligent, the delinquent, the rich, the religious, the criminals, everyone should have a home as it is only the forsaken who do not have a home.

Itôs only the forgotten one who does not have a hone

Itôs only the forsaken one who forgets home

The above excerpt insinuates homelessness as some sort of curse. The home is said to be ña refuge in the world from unknown surroundings where people may degenerate themselvesò (Terkenli, 1995, p.331). It is seen as a place that gives meaning, validation and continuity and secures peopleôs distinctiveness (Terkenli, 1995). In this sense therefore one who does not have a home is in danger of losing the essence of their being. This song and poem thus reify Zimbabwe as home in that the spatial context of home spoken of in this song delineates the Zimbabwean territory. The poem calls for the listeners to lay a claim to their home which is Zimbabwe no matter how good life may be in South Africa, their real home is in Zimbabwe as the excerpt below shows:

> Enjoy in the land of plenty but remember home
>
> Enjoy but donôt grow old without a home

Further to this a claim to home is legitimate even if one is far away, meaning one does not have to be within that space delineated as home to claim it as home. Thus:

> Home is always home even when itôs far

Here, transnational practices are reified as expounded by Levitt & Nyberg-Sorensen (2004). In this song ZAM members lay claim to Zimbabwe as their home even when outside of Zimbabwe.

This song and poem is a call to the *Ndebele* to reclaim their Zimbabwean nationality. The *Ndebele* may have run to far places but they must always remember Zimbabwe is their home. This song is a call to nationalism for the *Ndebele* who may have gone across borders and rivers far from Zimbabwe that no matter how far they have gone Zimbabwe remains their home. Remembering home may mean that they should be concerned about what happens at home, for example involvement in the Zimbabwean politics. According to one participant in this study the Zimbabwean identity should be claimed so that:

> Zimbabweans must go back to Zimbabwe and solve their problems. They do not belong to South Africa, South Africa is for South Africans, and we must go back to Zimbabwe and enjoy our country (Interview, Jabu)

7 Chapter Seven: Conclusion

The above report has explored the meanings that ZAM members attach to *Gukurahundi* as well as the role that membership of ZAM plays in their lives. This study has been conducted from a phenomenological perspective which foregrounds the subjectivity of meanings attached to experiences and allows for a view of phenomena from the perspective of the one who experiences them (Burch, 1990). The phenomena studied here is *Gukurahundi,* an event that occurred in history. In this regard participants in this study are retrospectively constructing meanings and this is an interpretive act (Ricouer, 1984). In this regard therefore the themes discussed in this study are not universal to all who experienced *Gukurahundi* but, they are interpretations that are brought to bear on *Gukurahundi* by a specific group of people in a specific context. These are the interpretations that members of ZAM, who are migrants in Johannesburg, in the year 2009 make of *Gukurahundi* in interviews conducted by a university student who is female, a migrant, Zimbabwean, Ndebele and Kalanga. Further on from the theory of narratives, stories are told based on who the audience is perceived to be by the narrator and also to achieve specific ends (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989; Koschmann, 1999; Squirre, 2005). The ZAM members have narrated their stories to a university student, who shares in certain aspect of their history as Zimbabwean, Ndebele and in some instances as a Kalanga. This specific context within which the ZAM members told their stories therefore, has a bearing on what stories and how the stories were told (Freeman, 1993).

In considering the specific context within which the narratives of the ZAM members are framed I will highlight a few key issues. Firstly, this research was conducted in 2009 at a time when Zimbabwe as a nation has been experiencing an economic crisis for close to a decade. The current political and economic condition of Zimbabwe may be resulting in the ZAM members invoking the memory of *Gukurahundi* in the way they have. This may be done to draw attention to the *Ndebele* as a group more deserving of assistance because they have been victims of the Zimbabwean government from the onset. *Gukurahundi* dates back to the early rule of the ZANU PF government in Zimbabwe which is now currently demonised for its failure and economic crisis that has seen an increase in Zimbabweans seeking refuge out of the country in the SADC region and abroad. Invoking a memory of *Gukurahundi* may

thus be serving the purpose of drawing greater sympathy. The victim identity it has been argued may be chosen as a result of the benefits that are perceived to accrue from it (Enns, 2007). It may also be the reactivation of chosen trauma as expounded by Volkan (2001), the present political and economic meltdown in Zimbabwe may be reactivating the trauma of *Gukurahundi* and therefore leading to a reifying of that identity as a victim.

Secondly, ZAM members are all migrants in Johannesburg. Their status as migrants is another context that needs to be considered in understanding their complaint. The experience of being a migrant is said to have the potential to result in imaginings of what home is and should be (Malkki, 1992). The ZAM membersô status as migrants in South Africa may be seen to influencing their imaginings of home and what should be happening at home. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission for example is alluded to as something Zimbabweans can emulate pertaining to issues of *Gukurahundi.* In this regard the migrant status has exposed the ZAM members to these issues and influences what they think should happen in Zimbabwe. At the same time the interaction with South African, as a Zimbabwean, may lead to a reclaiming of Zimbabwean identity as a result of one feeling they do not belong to South Africa.

Thirdly, all participants in this study are members of the ZAM. The participants in the study allude to the facilitative role that ZAM plays in their involvement in the memory work through songs, poetry and drama. ZAM is said to have facilitated a realisation that there was something that the participants could do in relation to their predicament as victims of *Gukurahundi.* At the same time membership of ZAM is said to have brought the individualôs experiences into perspective once they had a chance to hear of other membersô experiences. This therefore highlights the role that ZAM has in its membershipôs coping with *Gukurahundi* by providing a network for support and involvement in activities that aid in coping such as the *Ithemba lamaNguni* group. It is possible that outside of the ZAM the participants in this study will hold different views about *Gukurahundi.*

Finally, participants in this study are children or relatives of those who were directly affected by *Gukurahundi.* In this regard ZAM members are narrating of the effects of violence that they see as second generation survivors. It has been argued that trauma can be transmitted from one generation to the next (Volkan, 2001; Weingarten, 2004). In this study, ZAM members expound on the intergenerational transmission of poverty linked to an experience of violence by linking the lack of education to poverty where the lack of education is a result of a loss of parents in *Gukurahundi.* Volkan (2001) has argued that second-generation victims may take it upon themselves to correct the harm done to the previous generation. The protest against the silence ZAM members experience at community level highlights the differences in priorities between the two generations and may highlight the way in which the ZAM members as second-generation victims want to correct the harm done to the earlier generation. The meanings expounded by the ZAM members therefore may not be the same with those expressed by a person who experienced *Gukurahundi directly.*

A key meaning attached to *Gukurahundi* fore grounded by all participants in this study is the silence of *Gukurahundi* found in the Ndebele community, Zimbabwe as well as the international community. The silence at community level is experienced as enforced by the elders within the community. The ZAM members view this silence as a result of powerlessness on the part of the Ndebele community in relation to the government of Zimbabwe. A second level of silence is seen at the Zimbabwe national level, in which from the perspective of participants in this study, is government orchestrated as they are the perpetrators of *Gukurahundi* and do not want to face up to their sins. At a global scale, the silence is viewed in comparison to present events. The global response to current violence in Zimbabwe is compared to what occurred in *Gukurahundi,* history is made sense of in light of the present (Freeman, 1993) . The ZAM members have a specific way in which they want the silence of *Gukurahundi* broken, and that is in the form of apology and memorialisation. The ZAM members want the perpetrators of *Gukurahundi to* apologise and then there can be reconciliation. Apology is said to signal that the apologiser intends to work for good relations in the future (Hamber & Palmary, 2009) and in relation to the feeling of non-belonging that the silence of *Gukurahundi* results in, an apology may signal to the *Ndebele* that perpetrators of *Gukurahundi* are committed to having good relations with the *Ndebele* as members of one nation. They also want their version of the memory of *Gukurahundi* as victims to be

acknowledged in Zimbabweôs public discourse. A sense of belonging is said to be fostered when oneôs narrative is accommodated within the collective narrative (Brockmeier, 2002). In this regard, in when the ZAM membersô narrative of *Gukurahundi* is silenced it results in feeling of non-belonging to Zimbabwe. The silence of *Gukurahundi* is therefore, interpreted as a value judgement on the Ndebele as members of the Zimbabwean nation as well as members of humanity. This leads to a questioning of whether the Ndebele really belong to Zimbabwe. Other effects of the *Gukurahundi* expressed as loss of opportunities in education, further reify the meaning of the Ndebele ethnic identity and its alienations from the Zimbabwean nation. In response to this understanding of *Gukurahundi,* the ZAM members invoke an image of Zimbabwe as home and lay claim to the Zimbabwean identity. Home is a cosy place of refuge (Terkenli, 1995) and in this regard, invoking an image of Zimbabwe as a home is a way to cope with these effects of *Gukurahundi.*

It was the focus of this study to explore the meanings that ZAM members attach to *Gukurahundi* and how they cope with this experience of violence. To this end, this study has shown a link between the meanings that are attached to the events and the kind of activities that are embarked on as a strategy of coping. Further on, this study has fore grounded that membership of ZAM is in itself a coping strategy as it facilitates access to support and networks that further assists in coping. This study has described the key meanings that ZAM members attach to *Gukurahundi* and also fore grounded that these meanings are subjective and contextual. In this regard therefore, in responding to violence, it is imperative that the context within which the violence occurs is taken into cognisance. Also from this study it can be seen that meanings attached to experiences are subjective, and the meanings expounded here may not be found in a similar study. From the discussion presented in this report therefore it is argued that responding to socio-political violence requires attention to the context in which it occurs as well as the subjective meanings that are attached to the experiences.

This study has presented a case study of a group of migrants in a specific context. The results of this study thus apply to this one specific context, however, this presents opportunities for further study in exploring what other people who share in the experience of *Gukurahundi* but

are in a different context attach as meanings of the *Gukurahundi*. A study of survivors of violence resident in Zimbabwe or in another Diaspora location will give opportunity for comparison which may provide insight into how the specific context of the ZAM members has influenced the narratives formed about *Gukurahundi* and the meanings attached to the same.

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