

“LET ME TELL MY OWN STORY”:

**A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF HOW AND WHY ‘VICTIMS’ REMEMBER
GUKURAHUNDI IN JOHANNESBURG TODAY.**

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*A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the
Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy*

03 February 2017

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university

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Abstract¹

This study is about the ways *Gukurahundi* memory is invoked by Zimbabwean migrants living in Johannesburg, South Africa. The research focused on inner city Johannesburg residents who are actively speaking about the *Gukurahundi*. Participants were drawn from three main migrant groups; Zimbabwe Action Movement, *Mthwakazi* Liberation Front and *Ithemba leSizwe*. Two artworks produced to document the atrocities; a film, *The Tunnel*, written and produced by an ‘outsider’ white South African filmmaker and music, *Inkulu lendaba*, written and performed by victims of the violence, were used as case studies; to answer questions about the meaning, role and appropriate form for remembering *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today. *The Tunnel* has enjoyed a global audience whereas *Inkulu lendaba*, remains within the victims’ locality. Findings of this study are drawn from participant observation of victims’ community events, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and, an analysis and comparison of the artworks and their reception by victims. One of the key findings of this study focusing on contestation over how a history is narrated is that translation plays a significant role in maintaining global inequality and continuing forms of colonialism. The memory of *Gukurahundi* is invoked, partially translated, in the music to critique continuing forms of colonial inequality in the ways narratives of victimhood are received by the global audience highlighting a shortcoming in the film, which translates the story of *Gukurahundi* for a global audience yet causing it to lose its authenticity for the victims. The music by victims narrates the experience of being a victim of *Gukurahundi*, a migrant in xenophobic South Africa and black in a racist global community. In this way it postures the socio-economic location of the victims in the global community as the reason for their victimhood and its lack of acknowledgement. This socio-economic location is therefore pivotal to their healing. The study contributes to literature on post conflict transition mechanisms and foregrounds the role of acknowledgement in healing however; specific

¹ Ethics clearance for this research was received from the University of the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), Protocol H121114 & H12/11/14

forms of narration are required for healing. Furthermore the study shows the role of music in the transmission of trauma across generations, facilitating the domestication of politics into the everyday and fostering ‘safe’ political participation in repressive contexts. The thesis also presents the potential of creative methodologies in disrupting the researcher-participant relationship power dynamics by presenting research in poetic form and facilitating participant engagement with research output; Poetic transcription similarly does this by creating transparency in the meaning making process of research analysis.

Key Terms

Transmission of trauma, translation, memory, identity, nationalism, poetry, art, music, film, migration, everyday politics, violence

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Dedication

The Race...

To my parents for taking that extra step

Running farther than you had to

You left me that much closer to the goal

For setting me up to succeed

Not by giving up your dreams

But in living the dream

You showed me what was possible

May I be half the parent you are

Run further and pass the baton that much closer

For those coming behind me

To look back, See how far we have come

Look ahead, See how close we are

For my mother who lived

Ahead of her time

She did not have to be called Feminist

But raised daughters

Strong and independent

For my father

The choices he made

I was born into his life

Made my own life

Out of the bricks he laid out

His daughter I am

For Butho

This is you, It is us, WE

Endless possibilities

Adventures, pressures, measures, leisures, pleasures

B.Coms, PhDs, Parenting

And everything in-between

We win

For my sons

The future is here and now

A blank cheque

Run run run

Love, Laugh, Live

Dance,

Bring colour and beautiful music

The world awaits....

Acknowledgements

Do you see what this means - all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we better get on with it, strip down, start running and never quit....

First and foremost a big thank you to the participants that shared their lives with me and trusted me with their stories. It has been a journey of great learning for me and my hope is your participation has been useful for you too.

There is the saying, *you become like what you behold when you go to drink*. I have been gently yet firmly guided in this PhD process by Professor Ingrid Palmary. Like a midwife she has skillfully pushed me beyond what I thought possible and silenced the doubts I carried so I could complete this PhD. Thank you for going beyond your call of duty and helping me navigate the PhD and my transition into motherhood. I hope I will be that guide and light to give to others as you have generously given to me.

Thank you to my family; Butholezwe Ndlovu for growing with me in this journey and Zanele Ndlovu for being a sister, friend and a mother to my boys. Nothing of significance can ever be accomplished in solitude. This thesis holds great significance to me and I owe gratitude to so many others that have made its completion possible. A great cloud of witnesses has and continues to cheer me on. Thank you to the many colleagues and to the many friends that have encouraged me and believed I could do it. Thank you for carrying me through the storms that came with this journey. Special thank you to the

Facebook Group “*PhD and Early Career Researcher Parents*” that has celebrated the small and big milestones in this journey, for sharing their journeys and wisdom.

Last but not least I am grateful for the funding that made this work possible from The Mellon Postgraduate Mentorship Program, the Humanities Graduate Centre and also facilitated by Professor Ingrid Palmary and Professor Loren Landau from the National Research Foundation.

List of Acronyms

AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
GNU	Government of National Unity
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MLF	Mthwakazi Liberation Front
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisation
PF ZAPU	Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African People's Union
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
TRC	South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission
ZAM	Zimbabwe Action Movement
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZIPRA Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

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Preface

Silence

Everyone knows of that time

That time nobody wants to go back to

That time that will never be forgotten

That time we never speak of

Screams in the night

Fear gripping the most brave

Nobody wants to witness the shame

Black on black violence

Gukurahundi Genocide

Daylight brings sunshine and blue skies

Yet even the brightest song from the birds

Can never soak away

The blood drenching the earth

Calling out for justice

Mothers bear a fatherless generation

Girls pay with their sexed bodies

Young men flee for their lives

Fathers killed for their politics

Silence labours to erase

The trace of that time

But like a woman bewitched

Produces a thousand times more

The stench of death

(Poem by Duduzile S. Ndlovu, 2015)

Chapter 1: *Ukhalelani mntwanyana uGambu ufile*

Ukhalelani mntwanyana uGambu ufile

Gambu uGambu ufile

Ungabokhala uGambu ufile

Why are you crying child

Chief Gambu is dead

Don't cry Gambu is dead

(Community song)

I have been singing this song in the last five years to my children. I did not live in the time or area of chief Gambu but my parents did. The song has passed on a history and memory that I would have otherwise not known. Whenever I sing it, I imagine an African woman pounding grain with a baby on her back. The song has the rhythm of a manual labour song, meant to synchronise the women's shared movement when pounding grain or digging when farming. It is a soft and gentle song and very different from the beer party song that was normally sung by men.

Normally when someone dies people cry, in mourning, but in this song, a child is being admonished not to cry because a chief has died. The colonial regime abolished certain chieftainships and bolstered some by making them tribal authorities, where they had judicial powers over land, including powers to arrest. Paid by the colonial government, such chiefs were viewed as collaborators with the colonial regime and Chief Gambu was one such chief. Dube (2013) argues that chiefs were in a difficult position when the nationalist movement began because guerrillas saw them as agents of the colonial government; especially with all the provisions they received from the government which ensured they danced to its tune. Chief Gambu's death was directly linked to this as he was killed by guerrillas as the nationalist struggle intensified.

The song today triggers questions such as; why was a child being asked not to cry for the chief? There are many possibilities but I will briefly discuss two in this paper. The first being that Chief Gambu was not to be mourned as he was killed by the guerrillas for collaborating with the Rhodesian government. Therefore, his death was a moment to celebrate a victory against the colonial regime. In this case, people may have publicly mourned the death of Chief Gambu with the song, as is required by custom, and also to avoid offending the colonial regime. The song would have ensured they were able to register their celebration of what his death symbolised, without the regime's awareness, because of the ambiguity of its meaning resting in interpretation.

It is possible on the other hand, that chief Gambu was not to be mourned because the

guerrillas were watching and if anyone mourned they would be seen as his supporters and of the Rhodesian regime. Therefore, the song could have instead been a veiled mourning for the chief without antagonising the guerrillas. The song would have allowed people to avoid any possible backlash from the guerrillas because it can be interpreted as a celebration of the chief's death. Central to the meaning here is the context and the communal definition ascribed to the song.

Women would have sung the song as they went along with their domestic business of taking care of children and preparing food. The song brings politics to an arena that may be considered apolitical. It allows for a subversive performance avoiding the surveillance of the colonial government or the guerrillas. Importantly it allows this to be passed onto a future generation. I am not pounding grain to prepare food but I have carried my children and sung the rhythmic tune lulling them to sleep. Singing it to my children symbolises its travel to the future and with the song is transferred history and heritage from the past to the present. Today I sing *Ukhalelani mntwanyana uGambu ufile* as a celebration of my culture and of bringing up my children in the same way as those before me.

A song sung in the 1970's in the rural Matabeleland South province of Zimbabwe, is being sung in Johannesburg, South Africa one of the biggest metropolitan areas in Africa, in 2016. This is the power of the song in a memorial; it is open-ended and can carry multiple meanings and perform multiple functions. The meaning in a song can be multilayered. We can sing about chief Gambu to both mourn and remember the chief or

to resist his memory, based on how you interpret it. Singing the song also represents celebrating history, identity and culture. It allows for a covert resistance that subverts surveillance and only insiders would understand its significance. The sad event of a chief's death is remembered in an entertaining way because it is an enjoyable tune. It is possible to pass the memory to future generations at times without passing on the pain of the actual event.

In this thesis, I am looking at this tradition of providing social commentary in the form of music or performing arts. Focusing on the way *Gukurahundi* is remembered and narrated in Johannesburg, I explore a music, poetry and performance art culture that brings together different influences both traditional and contemporary (Coplan, 2008). Performance has the advantage of reaching places that bodies cannot reach. Music, as evidenced by the song that remembers the death of chief Gambu, can travel across generations, space and time. Similarly, the music being interrogated in this thesis is travelling further than the musicians composing and singing it have been able to reach. It has now been intertwined with modern technology and its popularity and distribution is reaching as far as Europe and America. Technological advancements have made it possible for performances of different kinds to reach further than the bodies performing them. Internet platforms such as YouTube, iTunes etc make it, theoretically, possible that anyone anywhere in the world can have access to the music and performances staged in South Africa.

When I began this study, the music by the group *Ithemba lamaNguni* that informs this thesis was being distributed on a CD. *Ithemba lamaNguni* provides commentary on issues important to their community; the *Gukurahundi*, migration trajectories, their lives as migrants and the Zimbabwean state. I recently received a clip of the poetry from a friend via a What's App message. The lead singer also sent me a link to a YouTube video of him reciting one of the poems. He enquired about ways of getting the music onto iTunes as people overseas have requested him to do this. This would ensure that access to the music is easier, faster and cheaper than through CD distributions. These are all the different ways that a culture of music has changed over time but has also remained the same.

Researching *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg

Gukurahundi refers to a period of violence perpetrated by the national army that occurred soon after Zimbabwe gained its independence. I will give more details of the violence in the following section. Suffice for me here to say, *Gukurahundi* remains an open-ended question that is being continually defined and debated since it has never been officially acknowledged. Many in the affected areas see *Gukurahundi* as worse than the war of liberation (Eppel, 2004; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008). This may be the case because the logic and purpose of the *Gukurahundi* is lost to the communities. There is no narrative to make sense of the event or to justify the experience as necessary in their lives, in the same way that the nationalist struggles were a necessary pain in order to gain independence from colonial rule. This means the narrative of *Gukurahundi* is open to being reframed in

different contexts. In Zimbabwe *Gukurahundi* remains silenced from public domain although people continue to speak in ways that are not always clearly recognisable, to avoid a backlash from the government. South Africa on the other hand presents different possibilities for victims who want to speak about *Gukurahundi*.

This is how I found myself shocked by the speeches and songs about *Gukurahundi*, in Johannesburg, that blatantly remember a period that was only possible to remember in inconspicuous ways in Zimbabwe. This study is based on qualitative research conducted with members of several Zimbabwean migrant groups and seeks to understand how *Gukurahundi* is remembered in the specific context of contemporary Johannesburg. I conducted interviews, focus group discussions and participated in community events. Interview participants were identified through a snowballing technique, through pre-existing networks. In addition to the interview and focus group discussion transcripts and field notes, music created and performed by Zimbabwean victims of *Gukurahundi* and a film written and produced by a South African filmmaker constitute the data used in the thesis.

I began exploring *Gukurahundi* narratives in Johannesburg sparked by my encounter with members of Zimbabwe Action Movement (ZAM) in 2007. ZAM is a pressure group that was formed by Zimbabwean migrants who are second generation victims of *Gukurahundi* living in Johannesburg. It was working towards regime change in Zimbabwe while also calling for the acknowledgement of the *Gukurahundi* atrocities. The ZAM narrative of

Gukurahundi differed greatly with the way I had grown up hearing talk about the violence. In Zimbabwe people feared being viewed as Shona hating tribalists and so did not publicly speak about *Gukurahundi*. The state also dealt a heavy hand against those who spoke about it. Having grown up and lived in such a context that discouraged remembering the violence, encountering this different narrative in Johannesburg triggered the initial research questions in the MA study (Ndlovu, 2010) and now the completion of this PhD thesis.

My research journey was sparked by a curiosity to understand why people were speaking about *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg. Having grown up in Matabeleland I share a history and background with participants in the study. I have relatives who were killed in the violence or sustained injuries. However, I do not hold the same views on the violence as I found people in Johannesburg to have. As a result, my position as a researcher was both as an insider and an outsider to the groups being researched. This positioning made it possible to gain access to participants and conduct this research. It also informs the reading and analysis that underpins the claims I make in this thesis. This thesis focuses on the specific context of Johannesburg in this political moment after the Government of National Unity (GNU) and explores how migrants using performing arts remember *Gukurahundi*. It explores what *Gukurahundi* means for people living in Johannesburg after the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and GNU. In this regard it seeks to answer the following questions:

Research Questions

1. What does the *Gukurahundi* mean and what is its significance in Johannesburg today?
2. What is the appropriate narrative for remembering *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today?
3. Why are people talking in this way about *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today?

In the following section, I will briefly outline the events now popularly known as *Gukurahundi*. What is said of the period and how it is remembered are important factors in making sense of the narratives in Johannesburg. I will begin by outlining the events leading to the *Gukurahundi*, how it came to an end and the ensuing legacy of silence from the Zimbabwean government, concluding with a reflection on its linkages to ethnicity in Zimbabwe.

Gukurahundi

Gukurahundi refers to a period in post-independence Zimbabwe from 1982 – 1987, which saw socio political violence in the Matabeleland and Midland regions of the country. This was during a time when the freedom fighters were incorporated into the Zimbabwe National Army. Two main political parties, Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) through their respective armed wings Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army

(ZANLA) and Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), fought the independence war. ZANU won the first elections after independence and ZAPU had seats in parliament. Since ZANU was the ruling party, ZIPRA members felt that ZANLA people were being favoured in the army and some of these disgruntled ZIPRA members abandoned the incorporation into the army and chose to take up arms and fight for their party to rule. These army deserters were later called dissidents.

Gukurahundi then occurred when the government deployed a unit of the army, The Fifth Brigade, as an effort to 'bring order' to the Midlands and Matabeleland areas that had been 'destabilised' by dissidents. However, 95% of the atrocities committed during the conflict are attributed to the army unit that was deployed by the government and only 5% of the atrocities are ascribed to the dissidents (CCJP, 1997). The Fifth Brigade did not just target the 'dissidents'. Unarmed citizens bore the greatest brunt from this force. Civilians were targeted as it was argued that they were hiding the dissidents (Worby, 1998). The violence included beatings, torture, murder, rape, detention and disappearances (CCJP, 1997; Eppel, 2008). Camps were set up where civilians were detained, tortured and killed. Estimates of the fatalities from the *Gukurahundi* range from one thousand up to twenty thousand people (Abrams, 2006).

The 1987 Unity Accord: The Gukurahundi Unacknowledged

Gukurahundi came to an end with the signing of the 1987 Unity Accord between ZAPU

and ZANU, which resulted in ZAPU becoming a part of ZANU, effectively destroying any political opposition to the government of the time. Eppel (2009, p. 8) argues that the Unity Accord meant “you cease to exist and we will stop killing you”. This means ZAPU had no choice but to enter into the Unity Accord to stop the killings. It was an outcome of the power relations between ZAPU and ZANU and the lack of international support for ZAPU that the Unity Accord was the only choice. This is also evidenced by the eleven points that made up the Unity Accord document which made no concessions to ZAPU and no mention of any steps to be taken for reparations to the victims of the violence, except that the violence occurring in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions would stop (Eppel, 2009). Following the signing of the unity accord a blanket amnesty was granted to all those who had been involved in the violence. A commission was set up to investigate the atrocities but the outcomes of this inquiry were never publicised.

The skewed power dynamics leading to ZAPU signing an accord that effected its dissolution have prevailed to the present. The government, responsible for the majority of atrocities against civilians during the *Gukurahundi*, has remained in power and invokes different laws to deter remembering the atrocities. A 2007 quote from the then speaker of parliament the late John Nkomo, typifies the government’s justification of this forgetting, he said:

We must be careful when handling such issues because they affect national unity symbolised by the unification of ZANU PF-PF and PF- PF ZAPU.... *Gukurahundi* has always been steeped in tribal overtones

pitting the *Ndebele* against the Shona, and no one wants to revisit such as divisive era (IRIN, 2007)

The government of Zimbabwe justifies a forgetting of *Gukurahundi* out of a fear of the effects that remembering will do. The government has framed talking about *Gukurahundi* as opening up old wounds and derailing the national project. Forgetting or silence is preferred as it is believed that remembering will bring ethnic division between the Shona and *Ndebele* when their unity is important for nation building. Silence is framed as beneficial for the greater good of the nation. However, Fontein (2009) has argued that manipulation of the representation of memories of violence, including the *Gukurahundi*, is the ZANU PF's strategic historical project. Igreja (2008) reports a similar stance in Mozambique however with the consequence that the silencing of memories only results in them being misused by those in power.

This position of silence stands in stark contrast to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's stance. The South African TRC put remembering in the form of narration as the cornerstone of building the nation. The TRC postured remembering or the truth was seen as the foundation for bringing together the nation. The Zimbabwean policy of forgetting the *Gukurahundi* has not been accepted by all as will be seen in the following discussions. Communities, artists and opposition politicians have all attempted to break this imposed norm of silence and have met with the government's brutal reprisal. As earlier outlined, the *Gukurahundi* occurred in the Midlands and Matabeleland regions of Zimbabwe. This was a result of, and further influenced, an

overlap of cultural and ethnic identities with political allegiance. I will discuss this intertwining of ethnicity with party politics and victimhood as it links to the *Gukurahundi* violence below.

The Ethnic Story in Gukurahundi

It has been argued that *Gukurahundi* cemented the feeling of being *Ndebele* (Eppel, 2008; Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). Worby (1998) argues that the *Gukurahundi* violence framed the *Ndebele* as outside the nation. The government has also framed the *Gukurahundi* as an issue that will bring ethnic division to Zimbabweans and hence not to be spoken about (Ndlovu, 2010). The *Gukurahundi* violence occurred in the Matabeleland and Midlands parts of the country which were a stronghold to the main opposition party at the time, ZAPU. Midlands and Matabeleland are also home to the many ethnic groups in Zimbabwe that have become subsumed under the *ndebele* identity. As a result *Gukurahundi* is viewed as an assault on the *ndebele* group. In many areas that were affected by the violence, *Gukurahundi* is seen as ethnically motivated and an attempt to annihilate the *ndebele* from Zimbabwe (Ndlovu, 2010). As a result ethnic constructions are prominent in the *Gukurahundi* narratives.

Zimbabwe is generally known to have two ethnic groups *ndebele* and Shona. There are more than ten ethnic groups subsumed under the popular *ndebele* and Shona identities. These include Tonga, Kalanga, Venda, Nambiya and Sotho which are considered *ndebele*; Karanga, Manyika, Ndau, Zezuru etc which are considered Shona. Msindo

(2012) in an attempt to distinguish the twofold division into Shona & ndebele identities from the cultural identities has argued that these are regional political identities. The Ndebele regional political identity allows for participation of the Kalanga in Matabeleland politics but is different from the Ndebele cultural identity. While Eppel (2004), Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007), and Worby (1998) speak about the Ndebele as victims of *Gukurahundi*, Msindo (2012) goes further to distinguish between cultural identities and regional political identities. In this thesis I want to focus on the *ndebele* regional political identity as it is articulated in Johannesburg, linked to remembering *Gukurahundi*. The regional political identity as expounded by Msindo, (2012) is linked to other politics and not only *Gukurahundi*. In this thesis I am focusing on contemporary politics in Johannesburg and Zimbabwe as people remember *Gukurahundi*.

Since this thesis problematizes the *ndebele* identity linked to the *Gukurahundi* it is important to make a distinction between the *Ndebele* cultural identity and the *ndebele* identity linked to *Gukurahundi* victimhood. There are *Ndebele* people, those who speak the *Ndebele* language and identify culturally as *Ndebele*. I want to distinguish this group from the broader group of *Gukurahundi* victims who have different cultural identities and languages such as the Kalanga, Tonga, Namibia, Venda, Sotho and many other smaller language groupings in Zimbabwe that have come to be popularly known as *ndebele*. As such the identity linked to *Gukurahundi* will not be capitalised, that is, *Ndebele* refers to the cultural identity and *ndebele* refers to the identity as it has come to be understood with its links to *Gukurahundi*. The *ndebele* in this thesis therefore include the *Ndebele*,

Kalanga, Tonga, Venda, Sotho, Nambiya etc that were victims of the *Gukurahundi* but are not '*Ndebele*'.

The *Ndebele* are not necessarily a homogenous group and it is not only the *Gukurahundi* violence that influences the construction of the *ndebele* identity. Dube (2015) argues that ethnicity became socially significant because of colonial invasion. She speaks of *Ndebele* of Kalanga origin in reference to those who *ndebelenised* their totems in the 1800s for them to gain leadership recognition within the church from missionaries. The cultural identities have not always been static although categorisation of the *ndebele* against *Ndebele* runs the risk of presenting them as such. This is not my intention, I am making the distinction between *Ndebele* and *ndebele* for the purpose of understanding how violence has reframed and led to a reconstruction of the meanings of these social categories.

The separation of the different groups *Ndebele*, Kalanga, Tonga etc similarly poses the challenge of reifying differences and concretizing boundaries that in reality are in constant flux and change. For example Dube (2013) argues that ZAPU was considered an *Ndebele* party however the majority of its leadership was Kalanga. She further says:

Joshua Nkomo thus assumed many identities. In Bulawayo, an urban city dominated by *Ndebele* speakers, he was *Ndebele*; in Kezi, his home area, he was a Kalanga; in the then Southern Rhodesia as a whole he was a

nationalist (Dube, 2013, p. 163).

As such the distinction being made between the ethnic and victim identity linked to *Gukurahundi* is for the purpose of the arguments made in this thesis and may not apply in a different context. It is possible that people oscillate between these different identities at different points. This thesis therefore focuses on the dominating narratives on *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg in the timeframe of this thesis, which may not be valid at another place or time.

One of the most publicised genocides in Africa is the Rwandan genocide where ethnic identity was used to justify the killing of many. Mamdani (2001) argues that to understand how this could happen there is a need for a historicisation that problematises the relationship between the historical legacy of colonialism and postcolonial politics. Focusing on political identities, that is, identities that are a direct consequence of the process of state making, is one way this can be done. For example the native/settler identities that originated in the context of colonialism in Rwanda can help us to understand how the masses could be persuaded to kill their neighbours. The Hutu identity was defined as the native identity while the Tutsi were seen as settlers. As such the Hutu were getting rid of "invaders" in the genocide.

Following Mamdani's (2001) argument here I shall discuss how the *ndebele* and Shona interactions during and after the *Gukurahundi* shape the *ndebele* identity that is

articulated today. The history and development of these ethnic identities requires its own separate study as seen in Dube (2015) who focuses on the Kalanga identity. Therefore in this space of the PhD study, I shall only focus on the development of the *ndebele* identity in reference to the *Gukurahundi*. Identities are contingent and do not have the same meaning universally (Hall, 1996). In this way we are able to look at contemporary political identities with a historical perspective of how they have come to be. It is in the specific context of the memory of *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg that the *ndebele* identity is of interest in this thesis.

Ethnicity in Zimbabwe Since 1963

Yap (2002) contends that the *Gukurahundi* was an inevitable outcome of the tensions that prevailed during the liberation war between the two main political parties involved in the struggle. These tensions before independence had a bearing on the ethnic characters that the liberation parties took on and the meanings people now draw from the violence and how it has been responded to. In the following section I therefore focus on the nationalist movement's developments and how these have resulted in the ethnic circulations currently found in Zimbabwe. This section only looks at ethnicity from the beginning of the nationalist movements and does not include the colonial or pre-colonial period.

The 1950s to the 1960s saw a rise in nationalist movements that were agitating for the freedom of Zimbabwe from colonial rule. These movements used ethnicity to mobilise support for the nationalist movement against colonialism. 1963 represents an important

time in the history of inter-ethnic relations in Zimbabwe because it is the year when the then main nationalist party ZAPU split into two parties, ZANU and ZAPU. Msindo (2012) argues that this division was not motivated by ethnicity but differences in policy. Nonetheless it led to the creation of the regional political identities in that after this split, the two parties continued to use ethnicity to mobilise support. This resulted in the two parties taking on an ethnic character as ZAPU and its military wing ZIPRA recruited mostly people from *ndebele* and ZANU's ZANLA increasingly recruited the Shona (Msindo, 2012).

Another view, and a more popularly accepted one, of the 1963 ZAPU split is that ZAPU split along ethnic lines in 1963 as a result of leaders wanting to strategically position themselves for leadership take over once the war ended. So the two formations took on ethnic identities, ZANU a Shona ethnic character while PF ZAPU took on a *Ndebele* ethnic character. Regardless of the explanation given, the 1963 split is significant in that it led to two parties that drew support from ethnic groups leading to an overlap of political with cultural identity. There were tensions between the two parties because political leaders were using ethnicity to position themselves. Efforts to bring the parties together to further nationalist intentions failed. Since *Gukurahundi* occurred soon after independence it 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.

Further to the conflation of ethnicity with political allegiance discussed above, ethnicity continues to be important in relation to the *Gukurahundi* as a result of the Zimbabwean state's policies. Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007) argue that the Zimbabwean government has not engaged ethnicity to address the historical and contemporary factors that make it important today. For example it has chosen to silence the *Gukurahundi* instead of opening it up for debate. This influences the way people remember *Gukurahundi* today and this thesis explores how this occurs in Johannesburg. In commemorating the liberation wars, for example, ZANU and its military wing ZANLA are magnified as the sole liberators of Zimbabwe downplaying contributions made by ZAPU and other players. Shona heroes and historical monuments are used to imagine the nation while *ndebele* heroes and history are marginalised.

Zimbabwe's Silence about the Gukurahundi

The *Gukurahundi* period is officially silenced in Zimbabwe and to this day victims have not received any official acknowledgement of the atrocities. 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 reason for the violence and its effects has not been acknowledged in the public domain. For example, Robert Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe, who was also president at the time the atrocities took place, is quoted saying the atrocities were a "moment of madness" (Eppel, 2004). This statement, while acknowledging its occurrence, insinuates that the *Gukurahundi* was temporary and unplanned; an

insignificant deviation from normal life. It insinuates that life has gone back to normal and does not account for the upheaval that many people may have experienced as a result of the *Gukurahundi* and which continues to affect their lives currently.

Instead, the signing of the Unity Accord is commemorated through an annual national holiday, the National Unity Day. This commemoration does not mention any of the victims or the violence that necessitated the signing of the accord (Eppel, 2004; Mpofu, 2008). On the contrary, the National Unity Day is commemorated as a celebration of the coming together of ZANU and ZAPU. Furthermore, community efforts to commemorate the lives lost or activities aimed at accounting for the time have been repeatedly closed down by the Zimbabwean government. Alexander, McGregor, & Ranger, (2000) for example, report of community initiated events to commemorate victims of *Gukurahundi* that have been closed down by government officials. Recently a new government ministry, the Organ of National Healing was incepted in Zimbabwe. The mandate of this ministry whose task is to spearhead national healing programs does not include *Gukurahundi*. In March 2010 an artist, Owen Maseko, was arrested for a *Gukurahundi* art exhibition; one of the Ministers in the Organ of National Healing, Moses Mzila Ndlovu, was also arrested in May 2011 for talking about *Gukurahundi* in a community gathering (Nehandaradio, 2011; Sokwanele, 2010).

The World Ignores *Gukurahundi*

Similar to the Zimbabwean government's silence, the atrocities were initially met with

silence from the international community. Phimister (2008) details a number of media houses that carried reports of the atrocities, particularly in the United States of America and the United Kingdom, but they did not elicit any action from those governments. Hill (2011) argues that the international community turned a blind eye to the atrocities so that Zimbabwe could be presented as an example to then Apartheid South Africa. Since the atrocities occurred in the 1980s, it is only in 2010 that the American based group Genocide Watch has classified *Gukurahundi* as genocide (Genocide Watch, 2010). This recognition of *Gukurahundi* as genocide is celebrated, by some, as a step in the right direction towards getting acknowledgement for the loss experienced in the violence.

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) brings hope

Since the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987 and the dissolution of PF ZAPU into the ruling ZANU PF, Zimbabwe has not had a formidable opposition party. This means that perpetrators of the *Gukurahundi* violence have remained in power without any hope of citizens challenging them. This changed in 1999 with the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The entry of the MDC brought a change into the Zimbabwean political scene with many seeing the MDC as an opportunity to bring to the fore histories and discontents that had been kept silent such as the *Gukurahundi*. This has seen an increase in people talking about *Gukurahundi* in Zimbabwe and the Diaspora (Guma, 2009; MISA, 2010; Mpfu, 2008; Sokwanele, 2007). There are debates in the media about what needs to happen with regards to *Gukurahundi*, with many calling for a truth commission (Du Plessis & Ford, 2008; Eppel, 2004; Mashingaidze, 2010). There

are various artistic productions, songs, plays, visual art and documentaries that have been produced. There are many Internet websites, blogs and platforms in which discussions on *Gukurahundi* are taking place.

The MDC came with a promise for regime change and a hope for a different Zimbabwe. The euphoria that came with the formation of The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) created hope that the story of *Gukurahundi* would have space in the country's public narrative so that victims could be acknowledged as a step towards reconciliation and nation building. Instead of silencing the memory of *Gukurahundi* for unity, remembering and acknowledging the atrocities was seen as the only way towards true reconciliation (Ndlovu, 2010). This hope has waned as the MDC went into a Government of National Unity (GNU) with ZANU PF in 2008. The GNU has also run its course bringing us to the current political moment where all hope for any regime change in Zimbabwe is lost. Economic challenges are worsening and the government continues to defy human rights norms.

Research Participants

I interviewed a total of seventeen people belonging to three organisations, I shall introduce below, were interviewed. Of the seventeen interview participants, three also participated in the focus group discussions. Fifteen people were involved in the focus group discussions. Participants in this study belonged to three migrant groups; the first is

Ithemba lamaNguni (Hope for the Nguni). I met members of *Ithemba lamaNguni* in 2008 while working as a health and rights trainer with migrants and refugee communities in Johannesburg.

Ithemba lamaNguni were part of ZAM and saw their creative work as a contribution to the Zimbabwe nation-building project. At the time ZAM was working towards a change of government in Zimbabwe, actively encouraging Zimbabweans to go back to Zimbabwe to vote and to encourage kith and kin in Zimbabwe and South Africa to do the same. ZAM was formed in the excitement of the formation of the MDC with the promise of a change of regime in Zimbabwe. To this day, this change has not occurred and ZAM disintegrated after the 2008 elections, which did not bring the expected regime change.

Ithemba lamaNguni are artists who write and perform songs and plays speaking about *Gukurahundi*. They perform within inner city Johannesburg in the community centers and record and distribute CDs of their music. They did not have a promotional company distributing their music but were selling it by word of mouth through their networks. So these artists are not privileged with access to resources and audiences but they are positioned on the periphery and utilize personal networks to distribute their message. In 2013, one of the founding members joined Facebook and used this platform to promote the CDs and received good reception to this from Zimbabweans in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Even though *Ithemba lamaNguni* is no longer active, two of its founding members have chosen to work with younger people to keep them off

the streets through involvement in the arts. These are matric students aged between eighteen and twenty years called *Ithemba leSizwe* (Hope for the Nation).

Ithemba leSizwe is composed of Zimbabweans and has one South African member. They perform regularly at the Hillbrow Community Centre for a nominal fee. Their plays are about the migrant experience of living in Johannesburg. One performance I attended was a play about xenophobia where a young South African man involved in the killing of a Zimbabwean decides to look for his father. He finds that his father is Zimbabwean and on meeting his father discovers that the man he killed was his brother. They also perform plays about the *Gukurahundi* and other similar atrocities that have happened across Africa.

The third group that participated in this study are members of *Mthwakazi* Liberation Front (MLF). As earlier highlighted, ZAM disintegrated after 2008 and other groups have become prominent in speaking about *Gukurahundi*, such as the MLF. In 2011 MLF held a march in Johannesburg where they burned the Zimbabwean flag as a symbol of denouncing the Zimbabwean state. MLF uses the *Gukurahundi* to justify calls for a separate state for the *ndebele*.

Recruiting the Participants

Ithemba lamaNguni and *Ithemba leSizwe* members were easy to access through the

linkages I created with ZAM during the previous MA study. However, it was a challenge to reach the MLF and other participants as I sought to widen participation in the study. My sister's friend is a member of the MLF and was instrumental in helping me gain access to the MLF members that participated in this study. She gave me names of five members of the MLF to contact and interview. Only one from the five was willing to meet with me, I shall refer to him as Mr X to ensure his anonymity. He was a member of the leadership of MLF and gave me names of other people to contact for possible interviews. Once I stated that I had been referred by Mr X, I found people more willing to talk to me. There was however one man who agreed to be interviewed only on condition that Mr X stayed for the duration of the interview and witnessed all that he had to say to me.

I have described the process of recruiting members of the MLF above to show the level of mistrust that I have encountered and had to deal with in order to gain access to the participants. One of the reasons for this mistrust was because the MLF had a split that was reportedly caused by their structures being infiltrated by Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) agents. The CIO is the Zimbabwean government's intelligence agency or 'secret police'. They are reputed with kidnapping and torturing or even killing those seen to be against the government. It is rumoured that they also operate in Johannesburg and have kidnapped and beaten people up.

The man who participated in an interview on condition that Mr X stayed for the interview

wanted to have a witness of what he said to me in case he was misquoted. Furthermore, he did not want to be left alone with me in case I had people close by who would kidnap him. This participant also refused to let me buy him a drink as he did not want anyone to think that whatever he said was because I had paid him to say it. Several other members of the MLF refused to let me to buy them a drink for the same reason.

I recruited other participants through attending a ZAPU event at the Constitutional Hill in Johannesburg. In this event there was a launch of an image documentation of ZAPU history. I was able to meet many ZAPU members and leaders of the ZAPU structures, however, when I mentioned that I wanted to hear their views about *Gukurahundi* many of them did not want to take part in the study. Further to this I did not have any personal relationships within which to manoeuvre in order to gain access to ZAPU members. As such I was not able to get views about *Gukurahundi* from ZAPU members based in Johannesburg.

The data

In addition to the interviews and focus group discussions conducted during the course of this research, the study utilises artworks on *Gukurahundi* as well as web articles. I also attended five community events in 2013 and two events in 2015. *Ithemba leSizwe* performed at three of these events. The events were open to all participants in the study but they were not always present or I was not aware of their presence save in the case of

the performers. Below I will give brief descriptions of the two main artistic works used, which are music by *Ithemba lamaNguni* titled *Inkulu leNdaba* (This is a big matter) and a film, *The Tunnel*, written by Jenna Bass a South African of Jewish descent.

The Tunnel

The Tunnel was written and produced by Jenna Bass in 2009 to commemorate the *Gukurahundi* violence. It has been showcased in more than twenty film festivals across the world. In 2010 alone the film was shown at twenty-two film festivals including the Sundance Festival where it received the Fokus-Dialogue Award and AfryKamera Festival where it received the Best Short Film award. *The Tunnel* was shown to audiences across the globe telling the story of *Gukurahundi*. Significantly, the film has not been shown in Zimbabwe although this was Bass' intention when she made the film. Participants in this study had no knowledge of the film prior to the focus group discussions. This made the film a good case study of a memorial created by an outsider without including or partnering with the victims or survivors of the atrocity. As such, it is included in this study to explore its reception by victims of the *Gukurahundi*.

Inkulu lendaba

The table below summarises the songs in the CD *Inkulu lendaba* which was produced in 2009. This music memorialises the *Gukurahundi* while also providing commentary on Zimbabwe's political issues and South Africa's reception of migrants simultaneously. The songs were written and performed by *Ithemba lamaNguni*. Most of the songs are

sung in Ndebele save for three, there is one song in English, another in Kalanga and one , with a mix of Ndebele and English. Some songs use old Ndebele poetry but with new lyrics incorporated. As such some of the songs are familiar however with contemporary relevance.

Table 1 *Inkulu leNdaba*

Song Title on CD/ Title Translation	Language	Main Theme of the song
Iphupho/ The Dream	Ndebele	This song is about 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. The territory of home here is delineated as Zimbabwe
Amaganyana/ Animals of prey	Ndebele	This song talks of the natural beauty of Zimbabwe that has been eroded by animals of prey into a desert.
Hungry Lions	English	In this song ZAM members say they escaped colonialism only to be led by ‘hungry lions’ who are leaders motivated by personal gain and not for the masses
Inkomo Zikababa/ Our Father’s	Ndebele	In this song the image of the <i>Ndebele</i> as livestock that has been led astray by a wayward rooster is used to show the

Cattle		predicament of the <i>Ndebele</i> in Zimbabwe under the leadership of ZANU PF.
Ngekuzikhohlwe/ One can never forget who they are	Ndebele	In this song ZAM members state that they will never forget <i>Gukurahundi</i> .
Hango/ Work	Kalanga	This song is a celebration of culture prior to colonisation. The colonial project is presented as a continuing evil which is corrupting the good aspects of the singer's culture and should be fought against.
Silandela amaqhawe/ We follow our heroes	Ndebele and English	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 as well as some names not recognised as heroes in Zimbabwe.
Amabalengwe/ The spots of a lion	Ndebele	This song traces the genealogy of ZAM members to <i>Ndebele</i> 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	Ndebele	This song talks about how ZAM members will stand for

		the truth about <i>Gukurahundi</i> even if this means risking their lives.
<i>Inkulu lendaba/ This is a big matter</i>	Ndebele	This is a call for those with the ability to write history to memorialise <i>ndebele</i> history to include <i>Gukurahundi</i> and the difficult experiences of being a migrant.
Ulobhengula/ King Lobhengula	Ndebele	In this song the <i>ndebele</i> are traced back to being subjects of King Lobhengula a valiant warrior who survives a battle where all his brothers are killed
Usizi/ Grief	Ndebele	In this song, ZAM members pray to God to walk with them because the life of a migrant is a difficult one.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is presented in poetic and academic prose. I have written primarily for examination in academic prose but each chapter is summarised into a poem. The merging of the poetic and academic genres, serves the function of bridging a gap in the audience of the thesis. I wanted to write a thesis that participants in the study would be able to engage with. So writing poetry to summarise the chapters was a strategy used to write a thesis accessible to the participants who contributed their knowledge and life experiences. In this way poetry provided one way to disrupt power inequalities in the researcher/participant relationship dynamic. The poems do not only serve the function of making the thesis accessible to research participants but further enhance the thesis through the inclusion of emotion in the story of *Gukurahundi*. They also serve as a tool for reflexivity to stage my positionality and work of making meaning out of the data generated in this research. As discussed in this chapter, the *Gukurahundi* has not been formally acknowledged and victims seek a documentation of the atrocities. The poetry also contributes as a form of documentation of *Gukurahundi* for participants as it translates the academic argument in the thesis to a language they can access.

Chapter Two locates this thesis in broader theories of memory, violence and migration.

This literature review explores and foregrounds the concepts used to make sense of the narratives of *Gukurahundi* presented in the thesis. The chapter explores the field of remembering and forgetting, looking at the popular concepts of trauma and its trans-generational transmission in contrast to less popular subaltern concepts of performing

memory and its transmission to the future. The chapter also explores the location of migrants at the margins of the national order of things and broadly in the global community. This is instrumental in making sense of how the violence of *Gukurahundi* is remembered within the broader global narratives of violence and failed postcolonial African states.

Chapter Three outlines the methodological considerations that have guided the empirical work of conducting this research and analysing the data generated. Here I present the discourse, narrative and poetry analysis strategies used to make sense of the data. I also focus on my insider-outsider position as a researcher and the adoption of poetry as a creative method to stage this positioning. Lastly, I present how poetry has been useful in presenting my position in a more complex way and showing the work of analysis in the creation of meaning from the interviews.

Chapter Four is the first empirical chapter in the thesis and presents the first set of insights gleaned from conducting this research. This chapter presents the narratives used to tell the story of *Gukurahundi* which are gendered and also intertwined with people's migration trajectories. Importantly this chapter reflects on the difference between the Zimbabwean state's stance on *Gukurahundi* and what victims are saying.

Chapter Five presents the ways in which *Gukurahundi* is remembered through a

comparison of the music *Inkulu lendaba* and the film *The Tunnel*, created to document the *Gukurahundi* atrocities. The ways in which *Gukurahundi* is presented in these artworks is analysed to explore the question of who has the right to tell the story of *Gukurahundi*. The subtle differences between the film created by an outsider and the music by victims centers on the function the artwork is aimed at serving today. Victims are documenting the story of *Gukurahundi* in order to record the history of the *Ndebele* but also to change the world for future generations.

Chapter Six brings together chapter four and chapter five to explore the racial, ethnic and national identities constructed in the telling of the story of *Gukurahundi*. Here the different constructions of who the victims of *Gukurahundi* are and the expected response to their victimhood is explored. The chapter foregrounds the instrumentality of the narrative of *Gukurahundi* today in Johannesburg and the ends to which it is being put to use in justifying a separate state for the victims or reimagining a different Zimbabwe.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by drawing the main arguments of the thesis from the previous six chapters.

Chapter 2: Violence, Migration and Memory

Illegal Immigrant

Sweet words

I keep

Under my tongue

So when

You stop me

I negotiate

The bribe price

Of my freedom

Call me

Any name

I am here

To stay

I will find

A job

Any that affords me

To stay

I pay daily

For my stay

Yet they still call me

An Illegal Immigrant

(Poem by Duduzile S Ndlovu, 2007)

Remembering Gukurahundi

This thesis is about how a violent past is being remembered in the context of migration. Memories of violence are being recalled in the context of ongoing violence in or its threat in Johannesburg. The study is focused on people that have moved from the area where the past violence occurred, Zimbabwe, and are now located in South Africa where they face xenophobic violence and its threat. As such in this chapter I will focus on how remembering has been theorised and the way nations figure in history and memory making practices. Importantly too, I shall discuss the context within which the Zimbabwean migrants are remembering the *Gukurahundi*. What does it mean to be a migrant in inner city Johannesburg? How do people's lives intersect with migration regulation and the everyday policing of the city and how does this influence memory making? Lastly what does it mean to remember violence in a post-colonial state in the context of global hegemonic discourses of violence?

Understanding the context of silence in Zimbabwe as discussed in the previous chapter is important in order to understand the significance of the way migrants remember *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today. The discussion of the Zimbabwean government's response to *Gukurahundi* as silence connotes an inclination against silence. This is the view taken by migrants remembering *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today who deplore the way the story of the violence is absent in Zimbabwe's social memory. To this end the migrants are involved in different activities to break the silence of *Gukurahundi*. This thesis focuses on remembering and forgetting at the national level and its intersection at various points and in different ways with individual memory.

Memory is a Function of Power

Freeman (1993) has argued that we remember the past because of the present. Memory is an evaluative act and not a perfect representation of the past and so is history (Poole, 2008). Although this is the case, history has long been viewed as better because of the systematic way in which it is arrived at. The archive is systematically curated but it produces as much as it records the past (Derrida, 1996). In this research, the difference between history and memory is not important; they are both ways of bringing the past into the present.

Conceptualising the process of remembering as social memory (Brockmeier, 2002; Olick, 1998) is one useful way of making sense of the ways *Gukurahundi* is remembered in Zimbabwe. Social memory is a politically motivated representation of the past where silence on an issue may be an adaptation to power by less powerful groups. So power plays a critical role in what becomes socially memorable. Hirsch & Smith (2002) say public media and official archives memorialise the experiences of the powerful, those who control hegemonic discursive spaces. Similarly, in Taylor's (2003) theorisation of history-making as performance, colonial power is central to the way the native history-making practices are viewed as inferior. Another form of power within society, of interest here, is gender and it similarly structures memory making within nations and communities (Hirsch & Smith, 2002).

In the following sections I shall first focus on the way gender structures remembering. This will be followed by a discussion of the memory fostered by those in power within

nations, the implications for the silencing of memory in such contexts and the ambiguous place of truth and reconciliation commissions as spaces to remember that may also silence. Lastly I shall turn to alternative archives (Hirsch & Smith, 2002): visual images, music, ritual and performance, material and popular culture as forms of history making available to the disenfranchised and used to remember *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg.

Remembering Women: 'apolitical lives'

The experiences of women in conflict and how they are remembered is a result of their gendered location. Palmary (2005) shows how gender was inextricably linked to the persecution that women suffered in the Great Lakes Region conflict and also structured the resistance that women engaged in and hence the narratives they framed about their experiences of the conflict. Looking at sexual violence in conflict for example, Ayiera (2010) argues that sexual violence against women is a direct result of the gendering of people into men, aggressive and violent and women gendered as the opposite of this.

Sexual violence happens to women because they are women and is an integral part of the conflict. The way that violence is reported however with the centering of the male experience casts a shadow on the female experiences and at times completely silences them. The gendered location of women, their experience of conflict and how it is remembered is rarely captured and represented in popular memory (Hamber & Palmary, 2009). In cases where the violation of women is spoken of, it may be seen as a footnote to the main story about men (Ayiera, 2010).

The representation of women in conflict has implications for their agency and participation in the post conflict period (Meintjes, Pillay, & Turshen, 2001). These are representations of women as either suffering or as sexual possessions of the perpetrators. Images of women are more likely to be used to represent the Holocaust memory as this creates a strong emotive context. For example, women in the holocaust memorial in Auschwitz are represented in two primary visual frames, as mothers and as embodied subjects of Nazi atrocity (Jacobs, 2008).

The emotional connection to the past created in the memory is filtered through images of the powerlessness of women and not their heroism. This does not allow for the representation of the agency that Jewish women may have had. This representation which stereotypes women as seen in the Auschwitz memorial limits the other possibilities to show women's agency which may open up opportunities for women's participation in the present (Roy, 2006; Scott, 1986)

In the South African TRC, Gobodo-Madikizela (2011) says women were the main transmitters of the memory of the traumatic past. Although women as transmitters of memory testified more about the experiences of their male relatives, Gobodo-Madikizela's (2011) reading of the embodied empathy *inimba* which is a sphere exclusive to mothers shows one way in which this location as mothers gave the women agency to forgive the perpetrator. Gobodo- Madikizela (2011) presents a case study of women in the TRC who had lost their sons and on meeting the perpetrator forgave him. The women's social position as mothers gave them access to embody empathy in *inimba*

and this is what also gave them the agency to forgive the perpetrator. In the same vein however this *inimba* could limit women's enacting other reactions to the violence such as anger or revenge.

This study acknowledges the dominance of a male centric narrative on *Gukurahundi*, but also aims at finding the location of women outside of their framing as symbols of powerless victims. The experiences of women in conflict may be left out because women's memories of conflict are often found in their attempts to maintain their homes and relationships (Motsemme, 2004). However, Ashe (2012) argues for a gendered analysis because its neglect may result in the non-transformation of gender power relations. Using an example of Northern Ireland where men were predominantly involved in the violence and used this to justify their dominance in the peace building processes thereby sidelining women, Ashe (2012) argues that the justification of men's involvement in the peace building processes results in the experiences of women which may not have been public but were nonetheless influenced by the conflict to be seen as insignificant.

Women's narratives have been difficult to capture save in places where conscious effort is made to include a gendered perspective, see for example Theidon (2015) where the Peru truth commission specifically looked for the narratives of women. In this way the Peru truth commission was able to document cases of sexual violence and the children born as a result. Nevertheless a focus on women specifically may serve to reify the notion that women are not directly part of conflict. Theidon (2015) notes how the

implications for men if women told of their experiences of rape resulted in the women not coming forward to speak outside of the special intervention. Women may have been used to buy the freedom or the lives of their partners or other male members of their community. Speaking about these experiences was thus difficult. So here a gendered analysis of the narratives of *Gukurahundi* looks to present the different gendered framings of the memory and their implications today. How is the story being told by men and that by women differing? And also how the memory draws on gendered notions of family, home and the loss thereof?

It is important to highlight here that it was difficult to access female participants in this study. Harding (1987) argues that the male experience has framed the questions asked and the way in which research is conducted and the resulting outcomes. I found that women were not eager to participate in this study even where I specifically asked for participants to refer me to women. Women did not commit to meeting with me. Even in cases where they agreed to be interviewed, when the agreed time came they would 'disappear'. Only one woman agreed to be interviewed and she is a leader within the MLF. In the interview she reflected on how women felt that political issues were for men. She also reflected on her experience as a woman leader within the MLF that men were not willing to share power with women and that women needed to be trained to realise that they had a place in the political arena. As such this research presents views largely from a male perspective.

National Memories

Social memory as a politically motivated representation of the past means that within nations, governments tend to have more power in determining what is memorable and what is not. Governments' interests do not always cohere with the interests of communities, for example, memory may be used to enhance the state's power and legitimatise the nation but result in some victims being forgotten from the national imagination (Ibreck, 2010). In spite of this, however, people remember the victims of violence even though the government has not acknowledged them (Lundy & McGovern, 2001). This is the case with Gukurahundi which is remembered despite the state not acknowledging it.

Buckley-Zistel, Igreja, Lundy & McGovern and Misztal, (2006; 2008; 2001; 2005) have all presented cases similar to the Zimbabwean silence over *Gukurahundi*, where all or some aspects of violence are forgotten from the public narrative. Selective amnesia, social amnesia or chosen amnesia are all terms that have been used to describe such contexts where certain aspects of the violent past are silenced, usually driven by anxiety over the effects of the remembering. In the Rwandan genocide, the historical ethnic divisions between the Hutu and Tutsi are actively forgotten when explaining the causes of the 1994 genocide because victims and perpetrators have to live together in close proximity and depend on each other (Buckley-Zistel, 2006). In Mozambique, Igreja (2008) says that the government chose to silence memories of atrocities suffered in the liberation wars in order to protect the fragile newly found peace. This silence, in

Mozambique, however has seen the appropriation of memories in party politics that is not always fair.

Ranger (2004) has argued that Zimbabwe's history is patriotic history: controlled and manipulated by the state to serve nationalist concerns. The Zimbabwean government has not instituted any process of recognising the victims of *Gukurahundi* and has also obstructed community and individual attempts to do so (Alexander et al., 2000). Murambadoro and Ngwenya & Harris (2015; 2015b, 2015a) report on the unacknowledged *Gukurahundi* atrocities and the consequences for communities in Matabeleland Zimbabwe which include a passing on of revenge and anger to the next generation.

Differences in priorities for memorialisation are not only found between the government and survivors but there may also be differences found amongst the survivors' priorities (Ibreck, 2010). In South Africa, for example, memorials put up by ANC or PAC aligned activists respectively because they emphasised the rival stake holder's representation of the past (Becker, 2011). In Rwanda some people are intent on ensuring that the Tutsi are identified as the real victims and not any other groups. Others want to mourn the loss of their loved ones privately and some want a public acknowledgement of their loss. In addition the priorities for memorials may also shift over time (Ibreck, 2010). In Johannesburg today there are groups that want to remember *Gukurahundi* which is contrary to the Zimbabwean government's policies. The motivations for remembering differ: some want to remember in order to justify the creation of a new nation, others are

remembering in order to build a better Zimbabwe and at the same time not everyone wants to remember.

First generation victims have been accused of promoting the forgetting of *Gukurahundi* (D. Ndlovu, 2010). In conversations with first generation victims of the violence, I have been warned of the danger of speaking about *Gukurahundi* in Zimbabwe. These conversations have revealed that silence is a strategy for self preservation, since ZANU-PF is still in power there is a possibility of a repeat of the violence. Remembering *Gukurahundi* is seen as something that could trigger a repeat and so people choose silence. In this instance the silence in Zimbabwe with regards to *Gukurahundi* may be a function of the power dynamics where victims are less powerful and unable to challenge the government's stance and not necessarily an indication that people have moved on as Vambe (2012) states. In other cases silence is chosen in order to mitigate the effects of remembering (Sheriff, 2000; Weingarten, 2004).

Silence

Silence may be chosen as a strategy to alleviate the pain of remembering or people may be caught in the conspiracy of silence. The first generation may be unable to find the language to speak of their experiences (Danieli, 1995; Uehara, Farris, Morreli, & Ishisaka, 2001; Uehara et al., 2001). For example Danieli (1995) speaks of the conspiracy of silence where violence brings a rupture between survivors and society where survivors' lives do not reach a level of normalcy. It may also mean that the past event is

still seen as unfinished business where people have not attained closure over the past (Hamber & Wilson, 2002).

It is also possible that people may not be silent, but speak in a way that is not readily recognisable. For example, Sibanda (2004) presents the case of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in Zimbabwe, which is popularly interpreted as a political message. Mtukudzi does not accede to the political interpretations of his songs but maintains that they are just music. Sibanda (2004) argues that Mtukudzi takes advantage of the contradiction that may occur between how audiences interpret his music contrary to his intentions because he lives in a dangerous political situation (Sibanda, 2004). The ambiguity in the meaning of art gives him safety to speak in a context of repression. It allows him to articulate truth in a way that avoids confrontation (Ntuli, 2004). The second generation victims in Johannesburg are also using the arts to speak about the *Gukurahundi*. Johannesburg is not repressive like Zimbabwe, however people continue to use music in remembering *Gukurahundi* raising questions about the role art plays in the memory.

Silence and Transgenerational Transmission

Speaking and having witness to experiences is important and is one way to find closure (Hamber & Palmary, 2009; Hamber & Wilson, 2002; Posel & Simpson, 2002; Summerfield, 1995). Through being able to narrate their experiences, people are able to link a past that was destroyed or disrupted with the present. Remembering or the ability to speak about an experience is a productive act that heals and restores (Laub, 1992).

Laub (1992) argues that the holocaust became an event because of the way it did not produce witnesses to its occurrence.

So here we find the lack of a witness is not the absence of a story but rather a narration is enacted by the silence that defines what the event means. Silence may also work to pass the trauma to the next generation (Frankish, 2009; Weingarten, 2004), a process often referred to as trans-generational transmission of trauma. Over time the trauma may transform. Volkan (2001) shows how it may become an ethnic marker and frame the identity of groups. Mendelssohn (2008) speaks of trauma in the second generation in the form of guilt, shame and heroism. Shame due to the humiliation suffered which is countered by pride and heroism. The survival guilt may be interrupted through remembering and mourning those who died in the atrocities.

The theory of trans-generational transmission of trauma and chosen traumas may explain the predominance of second generation victims of *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg speaking out about the atrocities (Ndlovu, 2010). Ngwenya & Harrison (2015) argue that because *Gukurahundi* remains unacknowledged in Zimbabwe, the memory is being passed on, influencing thoughts of revenge in the second generation. In the transmission of trauma from one generation to the next, future generations may have their identities framed by the trauma in what is called chosen trauma (Volkan, 2001).

According to Ndlovu (2010), second generation victims felt that *Gukurahundi* was silenced by the global community, Zimbabwe as a nation and by the first generation

victims. Therefore the second generation were preoccupied with correcting the effects of *Gukurahundi* and breaking the silence about it. This thesis explores this passing on of the memory of *Gukurahundi* and its connections to *ndebele* identity constructions in Johannesburg.

Remembering the dead

In the Southern African context it is important to make sense of the links made between the dead and the living to understand the transmission of trauma. This is a form of remembering, linked with religious practices that collapse time, bringing the past into the present (White, 2001, 2004, 2010, 2013). Rituals that recall the dead are performed to find solutions plaguing families and individuals in the present. White (2001), shows how a young man's misfortunes are linked to his dead relative's equally failed life prospects using the case study of a young man who is struggling to make a life for himself; according to the culturally accepted norm of being able to build a homestead for his mother, accumulate enough capital to pay *lobola* for a wife and build a family. The dead relative's memory is invoked to make sense of the present calamity. In this way, memory becomes a link between the living and the dead. The dead relative is the young man's grandfather's brother who disappeared after migrating to an urban area to find employment in order to secure a livelihood.

This also references the disenfranchisement by the colonial encounter that forced African men to migrate to the urban areas. This disenfranchisement is equally a feature of the young man's life hence his wasted drunken habits that result in his eventual stabbing. The impact of the colonial encounter is re-enacted in the ritual that mimics a pre-colonial life

world which did not depend on paid labour but ownership of livestock. The performed ritual speaks to the contemporary trauma of stabbing and that of the past colonial encounter and its lasting legacy.

This double edged approach of the ritual further speaks to the never ending cycle of life that the dead continue to live among the living in different forms. The dead are credited with bringing good fortunes to the living through watching over them and ensuring a safe passageway, for example in a journey. Equally, when misfortunes happen, the dead are attributed to the misfortune 'because they are unhappy'. This form of memory is important to recognise here as it seeks continuity between the dead and those who are living.

The invoking of the dead also speaks to the meaning of death in this cultural frame, where the dead become spirits that are always present in the lives of the living. This raises questions, in this thesis, about the cultural frame through which the deaths in *Gukurahundi* are given meaning and remembered. What is the significance of knowing what happened to the disappeared and the location of human remains that have not been properly buried? Which is one of the questions in the memory of *Gukurahundi*.

Truth and Reconciliation Commissions

One of the ways in which people want to speak about the *Gukurahundi* is through a truth and reconciliation commission (Mashingaidze, 2010). Truth and reconciliation commissions are platforms that have been used in many contexts to speak about violent

pasts and facilitate societies moving forward. To date Zimbabwe has not instituted a truth commission for any of the episodes of violence that have occurred. Truth commissions allow for a reframing of the public narrative about past atrocities (Graybill & Lanegran, 2004). They create space for perpetrators to apologise or show remorse for their deeds (Graybill & Lanegran, 2004) and allow for society to say that such atrocities should never again occur (Hamber & Wilson, 2002). Some truth commissions have provisions for reparation to compensate for loss. In other instances they include memorialisation, where memorials are built to commemorate victims.

Truth commissions are useful in creating a space for the narration of victimhood. They ensure that victims are acknowledged and may even have opportunity for restitution but they are not without challenges. They may leave out certain events as not valid to be included in the testimonies given. For example Olckers (1996) discusses how in the TRC, the 'truth' was presented as 'gender neutral'. Gender neutral truth tends to privilege the experiences of men and leaves out the experiences of women. In the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Posel & Simpson (2002) write that there are many different versions of the truth and therefore it is difficult to find one truth to which everyone agrees. In Northern Ireland Lundy & McGovern, (2001) argue that truth commissions may just be 'window dressing' by governments so that they are perceived to be "doing something", as officially instituted processes in some instances they may be borne out of political calculation.

One of the complaints against the silence of *Gukurahundi* is that it does not signal a willingness to have the victims as equal members of the Zimbabwean nation (Ndlovu 2010). As such the silence is viewed as a confirmation of the view that the violence was a message to the *ndebele* that they do not belong. One of the aims of breaking the silence of *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg, therefore is for the victims to reconcile with the perpetrators and work together towards Zimbabwe's nation building (Ndlovu, 2010). The apology is one way of speaking about the past that truth commissions can facilitate. In an apology the perpetrator accepts responsibility for the atrocities thereby absolving victims of the guilt of surviving. The apology also signals that the perpetrator wants to mend relations and correct the wrong (Ireton & Kovras, 2012). The apology brings together the perpetrators and victims to a common present and future. Victims of *Gukurahundi* therefore want an truth and reconciliation commission to facilitate the reconciliation of Zimbabweans so that the *ndebele* may feel as part of the nation.

The Archive and the Repertoire

It is not always enough that we can remember, but memories need to be stored too. There is a fear that we will lose the ability to remember the past, something Crane (1997) terms the fallibility of our memory, if we do not have an external repository. For example, in the holocaust a call was made during the liberation of the concentration camps that journalists come in and document what was happening through taking photographs and recording videos (Hirsch, 2001; Orgeron, 2006). The photos and videos were an external storage of memory which is unchangeable (Crane, 1997).

In the Holocaust the documentation of the camps was important because the images would remain as traces of the camps which were destroyed so that people would not deny its occurrence. Therefore, sites for memory are usually unchangeable sites such as photographs, sculptures or museum exhibitions. However, vehicles of memory or the media used to express memory do not speak on their own but the memory is contested, appropriated and or rejected (Confino, 1997; Keightley, 2011). So despite this infallible repository in which memories can be stored without corruption, an excess of memory still occurs where representations of the past do not cohere with our memory or what we expect them to be saying (Crane 1997).

The 'storage' for memory is not always an unchangeable external repository. Sometimes memory is stored in the ephemeral and changeable, such as a performance (Taylor, 2003). Taylor's (2003) theory of the archive and the repertoire helps us to view memory and history from a performance lens. She differentiates between the archive, colonial history and the repertoire, 'native' memory making practices. The archive is history that cannot be easily changed (Taylor, 2003). It is found in the written, recorded material that cannot easily be altered, in documents, maps, texts, archeological remains, videos, films and CDs. The archive gives the impression of objectivity, although it is subjective in the same way that the repertoire is. Native history making practices are embodied, ephemeral, performed forms of remembering: the repertoire. The repertoire can be easily altered and is not an objective truth telling exercise but is blatantly as much about the present as it is about the past.

The repertoire makes possible the simultaneous expression of complicated multilayered processes. In this view of the past, time is not a chronological horizontal movement from one era to the next but Taylor (2003) argues that we view it as a multi layered sedimentation. In the repertoire it is possible to present issues beyond the explicit topic. Using the example of a fiesta in a Mexican City, Taylor (2003) argues that in the repertoire it is possible that history is enacted in a way that affirms identity and agency. The fiesta re-enacts past pre colonial battles to redefine the history of the people. In this way historical scenarios are used to provide contemporary solutions (Taylor, 2006).

Taylor (2003) argues against the hierarchy set in motion by the colonial encounter, which was used for disempowering the native by framing the repertoire as inferior to the archive and a preserve of the illiterate who have not yet embraced the discipline of history (Poole, 2008). In this sense the repertoire can be an important way of claiming back power by the disenfranchised. Taylor (2003) discusses the colonial vs. the native however this conceptualisation can be a useful way of viewing memory history and making by the powerful, nations, in contrast to the less powerful, victims. It shows the potential that performance has to subvert power be it the colonial conquest or its different continuing forms today.

Music and Film as Sites of Memory

There have been a lot of theoretical discussions on the role of music in Zimbabwe's popular culture but not much literature exists on visual art. Although visual art occupies a significant place in the way society speaks about issues according to Bennet (2005), in

Africa music is the most widely appreciated art form and a popular site for thinking through politics (Allen, 2004). Music, as all arts, allows for political messages to be hidden as different meanings can be derived from the same lyrics.

The political power of music is also found in its ability to create a space for personal pleasure and enjoyment in contexts where one's humanity is not recognised and providing an outlet for issues and emotions that would normally be difficult to express (Chitando, 2006; Makina, 2009). In the course of this study, I have found myself enjoying the music from *Ithemba lamaNguni* and not only listening to it for the purpose of the research. This speaks to the multifaceted benefit of music where the memory of *Gukurahundi* is transmitted while the music is also celebrating culture.

Visual art on the other hand complicates the clearcut divisions between victims and perpetrators thereby complicating notions of trauma, (Bennet, 2005). This is because it goes further than narration with words and brings insiders and outsiders together establishing a manner of affective connection (Bennet, 2005). Similarly, Meskin & van der Walt (2011) argue that drama has the ability to embrace ambiguity, tension and conflict. As such it is possible to express the contradictions that may so often occur in narratives through drama. While focusing on theatre performances linked to the South African TRC, Meskin and van der Walt (2011) show how narratives that did not fit the scope of the TRC such as calling for the punishment of perpetrators could be expressed in drama. They also show how art allows for the individual narratives to also be heard and not just the collective narrative (Meskin & van der Walt, 2011). Art allows an audience to

not only deal with the past event but brings the past memory into the present (Espiritu, 2006; Meskin & van der Walt, 2011). By bringing the memory into the present art or theatre may allow for the processing of the past experiences to facilitate moving into the future.

What is Violence?

As earlier stated, this thesis focuses on how migrants remember violence in the context of violence. As such, it is important to explore the question, what is violence? This discussion of violence takes as its starting points three voices: Fanon (2004), Bourdieu (2004) and Žižek (2009). These three voices think about violence in a way that best illuminates the *Gukurahundi* and the other forms of violence that figure significantly in the way people remember and narrate their experiences in this study. Žižek's (2009) view of the triumvirate of violence categorises violence into: subjective violence which is the most visible form of violence with an easily identifiable agent, symbolic violence which is in language and lastly systemic violence which he says is the catastrophic functioning of our economic and political systems.

Fanon (2004) distinguishes between colonial violence, violence of the elite party officials and virtuous violence by the people. He saw violence as the only way out of the grip of colonisation and this is the virtuous violence by the people for freedom. As he was writing in the wake of native efforts to break the hold of colonialism, he spoke of the danger of the leaders of the nationalist movements taking up the place of the colonial

masters and leaving the masses to suffer: the violence of elite party officials. Corruption in the liberation movements' governments has proven his predictions true. In Zimbabwe the ZANU PF, is now known more for running down the country. In South Africa, the ANC is increasingly losing its support as well due to corruption scandals within its leadership.

Bourdieu & Wacquant (2003) speak about symbolic violence that has at its core a misrecognition which causes the dominated to be complicit in their domination. He argues that symbolic violence, for example in gender based violence, is accomplished through socialisation that makes women complicit in their domination (Bourdieu, 2004). So Bourdieu (2004) is useful in enabling a gendered analysis of the narratives and identifying the ways in which symbolic violence figures. In contrast to the theory of misrecognition, Fanon (2004) argues that the colonised man does not accept the status quo. However the inequality brought by colonialism is what makes the colonised reject the colonial system in pursuit of a different world. In this case the violence of colonialism begets the violence from the colonised in their quest to gain freedom.

Colonial Violence

The story of *Gukurahundi* is being told in a context of continuing, and new forms of colonialism such as the cultural hegemony of the west and global discourses about the 'developing world'. McClintock (1995) warns against the generalising term 'post-colonial' which overshadows the enduring colonial power that has continuities and

discontinuities with the colonial era. In many ways colonial violence continues in the present as many who were dispossessed of land and other resources during the colonial conquest continue to live disenfranchised lives. It entrenched the unequal access to resources favouring the European settlers over the African natives. This is the order of the world we live in today which is premised on the exploitation of the 'developing' world. As such Fanon's (2004) writing on the violence of colonialism is significant here. Although the development of the 'developed' world is premised on the underdevelopment of the 'developing' world, Comaroff and Comaroff (2012) state that this is not a fact readily acknowledged. In popular thought the problems of the 'developing world' are unique and internal to the region. The narrative on *Gukurahundi* gives an opportunity to explore the linkages between the 'developed' and the 'developing' world.

Colonialism established a hierarchy in the way cultures are valued. For example, the western view of life and culture tends to be hegemonic and becomes the standard against which other cultures are measured. Povinelli (1995) shows this in the case of the aboriginal people's belief systems where the western world view is not examined in the same way in land claim court proceedings. The western world view is postured as a neutral against which the 'other' is measured. This is the systemic violence that continues stemming from colonial policies. On the other hand there may be need for universalist discourses to be applied cross culturally, such as United Nations Declarations. However, Asad (1996) says that the universalist discourses may become a central category but are

not necessarily stable or cross-culturally universal, they are adopted because they have become the dominant mode of moral engagement.

It is not only the systemic violence of colonialism that has a history of being institutionalised and used as legitimate in the colonial policies, subjective violence does too. For example the first genocide in Africa, of the Herero people in Namibia, occurred as part of colonisation (Mamdani, 2001). Césaire (1972) says the Holocaust was shocking because Hitler was doing to white people, what had only been normalised against black people and would not have elicited a similar response had it been targeted at black people. This view raises questions about what motivates the world's action or inaction towards injustice and how race may influence the world's response to atrocity.

Žižek (2009) argues that we tend to overlook systemic violence and only focus on subjective violence because systemic violence is the zero violence level: the normal against which we measure subjective violence. As such instead of seeing systemic violence as the zero point from which we measure subjective violence, he calls for turning a blind eye towards subjective violence at the risk of being seen as callous and focusing on the systemic underlying issues. This argument is apt, as systemic violence tends to be disguised as the orderly status quo to be aspired to and subjective violence is easy to condemn and yet it could be *virtuous violence* by the people as Fanon (2004) has argued. For example Mark Devenney (2013) argues that the suicide bomber is a symptom of contemporary global socio economic and political systems. If for a moment we turn a blind eye to the 'horror' of the suicide bomber we can see what Devenney (2013) says,

that contemporary global systems make life in certain localities meaningless such that ending one's life is better than to continue living. The subjective violence from the suicide bomber is a direct outcome of the sociopolitical and economic policies of the contemporary world and can be seen as a form of *virtuous violence* that 'frees' the bomber.

Global Location of Research Participants

Bringing together McClintock's (1995) argument that colonialism continues in various forms today, Fanon's (2004) view of colonialism as violence and Žižek's triumvirate of violence helps us to view the continuing forms of colonialism as a form of systemic violence and makes possible a more complex analysis of the *Gukurahundi* violence. We can link the 'peaceful' 'developed' world with the 'developing' world plagued by conflicts through the political and economic systems. The economic relations between the 'developed' and 'developing' worlds are the systemic violence and are implicated in the subjective violence in the global south. In this study therefore it is important to understand the historical and contemporary context of violence within which the *Gukurahundi* violence occurred and is now being remembered.

We also need to interrogate the location of participants in this study in reference to the global community and how this influences memorial practices so that we can explore questions about how the narratives of *Gukurahundi* allow us to see the systems of violence and how they operate in the contemporary context. Furthermore, we need to unpack the significance of the form that the *Gukurahundi* memory is being presented in

and how it relates to these broader systems of violence. Other questions to explore are: how does the global discourse define events in Zimbabwe in contrast to what Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa are saying? Do people adopt hegemonic discourses of trauma and reparation as a way of speaking about their experiences? How do people locate themselves against or alongside hegemonic discourses and claim a different voice to the mainstream?

Below I focus on the nation-state and how people are differentially located within it. The nation-state figures prominently in the way *Gukurahundi* is remembered as the memory links people to the Zimbabwean, South African or *Mthwakazi* state in different ways. This discussion maps out nationalism and how it figures in the lives of migrants and influences their movement across national borders and daily experience of living in inner city Johannesburg. This is another layer to the context within which *Gukurahundi* is remembered in addition to the global discourses and context.

Looking at the nation as a space given meaning by those residing in it (Cresswell, 2013; Massey, 2013), giving meaning to any space and a nation in particular is not equally distributed among people. Massey (2013) further argues that we look at space through a power geometry where she differentiates between those who can move and have control over this movement with those who cannot move and have no control over the process of movement. Using Massey's (2013) power geometry perspective allows us to zoom in and not just look at the nation but to come to a locality. It is not clear how 'local' one should get, in this thesis, the locality of Johannesburg has been used as a framing boundary.

However, at other points Hillbrow is a local that is more salient in the imaginings and narratives about *Gukurahundi*.

A theory of intersectionality allows for an acknowledgement of the different social categories that intersect to locate people in places that allow different access to give meaning to the nation (Yuval-Davis, 2006b). For example, women are figured as the producers of the nation and symbolise the national collectivity (Yuval-Davis, 1993). Wilford & Miller (1998) argue that the state is gendered male and the nation female. This positioning of women as producers of the nation that is imagined from a masculine perspective places women in the private sphere. In this way women end up not having the same access to the state as men.

Further to gender structuring people's access to the state, ethnicity is another significant factor. In the post-colonial nation two types of citizenship may occur simultaneously, ethnic citizenship and national citizenship (Ndengwa, 1997). Ethnic citizenship differs from national citizenship in that it is based on reciprocity and not the legal rational codes that govern relations between people where rights inhere in the individual prior to community while in the ethnic group rights inhere in an individual as a result of participation. This duality of citizenship is complicated as citizenship is understood differently in the ethnic group from the nation state. Zimbabwe is popularly imagined as a Shona nation and *Gukurahundi* is postured as a strategy in pursuit of its ethnic purity. This makes it important that this thesis interrogates ethnicity and its links imagined or real to citizenship in Zimbabwe.

Human Rights and Citizenship

Citizenship rights represent the link people have to the state and therefore access to basic life requirements (Brysk & Shafir, 2004). The state is expected to provide these basic needs to all members equally. Theoretically citizenship should be extended equally to all members of the nation, however, this is not the case as already discussed above on the different ways people are positioned in reference to the state. Many rights of citizenship are accessed through labour market participation making it the most significant way to secure life according to standards prevailing in society (Brysk & Shafir, 2004). Migrants are located outside of citizenship and therefore outside of the most significant way to secure their life. So in addition to the gender and ethnicity discussed above, migrants are already framed outside of the nation and without any claims on the state. There are work permits or residence permits that allow labour market participation however in South Africa it is difficult to obtain one especially for low skilled workers as most participants in this study are.

This discussion on the nation and how people are located differently within it is important in making sense of the location of those speaking about the *Gukurahundi*. It is not only their location within South Africa as a nation but their experience of being part of Zimbabwe is also significant. This helps us to answer questions about what it means to be a victim of *Gukurahundi* in Zimbabwe trying to make a life in Johannesburg, South Africa. What happens when people move from violence and find themselves faced with other forms of violence? What does it mean to move from one nation and to live in

another? Access to movement and the ability to move between and across nations is similarly a varied experience for people in the same way that citizenship is differentially experienced. In the following section I will discuss the regulation of movement of people and its effect on the lives of people who move.

Regulating Migration and Migrants

Torpey (2000) argues that the need to identify unambiguously those who belong and outsiders requires documents that testify to this. Additionally these documents also become the means through which movement of people is regulated. In this way Torpey (2000) argues that the state has expropriated the legitimate means of movement. Migration is organised into categories such as forced migrant, labour migrants, expatriate etc. While on paper these distinctions work, everyday lives of people who move do not fit neatly into these categories. In South Africa, for example, it is popularly touted that the asylum system is being abused by economic migrants (Amit, 2015). These debates by officials fail to acknowledge that people's lives cannot fit into the neatly packaged categories that the law requires. Economic and political issues intersect and intertwine. Importantly however people make their lives in the margins of these laws.

The Violence in the regulation of migration

The power geometry (Massey, 2013) differentiates between those who can move and have control over this movement with those who cannot move and have no control over the process of movement. There are also those who move but are not in control of the

process. Below is an excerpt from a travel blog written by a Nigerian that shows the location of the 'Nigerian' in this power geometry:

For those of us that hold that passport which serves more as barrier than an entry pass, preparing for a trip takes 3 times as much as any other person from another continent. But for the love of travel, we brace the challenges and difficulties, the waiting times and delays. You may need a visa for almost every country you wish to visit so know the requirements, apply way ahead of time because visas for Nigerians generally take longer than everyone else. On arriving at your destination, be prepared to spend longer at immigration points. So try to get off the aircraft earlier than everyone else and walk swiftly straight to immigration. Also be mentally prepared for the questions that may follow. At this point you may be tired and angry but you 'rise above your raisin' your tolerance level must surpass everyone else's because there is no telling what your outburst of anger may land you in. Every trip creates stories and memories that is unique to you and is worth it. Keep traveling and experience the world! (Talatu, 2014)

The passport, which is supposed to facilitate movement, is here called a barrier. She details the barriers in the time required to prepare for travel, a visa may be required and one needs to know the small print pertaining to this. It does not end with acquiring a visa because the port of entry once again becomes a dreaded place of questioning and calls on the traveller to exercise the highest form of self policing. If indeed one is to react naturally in response to the questioning that happens at the border this would certainly work against all the effort put in thus far to reach this border.

The passport, depending on the issuing authority may become a barrier. In the blog post above, using a Nigerian passport does not facilitate easy movement but results in a negative experience. The location of Nigeria as a ‘third world country’, the stereotype of Nigerians as drug dealers and scammers and many other real and imagined categories into which the Nigerian falls into, intersect and influence the way she experiences the movement. The regulation of travel does not necessarily facilitate easy movement for everyone. For some it presents a violence that at times forces people to use irregular means of entry into a country. As such the ports of entry are not the only places through which people leave or enter a country. They may as outlined in the quote above be sites of violation for many who pass through.

The above blog focuses on a Nigerian’s experience of traversing the world. It assumes that one has access to a passport and is granted a visa. For many Zimbabweans it is difficult to obtain a passport because of its cost as well as other regulations that for example require denouncing dual citizenship. Apart from the challenges to obtaining a

passport, the visa application fee presents another barrier in addition to the unlikelihood of the visa being granted.

In the above discussion migration regulation in the form of the way travel documents are viewed depending on the issuing authority, the need to apply for visas and the interactions at the port of entry are significant factors in the way people experience migration from one state to another. Below I want to focus on the regulation of the migrant in the host nation, using an example from the United States of America's laws that prescribe and limit the course of life for immigrants. Menjívar & Abrego (2012) argue for the concept of legal violence: the forms of violence that the law makes possible, or conditions created by the legal framework that make lives unbearable. Menjívar & Abrego (2012) argue that immigration laws grant or restrict movement and therefore establish a social hierarchy anchored in legality as a social position.

As such immigration laws shape life chances and future prospects. Family, work and school are the most salient spheres of life through which immigrants experience the law (Menjívar & Abrego, 2012). For example the law influences adolescents' aspirations because while undocumented they have access to school but this does not extend to accessing college. As such they report of students who would intentionally lower their grades or do not put effort to their studies because of the challenges of accessing college after high school. Important here is how the framework of legal violence helps us to understand how laws may lead to violence in people's lives. This case study is based in

North America which in contrast to South Africa has the resources to implement its legal framework.

Migration Regulation in South Africa

Although Landau & Amit (2014) argue that when considering refugee protection in South Africa, legal status is far less important than local social relations. These local social relations between South Africans and migrants are already framed by the law which defines citizen rights as exclusive and with more purchase than the human rights which are accorded to all (Brysk & Shafir, 2004). Having legal documentation, which is one way the law exerts its power, is significant and migrants are preoccupied with it. One does not 'exist' unless there is testimony of them in a document issued by the state (Torpey, 2000). Takabvirwa (2010) shows the salience of documents in non-citizens' lives, in her paper focusing on Zimbabweans in Johannesburg. She argues that documents are about accessing a state of being. Documents are required in order to access employment, education for your children and on a daily basis may be required by police in order to prove that one is in the country legally. While it may be difficult to obtain legal documents from the DHA, migrants may irregularly get fraudulent permits and South African identity cards. The fraudulent identity cards may allow migrants to live and work in South Africa but again create anxiety about what happens when the person dies (Takabvirwa, 2010). Although the Zimbabwean documentation is not beneficial while in South Africa, people feel a need to maintain them, so they can be buried in their land of birth should they die.

In South Africa, the law may not be viewed in the same way as in the North American context however it still prescribes migrants' lives. Migrants are making life within the confines of the law even in instances where they are breaking the law. The choice to get a fraudulent permit, identity document or passport is in response to migration regulations. As such the social relations that Landau & Amit (2014) argue are more significant than the legal framework are already framed by the law, which places the migrant outside of citizenship. These local relations within the communities are also marred by xenophobic violence further influencing the lives of migrants.

Xenophobic violence is not only confined to the large publicly visible outburst such as in 2008 or 2015 but it takes on different characters in the different parts of Johannesburg. Grant & Thompson (2015) argue that inner city Johannesburg xenophobic violence plays out in the form of sentiments expressed in officials sanctioning as well as corrupt officials' practices. Kihato (2013) focusing on migrant women street traders in Johannesburg explores the official/ unofficial processes of running the city that leave migrants vulnerable. For example police jokingly call migrants "mobile ATMs" referring to the fact that they are able to easily get money from them as a bribe to avoid arrest and deportation (Landau, Segatti, Amit, & Jinnah, 2013). This is the location of 'poor' migrants in Johannesburg, at the margins and constantly working towards being unrecognisable. In addition to this, Crush and Tevera (2010, p20) say, "Zimbabwean migrants as a whole are denigrated, devalued and marginalised (especially in South Africa and the United Kingdom)" .

The institutionalisation of nationhood by states and its codification in documents renders the person who moves outside of the nation-state in which they belong, liminal. Of interest in this research is how migrants respond to this liminal space. Malkki (1992) discusses how the experience of displaced Hutu Burundians in Tanzania influenced their imaginings of home. Those 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 home being found only in Burundi.

The experience of being a migrant from this discussion can have an effect on people's notions of belonging, identity and nationality. The Diaspora experience may reify the longing for a home and cause imaginings and reconstructions of where and what home is. A question in this study is how does the experience of being a migrant figure in the narratives about *Gukurahundi*? How does being in South Africa influence the imaginings of where and what home is for participants? In the following section I focus on the everyday experience of being a migrant in Johannesburg. These are reflections on how the migrant negotiates their place within the city of Johannesburg.

The 'work' of living as a migrant in Johannesburg

South Africa is defined by high levels of economic inequality and violence a context further influencing what it means to live as a migrant in Johannesburg (Palmary, Hamber, & Núñez, 2015). This means that different localities that can be zoomed into as Massey (2013) argues will have distinct characters. Johannesburg is popularly called Egoli, referring to the gold mines but also denoting the hopes that many people that come here have of striking gold in the 'New York' of Africa (Grant & Thompson, 2015; Palmary et al., 2015). Johannesburg which draws migrants from other parts of South Africa and beyond its borders however turns out to be a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Many migrants in Johannesburg live precarious lives instead of the imagined better life the city promises (Palmary et al., 2015). This is a precarity, which transcends the physical, economic, spiritual and social categories of life. One of the issues that contributes towards this is the location of migrants within the nation.

To provide an example of being a migrant in inner city Johannesburg, I shall reflect on my experience of living in Johannesburg as a Zimbabwean. My reflections focus on the time soon after my arrival in Johannesburg when I worked in and frequented the inner city using public transport. Similar to many participants I did not have formal documents to work and stay in South Africa as I was on a visitors' permit. The experience of being an undocumented migrant typifies the migrants' everyday struggles which are manifested in physical, economic, emotional, moral and spiritual ways (Palmary et al., 2015).

Today as I write this I have a different experience of Johannesburg. My experience of the inner city is now within the sheltered confines of the university campus. I live far out away from the inner city and find my way around it in a car. I also have a legal right to live and work in South Africa which has a significant influence on how I navigate the city. My experience of the city is now very different and entails a different kind of 'work', as a result of the documentation I possess. For participants in this study however, what I detail below as the 'work' of living as a migrant in Johannesburg holds true for most of their daily encounters.

It has been argued that Johannesburg is a complex city that requires a geographically sensitive understanding (Grant & Thompson, 2015) and this is reflected in my experience. On my arrival in Johannesburg in 2006, I worked in a relative's Internet cafe in Yeoville. This gave me a unique insight into living in the inner city as a migrant. In Yeoville, I witnessed Internet scammers, those who sent emails to hoax people into sending them money. At other times it was identity theft, by those who created fake financial profiles and other fraudulent documentation to use in stealing, such as opening credit accounts and other activities. Walking on the streets however felt relatively safe. On the other hand, in Hillbrow, there was pick pocketing and mobile telephone snatching which was not common in Yeoville.

In contrast to Yeoville walking the streets of Hillbrow safely requires a hyper vigilance and awareness of your surroundings. I had to learn this when I was introduced to the place as a fieldworker on a migrant's health project in 2007. As a new researcher in

Hillbrow I learnt of certain streets that one should never turn into. I learnt that if you carry a cellular telephone you must set it on silent so that no one hears it ring because if it rings then you will be the target of a robbery. In those first days of working in Hillbrow I did not get robbed because my research partner was more aware of our surroundings and able to identify criminals at a distance and change direction. I still have a vivid image of the flashing of a knife as two men forced women that were in-front of us to surrender their money and cellular telephones.

Despite the close proximity of Hillbrow and Yeoville they are different spaces and require different skills to manoeuvre through them. Grant & Thompson (2015) looking at migrant entrepreneurial activities in Inner City Johannesburg outline areas that take on migrant identities such as the Ethiopian character in parts of the CBD, Somali in Mayfair and a Sub-Saharan street in Yeoville. Similarly, Simone (2004) speaks about the visibly performed Nigerian identity on particular streets and buildings in Hillbrow. These are all areas within close vicinity but with distinct characters and therefore requiring different skills to navigate them.

As a newly arrived Zimbabwean, I found that living as a migrant in Johannesburg required work and I had to learn the skill to be hyper aware of the surroundings and vigilant to present in a way that passes for a South African. This also involved how one dresses. It is important to add here that it is not only xenophobic violence or its threat that prescribes the life of migrants and their actions in public spaces. The xenophobic

attitudes also influence changes in attire and speech in order for migrants to be incognito although the violence makes it all the more urgent to pass for a South African.

I learned these skills to blend in on my arrival, from those who have been resident in the city prior to me and mastered the art to have their migrancy undetectable. I remember one day seeing a vendor selling maize cobs in Florida a largely coloured area in the western parts of Johannesburg. In *Ndebele* we call maize cobs *umumbu* however in Zulu it is called *umbila*. As we were walking down the streets, I exclaimed excitedly that there is *umumbu*. This was met with laughing and exclamations of what is *umumbu*. This is one of the ways that learning to live in Johannesburg and pass for a South African happens. While this all happened in the form of a joke, I was deeply embarrassed and quickly learnt to call things by their ‘correct’ names. This took hyper vigilance and what I call ‘work’, that every time you want to say something you have to ‘think’ and translate it into the ‘correct’ South African term.

The above discussion shows how the claim to a legitimate place in the city is one that is constantly negotiated and tested (Palmary et al, 2015). Migrants live with a constant reminder of their non-belonging and they have to engage in this constant work to fit in. Migrants try to be unrecognisable in Johannesburg through different strategies such as changing their language and dressing style. Public transport, especially the taxis are some of the spaces where it is most important to pass off as a local. Being a *Ndebele* speaker, it was easy to pick up Zulu phrases even though this ability never conquered the anxiety I always felt sitting in a taxi and not wanting anyone to know I am a Zimbabwean.

Conclusion

This chapter provides the critical lens through which I look at the memorials of *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today. There is a salience of the colonial encounter in the violence and the way in which it is remembered. Colonialism's effects are felt through the visible nation state borders but further in the location of African migrants within South Africa and the world. The continuing violence of colonialism and its echo in the present is felt through the racially defined unequal access to resources that structures Johannesburg and the world. As such, this helps us to make sense of how the violence of *Gukurahundi* is remembered within the broader global narratives of colonialism, violence and failed postcolonial African states. The chapter also brings into focus the migrant experience of liminality in the *national order of things*. This experience is framed by the legal framework regulating migrants as well as the social relations which in Johannesburg are xenophobic violence or its constant threat of occurrence. The migrant thus lives with a constant reminder of their non-belonging. Lastly the chapter locates memory and history within colonial discourses of progress where history is seen as better than other memorial practices. Instead of this hierarchy between history and memory, I argue that we should not look at whether it is history or memory but focus on the function art performs in bringing the past to the present. Furthermore looking at the music by *Ithemba lamaNguni*, the repertoire is archived. In the next chapter I shall detail the methodological choices I have adopted in order to answer the questions raised in this chapter so far.

Chapter 3: Methodological Considerations

Coming clean

It has taken me

Five years of

Pining

Struggling

Pushing

Loathing

Excitement

Crying

Writing

Thinking

Sorting

Laughing

Presenting

Talking

Walking

Rolling

Giggling

Floating

Sinking

Breathing

Plodding

Ploughing

Sobbing

Facing up to

Who I am

(Poem by Duduzile S Ndlovu, 2016)

Introduction

In this chapter I present the different strategies adopted to generate the data informing this study. I also detail the choices I have made in the data analysis and presentation of the thesis. First I present the ontological and epistemological stance informing the methodology I adopted. This will be followed by the methods brought together to make sense of the data generated in the study. I used discourse and narrative analysis as well as poetic transcription. Lastly I employed poetry as a reflexive strategy to stage my position in the thesis as well as to summarise the thesis into a format participants may find easier to engage with than the traditional thesis format.

The relativist and realist argument

The big ontological question in this study is; what does it mean that we have different versions of the same event and should they all be taken as equally valid? Whose version of the *Gukurahundi* story should be taken as more valid? Critical realism as expounded by Parker (1992) provides the best theoretical framework for answering this question here. He argues that there are three realms for an object to exist in. The ontological realm in which an object takes on a material form, next is the epistemological realm where an object is known and thirdly the moral/political realm in which objects are contested or given different meanings depending on the values. Some objects do not have a material form and are only found in discourse. Certain objects however have a material form however the moral/political expression of this is different depending on the values. Political and moral investments also influence how objects with a material basis become ontological objects of knowledge in the epistemological realm. The contestation over how a history is represented exemplifies this influence of political and moral investments.

This perspective is useful in this study in enabling me to explore the discourse on *Gukurahundi*. Not all objects within a discourse will have a material status. In this study for example people speak about the *ndebele* being marginalised. This is a view that is contested; it has been challenged by participants in this study and by audiences where this research has been presented. It is not always possible to show its materiality, however from understanding objects as occupying three realms, this is an object in the discourse on *Gukurahundi* that is recognised in this study. Objects in discourse have a material status however it is not possible to know of this material state of objects entirely. Discourses are some of the ways in which objects are brought into being in knowledge depending on the epistemological realm one is coming from. This is important because the way we come to know things determines the research relationships and how we interact with participants in a study. As such from a critical realist perspective research cannot be objective because the researcher's position brings them to the questions they ask. The ability to see the discourses comes from the position they occupy that can identify the discourse and also identify an alternative or counter discourse. It is my position of having grown up with a narrative about *Gukurahundi* that brings me to a place of recognising the different narrative in Johannesburg.

A critical realist stance is taken in this research in acknowledging that *Gukurahundi* occurred, however there is no way to access the truth of the event as it occurred. There are participants who were not yet born when the events occurred but they have narratives

about the events. In this instance the ontological stance of a constructivist perspective is useful. In constructivism there is no real world out there but the world is constructed by individuals. The constructions of *Gukurahundi* from those who experienced the atrocities and from those who did not are both taken as valid without a hierarchy that one is more authentic because they have firsthand experience. Further a constructivist epistemology centralises the interpretations that people make of phenomena. As such in this thesis I aim to present the different constructions of *Gukurahundi* made during the interviews and focus group discussions that I conducted and also found in music and film. The context, my position as an audience, within which these narratives are constructed is important. In the following section of this chapter, I will discuss in detail my position as a married young woman that enabled me to gain access to a specific narrative about *Gukurahundi* as I was viewed to be a better 'sell out'.

Asking the research questions?

When I began this study it was aimed at interrogating the gendered and generational dimensions of *Gukurahundi* memorials in Johannesburg. I had imagined I would have conversations with people about their thoughts on art that has been created about *Gukurahundi*. This would facilitate exploring if the art was a good thing and whether the message carried in the art was acceptable. At the beginning of my fieldwork, while conducting interviews with different people I quickly realised that it was difficult to start a discussion on the artworks during a one on one conversation. Talking about artworks required that we watch the film or listen to the songs together before discussing them. This was a difficult undertaking if not nearly impossible as I met with participants in

public places, some which were noisy. As such in the interviews I conducted we talked about people's experiences of *Gukurahundi* and their migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa. *Gukurahundi* being an issue that has been silenced, the turn which the interviews took provided an audience for people to narrate their experiences that have largely been kept private.

As a result, over the course of the research the questions I was asking shifted. The questions I initially set out to answer as listed in the proposal (Ndlovu, 2012) are:

1. Who is talking about *Gukurahundi* and who is not talking?
2. Why are people talking about *Gukurahundi* today and in Johannesburg ?
3. What are the stories being told about *Gukurahundi* and what narratives are silenced?
4. Why is art chosen as a way to talk about *Gukurahundi* ?
5. What is the diversity of narratives among women, men and across generations?
6. What is the benefit of remembering *Gukurahundi* in this way?

The history of the questions we ask in research, the context which leads us to asking certain questions in research is important and significant to the research process (Harding, 1987). I asked the questions listed above as a Zimbabwean living in Johannesburg because there was a stark difference in the way *Gukurahundi* was being

presented in Johannesburg compared to the narrative I had grown up with in Zimbabwe. I recently had an epiphany when I realised that a prayer made back in 2003, to close a community meeting in Nkayi was about *Gukurahundi*. I had facilitated a community leadership meeting during my internship with Christian Care in Nkayi, a rural district in Matebeleland North. Nkayi is one of the areas that was hardest hit by *Gukurahundi*. The facilitating team at this workshop was composed of myself and another intern, a Shona young man. As was the case with all workshops on leadership, we were careful to limit our conversations to ‘non-political’ leadership such as water and sanitation committees, school committees etc. Any political discussions would put us and the participants at risk of government scrutiny which could result in arrest. In this meeting therefore our discussions followed these rules and nothing ‘political’ was discussed.

However in closing the meeting, the old man who prayed, passed on his message about *Gukurahundi*. His prayer which was made in tears asked God to help us, the younger generation, realise the challenges they, older generation, had met. He prayed that the younger generation would realise how difficult it was to forgive. During the workshop there had been some resistance to the use of English as a language, a resistance to the Shona facilitators who could not speak *Ndebele*. In the ‘prayer’, the old man spoke about *Gukurahundi* without saying anything explicitly or anything that could be used against him. In contrast to this, in Johannesburg I found people openly speaking about *Gukurahundi*, and just the open use of the term *Gukurahundi* was shocking.

I grew up in the southern parts of Zimbabwe that were affected by the violence, where everybody knew about it but nobody talked about it openly. Talking about the violence carried a stigma. It was popularly interpreted to mean you hated the Shona. Apart from this stigma, talking about the violence also invited unwanted attention from the government.

There is no specific law prohibiting people from speaking about the *Gukurahundi*, however the state has invoked other laws to silence any talk on the issue. In some cases incarceration has been used against those who speak out. Many people have learned to self-censor or talk about the violence in ‘code’. Some individuals over the years have spoken about the *Gukurahundi* but the Zimbabwean state has responded in harsh ways that have sent the message that talking about the violence is unwelcome. For example, the imprisoning of a minister and an artist in 2010 and 2011 (Nehandaradio, 2011; Sokwanele, 2010). The minister had spoken to villagers about human remains believed to belong to victims of *Gukurahundi* found at a school. On the other hand, the artist Owen Maseko had set up an exhibition of visual art on the *Gukurahundi* at the Bulawayo National Art Gallery which was closed down and he was arrested for insulting the president.

As such, growing up I learned that narratives about the violence were spoken in silence. My grandmother spoke about ‘that time’, when she was beaten and lost her sight and hearing. In her covert narrative, however I never heard about an uncle who was shot and

killed for opening his shop beyond a curfew, until my research began. The silence cast a shadow over stories of my father missing death by just one decision he made, of closing the school he was heading and leaving the area, because that very night the *Gukurahundi* attacked. In the silence I did not hear about my mother witnessing young men being taken off a bus knowing that was the last time they would be seen alive. As already said, it is only recently that I remembered the prayer in Nkayi and realised the old man was talking about *Gukurahundi*.

Having grown up with a narrative of silence that I had learnt from the affected community and that is policed by the Zimbabwean state led to the questions that this research seeks to answer. Johannesburg provides a space without the threat of arrest for such talk. Instead the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is taken as an example of how to respond to the *Gukurahundi*, where people deal with past injustice and violence through public narration. As I stated earlier, the questions I set out to answer shifted over the course of conducting fieldwork.

In speaking to people it became apparent that certain questions were more pertinent than others. A prominent theme in the interviews conducted and the focus group discussions was the need to define what the *Gukurahundi* was or is. This question seeks to define the violence of *Gukurahundi* in a way that brings meaning to the suffering endured by people as a result of the experience. The question, What is the *Gukurahundi* ?, seeks to acknowledge the significance of the atrocities in the lives of people today. Secondly, this

is linked to the position of the *Gukurahundi* victims in Zimbabwe. Lastly, it is a question about how the *Gukurahundi* is represented in the global community and the position of the victims in this representation. This research therefore seeks to answer the following three questions:

1. What does the *Gukurahundi* mean and what is its significance in Johannesburg today?
2. What is the appropriate narrative for remembering *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today?
3. Why are people talking in this way about *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today?

Conducting Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

The methods employed in this study have been arrived at through a bricolage. As Maxwell (2013) says, I have used whatever tools and materials I had on hand instead of developing a plan in advance that I have strictly followed. The research began with drafting a proposal; however, the initial stages of the fieldwork proved that the method outlined in the proposal needed to be adjusted in order to be feasible given the time and resource constraints of conducting a PhD research. As such I have picked up different strategies along the way as I responded to the challenges and changes of conducting this research.

The study is not only looking at the use of art in memorialising *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg. Instead, I am focusing on how people in the city remember *Gukurahundi*

in Johannesburg including memories expressed through artworks. I initially focused on artistic productions as data and along the way adopted artistic research methodologies. In the next section I will present how the data informing this study has been generated beginning with an outline of how I used Internet based information.

Working with Internet Sources

In the context of repression, the Internet is an important place to find people's voices because due to official silencing, placing information on the web can be a form of radical political action (Kensinger, 2003). However, access to the Internet is not fairly distributed across populations and many people tend to be consumers of the information found on the Internet rather than its producers, "those with money and the fast connections have the loudest voice" (Deibert, 2000, p. 256). In Zimbabwe, Hirsch (2009) notes that race and location structures access to the Internet, urban white NGO members had access to the Internet, while the rural, Shona participants in the study did not. In the UK, Kuhlmann (2010) describes Zimbabweans who use the Internet for their activism as "cyber space" or "desktop" activists. She says they are highly qualified, educated and attend conferences in order to discuss and influence public opinion.

In this study, many of the participants do not have easy access to the Internet and for the majority the cellular phone is the only device through which they access the Internet. Only one person from the people I interviewed in this study was a regular blog contributor for an online news site. Participants in this study used the Internet as a source

of information on the *Gukurahundi*. As such participants in this study were mostly consumers and not producers of information on the Internet. Some of the participants presented me with web articles as written evidence to support their claims, views and activities. In the context of the silencing *Gukurahundi* atrocities in Zimbabwe, the only official record of the atrocities is the Catholic for Justice and Peace report (CCJP, 1997) and the articles on *Gukurahundi* found online are celebrated.

This highlights the status accorded to webpage articles on the *Gukurahundi* by participants. They are seen as a form of documenting the atrocities and providing evidence; strengthening the cause of the research participants in speaking about the atrocities and justifying their activities. As such website articles are an important part of the data in this study .

Internet Applications Used in the Research

I used a computer application called *Pocket* to capture the WebPages that were of interest to the research. This included articles that reported on artist shows that were linked to the *Gukurahundi*. I saved news articles from online newspapers such as *Nehanda Radio*, *New Zimbabwe* and other websites that had articles on the *Gukurahundi*. *Pocket* was useful in that I was able to capture different WebPages which I thought were useful for the research. I could access the written content of the WebPages without an internet connection. *Pocket* also helped in that it captured all the webpage details for referencing. It also captured You Tube video links and this was useful as a site for storing all the Internet based data, similar to capturing an interview on a recorder for later use in transcription and analysis.

I used Skype to conduct an interview with Jenna Bass, the producer of the film, *The Tunnel*. This was the most cost-effective way to conduct the interview as she is based in Cape Town. Theoretically a Skype interview could take the form of a face to face interview when conducted over a video call. I was unable to conduct a video call however due to the internet connection and so the interview was a voice call instead. I used another application called Call Note to record the Skype Interview and this was a useful application that saved the recording to a Dropbox folder ensuring that I could access it even if my computer had a problem. I also used Dropbox to store all audio and document files relating to this thesis. In this way I ensured that the research data was safe in case my computer was lost or broke down. It is possible however that my Dropbox account could be hacked and confidential information about the research would be exposed and so all files were saved under pseudonyms.

A note on conducting face to face Interviews

As a woman I made a decision not to meet with male interview participants in their homes. I had the first interview within the University campus however this proved a tedious process as entry into the university campus is tightly controlled and one has to produce an identity document to enter the university grounds. I did not ask about people's documentation as part of this research because some people have fraudulent documents and in setting up interviews asking someone to bring their identity document when coming for the meeting would have added another hurdle to an already difficult process of recruiting participants. I met with the only female interview participant at her home, a

flatlet on her employers' property in Sandton where she works as a domestic worker. She offered me an apple that I took because it would be considered rude to refuse food when offered. I however felt guilty for taking food from her as I already felt she was helping me immensely in accepting to be interviewed.

I met with the male participants at different restaurants in Braamfontein. Not all participants agreed to meet in a restaurant however and I conducted one interview on a bench on the side of a busy road. This was the most uncomfortable place to conduct the research. The bench was overlooking a restaurant that I had conducted other interviews in, but the participant refused to go into the restaurant because he did not want me to pay for our drinks. I understood the matter to be a gender issue that he would have been embarrassed to have a woman pay for his drink. It is possible however that he did not want to be seen in a restaurant with a woman, this could have been interpreted as a sexual relationship. After failing to convince him that I had funding from the university to pay for our drinks we sat outside and talked. This was a difficult interview to transcribe because of the noise from cars in the background. I also felt very unsafe during this interview as he spoke about his hatred for the Shona. This made me feel like it was directed at me as a warning in case I was sympathetic to them.

Conducting Focus Group Discussions

I conducted two Focus Group Discussions with members of Ithemba lesizwe and MLF.

The group discussions were held within the University of the Witwatersrand campus on a

weekend, in a classroom. To conduct the focus group interviews efficiently I hired a research assistant, a young man from Matabeleland, Zimbabwe who is well versed on the issues of *Gukurahundi*. He assisted in the focus group discussions with the note taking and participated in some of the conversations. The research assistant further transcribed the focus group discussion recordings. As a *ndebele* Zimbabwean, the research assistant was able to gain the trust of the participants as well as an understanding of the research context.

The focus group began with a brief discussion to agree on the rules for interaction. These included for example allowing participants to respectfully express dissenting views. The discussions also talked about confidentiality and the need to ensure that the content of the discussions were not shared with other people outside the focus group. The two groups with whom I conducted the discussions were already functioning as groups prior to participating in the research. As such there was no need to ensure that people were comfortable with each other and conversations were easy to initiate. The discussions were therefore very lively with little input from myself and the research assistant. However it is likely that the views of dominant members of the group took centre stage and others would have been less willing to challenge them due to the long standing relationships.

Transcribing & Translating

I transcribed all songs and two of the interviews and the research assistant transcribed the rest of the interviews and focus group discussions. The transcriptions were in the original language in which they were spoken, a mix of Ndebele and English. I have translated the portions that I quote in the text. All analysis occurred in the Ndebele mixed with English, which was the language used during the interview. I chose this strategy to work with the text as a way around the challenges of translating that I discuss below. I felt that conducting analysis in the original language enabled me to better read the texts and then to translate into the meaning I was drawing from the reading. Translation is also an interpretation and here by analysing before translation I aimed at not losing the foreignness of the texts before domesticating them into the English language (Venuti, 1998)

I found it useful that I have a shared history of being Zimbabwean and from Matabeleland which helped me understand the narratives better. This was also useful in my translation of the text especially where I went beyond literal translation and endeavoured to bring the meaning and intended effect of choosing certain words to speak. This was especially useful in translating songs. In an artwork as in all of speech, the specific way in which meaning is conveyed reveals the intended purpose. For example Wooffit (2005) says it would be correct to identify a person by their height or weight but a specific characteristic is chosen, for example their name. In the same way in art there are different ways that a message can be conveyed but a specific way is chosen for example for dramatic effect or to conjure a certain image. In the translation in this

research therefore, I have tried to translate in a way that will convey the drama and other messages that the speaker intended to convey as much as possible.

The responsibility of translating from a mix of *Ndebele* and English into English only was a challenging exercise of attempting to convey meanings across cultures. For example the word *umzali* was used, which literally translated means a parent. Depending on how it is used this word may mean a father. As I understood the context in which the word was used, I translated it differently at different times based on this. The ambiguity that lies in using this interchangeable word in the original language is lost. In my translation I found that I fixed meanings that could have been taken in a more fluid way and limited the interactions with the text that a reader would have had. This is the domestication of a text that Venuti (1998) argues happens in a translation. The word *umzali* was used when talking about the loss of parents or a parent during the *Gukurahundi*. The effect of this loss was linked to people's socio-economic status where it related to a loss of education and by default leading to people leading poor lives. The word *umzali* is used to convey the role that this parent played which had been lost. In the patriarchal society we live in, men are considered breadwinners and the loss of a father is linked to economic loss. So translating this word which could mean a mother or father because of my reading of the context in which it was spoken, takes away the opportunity for the reader to make their own interpretation that it could equally mean a mother.

In translation I also had to make decisions that I thought led to some of the meaning becoming lost in translation. In translating the phrase *omabonwa abulawe*, I chose to use the phrase *the hunted to be killed*. I felt this was the best phrase to carry a similar meaning with the same punch and drama as the original. However the phrase *omabonwa bulawe* is not necessarily speaking of something that is sought after ‘hunted’. *Omabonwa bulawe* refers to creatures such as snakes, poisonous insects which if they stray into the home are killed because of the danger they pose. So it is not that people go out to hunt for them but wherever they are spotted, they are killed. However, a lengthy translation of that phrase lost the punch that the phrase carried in the song. So I made the choice to use the phrase *the hunted to be killed* that was not the literal translation but conveyed a similar air of the drama and impact intended in the original language. In the translation therefore, I aimed at conveying the meaning of what was said but also tried to use words that would give the same effect that the original text gave. This was a difficult task but I made the choices in translation that I thought best served the purposes of this thesis. As such the translation was as much an analysis as the other overt stages of analysis in the research process.

Art methodologies in research

Another tool I picked up along the research process is the use of poetry in research. Art is popularly seen as an antithesis to science (Eisner, 2008; Marvasti, 2008), however in this case it has been employed to enhance the analysis and knowledge construction in the study. Initially I turned to poetry in a quest to find a representation of data that would make the research output accessible to a majority of the research participants who would

not be able to engage with a thesis report. In conducting a literature search on ‘poetry in research’ I found that poetry was not only useful in the presentation or staging of research but could equally be useful in the analysis and data reduction process. As such I have employed poetry in the staging as well as the analysis stages of this research. Cousik (2014) says poetry is useful for researchers not to merely reduce the lived experiences of participants into reports, which prevents from capturing and communicating the nuances, emotions and feelings that emerge during interactions with them. So it has been useful here in presenting the research in a form that captures the emotions triggered in the interviews and discussions.

Knowles & Promislow (2008) argue that art inquiry is something a researcher has to choose to do because it requires extensive commitment. Higgs (2008) argues that it is possible for creative representation of research to be of poor quality. As such they suggest that one receives formal training in the art form they want to present research in. I have not received any formal training in poetry but I used it in presenting this research. This is because poetry is the most readily accessible art form that I practice and enjoy. Knowles & Promislow (2008) further argue that art based inquiry may be chosen if:

- *It is congruent with one's worldview, an acknowledgment that knowing through the arts is more than mere knowledge about the arts;*
- *It makes inherent sense given the focus and substance of the research;*

- *It fits one's artistic skills and expertise;*
- *There is an obvious potential to develop exceptional insights and knowledge; and*
- *It presents opportunities to reach audiences that are not normally very accessible to academic researchers* (2008, p. 518).

My search for literature on poetry in research uncovered many other ways that I could employ the art in this study. Poetry has enhanced this thesis by including emotion that is not easy to integrate into academic writing. Poetry has also presented my position as a researcher in a more complex way than just a presentation of the shared history. It has allowed for a presentation of my views. Lastly the poem crafted through transcription stages the work of the researcher and lays bare the process of the translation and interpretation of the interview.

Below I present the different ways that I employed poetry which has enhanced this study. I used poetry to summarise the findings of the thesis in a form that I hope participants in this study can engage with better, than with a thesis written for an academic audience. Secondly I conducted poetic transcription of one interview in order to capture the metaphoric language used by the interviewee as well as to show my role as a researcher in interpreting the interviews. Lastly, I employed poetry to stage my position, that is, to show the similarities and differences between my views and those of the participants in this study.

Summarising the thesis into poems

My initial thoughts for including poetry in the thesis were motivated by the desire to reach the participants of the study who may not be able to engage with dense academic prose. The aim was to condense this research into a form that would be easily accessible to participants in this study as they were already engaging in poetry in their activism. I was not looking to present this research outside of the book form as Knowles & Promislow (2008) say that a central question in presenting research artistically relates to whether or not all arts-related scholarship needs to be translated into “book form.” I wanted a book form that would be easily accessible to participants in the study. I wanted to use poems as a summary of each chapter in the thesis. Seven poems are included in the thesis summarising the arguments I am putting forward.

There are five poems written explicitly as part of the thesis from 2015- 2016. These are *Silence*, *Coming clean*, *Artists*, *Let me tell my own story* and *What is the Gukurahundi?*. I wrote the poem *Silence*, as a summary of the the MA study that preceded this research. It is the distillation of the effect of the lack of acknowledgement of the *Gukurahundi* atrocities. *Silence* summarises the MA thesis and presents the context from which I conceptualised the questions in this thesis and so it is a preface to the thesis. The poem *Coming Clean* summarises this chapter as a reflection of the process of conducting this PhD study. I am coming clean because the role of being a researcher has challenged my views and led me to reflect on my position and privilege or lack thereof. *Artists*, reflects on the differential positioning and access to an audience that people making art about *Gukurahundi* have. It is expressing the location of the *Ithemba lamaNguni* and *Ithemba*

leSizwe in the world. *Let me tell my own story* is focusing on who is entitled to tell the story of *Gukurahundi* as well as what is at stake in telling this story. The poem reflects on what it means to be located in the global south and want to participate in the global discourse. The local language cannot be heard as such one has to borrow from the language that can be heard.

The poem, *What is the Gukurahundi?* differs from the other four in that it was written through poetic transcription. I will discuss how I generated this poem in more detail in a following section of this chapter focusing on poetic transcription. I wrote the other two poems *Illegal Immigrant* and *Zimbabwe at twenty-seven years* soon after I arrived in Johannesburg. These two poems although written prior to the research also summarise the chapters in which they appear. Furthermore, because I wrote them before commencing this study, these two poems have been useful in showing my position in reference to the participants. I will comment further on staging the researcher position in a following section. The table below summarises how and when each poem was generated.

Poems in the thesis

Table 2 Poems in the thesis

Title, Year	Page	Notes
Silence, 2015	16	Summary of my MA thesis,
Illegal Immigrant, 2007	49	Summary of Chapter 2 also Stages my position
Coming clean, 2016		Summary of Chapter 3
What is the Gukurahundi?, 2015	131	Summary of Chapter 4 Stages my position
Artists, 2015	189	Summary of Chapter 5
Zimbabwe at twenty-seven years, 2007	231	Summary of Chapter 6 Stages my position
Let me tell my own story, 2015	282	Summary of Chapter 7

Discourse and Narrative Analysis

This research is a discourse analytic approach to understanding what is being said in Johannesburg today about *Gukurahundi*.

Discourse analysis is not just a method but is a whole perspective on social life and its research, and, second, that all methods involve a range of theoretical assumptions (Potter, 1996, p. 8).

Discourse analysis focuses on talk and texts as social practices, and on the resources that are drawn on to enable those practices. One way of conducting discourse analysis is to

identify interpretive repertoires in texts. This has been a useful analytic strategy in this research as participants spoke to me based on our shared history of *Gukurahundi* and thus drew on this shared history assuming that I would understand the ways they talked about *Gukurahundi*. Interpretative repertoires make up an important part of the common sense of a culture (Potter, 1996). Potter (1996) describes interpretative repertoires as historically developed ways of talking with an off-the shelf character, where they can be drawn on to speak of an issue. He defines them as systematically related sets of terms, often used with stylistic and grammatical coherence, and often organised around one or more central metaphors. For example participants in many instances use the words “sell-out” when questioning my intentions in wanting to speak to them about the *Gukurahundi*. The phrase sell-out is an appropriation of the way Joshua Nkomo, popularly seen as the *ndebele* leader, was referred to by Robert Mugabe during the liberation struggle and after independence. Joshua Nkomo was described as a sell-out in the liberation struggle, meaning that he was willing to compromise on the demands from the nationalist movement. As such it was used to brand him as not for the interests of the majority black population. After independence he was branded as a sell-out, who was destabilising the newly founded Zimbabwean nation by being the “father of dissidents”. The *ndebele* leader being branded as a sell-out meant that all *ndebele*’s were sell-outs. In other instances Lobhengula, king of the Ndebele, is blamed for selling the country to the whites colonisers and thus is also seen as a sell out.

During the liberation struggle as well, guerrillas murdered villagers who were branded as sell-outs accused of giving information about the guerrillas to the Rhodesian army.

Certain chiefs who collaborated with the colonial regime were equally branded as sell-outs, for example the earlier mentioned Chief Gambu was murdered for that reason (Dube, 2013). When used in reference to me therefore the phrase sell-out is reappropriated. However, in this case it is not the Zimbabwean nationalist project that I am at risk of betraying but it is the *Gukurahundi* victims' aims, be they those who want to have a separate nation or those who want the atrocities to be acknowledged. The interpretative repertoire of sell-out is used to communicate the value of the information the participants are giving me and to express their desire that it be used to serve a particular purpose, such as documenting the atrocities and not that of the Zimbabwean government which dismisses *Gukurahundi* as a matter of the past.

Discourse analysis as outlined above has been coupled with narrative analysis to draw from the texts in this study the ways in which people make sense of their activities in Johannesburg as Zimbabwean migrant victims of *Gukurahundi*. Narrative analysis foregrounds the subjective in the retelling of events of the past (Riessman, 1993). Only the significant events from the past are chosen and shared in a narrative that connects the past with the present (Freeman, 1993; Ricouer, 1984). Guiding the analysis of the stories told in this study is the structure of a narrative presented in Riessman (1993) and following Labvov. In the analysis I looked for the four parts of a narrative; Orientation which introduces the background of the story; Complicating action, the event that was unexpected; Evaluation, how the complicating action affects the narrator and the Resolve that links the story to the present. Not all these parts of a narrative were found in all the

stories told or in that order, however, it was a useful framework facilitating a close reading of the text.

Narrative analysis allows for one to see different and contradictory layers of stories (Squire, 2005). A useful strategy in analysing the text in this study from narrative methods is looking at the genre of stories being told (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2008). This has allowed me to explore the different strategies people have employed to tell about the *Gukurahundi* and to make meaning of the event and how it affects and influences their lives. A lot of the stories told took the form of factual description. Different approaches were used to frame the stories told as factual. People related their personal experiences as a way of grounding what they were saying as the truth. So many participants spoke about how they directly experienced the *Gukurahundi* as a way of making their stories valid. Wooffitt (2005) looks at the organisation of factual discourse, which I found was a useful way to look at how *Gukurahundi* is spoken about. Since the violence was never acknowledged, participants speak about it in a way that makes it real.

Other interviewees however did not attempt to present a logical argument about their views. Tshengi for example talks about a ZANU PF fundraising campaign to enable Grace Mugabe to go shopping. I initially found it absurd that she actually believed such a campaign could exist. However, in the analysis looking at the genre of the different stories told I realised that this story was crafted in this way purposefully. She did not attempt to craft this story about Grace Mugabe as a factual report of something that

actually happened. Here I would call the genre of this story banter. This ‘banter’ genre was used to present her views of Zimbabwe that she does not consider it to be of any significance. Zimbabwe is not a project worth giving serious attention to, nor is what they do. So she will talk about an absurd project such as fundraising in order to go shopping as a way to express the absurdity of the entire Zimbabwe project.

Narrative analysis also allowed me to consider the different ways participants claimed authority and entitlement to speak about the *Gukurahundi* (Phoenix, 2008). This links to the genre of the stories as the sharing of personal experience was used to craft factual reports of the atrocities. It also served the purpose of staking a right to speak about the violence. This is a theme I revisit in greater depth in chapter five of the thesis. I mention it briefly in this section as it was a useful analytical strategy in understanding what people were saying about the *Gukurahundi*. Authority to speak about *Gukurahundi* was claimed through showing how people were directly affected by the atrocities. This was further used to make their views presented in their stories as valid. For example by describing how they had suffered from the *Gukurahundi* participants justified their hatred for the Shona.

Mabuya believed he had the ‘right’ information about the *Gukurahundi* and therefore took the interview as an opportunity to ‘school’ me on the correct meaning to ascribe to the *Gukurahundi*. Mabuya staked his right to ‘school’ me on his role as a commander of the ZIPRA armies that operated in MaShonaland although he was *ndebele*. He claimed

the right to hold these views about *Gukurahundi* based on what he experienced when it was occurring. His mother was beaten up by the *Gukurahundi* and he was put on house arrest. He therefore presents his views about the *Gukurahundi*, that vary greatly with the narrative about *Gukurahundi* that is most popular in Johannesburg, as a superior and more politically nuanced view of the issue. Mabuya places the *Gukurahundi* in the realm of politics and nationalism and his view calls for putting aside the ethnic divisions that usually arise as a result of talking about *Gukurahundi*. He puts forward the national project as the prized object for which differences, including grievances about the *Gukurahundi*, should be forgone.

Narrative analysis further enhanced my ability to reflect on my position within this research. Stories are told based on the audience. Participants held various views about who I was and my views about the *Gukurahundi*. Stories were influenced by what people imagined me to be. Some participants saw me as a young child who was following the wrong crowd and being taught wrongly about *Gukurahundi*. As a result, the interviews became a site for directing me to the correct views about the *Gukurahundi*. By foregrounding the co-construction of knowledge, narrative methods were instrumental in exploring my position (Koschmann, 1999).

I also paid attention to the things that were said before and after the recorder was switched on. The moments before I switched on the recorder usually involved a negotiation from me to gain access to the stories. Participants evaluated my position and

justified their participation. The justification made for participating was insightful in understanding why people said certain things during the interviews. Tshengi agreed to participate in an interview by warning me that there were people planted by the Zimbabwean government and I should be aware that they may participate in my research as undercover agents. This warning, looked at in light of our conversation during the interview, sheds light on her participation in MLF. She considers her participation in MLF as a sign of her commitment as she does this despite the threat from Zimbabwean Central Intelligence Officers (CIO).

Poetic Transcription

Poetry in transcription enhances the visibility of the researcher in the co-construction of meanings in an interview. Poetry lays visible the work of the researcher in drawing meanings from the words that the participant says. It also displays more openly the role of the researcher in choosing which words that the participants have spoken and the decision to share and not to share. I employed this method of analysis in creating the poem *What is the Gukurahundi?* I used an interview transcript and the words of the research participant to write the poem. All the words in the poem were used by Mabuya but I moved them around and deleted most of the transcript. I however kept phrases intact so that the meaning conveyed is what Mabuya was saying. This poem exemplifies what we do as researchers with what research participants say. The poem however goes a step further in bringing to the open, the work of the researcher. In a traditional analysis, I would have picked some phrases of the interview and quoted them in the study. This is similar to the shifting of phrases around in the construction of the poem. However the

poem allows a representation of the whole interview and gives a more complete picture of what the participant said in the interview.

I chose to poetically transcribe the interview with Mabuya because he spoke with many poetic phrases that left an impression on me for a long time after conducting the interview. His views were also very important to this study as they stood in big contrast with the views held by the majority of the participants. Mabuya's interview was in English which made it easier to capture the poetic rhythm in phrases such as *no no no no emphatically no!* It would have been very difficult to capture the poetic rhythm in a translation. Ethnographic poetic representation looks for poetry implicit in speech (Rapport & Hartill, 2012). As such the language he used was already a good start for poetry. In talking about Zimbabwe's independence for example, he used the image of a wedding. I wanted to present what he said with as much flowery language as he had. So the interview was an easy match for poetic transcription (Glesne, 1997).

I used the method presented in Glesne (1997) as an example for the poetic transcription. The interview transcript I chose to transcribe poetically was fascinating because of the kind of images that Mabuya used to talk about *Gukurahundi* (see pg 131). The interview was first transcribed into the traditional transcript format. I then selected the phrases that I felt would work in the poem and copy and pasted those to form the poem. This involved tweaking back and forth with the original transcript and the poem until I got to a place where I felt the poem best represented the main points from Mabuya's interview.

Below is an example of how I moved through the different steps to construct the poem as it now stands. I have chosen the first part of the interview that also informs the first stanza of the poem. I will also present below two final versions of the poem that I went through before settling on the poem as I present it in the thesis. In the initial drafting of the poem I had left out the part that speaks about Zimbabwe's independence as a wedding. However as I was writing up I felt it was an important part of the poem and included the stanza. The construction of the poem therefore was both a transcription and an analysis of the interview. I selected the sections that I felt were important for the thesis and the poem remained an open working document that I could make changes to throughout the writing process.

Mr Nyathi: I I I am saying and

so I can answer and say what was the reason,

what was the real reason for *Gukurahundi*

was it because people were

eh speaking a certain language

Ndebele in this case

eh or there were the other reasons

eh a lot of people because

they have stooped so low

even lower than eh ZANU

eh Im meaning when i say Zanu

i mean Zanu pf this one of Robert

they stooped so low that

they begin to **see themselves**

as small corners in the in the country

which is **which is wrong** a fighting

that is a problem and how did that come about?

it came about because **at independence**

at independence

The highlighted words were used to frame the first stanza of the poem. The highlighted phrase forms the opening line of the poem however the word *Gukurahundi* has been placed in a different position. The rest of the stanza is constructed using words from other parts of the transcript. The other highlighted words form other parts of the first version of the poem that is further refined to the version that forms the poem presented in the thesis.

Gukurahundi

what was the real reason

Let me give you

a bigger a greater understanding

a strategy to disperse

people involved in the struggle

people organized to take the revolution forward.

Below is an image of the last three versions of the poem. This shows how I moved from one version to the next, to get to the final version presented in this report.

Table 3 Poetic Transcription Phases

Version 1	Version 2	Version 3
Gukurahundi what was the real reason Let me give you a bigger a greater understanding a strategy to disperse people involved in the struggle people organized to take the revolution forward	Gukurahundi what was the real reason Let me give you a bigger a greater understanding a strategy to disperse people organised to take the revolution forward	Gukurahundi What was the real reason? A strategy to disperse People organised to take the revolution forward The (westerners) were very worried Create Gukurahundi Make sure ideology is smashed Crush any national notion of any kind
the (westerners).... they were very worried create Gukurahundi make sure that ideology is smashed smashed properly and completely crush any national notion of any kind	the (westerners).... they were very worried create Gukurahundi make sure ideology is smashed smashed properly completely crush any national notion of any kind	1854 Europeans decided on the border Create groupings to be controllable We didn't create borders Robert is saying I am a white man in a black man's skin Interest of the people of Zimbabwe no! People have stooped lower than ZANU Retreat to their little corners It is so good for the imperialist That you think like Mthwakazi The nation totally destroyed
Zanu and Robert extension of the white rule the interest of the people of Zimbabwe no! 1854 Europeans decided on the border Who was the African man there? we didn't create borders create groupings to be controllable Robert is saying I am a white man in a black man's skin	1854 Europeans decided on the border create groupings to be controllable we didn't create borders Robert is saying I am a white man in a black man's skin interest of the people of Zimbabwe no!	I lost hope in 1980 We went to a wedding The bride didn't come The husband independence appeared Freedom never appeared I was a freedom fighter not a war veteran Not an ex combatant We were fighting for a marriage
people have stooped lower than eh ZANU see themselves through these glasses borrowed by ZANU see themselves as small corners in the country uyayibona inkungu bavalelwa enkungwini baphakathi kwenkungu ababoni people retreat to their little corners and everybody sees themselves in their corner they don't see themselves as being part of the whole it is so good for the imperialist that you think like Mthwakazi the nation totally destroyed	people have stooped lower than eh ZANU retreat to their little corners it is so good for the imperialist that you think like Mthwakazi the nation totally destroyed	Nobody is a minority We fought for a majority government Should a Tonga be called Ndebele You are Ndebele Tonga or Kalanga Karanga or Zezuru or whatever You don't behave the way you behave Because of the blood in you You behave the way you behave Because of the information around you
nobody is a minority that is what we fought for a majority government are Ndebeles a minority the people who were called Ndebeles they are not there its either you are Kalanga a Venda should a Tonga be called Ndebele seven different languages made to disappear into a lie called Shona it is not true for you to say you are Ndebele Tonga or Kalanga Karanga or Zezuru or whatever you don't behave the way you behave because of the blood in you because of the information around you	nobody is a minority we fought for a majority government should a Tonga be called Ndebele seven different languages disappear into a lie called Shona	The most stupid generation Allowed the country to degenerate We owe it to our children We owe it to our ancestors' resistance in the 1890s But if you say Lobengula you are Zimbabwean Nehanda you are Zimbabwean no no no no no very emphatically NO You are mad
Lobengula established Chitungwiza the third settlement did Burombo the leader of resistance in Bulawayo speak Kalanga he was never a Ndebele Makwati was a Tonga leading in Salisbury	you are Ndebele Tonga or Kalanga Karanga or Zezuru or whatever you don't behave the way you behave because of the blood in you because of the information around you	
our generation is the most stupid the generation which has allowed the country to degenerate into nothing We owe it to our children we also owe it to our ancestors' resistance in the 1890s Not to pursue the agenda of the white guys	the most stupid generation allowed the country to degenerate We owe it to our children We owe it to our ancestors' resistance in the 1890s	
if you said to Lobengula you are Zimbabwean he would say I'm not a Zimbabwean If you say Nehanda you are Zimbabwean she will say you are mad dont bring Nehandas and Mzilikazi into this picture you are forging a nation nation it is in whose interest?	But if you say Lobengula you are Zimbabwean Nehanda you are Zimbabwean no no no no no very emphatically NO You are mad	
so in other words if you talk about these people hurt us because we are Ndebele because we are this and for sure you are only condemning an old woman in Hurungwe who doesnt even know Gukurahundi who never even heard about that never even approved of it no no no no no very emphatically NO		

Staging the Researcher Insider/Outsider Position

My name, age, gender and history have been important entry points for this research. At times it has worked to my advantage that I am a ‘*ndebele*’ married woman, doing a study on *Gukurahundi*. This has been celebrated as I was viewed as a representative of the community but at the same time different in that I was educated and able to participate and contribute in a discourse that many said they were unable to do. My position was celebrated as one in which I could contribute to the discourse on *Gukurahundi* in a way that my voice could be heard where theirs could not be.

This position of being part of the community was not one of being fully part of the community as, in some interactions, I was being wooed for example to join the MLF. I was given promises of funding for my study if I was willing to join the group. These interactions were driven in part by the realisation that I was not fully a member of the community and that my study would not be fully representative of their views. If however I became a member of the group and received their funding I would be more likely to present their views in this study. In other instances it was not just about my membership of the group but there were suspicions over who I was married to.

If you married a Shona you have insulted us

If you married a Shona you would have insulted us

(*Interview with Zweli*)

In the quote above, Zweli makes my choice in a marriage partner an expression of what I think of the *ndebele*. Who I married would not have been an issue had I been male, given the patrilineal traditions in Zimbabwe. Marrying a Shona was presented as the highest form of betrayal of the '*ndebele*'. This was a difficult position as I found myself glad that I was not married to a Shona although I could have been married to one. My marrying the 'right' person gave me access to speak to participants. This was a relief in those interviews where I found myself feeling very vulnerable. I was afraid to even admit that I can speak Shona as this would also have been taken as a betrayal and I would not have been worthy to be an audience to the stories I was being told. So I became anxious of participants discovering I could speak the Shona language and I had Shona friends and relatives even though I was not married to a Shona. This anxiety was not limited to the interview space alone but spilled over to my social media interactions particularly on Facebook.

Over the course of the research I 'added' some of the people I met through the research as 'friends' on my Facebook profile. I did this without putting much thought into it as they 'requested' me. Reflecting on it now I see it as a mistake, however, it helped me understand one of the difficult positions that conducting this research put me in. As earlier stated, negotiating access to interviewing people involved positioning myself as similar to them. In the interviews I found myself being recruited into sharing the same views as the participants. I was told of how much they hated Shona people and I felt put on the spot to prove that I was deserving of being told these stories. On my Facebook profile I have Shona friends that I sometimes speak to in Shona. I found myself caught

in a dilemma of continuing to interact as always with my friends at the risk of seemingly betraying my research participants. After listening to some of the participants in this study, it became difficult to throw in a Shona phrase here and there in our conversations, as I normally would have done..

I did not agree with their position and views however I found it uncomfortable to overtly interact with my Shona friends once I knew they had access to view those interactions. On reflection again I could have done this as a way of showing them my position and hopefully converting them to see things my way. The easiest thing, which is what I chose, was to deactivate my Facebook account and start afresh without adding people I had met through the research. Despite not agreeing with their views I felt it would be disrespectful to disregard them in that way. This is especially because they had entrusted me with their stories. I did not want to seem like I was a ‘sell out’. This felt like a grey area to me and I may have done things differently if given another chance however I think this is a good case in point in outlining some of the not so clear ethical issues I confronted when conducting this research.

Positioned by the Gukurahundi

My insider-outsider position (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) was useful in giving me access to people to interview as I could relate my own story of the *Gukurahundi* in justifying why I wanted to research on it. My typical introduction which developed over the course of meeting different people and learning that simply wanting to do research on the

Gukurahundi was not a good enough reason for people to want to talk to me. Most participants were suspicious of my intentions and spoke about not wanting to be used. People placed a high value on their stories about the *Gukurahundi* and were suspicious of my interest in them. Many felt that I would use their stories to benefit myself, for example sell it to a news agency. I had to develop a strategy with which to access the narratives constructed in this study about *Gukurahundi*.

I found that people responded more readily to participate in the study when I shared my personal story of how I came to be doing a study on *Gukurahundi*. This involved telling the story of how my grandmother spoke about being beaten and had lost her sight and hearing as a result. I also shared about an uncle I never met who was killed for failing to adhere to a curfew during the *Gukurahundi*. Having grown up with this history I shared how I was taken aback by the way talk about *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg differs so much compared to the narratives I grew up with in Zimbabwe. During this research I have had to identify myself in a way that I do not normally do in order to gain access. I am ambivalent about my choice to narrate this history that I do not necessarily consider a defining history of who I am in the same way that some of the participants in the study identify with it.

I do not view *Gukurahundi* as a central and defining feature of my life that has affected my access to education, my position as a citizen of Zimbabwe or my economic standing. I however carry the history of unacknowledged pain and loss. As such at different points

in this study my views about the *Gukurahundi* converge with those of the participants but at most points they diverge and contrast. For example I found it deeply embarrassing that participants in the study were complaining about the Shona coming to take over their jobs in the service industry of South Africa because they had access to education in Zimbabwe and therefore become preferred over the uneducated *ndebele*. I found it embarrassing that the *ndebele* were claiming turf at the lowest rung of the social ladder and did not want to identify myself with those views. I have however presented all views in this study whether they sit well with me or not. Poetry I had written before I began this study became pivotal to stage the subtle differences between my views and those of the participants that would be difficult to tease out in a descriptive format. I used the poems *Illigal Immigrant* and *Zimbabwe at Twenty-Seven years* to do this.

Illegal Immigrant, is a reflection of what it means for many to make a living as non-citizens in Johannesburg. I wrote this poem in 2008 in response to the institutionalised xenophobia that I have already discussed in the previous chapter. The poem reflects the experience of being a 'mobile ATM'. This was a time when I was struggling to make sense of the xenophobic violence as reflected in annex 1. I wrote Annex 1 as part of a process initiated by the organisation I was working for to assist foreign employees to work through the impact of the violence. The poem *Zimbabwe at 27 years* is the fifth in the thesis and represents the position from which I came into this study as a Zimbabwean located in South Africa questioning what it means to celebrate Zimbabwe's independence. In contrast to participants that want a separate nation, this poem locates me as a Zimbabwean but similar to participants in the study I am looking for a place to

belong as the ending outlines *Where shall I go*. In this poem *Gukurahundi* is one of many significant events in my history of Zimbabwe while for many participants in this study it is the single most important event in their story of Zimbabwe and their lives.

Incorporating the poems which I wrote prior to beginning this research art allows me to show how much I share with the participants in this study as well as the differences. The poem, written during a time when I was unemployed and new to Johannesburg, reflects the questions that arise as a result of the uncertainty that comes with migration. Location in the city of Johannesburg, the city of gold that holds great promises still brings with it the uncertainty of the future of whether the aspirations will be met or failure will be the ultimate end. The poem therefore speaks to my positioning within this research but also speaks to the themes of the research.

This poem presents, in the best way, the power that artistic expression in the form of poetry brings to this study. By using the poem I am able to move beyond the simplistic staging of my position as an insider-outsider but to also show the complexity of this position. The poem also helped me remember my initial position and thoughts about *Gukurahundi*, before I began this study, that have shifted as a result of my interactions with participants. I found it challenging after being involved in this research for more than five years to remember my thoughts about *Gukurahundi* before I interacted with people's different narratives about it. The poem became useful for me to locate the

thoughts I had, that influenced my interest in this research. It was important to locate my pre-research thoughts as this research has at different points drawn me to take a position. In this sense I do not take an objective position however who I am has influenced, and been influenced by, the research.

Positioning myself using a poem at the beginning of chapter six has been a choice that was difficult to make. I felt that including my views as part of the study was self-indulgent in a space where I should be presenting the views and voices of the participants in this study. In considering my relatively privileged position as a researcher and the writer of the thesis, in comparison to the participants, I had mixed feelings and was concerned that it was placing too much of who I am in the work and taking away from the views of the participants. I have however used the poem as I find it best summarises the position from which I came into the research and stages the complexity of my insider-outsider position best (Knowles & Promislow, 2008b).

The researcher as audience

I have also wondered about the implications of giving audience to some of the views that I found problematic. In some interviews people have spoken of their hatred for the Shona in ways that have left me feeling vulnerable. The deep hatred that is palatable in talk that makes your skin cringe and feel unsafe in their presence. While their hatred may be justified by their experiences of *Gukurahundi* I feel ambivalent about what my presence as an audience to it means and further what my staging of these views here accomplishes

for the narrators. In the interviews some of this narration of the hatred of the Shona was a performance aimed at convincing me to adopt the same stance especially since my introduction was crafted to present me as one that wanted to understand the views of others with similar experiences as me. This was the case especially in interviews with MLF members. I am not a member of the MLF and most of the interviews with the members became places of recruitment. I was being recruited to become a member of MLF and for this study to be a documentation of what the organisation stands for and to justify this standing. Apart from being recruited to be a member of the MLF, in other interactions I was being recruited to take on the same views as the participants. As such the narratives constructed here were a response to what participants imagined were my views about the *Gukurahundi* some of which were correct. I have no intention of joining the MLF in their quest for a separate nation state for the *ndebele*. I find this problematic as I have grown up as a Kalanga the underclass in a *Ndebele* nation. So the imagined views of who I am as an outsider to MLF and trying to win me over to their cause in this case were correct.

In one interview for example I arrived at the person's office having spoken to them on the phone and explained that I was researching people's views about the *Gukurahundi*. On arrival at office I was ushered into the gentleman's office to wait for him as he had just gone out for a short errand. On his return he apologised for making me wait and explained that he has been looking forward to talking to me since the day we had set up the appointment. He explained that his excitement was based on the fact that he was one of the most "clear people" who had a full understanding of what the *Gukurahundi* was

and was excited to share this with me. He then launched into a long description of the *Gukurahundi*, what it was and how he had been affected. He was one of the ZIPRA leaders and so was under house arrest during the *Gukurahundi*. His mother was beaten up during the conflict and later died from those injuries. This all was said to foreground his entitlement to his views about *Gukurahundi* (Phoenix, 2008). He did not view *Gukurahundi* as an attack on the *ndebele* not because he was not affected but because despite being directly affected he was still able to think logically about it and see it as a political issue. In this interaction I was positioned as a naive young person who needed to be guided to view the *Gukurahundi* correctly. This is similarly reported in research with women who fashioned the participant-researcher position as a mother-daughter relationship (Clark, 2009). In this instance my age was taken to mean that I do not know anything about the *Gukurahundi* and what I know was immediately dismissed as wrong.

This narration was one hour long before I asked him any questions. He then concluded by saying that he wanted me to understand his view about the *Gukurahundi* before I could ask him any questions. He also told me the kind of research that he wanted me to do, which was to highlight the resilience of the people that despite *Gukurahundi* they had made something of themselves and had emerged winners. This participant therefore imagined that I saw *Gukurahundi* as an attack on an ethnic group and secondly that my research was aimed at showing how people were affected by the *Gukurahundi* portraying them as victims instead of focusing on their resilience and empowering them further. I have tried to describe this interaction as it is easier to see how this participant constructed his narrative to respond to an imagined view of who I was as a person. This example

brings out poignantly the influence of the audience, imagined or real, on the narrative told. Further it points out how it is not only what one has said that shapes the interview but also what the other person imagines to be the listener's views.

The fact that I was interested in *Gukurahundi* classified me, for this participant, among those who are visibly talking about *Gukurahundi* which in most instances happens to be those calling for a separate state or those that view it as an ethnic conflict and use it to justify their hatred of the Shona. Further to this, my gender and age played a role in this construction in that this participant placed me in the role of a daughter and in my interaction with him I somehow found myself interacting the same way I would with my father. This was my response to his age, I saw him as old enough to be my father and it was difficult for example to interrupt him as he spoke for an hour about his views and what he wanted me to know. I found myself wanting to be respectful to him and in the way I was brought up that means not interrupting when an adult is talking and only speaking when invited to. So I sat for an hour and listened. I only interrupted him to ask if I could record him at the beginning of the hour. At the end of the hour he then gave me permission to ask questions however with the warning that he would only engage if we are of the same understanding about what the *Gukurahundi* was. In this interaction the recruitment to his side was not a subtle one. Instead he plainly stated that he has people who were affected by the *Gukurahundi* that he wanted me to interview together with him.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the different strategies that I have adopted in order to conduct this research. It reflects on choices I made based on my position, which I took advantage of, by foregrounding our shared history as victims of *Gukurahundi*, and participants reflected on this position in the process of negotiating consent. As an outsider, participants highlighted the possibility that I may not fully represent their interests. However as an insider, black, *ndebele* woman, married to a *ndebele* man, it would be better if they were sold out by me than someone else. In this way participants subtly disciplined me into representing their interests, a positioning I have found difficult throughout the course of this research.

Although this was a difficult position to be thrust into - being a representative and one who amplifies their voices to an audience participants' felt they could not reach - it has also brought into sharp focus the issue of informed consent in research. Participants consented to their participation however they also expressed a desire for their narratives to be represented in a way that is true to their intentions. To this end this methodology, especially using poetry to reflect on my position and the interpretative work that as a researcher I have carried out as well as the co-constructed nature of knowledge, has been a response to this challenge. Poetry has allowed me a coming clean to show that I am representing my interpretation of their narratives. In the following three chapters I shall present the results of the analysis of the interviews, focus groups discussions, music and film that are part of this research.

Chapter 4: What is the Gukurahundi?

What is the Gukurahundi?

Gukurahundi

What was the real reason?

A strategy to disperse

People organised to take the revolution forward

The (westerners) were very worried

Create *Gukurahundi*

Make sure ideology is smashed

Crush any national notion of any kind

1854 Europeans decided on the border

Create groupings to be controllable

We didn't create borders

Robert is saying I am a white man in a black man's skin

The interest of the people of Zimbabwe, no!

People have stooped lower than ZANU

Retreat to their little corners

It is so good for the imperialist

That you think like Mthwakazi

The nation totally destroyed

I lost hope in 1980

We went to a wedding

The bride did not come

The husband independence appeared

Freedom never appeared

I was a freedom fighter not a war veteran

Not an ex combatant

We were fighting for a marriage

Nobody is a minority

We fought for a majority government

Should a Tonga be called *Ndebele*

You are *Ndebele* Tonga or Kalanga

Karanga or *Zezuru* or whatever

Different languages made to disappear

Into a lie called Shona

You don't behave the way you behave

Because of the blood in you

You behave the way you behave

Because of the information around you

The most stupid generation

Allowed the country to degenerate

We owe it to our children

We owe it to our ancestors' resistance in the 1890s

But if you say

Lobengula you are Zimbabwean

Nehanda you are Zimbabwean

no no no no no no very emphatically NO!

You are mad

(Poetic Transcription of Interview with Mr Mabuya)

Introduction

This is the first chapter of three that presents the empirical findings of this study. *Gukurahundi* is being remembered in Johannesburg today by people who want to make sense of the event and its effects on their lives. It is being remembered to claim space within global and Zimbabwean national discourses and so define the victims' identity and belonging as members of Zimbabwe or the new *Mthwakazi* nation and the global community. In this first empirical chapter, I am going to explore the ways in which participants gave meaning to their experiences of *Gukurahundi* in the specific context of Johannesburg. I present the stories chosen to speak about the violence and represent what the experiences mean for participants' lives today. I will also link these stories of migrants in Johannesburg to the Zimbabwean government's discourse on *Gukurahundi* in order to show what it means for people to be engaged in telling their stories of *Gukurahundi* in the way they do.

In order to make sense of the narrative found in Johannesburg, in this chapter I present the different stories told about the *Gukurahundi* in Zimbabwe by government officials, political leaders and the 'rumours' spreading among different people about the violence. The chapter begins by focusing on some of the popular discourses on the *Gukurahundi*; what has been said by President Robert Mugabe, rumours about the 1979 Grand Plan, and calls for compensation for victims of the *Gukurahundi* by Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the MDC. Official discourse on the atrocities and some in academia have argued, that victims have moved on, (see Vambe, 2012). However, in this chapter I argue that *Gukurahundi* remains unfinished business shaping the lives of people in Johannesburg.

A moment of Madness

even though Mugabe has come out in the open to admit that *Gukurahundi* was his moment of madness...maybe he needs to say ok during the time when I was mad I did this (Interview with Themba).

One of the most popular things the president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, has said about the *Gukurahundi* violence is that it was *a moment of madness*. Many participants in this study have referred to this widely publicised statement. In an interview, aired on South African national television in 2012, the president was asked about the *Gukurahundi*, and his response justified the violence as excesses of war. He defended the *Gukurahundi* as a just war against dissidents with the unfortunate attacks on civilians due to misconduct by the soldiers. Many victims of the violence receive Robert Mugabe's utterances about the *Gukurahundi* as inadequate acknowledgement.

For the majority of the Zimbabwean citizens who did not reside in the regions that were affected by the *Gukurahundi*, propaganda was used to justify the *Gukurahundi* by framing the dissidents as a threat to the nation. Therefore the *Gukurahundi* violence was a justified violence, the ends of which were the stabilising of the country and protection of its citizens. So framing the *Gukurahundi* as a moment of madness may be referring to the dissidents as those who were mad. However among participants in this study it is widely regarded to mean that the President was mad and attacked his own citizens. Most significantly, the statement denies that the *Gukurahundi* was a coordinated strategy and places it in the realm of misconduct by soldiers on the ground (Ndlovu 2010).

In addition the ‘moment of madness’ story is challenged by the presence of a document called *The 1979 Grand Plan*. This document presents *Gukurahundi* as an operation planned and executed by ZANU PF with the goal of removing the *ndebele* from Zimbabwe thereby creating a Shona state. *The 1979 Grand Plan’s* authorship is attributed to ZANU PF and so, if there was a plan for the violence, *Gukurahundi* could not have been a moment of madness but a planned operation. *The 1979 Grand Plan* defines the *ndebele* as the targeted victims to be annihilated from Zimbabwe. As such it has been quoted by those who view *Gukurahundi* as an ethnic assault. I will revisit its influence on understanding the ethnic dimensions of the violence in chapter six. Here it is sufficient to highlight that it makes the non-acknowledgement of the violence by the president even more unacceptable.

We will never forget

Don’t take us lightly when we sing this song

We are heart sore

We are growing old in foreign lands

We are heart sore

Do you tell your children the truth

Do you teach your children their history

Those who forget may forget

But we will never forget

Gukurahundi

We will never forget

Our brothers died

We will never forget

In Bhalagwe

We will never forget

We say come that day

We will never forget

Never never never

We will never forget

(Song *Ngekesikhohlwe* by *Ithemba lamaNguni*)

While Robert Mugabe has called the *Gukurahundi* a *moment of madness*, members of *Ithemba LamaNguni* sing that they will never forget it. In their view it is not a *moment* but something they continue to carry and will not forget. In this song *Ithemba lamaNguni*,

ask if children are being taught the truth about *Gukurahundi*. The truth about *Gukurahundi* is not the ‘moment of madness’ that the president of Zimbabwe is popularly known to have called the atrocities. The truth of *Gukurahundi* according to this song is that their brothers were killed in Bhalagwe and they will never forget this. During the *Gukurahundi*, a camp was set up in Bhalagwe where people were tortured and killed. Bhalagwe is a site in Matopos which has been likened to the concentration camps during the Holocaust (CCJP, 1997). Recently human remains were found in a disused mine in Bhalagwe that are believed to belong to the people who were killed in the Bhalagwe camp. As such *Ithemba lamaNguni* sing about Bhalagwe in contrast to what President Robert Mugabe has said.

One of the ways victims continue to carry the *Gukurahundi* is in their migration trajectories. *Gukurahundi* is linked to migration in four ways that I explore in greater detail below. Firstly the violence is seen as a message that the *ndebele* do not belong in Zimbabwe and has resulted in their scattering to neighbouring countries. Secondly young men, who were targeted in the violence, fled to protect their lives. Thirdly contemporary migration is linked to the silence of *Gukurahundi* in Zimbabwe which is causing victims to fear a repeat of the violence and thus leave Zimbabwe. Lastly, *Gukurahundi* is linked to people's access to employment which leads to migration in search of employment outside Zimbabwe. I am going to expand on these themes below in the following order. First I discuss the view that the violence was aimed at pushing the *ndebele* out of Zimbabwe. I shall then move on to the migration of young men, ending with a focus on contemporary migration which is linked to silence and unemployment. The migration

linked to *Gukurahundi* in these different ways is viewed negatively as it results in people *growing old in foreign lands*, which are dangerous, and not returning to their ancestral homes.

Dislocation and Re-location: Migrating from Zimbabwe to South Africa

We are growing old in foreign lands

The song *We will never forget*, interweaves the story of *Gukurahundi* with migration. Migration is spoken of as *growing old in foreign lands*, something which causes them to be heartsore. In many regions of Matabeleland, migration to South Africa is a norm especially for young men, and used to be so before the *Gukurahundi*. Maphosa (2010) speaking about migration from Matabeleland south says:

To many Zimbabweans in this part of the country, migrating to South Africa is seen as a “rite of passage,” a signal of a man’s maturity (Maphosa, 2010, p. 137).

However it is expected that people remain migrants for a short while, gathering enough money or resources to go back home and establish themselves. People would migrate to South Africa in order to work and raise money to buy livestock and build a homestead after which they would go back home to settle down and raise a family. This is similar to what White (2014) writes about KwaZulu Natal. So here victims are heartsore, because to

grow old in foreign lands is not good. Growing old also speaks to the possibility of dying and being buried in the foreign land. 'Good' migration is circular, where one goes to amass the resources to establish themselves and returns to the land where their ancestors are buried to make a life and to die there. Thabani below speaks of not only how *Gukurahundi* led to people leaving Zimbabwe but also how they ended up in places not conducive for building a life. In this way *Gukurahundi* left people homeless.

I don't know, I just think he was just trying to finish off the *Ndebele* and he succeeded, he killed a lot of people and many people fled and are scattered all over the bush (*bagcwele iganga*), many of them are here in South Africa and when you tell them about home they don't want to go back

(Interview, Thabani).

In the above quote Thabani says *bagcwele iganga* which literally translated means they are scattered all over the bush. This statement connotes that people are out of place. The bush is not a place where people are supposed to live; it is not home. However, Thabani says that the people in the bush do not want to go back home. Here *Gukurahundi* was aimed at annihilating the *ndebele* and, if not to kill them, to disperse them from the country such that today they are not willing to go back. This way of speaking about the violence presents victims as homeless. The story of migration due to the *Gukurahundi* is that of bodies out of place (*Malkki, 1992*). It is of people *abagcwele iganga*, this insinuates things that are strewn haphazardly, connoting being discarded or thrown out.

Iganga is the space that exists outside of home. It has wild animals that people can easily fall prey to. It is an undesirable place to be found in, where one is exposed to the weather elements. It offers no shelter or protection. The *Gukurahundi* displaced people and left people exposed but still not wanting to go back home. The *Gukurahundi* made people realise that home was not a safe place for them to belong and so even though they are in the wilderness they have no desire to go back home.

Sons of valiant heroes have become the laughing stock of the nations

In the following section, I focus on how young men's experiences of migration were changed by the *Gukurahundi*. Young men's migration was considered a normal part of their life trajectories as in the quote below. The fact that these boys were on their way back to South Africa shows that this migration was not out of the ordinary.

When we got there these boys were sitting there on their way back to eGoli the *Gukurahundi* soldiers stopped the bus, it stopped, those boys did not speak Shona...they were told to get off the bus, they got off., they spoke to them in Shona the boys could not understand. The soldiers then said "you think you are special" They took them to some thorn bushes nearby... this is not hearsay we were there... after that they called young men from Plumtree and just told them to dig holes and they just buried them there (Interview, Tshengi).

The young men on their way back to South Africa were taken off the bus and killed. During the *Gukurahundi*, roadblocks were set up on roads from rural areas leading into the cities. At the roadblocks young men were taken off buses and in most instances these young men were never seen again. *Gukurahundi* brought a different meaning to migration which had previously become a normalised part of life for young men. During the *Gukurahundi*, young men's migration was further influenced by the fear of being targeted as is the case of the young men spoken of above. Themba below talks about this migration of young men from the regions affected by *Gukurahundi* due to fear:

Especially the youth, boys in particular, once you've grown up and you are at that stage of you are a man, you now live in constant fear especially during the dissident era, especially in the rural areas, they'll perceive you like you know some information about dissidents...ah about the political arena generally, they suspect that you have joined politics, so as a result you find out that most of these boys or men that were out there once at that stage maybe they will try to leave the country most probably and the only destination was eGoli (Interview, Themba).

Themba says young men fled to South Africa for fear of being labelled political. He does not speak of all males but says youth, boys in particular, delimiting a particular age. In conversations with my mother when I began this research, she spoke about journeys on the bus where young men were taken off the bus and the terror of knowing that those taken off the bus were going to be killed. It was not all men who were targeted but men of a certain age, young men. Young men were targeted with the assumption that they had

come of age and were now politically involved. The other presumption was that they were most likely to be dissidents or to have been trained in the ZAPU military wing. Many people report that as a result, many young men from the Matabeleland areas fled the *Gukurahundi* and crossed the border to Botswana and South Africa.

While the migration of young men to South Africa was viewed as coming of age, the *Gukurahundi* changed it to that of people fleeing out of fear of being killed. Those who fled for their lives did not spend a season in the neighbouring countries only to return home. Instead they are *growing old in foreign lands*, continuing to live away from their ancestral homes and without a spiritual connection to the lands they inhabit. In addition to the migration that occurred during the violence in the 1980s, negative migration linked to *Gukurahundi* still occurs as I discuss up next. Motivated similarly by a fear for their lives, as occurred in the migration of young men, the quote below speaks of people leaving Zimbabwe because *Gukurahundi* remains unacknowledged and so victims fear there may be a repeat. The *ndebele* feel that they are being pushed out of Zimbabwe by the silence that the government has chosen in response to the atrocities.

Pushed Out Of Zimbabwe

also we ask that they explain to us what is happening can we know why we are being pushed out of the country right now if I tell you Plumtree is the last town of Zimbabwe on your way to Botswana and yet it's full of them and we are pushed out we are

no longer there, Plumtree is a small town I don't even want to talk about Bulawayo we are no longer there, Gwanda is on your way to South Africa we have been pushed out we want to know why we are being pushed out so excessively does it mean they will go back to killing us like they did

(Focus Group participant).

The above quote is taken from a focus group discussion with members of MLF. In response to discussions about what should be done about the *Gukurahundi*, this participant spoke about wanting access to the remains of people who were killed in the violence. He says *also we ask*, linking having access to the graves to migration, which he views as *being pushed out*. Here as long as victims do not have access to the graves, the *Gukurahundi* is pending business that could recur. The graves also provide materiality to participants' claims about the *Gukurahundi*. Without acknowledging the past, people are unable to form a collective narrative towards the future (Ireton & Kovras, 2012). So this mistrust pushes the victims of *Gukurahundi* out of Zimbabwe because of a fear of a repeat of the violence.

When speaking about being pushed out of Zimbabwe, the participant describes areas at the periphery of Zimbabwe as being *on your way out*. The presence of the Shona in contrast to the *ndebele* in the peripheral cities of Gwanda and Plumtree is seen as a

pushing out of the *ndebele excessively*. This gives a sense that the dominance of the Shona at the centre of Zimbabwe has been accepted, however the *ndebele* had made the periphery their space from which they are now being pushed out. The metaphor gives weight and material evidence to the symbolic outsidership of the *ndebele*. This gives the impression that they had accepted being pushed out of the centre but not outside the borders and that Zimbabwe is seen as the place where they belong.

Also the *Gukurahundi* is presented here as happening in stages. The first was the actual violence in the 1980s, which has not been acknowledged and, because it is unacknowledged, people live with a fear of a repeat. Apart from this fear of a repeat people are seeing the presence of the Shona in places traditionally expected to be theirs as a message that the *Gukurahundi* is continuing. This indirect form of *Gukurahundi* violence is also experienced in people's quests for employment and education. The presence of the Shona in areas 'supposed' to be *ndebele* is another way in which materiality is given to the discourse about the marginalisation of *Gukurahundi* victims.

Unemployed and Living like a foreigner in Zimbabwe

Below, *Dumo* speaks of his reason for coming to South Africa in the late nineties. He framed his move to South Africa in a similar way to the focus group discussant who saw it as being pushed out. For *Dumo*, he was *pushed out* because he was not incorporated into the civil service. So having failed to get work in Zimbabwe he chose to move to South Africa. South Africa figures as a last resort, the next option after the best had

failed. Zimbabwe is foregrounded as the rightful place in which he should have been employed. It is the home that should have provided for all of Dumo's needs. Brysk & Shafir (2004) argues that economic rights are the most meaningful way through which people access citizenship rights:

what brought me to South Africa I would say is work, I failed to get a job back home so I tried to get a job I would say every field that I thought I would perhaps get hired in, ah as a person who is not educated... and failed so the best thing to do was to try life elsewhere
(Interview, Dumo)

Dumo feels he was pushed out of Zimbabwe because he was unemployed and yet the government employed Shona people in Matabeleland. Furthermore unemployment and migration is linked to *Gukurahundi* through documentation. He speaks about this in the following quote:

ah looking at people's movements because of the *Gukurahundi* obviously if a person has not been well documented in Zimbabwe it means they are not able to get a job and so they feel like a foreigner in their own country so ah now those people after failing to get a job so some of them choose to cross

the borders and tell themselves that it is not any different because even the place which I call home I live like a foreigner so it's better to be a foreigner elsewhere than to be a foreigner at home (Interview, Dumo).

Dumo says people live like foreigners in their own country because they are undocumented in Zimbabwe and consequently unemployed. In the same vein, Dumo sees being undocumented as analogous to living as a foreigner. Documents that testify to a person's existence, as argued by Takabvirwa (2010) and Torpey (2000) are central to people's access to the state. Being undocumented in Zimbabwe therefore is like living as a foreigner. In South Africa, non-citizens do not have much contact with the state. They do not have any claims or benefits from the state. Studies have documented non-citizens' struggles to access healthcare among other services from the government. Hence, when talking about living as a foreigner in Zimbabwe, Dumo shows how the conditions that they find themselves in, in South Africa are the same as what made them move from Zimbabwe. Although it may be acceptable that noncitizens cannot make claims from the South African state, as people born in Zimbabwe it was not acceptable to live in this way in their own country. Dumo draws from a nationalist discourse that legitimises citizenship as the way to claim entitlements.

Participants in the study speak of migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa as an anomaly in spite of its historical regularity because its significance and motive has

changed. Something that became an option because the natural progression that life was supposed to take, had not happened. Migration became the only alternative available to them after failure to find educational or employment opportunities in Zimbabwe. As such living in South Africa is a last resort that is out of the normal projection in which life was expected to happen. This is also because the economic downturn in Zimbabwe makes the marginalisation of the *ndebele* in Zimbabwe even more apparent 'and migration to South Africa no longer mitigates against it. The economic challenges in Zimbabwe mean that the Shona are also migrating to South Africa and the *ndebele* once again have to compete with them in the job market.

In this instance, unemployment contributes to people feeling like "foreigners" in Zimbabwe. Ranger (1983) argues that in colonial Africa, high prestige came with jobs such as the army and teaching because of the ceremonials by the state attached to them. The colonial state made such occupations carry prestige that linked to people's recognition and relationship to the state. Themba speaks about his failure to gain entrance into these prestigious occupations such as the police force and teachers' training colleges. This speaks not only to employment but to his precarious citizenship as a *ndebele* in a perceived Shona state. The view that people are living as foreigners because of a lack of documentation which would facilitate access to employment speaks to the same issue.

Refracted through the lens of the *Gukurahundi*, the experience of failing to gain entry into the teaching or policing profession is understood as an issue of citizenship in the Zimbabwean state. Unemployment thus represents for him a form of marginalisation from the state. The *Gukurahundi* lens is used to draw meanings from the experience of citizenship in this way. In contrast to particularising the lack of employment as a condition affecting only the *ndebele*, in Mabuya's narrative, unemployment is by the same token a problem of the state. However, in his narrative this affects all Zimbabweans and is not particular to the *ndebele*. Although Mabuya says he migrated to South Africa for economic reasons, he says he was unable to open and run his business because of Zimbabwe's restrictive laws. He blames this on the ZANU PF government's failure to prioritise the interests of the Zimbabwean people. He does not define this as the marginalisation of the *ndebele* from Zimbabwe or see it as an extension and continuation of the *Gukurahundi*.

Mabuya runs a business in South Africa, something he says he was not able to do in Zimbabwe. He calls this one of the freedoms that he fought for but did not experience in Zimbabwe. In contrast to the view that this is an experience particular to the *ndebele* in Zimbabwe and does not affect the Shona, Mabuya argues that all Zimbabweans are equally affected by this lack of 'freedoms' that should have come with the Zimbabwean independence.

I am saying they say those things because they are born into this confusion... can you see the fog... but once you remove the fog and someone can see things differently they will begin to see that no man it was not because of my surname it was because ZANU itself is a reactionary government it's a bad government for the people (Interview, Mabuya).

Mabuya believes those who see their experience of unemployment as a result of *Gukurahundi* and the marginalisation of the *ndebele* are confused and seeing through a 'fog'. He sees the fog of ethnicity as a strategy by ZANU PF to remain in power leaving the majority divided and unable to demand their freedoms. The economic problems that forced many to migrate to South Africa from this perspective are not particular to *Gukurahundi* victims as people like Dumo view them. Instead Mabuya sees this as stemming from bad governance. Also the metaphor of being born into fog is significant. It suggests that people have to mature into clarity of insight in a context where the natural (birth) state is one of confusion. Since Mabuya was talking to me as a younger person, and also we have the second generation's voices being more visible in talking about *Gukurahundi*. This metaphor speaks to how Mabuya sees himself as an older person and his role in speaking the truth so the younger people can be taken out of the fog.

The above discussion has outlined the ways that *Gukurahundi* is linked to the migration trajectories of victims. In this way the violence of *Gukurahundi* is given meaning through a metaphor of movement, space and belonging. The *ndebele* are being pushed out of

Zimbabwe by the silence of *Gukurahundi* today in the same way that the violence was a message that they are not welcome as members of the nation. Acknowledgement of the violence is required through the extension of a hand of reconciliation, in apology, thereby inviting the *ndebele* to work together with the Shona in building Zimbabwe. The apology and reconciliation however is spoken of as *if they could make right those things, if we are going to live together*, which implies that the speaker thinks this is highly unlikely to happen. Although migration to South Africa has a longer history prior to the violence, *Gukurahundi* has changed its meaning and in this current moment with Zimbabwe's failed economy the metamorphosis continues.

Omabonwa abulawe: Zimbabweans in South Africa

At this juncture I want to go back to the way being outside Zimbabwe is viewed as *bagcwele iganga*, discarded and homeless. This means South Africa, the place where this study is located and from which people are remembering *Gukurahundi* is viewed as *the bush*. South Africa occupies a paradoxical position in the narratives on *Gukurahundi*. It is a hostile environment because Zimbabweans do not belong here and indeed the xenophobic violence makes this non-belonging clear. But there are benefits to being in South Africa. It provides a space that is not available in Zimbabwe to speak about the *Gukurahundi*. The South African TRC is used as an example of how to transition from violence to a multiethnic nation and South Africa's policy on official languages (it has eleven) is also used as an example of how a state can accommodate multiple ethnic identities. South Africa also provides economic opportunities such as employment and

education that are not available in Zimbabwe. So although hostile, it has the positive role of modelling what could be done to make Zimbabwe a good place to live in.

In a song titled *Usizi (Sadness)*, *Ithemba lamaNguni* reflect on what it means to live in South Africa as a Zimbabwean. Being in South Africa is likened to being *sheep without a kraal*, those who are hunted to be killed and losing the vigor for life. Below is an excerpt from the song;

Lord God

You who has forever been on your throne

No one can move you

Who is man to tempt you

But we humble ourselves seeking your glory

You alone know the difference you placed

Between your people

That you lovingly placed on the earth

Today some live as sheep without a kraal

Because others have become hyenas inside the kraal

The taller ones do not lift the short ones

Instead they step on them

Strong ones do not defend the weak

Instead they kill them

We are losing hope as your children of Zimbabwe

And even where we run to

We have become *omabonwa abulawe*

Only you watches where we step

That there are no thorns

And where we sleep that there are not snakes

It's good to be able to move

But we have lost our strength

Stay with us

Move with us and

Sleep with us

Keep us Lord in all this sadness

Amen

(Excerpt from Song *Usizi* by *Ithemba lamaNguni*)

Zimbabwe is likened to a kraal in the song. The imagery of a kraal is used to picture the nation as a place of protection for animals, where the domestic are separated from the wild ones and thereby preserving their lives. This kraal, Zimbabwe, however now has wild animals within it, hyenas. The imagery of a hyena within the kraal conjures up an image of living in Zimbabwe as a deathly condition. It is also believed that witches use hyenas, therefore sharing the kraal with hyenas is a dangerous thing and it is not easy to identify who is the witch as they operate under the cover of darkness. Consequently, you may never know who your enemy is. Furthermore, within the kraal, there are some who are taller but they do not help the shorter ones. The song has the tune of a hymn and is a prayer creating the impression of a helpless person seeking intervention from a powerful figure. It thus constructs a particular victim image of a helpless person who can only plead which is very different to the image of a dissident or combatant.

Since Zimbabwe has become an unsafe place, the song speaks about where they have run to. The place where they expected to find refuge is the place where they have become the *hunted to be killed*. This prayer therefore is a sign of desperation in that they have tried to find recourse to their predicament but this has led to more troubles. They have come to a point which is beyond their reach and only a deity can resolve, hence the prayer. The song is titled sadness and speaks of the challenges of being caught between two states in

which they do not belong.. The following quote exemplifies one of the challenges to living as a noncitizen in South Africa.

She passed her matric really well, right now we have tried but we don't know what to do because she has nothing she has no papers, so she was working at a restaurant but she doesn't want that job... so we don't know what to do...we tried, that's what I am talking about, you will find that if she had been at home she would have gone to school if things were ok at home, but here she is suffering and she has her matric certificate² from here in South Africa

(Interview, Tshengi)

Tshengi speaks about her daughter who has completed her secondary education in South Africa and obtained good grades. She was able to access secondary education through her mother's identity document which was irregularly obtained. After completing matric, she was unable to proceed with her education because she can no longer use her mother's fraudulent identity document and it cannot be used to help her get documents of her own. Tshengi's daughter cannot proceed any further with her education because she is undocumented. As a result she is stuck in the service industry, work she does not want to do. Tshengi ends with the comment that if her daughter was in Zimbabwe this would not

² The Matric certificate is the high school qualification used to gain entry into universities and other tertiary education institutions in

South Africa.

be happening. The challenges that come with living as a noncitizen are altering the life trajectory as evidenced by Tshengi's comment above.

Migration in this narrative is undesirable and a negative aspect in people's lives. The above echoes some of the sentiments explored in Ndlovu (2010) where *Gukurahundi* was seen to lead to a transmission of poverty down the generations. *Gukurahundi* causes migration which in this instance results in a failure to access further education. Similar to Menjivar & Abrego (2012), the way migration is regulated and the different documents required structure and influence people's life outcomes. Here Tshengi speaks as a mother with concern for her daughter. In the following sections I want to explore how gender locates people in different positions influencing their experience of the violence.

Violence is always gendered: Incapable mothers and absent fathers

Linking back to the way young men had a particular experience of violence leading them to migrating, in the following sections I want to look at how people's gendered identities prescribed their experience of *Gukurahundi*. Further, I also want to look at how this influences the stories people tell about the *Gukurahundi* today.

I was proud of myself that I am 19 years old, the other girls were 15, 16 and were sexually active, the teachers also were always asking me why I wasn't dating was it because I thought too highly of myself, I was really saddened you know that I was a virgin and looking after myself but now my virginity had been broken by someone I don't even know

and I didn't agree to it he raped me that's what made me drop out of school I couldn't face the teachers they were never going to believe me they would say I was lying (Interview, Tshengi)

Tshengi told me her story of encountering the *Gukurahundi*, being raped and having a child out of the rape. She was nineteen at the time, having recently come back from a refugee camp in Zambia where she had hoped to join the armed struggle for an independent Zimbabwe. She came back and started school in a boarding school. She told me of the time when she was on holiday at home with her parents when 'dissidents' had come into their home. Her father ordered that a goat be slaughtered and food prepared for the dissidents. The following day however another armed group arrived in the area and these were soldiers on the trail of the dissidents. When they heard of the arrival of the soldiers, she tells of how her mother was most upset that the soldiers would find out that the dissidents had been entertained at her homestead. This day coincided with the day when Tshengi was heading back to school with her younger sister. On their way back to board the bus they met soldiers who raped her. The rape was reported to the police but nothing came of the case and she went back to school delayed by a week.

While back in school she discovered that she was pregnant. Tshengi had prided herself of her virginity and refused to engage in sexual relationships with some of the teachers like other girls had been doing. Her discovery of being pregnant thus ate away at that pride and she was convinced no one would believe she was raped especially the teachers whose

advances she had turned down. This resulted in her running away from school and ending up back home where she had the baby and then migrated to South Africa leaving the baby in the care of her mother. Tshengi's story about being raped is not structured in political terms, as other popular stories. It is not about her ethnic identity but it is a story about her personhood. As a woman she is culturally expected to be the custodian of morality (Yuval-Davis, 1993). She is expected to take pride in sexual purity, something that is valued only in women. As such she internalises her rape and expresses it in the language of shame. The story does not end with the rape event because she is pregnant, it also is about a son who continues to torment her life because his paternal ancestry is not known and this she believes is linked to the criminal life he leads.

Incapable Mothers

So this child of mine who is a product of rape... If I tell you right now my child is in a lot of pain... I don't know what I can say about this child if you were to find us sitting with him in the house he is very good he knows how to do work he does everything he is not disabled it's just that his brain just misses it a bit... he just gets carried away and cheated by friends that say let's go and do this and he goes and when they get there they send him first then they take those things and sell and he never gets to see the money and it doesn't bother him he is in jail for the fourth time as we speak ... I went to see him in December you know for my son there is nothing that goes well for him everything

of his whose child will I say he is who is his father where will I find him go to him ask his relatives to fix things for the child... (Interview, Tshengi)

In the above quote, Tshengi speaks about her son who was conceived through the rape. She believes he has an abnormality which leads him to a criminal life. She links his abnormality to the fact that his paternal ancestry is unknown by asking the question *whose child will I say he is?* This is the missing link to her son's puzzling behaviour, the fact that his paternal lineage is not known. It is the answer to why, an otherwise normal thirty year old, would be involved in crime and take the fall for it while not enjoying the benefits. By telling the story of her son's normalcy, save for this one glitch with the law, Tshengi's story seeks to find a solution to the problems in an unexpected way. Instead of seeking to hold a thirty year old man accountable for his actions, Tshengi places the burden on herself.

Understanding the rituals performed at the birth of a child is important in making sense of the above narrative. There are rituals performed after a child is born to introduce and link the child to its ancestors. These rituals form a link between the dead and the living as well as to the land on which people live. All the rituals performed on an infant or child should be those of the patrilineal lineage. One of the rituals is the disposal of the wilted umbilical cord that falls off an infant. It is not uncommon that people will keep the wilted umbilical code, if the father of the child is unknown or not present, only to dispose of it

once the paternal relatives have confirmed what rituals are to be followed. Tshengi therefore talks about how she does not know who the father of her child is, if she did, she would have looked for him and asked them (his relatives) to fix things, correct the mistake of not having observed the correct rituals pertaining to the child. The excerpt from the song below speaks about the failure to observe the correct way of disposing the umbilical cord.

We have a hot coal on our back beautiful nation

The world has disowned us

Our umbilical cords are being disposed of using foreign customs

Sons of a nation of valiant heroes

Have become the laughing stock of the nations

Their fathers' heroism left behind in the ruins of a failing nation

Allow me brothers to analyse this oddity, a beautiful nation is dying

(Song *Inkomo ZikaBaba* by *Ithemba lamaNguni*).

In the song *Inkomo zikababa*, *Ithemba lamaNguni* speak of the demise of the Zimbabwean nation and the resulting migration to neighbouring countries of its citizens. They speak about the cultural rites of disposing of the wilted umbilical cord that falls off

an infant which they believe is no longer being observed the proper way because they are in foreign lands. In migration, people find themselves in a land to which they have no connection. In which the umbilical cord cannot be used to connect to the land or to the ancestors. In another song, the song ‘This is a big matter’, *Ithemba lamaNguni* speak about daughters in-law who are marrying before meeting their mothers in-law.

Write it down this is a big story

It’s the story of the sons of Zimbabwe

Who have become visitors in their fathers’ homes

It’s about the daughters in-law

who have never met their mothers’ in-law

It’s about grandchildren

who have never met their grandfathers

Write it down this is a big matter

(Song: *Inkulu lendaba* by *Ithemba lamaNguni*)

The significance of meeting the mother in-law, amongst other things, is so that she can pass on knowledge to the daughter in-law about the rituals that are to be observed for the children. The women in the paternal family pass down the knowledge on ritual and other

traditions to be observed, Yuval-Davis (1993) argues that women are given the social role of intergenerational transmitters of cultural traditions and customs. In the above excerpts, migration is deplored for upsetting the 'proper' way of life in that rituals are no longer being observed or are being observed following foreign customs. The cultural rights surrounding birth are important not only in relation to children born of rape but to all. The umbilical cord ritual here is about performing identity and it is only the father's identity that is performed in the ritual. The nation is produced by women but its identity belongs to men.

So, in this context, Tshengi narrates her role as a mother into the story and takes blame for the pain in her son's life. In this way the pain of *Gukurahundi* and of the rape continues to be borne by her in the role of a mother. In *Ndebele* there is a saying about feeling pain that only a woman who is a mother can use. In response to witnessing pain in another, usually a child or someone who could be that woman's child, a woman will say *kuyahela*, this is the same word used for labour pains. The mother bears the pain of the other in the form of labour pains. This is the witnessing of pain in another that only a mother can have. So Tshengi narrates her son's pain from that position of *ukuhela*. When she says she would look for the father of her child and ask his relatives to fix things for her son, she says she would ask his relatives because the father would most likely not know what needs to be done. His mother and aunties however would be the ones to say what needs to be done. This is also reflected in the way Tshengi expresses responsibility for identifying the father of her son. It is her role to know who they are so she would be taught how to raise her son according to his paternal customs.

Tshengi carries the burden of seeing the pain her son experiences because she, as a mother, has failed to identify his father. Knowing his father, would allow her to perform the needed rituals to enable him to lead a normal life. Tshengi carries the pain of having been raped during the *Gukurahundi* and furthermore of watching her son living a life of pain because of rituals that she as his mother should have performed for him but she could not. She calls this a wound that can never be healed.

I don't want to lie what they did to me ...that thing hurts a lot it is painful it is very painful it is a wound that is open, ulcers are better because if you have ulcers in your stomach you are given pills and medicine to drink and they heal a little bit but this wound that was opened by the Shona it's a wound that doesn't have medicine to heal it the only way you can say it's healed is if a person is dead and they don't know anything they have forgotten (Interview, Tshengi).

This is the wound that can never be healed because there is no way to identify the father of her son as she was raped by three men. Tshengi's son remains a constant reminder of the rape and furthermore his troubled life brings more pain for her. Not knowing who the father is means she cannot do anything to help her son live a better life.

So this child of mine who is a product of rape I have never told him that I was raped I have never told any child of mine I have never told him because when I look at him I think I will tell his child how is he going to feel he is going to feel a lot of pain (Interview Tshengi).

While Tshengi says she has never told her son he was conceived of rape, it is possible that this is an open secret as Theidon (2015) speaks of children born of sexual violence in Peru. The way Tshengi speaks of the pain her son is experiencing is with the sense of a helpless mother, because mothers are constructed as those who sacrifice for their children and bear pain on their behalf. Tshengi narrates the pain in her son's life as her own. She would rather not have him suffer anymore and so she does not share the pain of his conception. She would rather carry this pain alone.

Tshengi's worldview makes her believe that all children conceived of rape can never lead a normal life. This is informed by the belief in cultural customs where rituals are performed to link a child to its paternal ancestry. Where the father is not known, it is not possible to know which rituals should be performed. Children born out of rape, where the father is not known are considered problematic for this reason.

you see that thing what I am saying that many children from rape if you look the children are not right many of them that I have seen are not right those children (Interview, Tshengi).

She speaks with a despondent finality about how the children of rape that she has seen are 'not right'. Her dejection stems from the impossibility of identifying the father of the child and therefore solving the problem of observing the correct rituals for the child to be normal. The violence of *Gukurahundi* is understood from this gendered cultural standpoint as a wound that can never be healed. It is possible that Tshengi has tried to perform corrective rituals since the father of the child is not known. These may at times work but in some cases traditional healers and sangomas may say that the only thing that will work is for the child to be taken to his family as it is believed that a child belongs to their paternal side of the family. This is the 'problem' with children of rape, their family is never known and for those who believe in the power of the rituals that are performed, it is used to explain the delinquency and other negatives that occur in the lives of the children of rape.

Tshengi says *Gukurahundi* is a wound that cannot be healed except through dying. It is only when dead, she says, that one does not know of the wound and does not remember it. In this way *Gukurahundi* for Tshengi left a mark that can only be erased by her death. It is felt in Tshengi's intimate life as she goes to visit her son in jail, as she watches a young man that would otherwise be leading a productive life instead of living a difficult one. The nation is produced by women but belongs to the men. Women are rendered powerless as exemplified by the above discussion. Tshengi has no recourse to the pain she carries from *Gukurahundi* not in the publicly invoked memory of *Gukurahundi*. This is because it is a male perspective of the atrocities. In this way Tshengi's location as a mother is disempowering. The pain of *ukuhela* similar to *inimba* (*Gobodo-Madikizela*,

2011) is an arena accessible only to mothers. It is the witnessing of pain in another which in *inimba* empowers the mothers to forgive. In the case of *ukuhela* Tshengi is locked into a painful existence that only death can free her from.

A Mother to “Dissidents”

Themba tells the story of how his mother was caught between the dissidents and the fifth brigade:

It was in the morning and I saw those guys the dissidents ... Then one of them passed right in front of our homestead my mother was outside they said old lady can you see us? She said yes I can see you my children (*bantwabami*). Then he said just raise the volume and you'll see (*Usale uvuli volume, Usalu vuli volume*) and that was that. She said what would have happened, why would I do that, and she let them go, that was around seven in the morning when we woke up, now I think around two, three (afternoon) soldiers came by the Zimbabwe National Army (Interview, Themba).

Like Tshengi's, this story revolves around being a mother caught up between the dissidents and soldiers. Here the dissidents summon Themba's mother into a mothering role. She in turn addresses them as her children, *bantwabami*, this exchange influences how she interacts with the soldiers that later pass by her homestead on the same day. She

calls the dissidents her children and promises not to divulge having seen them, something which the dissidents threaten her into agreeing to by cautioning her against raising the volume. The Zimbabwe National Army then pass through the area on a trail of the dissidents. They question the old woman about the dissidents and she denies ever seeing them. She holds fast to her agreement with ‘her children’ even when the soldiers beat her up to the point of bleeding. Themba then comes to her rescue by offering the information that the dissidents had passed in the area and threatened his mother against speaking about seeing them.

Tshengi initially experiences *Gukurahundi* as a young woman who is raped. This experience of rape leaves her a mother to a son whose father she will never know. In her current life her mothering role is a constant reminder of her *Gukurahundi* experience and perpetuates violence in her life as a mother that she says will only end when she dies. In her mothering role she experiences the violence of being unable to do the rituals that could take her son out of the painful life he leads.

Themba’s mother on the other hand experienced the violence of *Gukurahundi* because she had responded to the dissidents as her sons. She could not betray her sons by giving information to the soldiers about their whereabouts. As a mother she wanted to protect her ‘sons’. Although these were not her biological sons she felt that having interacted with them as her sons, she could not view the soldiers in the same light. Tshengi also speaks of how her mother was most disturbed by the arrival of the soldiers the day after

they had entertained dissidents in her homestead. The domestic sphere, which is traditionally viewed as an apolitical space, appears in these narratives and women's experiences of the violence are expressed most closely in these spaces. Motsemme (2004) speaks of how women's narratives of violence in South Africa centered around maintenance of their homes.

Themba's mother in the above discussions suffers in the place of her children. She could have avoided being beaten up by telling the soldiers of her encounter with the dissidents. She carries the pain of *ukuhela* and this position does not empower her. These are children that do not belong to her or else she would have passed on her identity to them. The stories of *ukuhela* are not made central in popular narratives of *Gukurahundi*. As the excerpt from the song *Inkomo zikababa* on page 252 shows, *Gukurahundi* is about the sons of a nation, their fathers' heroism and a conversation among brothers. So now I turn to this story about fathers in *Gukurahundi*.

Absent Fathers

The story of *Gukurahundi* is usually told about people that grew up without fathers:

my father died ...my grudge comes in that I think if he had been there I could also be having somewhere to go to in the future because there is no parent who can just watch his child suffer but then my mother tries in her own way I cannot I will not always depend on her because she is

a woman she had her own house and has someone that she lives with the man that she is living with cannot be the person who takes my responsibility in the same way that my own father would have (Interview, Thabani).

The loss of fathers was spoken of in a fashion typified by the above quote. At times people described themselves as orphans even though they had only lost fathers and not their mothers. The loss of fathers was related to economic issues such as loss of breadwinners, inheritance and an inability to gain an education, which would have led to people leading better lives in the present. Even where mothers were present and also migrated to try and fend for their children, as is the case with Thabani quoted above, this was not spoken of in positive terms. The mothers would never be able to provide in the same way that the fathers would have.

in 1984 they came to my grandfather ... and then one of them beat up my grandfather and they kicked him, he broke a rib so my father was sick anyway and so I looked at my grandfather as the breadwinner and he was powerful you see more than my father and... he died. Then my father was left and he was sick also anyway he died in 1987. So till today for me at school I was very very intelligent and unfortunately because I am a twin you see my mother couldn't afford to send us to school, ... If it wasn't for them at least my father if would have been alive or my grandfather would have lived I wouldn't have been

maybe... he would have tried to send me to school, because my mother was alone (Interview, Siphho).

In the two quotes above, the loss of a father, although in one case it was a grandfather influences the life trajectory of both speakers. The father or grandfather are narrated as having the same role. White (2014) speaks of the worldview in which a father's siblings can take the place of the father. The grandfather could take the place of Siphho's father but the mother could not. This is about spiritual linkages which fathers have the capacity to facilitate but mothers cannot.

The mother is present but does not have the capacity to do what a father would have done in both instances. Mothers are seen as lacking the capacity to ensure a good livelihood for their children. Thabani says his mother now lives with another man, but he does not think this man should be the one to perform the fatherly duties that his father would have performed had he been alive. The loss of fathers is about the socio-economic role that fathers would have played in their children's lives. For Siphho this would have been his father or grandfather sending him to school. Even though his mother, as a woman, tried to do this, she was not able to do it satisfactorily. The patrilineal ancestors are linked to the socioeconomic wellbeing through the functions that a father would perform. Socioeconomic wellbeing affects all other aspects of life. This is what Tshengi alludes to as well in narrating the pain in her son that she cannot alleviate.

The effects of the violence have this gendered dimension at the family level where the gendered position of the mother, is to be involved in a child's life as a nurturer but not as a provider who prepares children for a good life. This differs from literature that argues that conflict may present women with the opportunity to take up roles that are traditionally the domain of men. Meintjes et al., (2001) speak of opportunities to be in charge of the fields and the financial rewards from those activities. In this case, however the women are not spoken of as taking up the roles that would have traditionally been a men's arena, such as ensuring their children are in school. Instead the loss of fathers is felt to have left an indelible mark on the lives of the children as they end up uneducated despite being intelligent. This is also the case with children conceived in rape. The father's role is not replaced; instead the trauma of the violence is expressed in terms of the lack of a father and passed down to the child.

This narrative on the loss of fathers is indicative of the socio-cultural positioning of women as earlier discussed on the cultural rituals around the birth and care of children. The loss of fathers, or absent fathers in the case of children conceived in rape, puts into focus the expected cultural role of a mother in the lives of children. In a culture that believes the children belong to the paternal side of the family, a mother can only nurture the child. Partenry gives access to the spiritual world. In the case of Tshengi's son, he is living a life of suffering because his father is not known.

The rituals are not only those performed at birth but there are other ceremonies that are performed in the course of a person's life to ensure that things go well for everyone. It is not uncommon that someone experiencing challenges in their life will go home to ask that rituals be performed for the ancestors to look kindly on the person and bring them good luck. Fathers form the link between those who are living and the dead. The link between the living and the dead is important so that the dead may look kindly on the living and ensure that their lives proceed well. From this perspective therefore the father is seen as crucial and important in the life of an individual such that it is not just the presence of a male who will provide financial but that biological link to the spiritual realm is important.

The narrative on the loss of fathers is therefore important in highlighting the role women are expected to play in the lives of their children. Mothers do not have the capacity to launch children into their lives as competent, financially successful members of society. Mothers are only a source of comfort and care. They do not have the authority to ensure their children live successful lives. The cultural understanding of the role of a father and mother is translated into economic terms where the mother may have been present but her attempts to ensure her children get an education do not amount to anything. Education here is seen as a crucial foundation to a life of success.

The rigid gendered conceptualisation of the role of a father or mother influence how people experienced and now remember *Gukurahundi*. The loss of fathers is a central part to the narrative of remembering the violence. This is because of the role fathers have in

people's lives. In remembering *Gukurahundi* and centering the loss of fathers in the story, the narrative simultaneously speaks about the biological and spiritual linkages to the earth. This by default narrates the social and economic effects of *Gukurahundi*. At the same time however, centering the male in this way limits the ways in which women can be remembered and the various roles they may have played or could have today.

So the role of *Gukurahundi* in the loss of fathers is linked to the present day lives of people, through the myriad understandings of the role of a father as a provider, as fathers were the ones employed in the urban areas while women stayed behind and maintained the homesteads. Further to this, however, fathers also formed the link between the living and the dead. This culturally nuanced role of a father is important in making sense of the way people talk about the loss of their fathers due to the *Gukurahundi*. Men were often publicly killed which may explain why narrating the violence centres on this more visible violation more than, for example, rape. In many instances, those killed were buried in shallow graves. To this day human remains continue to be unearthed in different parts of Matabeleland. What follows is a discussion of the way these killings and burials are viewed.

The father connects the child to the spiritual realm through the rituals such as the disposal of the umbilical chord. The umbilical chord links the child to the land and the ancestors. In migration or rape, or with the *Gukurahundi* where people were not properly buried this

‘proper’ way of doing things is disrupted. This results in the challenges that participants in this study are speaking of.

The ‘bad’ death

It is reported by the CCJP (1997) that families and communities were not allowed to mourn their dead kin. In some cases, people were forced to desecrate the graves in which victims were buried as they were told to sing and dance on top of the graves. In other cases people were asked to dig shallow graves and bury victims in the vicinity of the killings. Tshengi speaks about the graves she believes are still located in Plumtree where she witnessed the killing of two young men that she had been in a bus with:

After that they called young men from Plumtree and just told them to dig holes and just buried them they just buried there I’m sure those young men are still there where they were buried that day. They have not been exhumed, they have not been exhumed that is why on another day when there were talks, we were talking in the MLF and one lady just came out saying there are graves in Marula and I said not just in Marula in Plumtree there by the corner there are graves. People were just buried where they had been killed the soldiers would just bury you there so the graves of the Matabeleland people are strewn everywhere (Interview, Tshengi).

In the quote above, Tshengi concludes the story about her witnessing the killing of two young men in Plumtree. She concludes the story with a focus on how the young men were buried. In her telling the story she wants to show how this confirms that there are many graves across the Matabeleland region because people were clandestinely buried wherever they had been killed.

Translating this portion of the interview deserves a small note here, the word Tshengi uses in *Ndebele* to talk about the burial of these young men is, *ukugqibela*, which does not speak of a ‘proper burial’. The *Ndebele* word used for burial is *ukungwaba* which is also translated to burying in English. The word *ukugqibela* which Tshengi uses means just putting something in a hole on the ground and covering it with soil in the same way one would do this when planting seeds or disposing of garbage. *Ukungwaba* speaks of the burying of human remains and the different rituals that go hand in hand with this. So here Tshengi is making a point about the improper disposal of human remains that was not done according to cultural customs and is therefore a problem. Das (2007) speaks of the ‘bad death’, as the improperly mourned or unwitnessed death. In relation to *Gukurahundi*, thinking about the ‘bad death’ is highlighted in the different ways people spoke about the burial of the remains of those who were killed. The burial is a symbolic way of witnessing the death and gaining closure. There are many rituals that are performed in relation to death in order for kith and kin to get closure and bid farewell to their loved ones. This is the witness in the rituals that can turn a bad death into a good death.

In cases where someone dies in an accident, for example, rituals are performed which are believed to take the person's spirit from where they died to their last home and their burial place. By way of example, in 2006 I witnessed the memorial service of a cousin who died in Johannesburg and her body was being taken to Zimbabwe for burial. Just before the funeral party's departure with the body, her father took the branch of a certain plant and hit the ground while speaking to his dead daughter and explaining to her that they were starting a long journey home. He pleaded with her to understand that they were in a foreign land and she could not be buried here. He asked her not to give them any problems on the way home and to ensure that they have a safe passage.

In the case of people who disappeared or were killed during the *Gukurahundi*, it remains a source of distress that their spirits are wandering in the wild and have not been brought home. White (2004) speaks of similar customs in rural Kwazulu Natal. The burial and its accompanying rituals complete the link to the soil that is initiated with the disposal of the umbilical cord. The umbilical cord connects the child to their bloodline and the land. At death the burial brings the spirit of the dead to the land to join the ancestors. It is not uncommon for the bodies of people living in urban areas in Zimbabwe or those out of the country to be taken back to their rural home for burial. This is similar to the rituals performed in Kwazulu Natal to bring back the spirit of the disappeared grandfather (White, 2004).

I will detail briefly some of the rituals performed in relation to death and burials. If someone dies, it is custom that people gather at the house of the deceased and only disperse after the burial. The night before the burial, the body of the deceased lies in state within the home. On this last night people maintain a vigil in honour of the dead as a way of bidding them farewell. From the time of the death until the burial, life could be described as being in limbo. For example, close family members do not continue with life as normal, children do not attend school and adults take time off work. All the usual domestic sundry tasks such as sweeping the yard or cleaning the house may also be put on hold before the burial. This is all done as a sign of mourning. This period where life is in limbo lasts until the time of the burial. During the burial the homestead is thoroughly cleaned so that those who come back from the burial site come back to a clean home.

The burial serves as a cut off from the intense mourning and all the rituals that were being enacted as a sign of mourning. Extended family members that move into the family home of the deceased disperse after the burial and only a few close relatives remain to comfort and help those left behind. Customarily after the burial, people are no longer supposed to mourn publicly for the dead person as this is believed to bring bad luck. Mourning publicly after the burial means one is disturbing the dead person who has been laid to rest and may cause their spirit unrest. As such, the burial marks a cut off point between the dead and the living. It is the demarcation that one has left the earth and passed onto the next world. After the burial, people may observe a ritual of washing hands at the entrance of the homestead, in water with herbs. Each person has to wash their hands of all that has happened during the mourning and at the burial site before

entering the homestead. In this way a boundary is created between what has happened leading up to the burial and moving forward with life.

The burial marks a cut from the time of mourning and signifies the picking up and continuing with life. A different mode of mourning ensues, for example, the children or siblings of the deceased shave their heads and the wife of the deceased may be expected to wear a black dress for a year. At the end of the year, close relatives of the deceased gather to share the estate of the deceased as well as deciding the fate of the wife and children, if it was a man with children that were still dependent. The burial is significant in this way as part of the mourning and gaining closure after loss.

I want to ask that we be given our freedom, freedom with regards to the people who were killed like in Bhalagwe ... they allow us to go and speak to our people because right now when they see you there you get arrested, you have to ask and this thing is on our side and we don't have permission to go there so we are asking that they allow us we have accepted that they killed us and we don't care and we didn't even revenge we are just quiet and we ask that they leave that thing that we should have access to our people so they killed us and now they continue holding on to those corpses it's like they put those people in the mortuary and locked them inside no one has access to go there we ask that they make a way for us to go in there even if they have not apologised

we don't care we want to go in there and decide what needs to be done so we can rebury our people properly (Focus Group Participant).

The focus group participant quoted above describes the human remains that were not properly buried as similar to them as victims being locked up in a mortuary. This means that people's lives are still in that limbo state and they have not received any closure from the loss. He also asks for freedom to go and speak to the dead. The burial and reburial of the remains of those who were killed during the *Gukurahundi* remain an issue as the government has time and again responded by barring people from according their dead, 'proper burials'. During an interview, Dumo spoke about an event in 2013 where a family in Gwanda had been barred from reburying the exhumed body of a family member who was killed during the *Gukurahundi*. Police were sent in to disperse the crowds. Other disruptions to commemorations have been reported by Alexander et al. (2000).

Recently in November last year people in Gwanda were dispersed forcefully by the police while going to bury one of theirs who was killed by the *Gukurahundi* and thrown into a mine so that thing shows that people have not let go of that thing and it's still something very much alive in them and now if you prohibit them from such things its like you are reopening the wound and making it worse (Dumo, Interview).

After the burial, there was an enforced forgetting of the person, for example people would no longer use their name but refer to them as *umufi* literally translated to *the dead one*. There are ceremonies that are conducted to remember the dead, for example if it is the father of the family, a ceremony called *umbuyiso* is done. *Umbuyiso* literally translated means *bringing home*. In this ceremony the spirit of the dead father is brought back home. This happens usually a year after the death. Typically, the eldest son is endowed with their dead father's spirit. In this way he takes the place of the father and leads the family. In the case of *Gukurahundi* where graves are scattered everywhere and the spirits of those who died have not been brought home, this is a challenge.

Speaking about the graves and the remains is not only about improperly buried remains, it is also about the effect that this is believed to have on those who are still alive. The spirits of the dead are believed to be roaming around. This has an effect on the lives of those who are still alive who are supposed to ensure that the spirits of the dead are guided to their final resting place or called to continue guiding the living through *umbuyiso*. In addition, issues such as the drought that has been seasonally plaguing areas affected by the *Gukurahundi* are attributed to the presence of human remains that have not been properly buried.

In the past if you look at our culture there would be a time towards the rain where rituals would be observed or even those from the church would go and pray for the rain those who follow

a traditional way would go and even the bone of a dog that died in the bush would be collected... to be burned so that there was this belief that this is done for the rain to fall properly and that enough rain falls and that it doesn't rain and kill people but if you look in the recent years since the beginning of the Zimbabwean government eh or I should give a closer reference last year in in Matebeland South we can find close to ten people who were hit by lightning something which is new to us right now we are crying Bulawayo has no water Beitbrigde has no water ah so why because we don't believe that the rain could fall and we get enough water while we still have people's bones strewn all over the forests that people have not been allowed to collect and bury properly if the bone from a dog could stop the rain from falling properly what more that of a person (Dumo, Interview).

Dumo's comments above about the drought resonate with the song *Inkulu leNdaba* where *Ithemba lamaNguni* sing

These white bones

Belong to our brothers

Are you going to plead guilty to your crimes

(Song Inkulu Lendaba)

The phrase, these white bones connotes an image of remains that have not been properly buried and have been bleached by the weather elements (D. S. Ndlovu, 2015). Victims of *Gukurahundi* are in a state of limbo with their loved ones *locked in a mortuary*. As such, the violence continues in people's lives today, as they live with the unfinished business of those who were killed in the *Gukurahundi* and have not been properly buried. It is this understanding of the effects of the *Gukurahundi* that illuminates the rejection of Morgan Tsvangirai's proposal to compensate victims of *Gukurahundi*. While some may have rejected the compensation because they thought it was a strategy to buy voter support, the understanding of the effects of *Gukurahundi* from the notion of a bad death, suggests otherwise. The extract below illuminates this response:

What should be done since there is a next coming President as perceived by the people, Tsvangirayi who says he's going to compensate the victims of *Gukurahundi*. Who are the victims of *Gukurahundi*? Anybody from Matabeleland side, so the only compensation he can give them is total freedom to rule themselves, that's the best compensation he can give to us (Focus Group Discussion).

In the above excerpt a focus group participant, a member of MLF responds to Tsvangirai who, during the time he was Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, had called for the compensation of victims of *Gukurahundi*. Tsvangirai's call for compensation is not welcomed as a good thing despite many victims of *Gukurahundi* having been

preoccupied with calls for acknowledgement and compensation. Sibongile below says that acknowledgement should happen in tandem with compensation for the damage of *Gukurahundi*. She suggests the government take care of the victims of *Gukurahundi* as a way of paying for the damage caused.

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. Like right now if I come and break utensils in your house I will come and apologise and say I was drunk or whatever happened. But there is a need for me to repair the damage I have done. 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 its better if government or whoever they are is apologising should see that when they are apologising to those people there must be a repayment that they do because they cannot raise those who died but they can repay in ways that we are signifying that we are all

people and we are coming back to living together as one
(Interview, Sibongile).

Sibongile wants compensation for the damage that *Gukurahundi* caused in contrast to the focus group discussant who felt there is no way to compensate for *Gukurahundi* except through people being given their land to self govern. Another focus group discussant responds to the issue of compensation by asking how much the soul of a person costs. In posing this question they also argue against Tsvangirai's call. In this regard they view compensation as an insult as it means that they would have to remain as a part of Zimbabwe. Secondly how can one possibly compensate the lost linkages between people and their bloodlines? It is only giving them their freedom to land where they can correct this damage by reburying the dead.

The timing of these two utterances is important in understanding the differences. I interviewed Sibongile in 2009 as a member of ZAM, an organisation that was lobbying for the inclusion of the *Gukurahundi* narrative into Zimbabwe's collective story. Her narrative was hinged on the hope that MDC was taking over as the ruling party in Zimbabwe. I held the focus group discussion in 2013 after MDC had gone into a government of national unity with ZANU PF and initial hopes that it would bring change to Zimbabwe had waned. Sibongile spoke as part of a group that wanted to be part of Zimbabwe and was working against the division they perceived to be running along ethnic lines in Zimbabwe's national project. The focus group discussion I held was with

members of MLF who are calling for a separate nation for Mthwakazians out of Zimbabwe. In this regard the narratives are crafted within these broader contexts of time and organisational belonging.

Further to this however the religious inclinations of a proper burial according to the custom and traditions is at play in the refusal to accept Tsvangirai's call for compensation of *Gukurahundi* victims.

Why is he so concerned by playing the third party in it and saying he'll compensate where is he going to get that money from and I repeat how is he going to compensate? How much is a soul of a person? eh what they have to do is to agree and people must be reburied somewhere where there are mass graves there must be monuments, actually they must agree about *Gukurahundi* and put a reason why they did it because you forgive one who apologises, actually on my point of view, giving us our freedom would be a good price (Focus Group Discussion).

Another participant added to this by saying:

Actually the only compensation that will heal our wounds is total independence to our country Mthwakazi. I think that will be enough, we will then know what to do, we don't even need them

to tell us why they killed us, how many they killed how they did it. If they give us our independence we'll bury our people, then we'll know what to do with the rest of us, that will be compensation enough (Focus Group Discussion).

The last quoted focus group participant outlines this in his statement that all they need is their independence so they can bury their people after which they will know what to do. Burial presupposes everything else that they aim to do once they become independent from Zimbabwe. Burial will build the right foundation towards their healing and a good future for victims of the *Gukurahundi*. It is important to highlight here that these rituals of death and burial have, over time, shifted with influences of other cultures. As a result, not all people religiously observe them as culture is changing with time. However the underlying belief that people are spirit beings and after their death, the spirit lives on and may continue as a part of the family lives on in different ways. This is the worldview that undergirds some of the grievances with the *Gukurahundi* atrocities.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored ways in which the *Gukurahundi* violence is given meaning today in Johannesburg. Principally the narrative about *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg contradicts the official discourse that has prevailed in Zimbabwe and continues to be used against those who want to speak about the violence. While official discourse has framed *Gukurahundi* as a matter of the past that has been sufficiently dealt with, participants in

this study speak of *Gukurahundi* as a matter that is pending in their lives. It is as if those who died in the *Gukurahundi* are “locked up in a mortuary”, they are yet to be buried. People are yet to move on with their lives and have not yet reached closure for the loss experienced. Secondly this chapter has also highlighted the worldview within which people are making sense of the *Gukurahundi* atrocities. By looking through the spiritual and cultural frame from the lifeworld of participants, this chapter aids us in understanding what is influencing some of the meanings drawn from the *Gukurahundi*. Understanding the cultural and spiritual meaning of a father helps to explain the preoccupation with the loss of fathers and challenges of raising a child conceived from rape. Further to this, it aids in the understanding of the role and significance of women and mothers. Understanding the cultural rituals surrounding death and burials enrich and illuminate our understanding of the disgruntlement with the unacknowledged deaths that occurred during the *Gukurahundi*. It also helps in understanding what people mean when talking about acknowledgement of the atrocities in their lives.

Thirdly this chapter outlines the gendered way in which the *Gukurahundi* violence was experienced and continues to affect people today. While the popular way in which the story of *Gukurahundi* has been told foregrounds the male experience and overshadows women’s experiences or presents them as a footnote of the main ‘male’ issues, this chapter outlines the gendered nature of violence in that the sexual violence against women was as integral to the violence as the killing targeted at males. Central to these assaults is the gendering of males and females, where there is a division between the public and private and males are expected to be active in the public political sphere while

women are expected to be active in the private spheres. Additionally women's bodies are framed as belonging to the male which makes the sexual assault of women effective as a strategy against the group to which the women belong. While the story of sexual violence is framed from an individual perspective and the shame from the assault internalised, it is important to recognise it as a political assault on the women.

Lastly the story of *Gukurahundi* is told in Johannesburg intertwined with the migration trajectories. As the song "We will never forget" says

We are growing old in foreign lands; we are heartsore

We will never forget *Gukurahundi* (Song *Ngekesikhohlwe* by *Uthemba lamaNguni*).

In this song, migration features as an undesired status that makes the singers' hearts sore. Migrants are not connected to the land and occupy a liminal space in the nation as well as when viewing their lives from a cultural practices lens. This is the marginality narrated through the memory of *Gukurahundi*. In the following chapter, I focus on the use of artistic expression to speak about *Gukurahundi* by exploring the film *The Tunnel* and music from the CD *Inkulu lendaba*. These are two art pieces created by two differently located artists. *The Tunnel* was created by a white South African and has been viewed across the world while *Inkulu le Ndaba* music by black, Zimbabwean migrants living in Johannesburg has not enjoyed a world reach anywhere close to that of *The Tunnel*.

Chapter 5: Stories about the 'other'

Artists

Are not those with a VIP pass

To the world's stage

Born with a silver spoon

A golden handshake

The perfect skin tone

The correct language

The right sound

But those who begin to sing

From outside the stadium.

Their voices overpowered

By the noise from the stadium.

Though their song first sounds like a low hum,

As more join in the hum

It blazes and

Will disrupt and

Discord the main song

Even if for

One moment,

One second.

So the world asks

What is that noise

Where is that sound

Who are these people

Claiming their place

Stomping their feet

Banging the drums

Demanding

On the world stage

A day

A play

A dance

(Poem by Duduzile S Ndlovu, 2015)

Introduction

In chapter four, I focused on the meanings people give to the *Gukurahundi* today in Johannesburg. *Gukurahundi* is not a moment of madness but its effects continue to manifest in different ways in people's lives. Having explored the ways in which people see the continuation of *Gukurahundi* in their lives today, I will now move on to explore the how the story of *Gukurahundi* is told. Here I want to look at the art created to commemorate *Gukurahundi*. I am going to present the music by *Ithemba lamaNguni*, *Inkulu leNdaba* as well as the film *The Tunnel* by Jenna Bass. These two artworks present a good opportunity to compare how the story of *Gukurahundi* is told by victims on one hand and by an outsider on the other. There are other differences between Jenna Bass and *Ithemba lamaNguni* such as their nationality but participants placed greater significance on racial identity. I focus on these artistic creations influenced by the *Gukurahundi* to answer the question; Who is entitled to speak about the *Gukurahundi* today in Johannesburg? The chapter begins by exploring who the artists creating these works are and the motivation behind the art. Secondly, I will explore how the story of *Gukurahundi* is told in the two artworks and finally focus on how *The Tunnel* is received by victims of *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg.

Gukurahundi is still there and living inside of us

Gukurahundi is there and living in us... so I well think that thing has limited on me because if it wasn't for *Gukurahundi* I was going to be an artist not an activist. I was going to be rich and not

a politician so those things had an impact in my life because for me if it wasn't for tribalism and *Gukurahundi* I would have written about something different in my poetry but because of those things they still affect me and some of us over that's what forced me to end up writing about politics and tribalism in our country (Interview, Siphoh).

The quote above expresses the view of the past as a multi layered sedimentation as Taylor (2003) has argued about the repertoire. The repertoire speaks of the ephemeral, embodied and performed forms of remembering that allow for a simultaneous expression of complicated multilayered processes. In this case, the violence is not viewed as something that happened back then and people have moved on. It is felt today in the present and, as such, influences what people are doing. *Gukurahundi* is present in the poetry and has turned *artists* into *activists*. They no longer just create poetry for enjoyment but use poetry to remember *Gukurahundi*. The past is embodied and expressed in these ways by victims through to their artistic production. It seems that the creation of art by victims is not a choice but something they feel forced to do. If they could have it any other way they would not be making art on *Gukurahundi*. As discussed in chapter four, for many *Gukurahundi* was not a moment of madness that ended the day the Fifth Brigade left Matabeleland.

As *Ithemba lamaNguni* now we recognise we have a role a magnificent role to play in our country you see (Interview, Siphoh)

Although the art activism is not something that *Ithemba LamaNguni* chose as their life path, they find that it is an important part of nation building and so they are contributing towards nation building in this way. This leads them to create poetry, music and plays on the *Gukurahundi*. The work of artistically presenting the message of *Gukurahundi* is a significant part of nation building recognised by the community so they bring together the artists.

And there's a young man who said for him as a boy, what happened to him. I survived because my mother was asked to put me in a grain mill to pound me to death when she had done that dissidents appeared that is how I survived. So that boy you can see him he is still very bitter but he is that kind of person who loves art he loves poetry and all those, so some people connected us (Interview, Siphoh).

In the above quote Siphoh speaks about how he has been brought together with another artist because of their shared history and artistry. The community brought them together acknowledging their art memorising *Gukurahundi*. *Ithemba lamaNguni* speak about *Gukurahundi* despite the risk it carries because they see it as a significant part of nation building. Siphoh speaks about this risk of speaking about *Gukurahundi* in the quote below, where he says people question his choice of continuing to talk about *Gukurahundi* when he could be killed. There is a song that also speaks to this called *The Truth*.

The cost of telling the truth

Like most of the people ask me and say how come you never get arrested, do you go home (Zimbabwe)? I tell them I do go home if they arrest me and I go to jail they (ZANU PF government) can kill me, but as long as I'm alive I won't keep quiet for what I believe in, as long as I am alive but if they come now and shoot me, there is nothing I can do besides dying, but this thing can't keep me quiet even if they shoot me they will have heard the truth, my own son will live in a better situation than me... I have influenced so many people, even if I die today I know my history someone will carry it... My influence through poetry I know that even today or tomorrow I die but someone will carry it, even my own wife is a poet so that's why I say they can never kill the truth (Interview, Siphoh).

In the above quote Siphoh narrates the meaning of speaking about *Gukurahundi* the way he does. He could be arrested and killed by the Zimbabwean government. Although the artists are in Johannesburg where they wouldn't be arrested for speaking about *Gukurahundi*, they still maintain ties with Zimbabwe and therefore are still at risk. For Siphoh, the creation of a better future for his child justifies the risk he takes. Furthermore, Siphoh is passing on the baton of this work to a younger generation. A group of younger artists are being groomed to carry forward the artists' work. The group called *Ithemba le*

Sizwe which is translated to *Hope for the Nation* are mentored by two members of *Ithemba lamaNguni*. They perform plays written by the mentors. The project of mentoring the high school students was started as a way to keep them off the streets so they do not end up involved in bad activities such as drugs:

Even some youth who were born in *Ithemba le Sizwe*, they see things in a different way now, because if we train them on how to perform the drama we have to explain to them what the it (the drama) talks about (Interview, Siphó).

The work of mentoring the youth involves a passing on of the values that are influencing the older generation. In this way, the artists see their work as having greater meaning and worth the sacrifice of one's life. It is also worth passing on the work to future generations so it can continue unhindered not even by death. In the song *The Truth*, *Ithemba lamaNguni* allude to this continuity as they say *even if we die, others will be born who will fight for the nation*.

The Truth

They could beat us for doing this

I will never allow it not this time never

They beat up our fathers and killed them

How can they want to arrest us too

They could arrest us for doing this

They could kill us for doing this

Even if we die

Others will be born

Who will fight for the nation

Our forefathers' nation will grow

They can beat up a thousand

But they cannot beat up the truth

They can arrest a thousand

They cannot arrest the truth

They can kill a thousand

They cannot kill the truth

But they cannot kill the truth (Song, The truth by *Ithemba
lamaNguni*)

In this song, *Ithemba lamaNguni* reflect on their decision to speak about the *Gukurahundi* and declare that they stand for the truth no matter the cost. They are willing to stand for the truth even if it means being arrested, beaten up or losing their lives. This declaration is made in response to the government of Zimbabwe's stance towards those who have spoken about the *Gukurahundi*. For example, the artist Owen Maseko had his exhibition taken down and banned. He was also arrested and later released, after being charged with undermining the authority of the president in 2010 for a visual exhibition on *Gukurahundi*. In Zimbabwe speaking about *Gukurahundi* is a big risk and that is what this song is narrating. Without clearly identifying the Zimbabwean government or ZANU PF, *Ithemba lamaNguni* refer to the harsh response the Zimbabwean government has given to those who have attempted to speak about the *Gukurahundi*. In this song, the singers highlight their awareness of what such an action means and their commitment to speaking out regardless of this cost. Importantly the song speaks of how their actions could result in their deaths, and this is a cost they are willing to pay for the sake of speaking out about the *Gukurahundi*. On the other hand it may be that as a result of the *Gukurahundi*, the life that people are living is not worth preserving and people are willing to give it up in the hope of securing a better life for coming generations.

Remembering Gukurahundi using ndebele cultural symbols

The song Lobhengula by *Ithemba lamaNguni* is a good example of the way victims want the *Gukurahundi* remembered in Johannesburg. The song celebrates Lobhengula as the king of the *ndebele*. It has a poem that recites the names of the king. It was difficult to translate the poem into English because I could not find any English words equivalent to the cultural meaning of the poem. The poem has phrases from direct translation such as *The sun which rises out of the ear of an elephant*. Below is the chorus accompanying this poem:

You are the black bull that is famous for its wounds

You have red knees because of kneeling

In the blood of your fallen brothers

Lobhengula

(Except from the Song uLobhengula by *Ithemba lamaNguni*)

This song is a celebration of Lobhengula as a valiant warrior, a black bull known for its wounds, meaning a fighter carrying the scars of battle. The song says after battle he remains the only one kneeling in the blood of his brothers who have been killed. *Ithemba lamaNguni* have included this song as part of their remembering *Gukurahundi*. The repertoire allows for the performance of memory to have multilayers and not just focus on the explicit issue (Taylor 2003). In this case the performance of this song allows for a

politics that includes the celebration of cultural figures that are not included in contemporary imagining of Zimbabwe.

In the song King Lobhengula is celebrated as a valiant warrior and by default so are his people, the *ndebele*. The song, while remembering their victimhood invokes memories of *ndebele* courage. Lobhengula is invoked as a brave leader who loses so much in a battle but is not killed. The *ndebele* as his subjects are thus not only victims of *Gukurahundi* but they are warriors. In this storying of *Gukurahundi* that invokes Lobhengula, remembering *Gukurahundi* is not limited to events in Zimbabwe but is stretched out to colonial times as well. Remembering *Gukurahundi* therefore becomes a link to invoke other forms of victimhood but also forms of cultural identity. *The Truth* that *Ithemba lamaNguni* seeks is to reclaim their identity that has been lost in colonialism and in their becoming part of Zimbabwe.

Ithemba lamaNguni tell the story of *Gukurahundi* as their contribution towards building a better nation for their children. They have a vision of a better future and life for their children. *The Tunnel* by Jenna Bass is also aimed at recording the history of *Gukurahundi*, but Bass' motivation to do this comes from a different place. She wrote *The Tunnel* to commemorate the violence for the victims. Having grown up with links to Zimbabwe, she was shocked to discover its hidden history of *Gukurahundi*. She had to bring the hidden into the open, influenced by her Jewish heritage of having the holocaust victimhood acknowledged. In addition being South African, with the TRC that privileged

speaking about past atrocities, Bass felt it her duty to speak about the *Gukurahundi* for the benefit of its victims. She says:

my mom's side of the family is from Zim and I had been there quite a lot as a child visiting family who had stayed there uhm in like the early 90s and stuff and had had like a very you know of cause you know, kind of rosy, tinted vision of the country especially coming from you know South Africa you know that kind of very limited view point I had of Zimbabwe as a well functioning country and this kind of national identity you know like and you know but that kind of just you know my childhood perspective on Zimbabwe was like that and when I went to film school I befriended someone (Interview: Bass)

Uncovering the hidden history of Gukurahundi

Bass had family in Zimbabwe and had visited the country in her childhood. Her links to Zimbabwe do not end there as she later became friends with a Zimbabwean in film school. This friendship led to her learning about *Gukurahundi* while conducting research to make a film with her Zimbabwean friend. The shock of the disruption of her childhood image of Zimbabwe by the discovery of the *Gukurahundi* atrocities led her to writing the film. She speaks of her decision to write about the *Gukurahundi* as something she felt compelled to do as it was a story that needed to be told:

eh so I started to research a couple of ideas which all were farfetched and in the process came across *Gukurahundi* which I had never heard of before despite my family having been from there and having discussed the history of the country and this had never come up and I was just so shocked by what I read you know in a brief period even that I just like literally wrote up the story the basic story which practically remained unchanged (Interview: Bass).

Bass' narrative of how she came to write and produce a movie about the *Gukurahundi* centres on her links to Zimbabwe and the shock of discovering this hidden history. Furthermore she compares this to her Jewish heritage in which their victimhood is a widely acknowledged history. Lastly, Bass makes a link to her being South African and the history of the TRC. Positioning herself in this way she justifies her decision to write *The Tunnel*. This justification of her position as an outsider telling the story of *Gukurahundi* is contested by victims of *Gukurahundi* living in Johannesburg. Bass' story about *Gukurahundi* further benefits from her socio-political position as a white South African. This gives her access to resources and an audience that is global for the film. Her Zimbabwean friend returns to Zimbabwe and subsequently is unwilling to be part of the film because of the risk involved in speaking about *Gukurahundi* in Zimbabwe. This again shows that her being South African, positions her in relative safety from any backlash from the Zimbabwean government.

Bass' social position and motivation to tell the story about *Gukurahundi* is unlike the motivations and social positioning from which *Ithemba lamaNguni* tell the story. In the following discussion I focus on *The Tunnel*, the story that Bass chose to represent *Gukurahundi*. It tells the story of *Gukurahundi* through the eyes of a young girl, Elizabeth whose father was involved in the liberation war and is killed during the *Gukurahundi*. Bass tells the story of *Gukurahundi* from the perspective of a child because this is the way she related to the story. Despite this claim to an entitlement to tell the story of *Gukurahundi*, participants do not approve of the story she tells mainly due to her perceived non-Africanness.

The film: The Tunnel

I remember so clearly coming across the events that inspired The Tunnel.....Like the rest of the world I'd looked at Zimbabwe as a beacon of hope- a place to watch in envy from my often troubled home in South Africa... I felt like a child growing up as I did. I couldn't show it any other way than through the eyes of a child. So Elizabeth was born. (Website , Bass)

The film's main protagonist is Elizabeth, a seven year old girl. The film shows Elizabeth going to seek help from a group of dissidents because the Fifth Brigade has attacked her village. The film scenes alternate between Elizabeth telling the dissidents her story, and

the flashback to the scenes of what Elizabeth is narrating. Alongside Elizabeth, are her parents and we are introduced to them arguing about Elizabeth's schooling. While her father Dumiso wants her to go to school, Elizabeth's mother argues that they have barely enough food. The argument ends with Dumiso declaring that he would go to the city to work in order for his daughter to go to school.

Throughout the film, we see Elizabeth's father carrying a bag over his shoulder and a lamp on his other hand. He is on his way to the city, as he has earlier declared, but we later find that he has been killed. Dumiso represents the many fathers narrated in the popular story of *Gukurahundi*. He decides to go to the city to work in order for his daughter to go to school. He is the father that many lost due to *Gukurahundi* and as a result their lives are not what they should be.

Elizabeth finds the dissidents in a house belonging to a white man. They are vandalising this house and one of the dissidents is urinating into a fish tank while others are looking for alcohol. It is a big western house with a snooker table in contrast to the huts shown in the village where Elizabeth lives. This could be a white farmer's house. The dissidents seem to be ransacking the house without fear, as if there is a moral justification to doing this. It could be that they feel the white man owning this house does not belong, or has been able to live this kind of life at their expense.

The dissidents are led by an older man whom they call Mdala. Mdala recognises Elizabeth to be Dumiso's daughter and says that he went to war with Dumiso. Mdala's physical appearance of being chubby makes him resemble Joshua Nkomo. Joshua Nkomo was commonly referred to as Mdala. During the *Gukurahundi*, Joshua Nkomo was called the father of dissidents by Robert Mugabe. The use of the name and the character's physique lead one to assume that Mdala is Joshua Nkomo. So Elizabeth has gone to report what has happened in her village and ask for help from Joshua Nkomo. Elizabeth begins her story by saying:

I will tell you a story. Its about my village, about strangers, spirits, ghosts in the night and the day my father went away. My story starts with digging. The men with my father were from the East, where the soil is red. No matter how hard they try, they cannot wash it off, there were other men from the village.

(Elizabeth, Film *The Tunnel*)

In Elizabeth's first encounter with Mdala, he asks her if she is the girl who used to turn into a chicken. During the *Gukurahundi* when Joshua Nkomo was being hunted down by the Zimbabwean government, many stories are told about the way he managed to skip the border to Botswana. One of the stories is that he turned into a chicken. Another story is that he dressed like a woman and escaped incognito. The film has a chicken that the dissidents are trying to catch and never actually get to catch. When I first saw the chicken in the film I thought that it represented Joshua Nkomo however we are then introduced to

Mdala. The first time we see the chicken is at the start of the film when a dissident is digging and hears rustling in the bushes. He finds that it is a chicken and tries to catch it. He fails and instead finds Elizabeth. The chicken appears in different scenes with the dissidents trying to catch it.

One of the dissidents wants to dismiss Elizabeth because she is a girl. Elizabeth defies him at which point he slaps her. Mdala intervenes in this altercation allowing Elizabeth to continue to speak. Elizabeth begins to tell her story which takes us to a scene where there are soldiers in red berets monitoring civilians who are digging. The music in this scene is *True Love* by Busi Dube. Elizabeth is watching the soldiers from a distance when her mother drags her back into their homestead leaving her in a closed hut. Whatever Elizabeth was watching was forbidden. In her narration she says:

The men with my father were from the East, where the soil is red.
No matter how hard they try, they cannot wash it off there were
other men from the village I saw Monica's Fiance but my father is
a hero, he should not have been there it was her fault my father
was back from the mines (Elizabeth, Film The Tunnel)

Elizabeth blames her mother for her fathers' predicament. This is followed by a scene in the night where Elizabeth witnesses her mother crying, she wanders out of the room into the night where she meets two men who are also digging and speaking English mixed

with Afrikaans which identifies them as South Africans. Elizabeth speaks to these men in whispers and one of them also whispers back telling Elizabeth that he is digging a hole home. The South African army is presented in the night, disguised and digging. At the beginning of the film, we see digging supervised by the Fifth Brigade which is when Elizabeth's father dies. Digging in the film represents the disruption of normal life in the village. The South African men are digging in the night, representing the covert activities undertaken by South Africa to destabilise the region. The apartheid state is implicated in destabilising Matabeleland as a way of stopping the nationalist revolution spilling over into South Africa. Here *The Tunnel* once again tells the story of *Gukurahundi* that is familiar and popularly shared.

The night turns into day and Elizabeth argues again with her mother. She leaves the village and we find her walking in the bush where she meets a young man limping pretending to have been hurt by the fifth brigade. This is a fake dissident who dances with Elizabeth in the bushes. The young man gives Elizabeth her father's watch claiming that he had met Elizabeth's father on his way to the city. Elizabeth and the young man dance and are interrupted by the sound of someone approaching. They are dancing, with a lot of giggling and laughing, to a Shona song titled *Chidziki* by Zex Manatsa which was written in 1980 that is just instrumental without any lyrics. It is a happy tune and fits into the setting. They stop dancing as they hear footsteps in the nearby bushes and the man disappears.

Elizabeth and the fake dissident's dance is characteristically Shona and happy with sexual innuendo. The dance can be read as a sexual interaction in the way the fake dissident asks Elizabeth to dance with him. The sexual allusion is furthered in that they are both startled to hear someone approaching and stop dancing. The *Gukurahundi* soldiers used to take girls from the villages to 'cook' for them. The cooking also involved providing sexual services. In *Ndebele* 'cooking' for your husband may also mean having sexual intercourse with your husband. Elizabeth dancing with the fake dissident in the bush leaves you wondering if this was just a dance or something else occurred between the two, despite the fact that she is a prepubescent young girl.

After the fake dissident runs off, Elizabeth has a conversation with her mud horse which warns her about difficult times ahead. At this point we are introduced to Father Nel, a white clergy who appears in the film preaching in a service that is disrupted by the fifth Brigade. This leads to a scene where Father Nel and Elizabeth have a conversation in which they talk about the "truth". Elizabeth says the truth is boring to which Father Nel agrees by saying that he doesn't always preach the truth. Father Nel further features in the film in a church service standing behind a pulpit and preaching. Elizabeth is in the congregation with many others. The preaching is disrupted by the soldiers in red berets. They burst into the tiny room and shoot into the air. As people scurry around, Elizabeth hides under a bench but when she sees everyone running outside she reluctantly comes out from under the bench and joins them. Father Nel is not forced out of the room with the rest of the congregants meaning that the soldiers were not interested in him. He is left

standing holding onto the pulpit as if to contain himself to not react physically to what is happening, he looks pained and at a loss.

In this film, Father Nel represents the actions of religious leaders in the *Gukurahundi* who are portrayed as uninvolved in the conflict. When his preaching is disrupted by the Fifth Brigade Father Nel, does not ask why and neither does he move away from the pulpit to cower like the rest of the congregation. Instead he remains standing silently behind the pulpit having stopped preaching. In this church scene, the movie reinforces that white people were not targeted by the Fifth brigade. In addition the religious leaders did not take any action to stop the fifth brigade. The Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice wrote a letter to the government about the violence and later published a report detailing the atrocities, and this is the most detailed report on the atrocities to date.

The soldiers in red berets are led by one who calls himself Jesus. He addresses the villagers and asks them to release the bandits they are hiding and feeding in the village.

The Commander says:

Today is a very special day! You are visited today by Jesus Christ! Yes! You might think you do not see Him, Because you have been told that he is white. But I tell you...He is right here. We know that this village...is hiding a dissident like a snake in its bed. I am giving you until sunrise...and then I'll send my angels. If I tell my angels I want two hundred heads chopped off, they will

bring them to me. They will do that...If I order it as Jesus.
(Commander, Film *The Tunnel*)

After this address soldiers start trying to grab people, one of them gets hold of Elizabeth causing her mother to scream:

Elizabeth! Leave my daughter, I know where the dissident is. I'll tell you but you must leave my daughter. (Elizabeth's mother, Film *The Tunnel*)

The soldiers let go of Elizabeth and grab her mother and another woman instead, forcing them into one of their vehicles and drive with them to their camp. At the camp, the young man who had danced with Elizabeth in the bush is presented to the women to verify if he is the dissident they were talking about. Elizabeth's mother's nod is met by a roar of laughter from the soldiers as the young man is not a dissident but one of the soldiers. The commander rapes and kills the other woman and Elizabeth ends her story after talking about the rape with the words:

Elizabeth: And so I came to you for help. And what have you done?

Dissident Leader: What about your father? Did you find him? Can he help?

Elizabeth: My father is not coming home. (Film *The Tunnel*)

At the end of Elizabeth's narration the song by *Mbira dzeNharira*, titled *Toputika neshungu* becomes louder and the following text is pasted across the screen:

What you have seen might not be a true story.

But it is based on true events.

In the 1980s, thousands of Zimbabweans died at the hands of Robert Mugabe's 5th Brigade

The time was known as *Gukurahundi*: the rain that washes away the chaff before spring (Credits, Film *The Tunnel*)

The song used at the end of the film, *Toputika neshungu*, has a Shona character and is playing in the background as the screen is covered by words that tell the viewer that the film is based on actual events that happened in Zimbabwe. It marks the film as Zimbabwean, but does not represent the culture of the participants in this study, those considered the 'real' victims of *Gukurahundi*. The title of the song is directly translated to mean *we are bursting with frustration*, which is very relevant in relation to the feelings

expressed by victims of *Gukurahundi* in this study. Victims of *Gukurahundi* are bursting with frustration over the unacknowledged atrocities and the loss they have had to live with as a result. Apart from the title of the song there is nothing else that makes the song a useful part of the film which commemorates *Gukurahundi*. Instead, the use of the Shona song reinforces the idea of Zimbabwe being a Shona nation. This is an idea that some participants resist in order to claim *ndebele* belonging to Zimbabwe. For participants who are members of MLF, it provides materiality to their claims of the marginalisation and annihilation of the *ndebele* from Zimbabwe. As such it works to bolster their claims for a Mthwakazi nation.

Storying the rape that occurred during Gukurahundi

Elizabeth's story in the film is about the loss of her father. The focus on a man who is killed resonates with many of the narratives about *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg. Elizabeth is telling the story of how her father dies. The film starts off with her going in search of her father and ends with her finding him in a shallow grave. Elizabeth's mother is shown, on the sidelines snatching her daughter away from watching her father being killed, and protecting her from the Fifth Brigade by taking her place. While Elizabeth is central to the story, she tells her mother's experience of the terror through its links to the role as a wife and a mother. This too, is a popular narrative about the *Gukurahundi*, women on the sidelines or absent. Although Elizabeth's mother is portrayed in relation to the terrors of her husband and daughter, the film uses a poignant scene to represent the rape of women during the *Gukurahundi*.

The rape and murder of a pregnant woman is shown in a very artistic way that captures the effects of the violation and transmits it to viewers. This is done through the use of sounds and images. A mouth covers the screen while we hear screams in the background, a stretching hand also covers the screen and gives the impression of the pain of the rape travelling through the body. This ends with the screen covered in flames. Elizabeth's face is frozen in an expressionless, wide eyed, non-blinking blank stare as she watches the rape from a distance. Although the actual rape is not displayed, the imagery used had a deep impact on me as a viewer. Elizabeth's voice continues to narrate how the soldiers made the women take their clothes off and did terrible things to them. The sounds of screams continue as the flames rage and we see Elizabeth's eyes behind the flames. The flames fade into a black screen as we are taken back to the Commander with the woman lying on the ground crying. The commander pulls out a large knife and stabs the woman on the ground. The camera moves to Elizabeth who seems to be staring at what is happening without blinking. Her face now covers the screen as she narrates how she continued to see the unborn child wriggling inside its dead mother's body.

True Love

The commander asks the fake dissident who is sitting close by and smoking to play him a song. He plays Busi Dube's song *True love*.

No more fake love I want true love baby

I want true love

I need true love

Have you ever seen the way I look at you

Have you ever seen the way I smile at you

Genuine love is all I need from you

Honey

All my life I've been messing with a lie

But with you I know it's the real thing Oh Honey

I can tell by the look in your eyes baby

I found True love

I need True love baby

I want True love

(Song True Love by Busi Ncube)

This was a popular song in Zimbabwe in the 1980s. The song was listed as number one in the top twenty hits that have come from South Western Zimbabwe by local news websites (Newsvyb, 2015; Zindi, 2011). The band is described as one of the most

talented to have ever come out of Zimbabwe and this song was one of their greatest hits. The song features in two scenes with the fifth brigade soldiers. The first scene is where Elizabeth's father and other men from her village are killed. The second scene is where the dissidents are in their camp and a woman is raped and killed. The way this song is used in the film does not make sense as this is a song that is popularly played celebrating love relationships. It is an upbeat song with a happy rhythm that speaks about love. The upbeat rhythm does not match the sad events being depicted on the screen. The music may have been chosen to stage the time of the events since it's a 1980s hit. It may have also been used to portray the shocking joy the fifth brigade took from the atrocities.

In most narratives about the *Gukurahundi*, participants have spoken about the violence and the violation and rape of women always figures as something to be added onto the story. In the scene preceding the rape, Elizabeth is seen forcing the dissidents to pay attention to what she has to say. She narrates the rape while tightly holding onto one of the dissidents' arm, forcing him to pay attention. The film portrays the narration of women's sexual violation as something the dissidents would rather not hear. This scene may, on the other hand, be portraying the struggle that men have in hearing about sexual violation of women belonging to their group because of the way women's bodies have been socially constructed to belong to men. The Commander is heard asking the woman why she is crying and whether she has never had a man as strong as him. Although this is a rape, the commander refers to the other men that the woman had sexual encounters with. In this way the movie places the rape in the realm of the community. As such, the dissidents may not want to hear about the rape because it is perceived as a violation

against them. As a result, women who have been sexually violated are forced into silence because speaking out is confirmation of the defilement of the group as a whole (Theidon, 2015). *The Tunnel's* scene on rape forces one to pay attention.

Reception of the Film by Focus Group Participants

I first came across *The Tunnel* during an Internet search for *Gukurahundi* artworks as I was writing a proposal for this research. Having found a film about *Gukurahundi* that had been shown in so many countries and received a number of awards, I initially thought the victims would be pleased to know that the story of their victimhood was getting airplay around the world. My own excitement also soon waned off after watching the film left me with mixed feelings. The story told from the perspective of a child, a girl child was a refreshing vantage point to hear about the *Gukurahundi*. However, the language used, broken *ndebele* with a Shona accent and Xhosa was disappointing as I expected a memorial of *Gukurahundi* to be in Ndebele. After I conducted focus group discussions focusing on the film, the mixed feelings turned to disillusionment.

Participants in the focus group discussions felt that the film misrepresented their story and questioned why they did not have the opportunity to contribute to the crafting of the story that would tell the world a more 'authentic' version of their history. The discontent with *The Tunnel* can be summarised into four categories. Participants were not happy that a fictional story was used to represent the *Gukurahundi*. Secondly, the language and music used as cultural markers of identity in the film were unacceptable. Thirdly, *The*

Tunnel did not tell the story that participants wanted told and are telling in Johannesburg today. Lastly, Bass' race positioned her as one who could not tell an authentic story of *Gukurahundi*. In the following section I will discuss this negative reception of *The Tunnel* in greater detail.

The fictional story Elizabeth tells about her village

The Tunnel is a fictional story of a girl who goes looking for her father and in her quest narrates events that have taken place in her village. The storyline of a little girl looking for her father, is a popular gendered way of portraying victimhood with the intention of garnering sympathy (Bennet, 2005). The male is usually posited as a direct target of the violence and the women suffer indirectly as a result of the impact on the male in their lives (Meintjes et al., 2001). The film shows the complexity of the terror of the *Gukurahundi* by highlighting how the differently gendered people experienced it; the women through sexual rape and the men through being killed. In having a female protagonist, Elizabeth, who goes to confront the "dissidents" the film portrays an empowered female who challenges male figures of power (Burman, 2005). However Elizabeth's challenge is to ask the male dissidents to protect the village. This again plays into the gendered stereotypes of men as the protectors of the village and the women and children in the village as innocent victims of the war (Meintjes, 2001).

The participants had a different view of this fictional story. They wanted a film that documented the atrocities and could invoke empathy for them as victims and be used against the perpetrators. The story in *The Tunnel* is fictional and the main protagonist is nicknamed rabbit. In many folktales the rabbit is a trickster who lies and cheats the other animals. As such Elizabeth being a rabbit gives a sense that whatever she is saying may not be entirely true. It means the story she tells is one that should be treated with suspicion as she could have imagined or made it up. Elizabeth being called rabbit places the story she has to tell about *Gukurahundi* in the realm of fables, lies, imaginations and not anything to be believed. This does not work for people that want the story of *Gukurahundi* to be told for the purpose of proving that it is something that happened and changed the course of their lives. It is seen to water down the issue which is already being denied by the Zimbabwean government. Furthermore in her conversation with Father Nel, Elizabeth says:

Truth is boring

(Elizabeth in the Film *The Tunnel*)

This places the film on a level of being something that Elizabeth creates to entertain and not a dependable retelling of what happened. When the dissidents dismiss her story however she screams that:

IT IS A TRUE STORY!!! It is a true story. You want the truth...I will tell you. (Elizabeth in the Film *The Tunnel*)

This contributes to participants viewing *The Tunnel* as an inadequate documentary of *Gukurahundi*. It can be easily dismissed as a fictional story because of these narrative devices that Bass chose to use in telling the story. This is more so because for example *Ithemba lamaNguni* declare that they are telling *The Truth*. Telling the story of *Gukurahundi* has to be about telling the truth. There are multiple versions of the truth and here participants want their version to be told because of its significance in their lives.

The power of the 'truth'

The truth in the story of *Gukurahundi* that participants want would have invoked an emotional response from those watching the film. It would also include the political context of the violence and go beyond Elizabeth's village to the broad area that was affected. The fictional story in *The Tunnel* did not create such a response, where the audience would have had a sense of having been there and experienced what happened during the *Gukurahundi*. *The Tunnel* is being compared to other representations of atrocities such as the film *Hotel Rwanda*. Participants as such felt that this was a failure of the film considering that many people do not know about the *Gukurahundi*. They wanted a film that shows the gory details of the violence. One way participants thought the film could have achieved this was through using the photographs and videos of the actual atrocities. *The Tunnel* does not use any of the images and videos captured during the 1980s found on the Internet. As a result it did not have any factual images of the violence that would invoke strong emotional outbursts from the audience such as anger or tears.

Many participants referred me to online spaces such as You Tube for articles, videos and photographs on the *Gukurahundi*. They referred to these articles on the Internet as evidence to back up their narratives about the *Gukurahundi*. As such when watching *The Tunnel* they expected to see some of the video footage taken during the time of the violence, which is found online. This speaks to the myth of the objectivity of photographic and video footage. The existence of photographic and video images is usually taken as a more objective representation of an event. Images are considered closer to the truth than the stories told about events. While images may be viewed as a more objective representation, they are themselves interpretations and the camera holder makes decisions about what to capture or not to (Hirsch, 2001; Orgeron, 2006).

Thirdly the fictional story did not have details about what was happening across the affected areas and only focused on just one village. It also does not detail the political issues that were occurring at the time. Participants felt that the story lacked the political contextual background such as, that the ZANU government instigated the violence against its main opposition party at the time. The ideal story would also outline that this fell into cold war politics where ZANU was supported by Britain and therefore Britain turned a blind eye to atrocities committed against ZAPU a Russian backed party.

Finally the fictional story in the film fails to capture the way the effects of *Gukurahundi* continue being felt in the lives of victims. The fictional story does not reflect the migration that many people attribute to *Gukurahundi*. It tells the story of what happened in Elizabeth's village and does not capture how this filtered through the lives of people into the present day. The *Gukurahundi* story told in Johannesburg today is used to distinguish between different Zimbabwean migrants and their motivations for leaving Zimbabwe. This makes the cultural markers of identity used in the film significant as the following discussion shows.

The language and music used in the film adds to the grievance participants have about their marginalisation in Zimbabwe. In *The Tunnel*, they are again made invisible as members of Zimbabwe because their history is not being narrated in a language that distinguishes and recognises how they are culturally distinct from the Shona but equally members of Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean state uses Shona cultural leaders to imagine and mythologise the nation which invisibilises the *ndebele* as members of nation. There is therefore a conscious effort by many to differentiate the *ndebele* from the Shona to highlight that there are other groups of people in Zimbabwe and not just the Shona. *The Tunnel* tells the story of *Gukurahundi* without making an explicit distinction between the Shona and the *ndebele*. I discuss this failing below.

Cultural Markers of Identity in the Tunnel

Using Shona Music

Shona music is used in the film to mark it as a Zimbabwean story and this attracted discontent from many focus group discussants. Music is one way in which African film performs politics (Dovey, 2010). So using Shona music is contested because of the politics it represents. To better profile this discontent, I will briefly talk about the stories told in Johannesburg about the *Gukurahundi*. The *Gukurahundi* story told identifies the *ndebele* as victims of the ZANU PF regime. This story works to show how the *ndebele* have suffered at the hands of the Zimbabwean government since the 1980s unlike the recent migrations that have occurred due to the economic downfall in the 2000s. This is important to accomplish because the economic downturn in Zimbabwe has led to migration of many people including the Shona to South Africa. As such, the *ndebele*, who see themselves as disadvantaged in Zimbabwe need a narrative to claim space in South Africa and show their presence in Johannesburg as more desperate than their Shona counterparts. Therefore the story of *Gukurahundi* is told in Johannesburg so that South Africans are made aware of the migrants' predicament and this, it is thought, will improve relations with locals.

Telling the story of *Gukurahundi* this way is also aimed at attracting support from the international community. The international community has 'responded' to recent violence against the MDC and the white farmers in Zimbabwe unlike the attention that was given to *Gukurahundi*. Telling the story to attract the international community is aimed at

attracting a similar international response to the *Gukurahundi* atrocities. Other groups tell the story of *Gukurahundi* to foreground how the *ndebele* have been mistreated in Zimbabwe and use this as justification for the need for a separate state for the *ndebele*. In both instances of telling the story of *Gukurahundi*, it is important that a distinction is made between those who are victims of the *Gukurahundi*, the *ndebele*, and those who are not, the Shona. The use of Shona music in the film clouds these distinctions.

Using Shona music celebrates the Shona identity over the *ndebele* and this plays into the politics of marginalisation that participants decry in Zimbabwe. The story that universalises the effects of *Gukurahundi* to all members of Zimbabwe does not serve the purpose victims are using the story for today, which is to justify their current lives. As such, *The Tunnel*, while acknowledging that *Gukurahundi* occurred and caused upheaval and untold pain to many people it is not a good story because it does not clearly define the victims as the *ndebele* given that Shona music is used to mark it as Zimbabwean. It is important to note that the use of the Shona language by the actors portraying the fifth brigade soldiers is acceptable because it works to clearly define the perpetrators of the violence as Shona.

The Language used and the Actors

Bass worked with Zimbabwean and South African actors in making the film. As a result, Elizabeth, the fake dissident, Mdala and the dissidents spoke isiXhosa rather than Ndebele. Elizabeth's father, Dumiso is the only character in the film who spoke *Ndebele*

with the 'correct' accent. Elizabeth's mother spoke *Ndebele* with a Shona accent and it was mostly broken *Ndebele*. On my initial watching of the film, in which I expected the language used to be *Ndebele*, I was left disillusioned by the fact that it was instead Xhosa and broken *Ndebele* spoken in the film. This made the film lose its authenticity as a memorial of the *Gukurahundi* in which mostly the *Ndebele* speakers were affected. Most of the focus group participants expressed similar discontent with the film.

Further to this, the discontent was linked to the fact that, people considered to be perpetrators of the violence, Shona actors, had been recruited to act in the film instead of victims of the violence. In this context where, participants feel that the Shona have a better access to the Zimbabwean state and the *ndebele* are marginalised, having Shona actors telling their story is seen as a continuation of this marginalisation. The Shona are seen here as continuing to benefit from the Zimbabwean state projects and even from a project that should benefit the *ndebele* because it is telling the story of *ndebele* victimhood. The use of the wrong vernacular language may be reflective of the intended audience of the film, being international and unable to distinguish between *Ndebele* and Xhosa. However, Bass says she made the film with the aim of screening it in Zimbabwe which makes it difficult to understand this oversight in using Shona actors. Although English was used in the film, participants did not have any reactions to this. Generally among Zimbabweans you find that if people speak different languages they shift to converse in English as the common language. This is unlike what I find common in South Africa where English is resisted and viewed as the language of oppression and people

prefer conversation across two languages for example Xhosa & Zulu rather than shifting to English.

Who is entitled to speak about Gukurahundi?

Research participants felt that, because victims were not part of the film making, it failed to capture the nuanced meanings that they want the story of *Gukurahundi* to tell today in Johannesburg. Victims are posited as owners of the story, and the only ones capable of telling an authentic narrative. They argued that experiential knowledge, in this case victimhood as a result of the *Gukurahundi*, grants one ownership and the right to tell the story of the atrocities. Phoenix (2008) argues that experiential knowledge of an event is one way in which entitlement to tell a story is grounded. Alcoff (1991) argues for a speaking with and not for others. In *The Tunnel* the filmmaker instead worked with the ‘wrong’ Zimbabweans, those considered to be the perpetrators to portray the victims of the *Gukurahundi*. Furthermore within this group of victims, with the entitlement to tell the story, there are some with more entitlement than others. One potential participant said to me:

All the *ndebele* people in Zimbabwe were victims of the *Gukurahundi* but there were those who were directly affected... lost their parents or had to flee to save their lives. (Potential Interview Participant).

She said this while declining to participate in the study, however promising that she would look for those who were directly affected to speak to me. In declining to speak to me with the explanation that she was only affected because she is *ndebele* but others were

directly affected, the words of those who were directly affected were deemed to carry greater weight than her own. They were more entitled to speak about the *Gukurahundi*.

Umuntu waphetsheya³

Bass' race was a big reason for justifying why the film was not a good representation of the atrocities. Participants argued that because Bass is a white person she could not capture the story of *Gukurahundi* in a way that implicates the global community. The film ends by placing the responsibility, blame and guilt for *Gukurahundi* on Robert Mugabe. While this may be true, participants in the study wanted a story that would highlight the complicity of the international community for turning a blind eye to the atrocities. The story of *Gukurahundi* is incomplete if the silence which the victims of the violence met from the global community is not part of the narrative. This is important in order to justify the *ndebele* as unacknowledged, unfortunate victims of global systems.

It is important that the story of *Gukurahundi* is told in the interests of the victims and not in support to the current acrimonious relationship between Robert Mugabe and the West. When *Gukurahundi* occurred, the global community, most significantly the Western world did not respond to the plight of the victims. Robert Mugabe was hailed as an exemplary African head of state at the time that the atrocities took place. He was knighted by the Queen of England and received honorary degrees from Western academic institutions. Bass' race represents this Western world and its influence. The

³ This person is from abroad. Although abroad is open ended, in most imaginaries when Zimbabweans speak of someone coming from abroad it is Europe or the United State of America that is being referred to.

focus group participants do not want the story of *Gukurahundi* to be told to further the interests of the West that has given focus to Zimbabwe in the ‘third chimurenga’ because white farmers are being killed. The ‘third chimurenga’ is the repossession of land by the majority local indigenes from the white minority commercial farmers that began in the late 1990s in Zimbabwe and has received mixed reviews about its success. Although put forward as a program to change the lives of poor black Zimbabweans, it has been rife with corruption with top ZANU PF members benefitting from the farms that were taken. So below I focus on how Bass’ race was articulated as a reason to reject *The Tunnel* as a story of *Gukurahundi*.

There is one thing actually I don’t like people who portray or who write a story about certain people without actually involving those people....I wanted to look at who wrote the story and who directed the story I only saw one or two names of seemingly white people which is what I’m against as an African child that our stories must be told by us (Focus group discussion).

In the above quote the discussant focuses on the race of the filmmaker. He uses race to mark one as African/black or non-African/ white. In this way the filmmaker is marked non-African and one who does not advance the Africans’ cause. From this view there is no way the filmmaker could tell a story that served the interests of the victims of the violence. This positioned the filmmaker as one who told the story for her own benefit.

This view does not allow for the possibility that an outsider could be motivated by anything other than personal benefit in telling the story of *Gukurahundi*. In this case Bass received personal benefit from making the film. She received funding from an American agency called Focus Features to produce the film and it went on to receive awards which have further benefited her career. Similarly in the following quote the filmmaker is marked as from overseas because of her race. If she is from overseas it therefore means she is not African enough to be writing about the *Gukurahundi*.

May I please ask... this person that made this film where are they from... they are from overseas right *ngowaphetsheya*... it means when she made this (film) she was not on our side the people who were victimized because it is not there at all (Focus Group Discussion).

Calling the filmmaker *owaphetsheya*, which literally means from across, the filmmaker is marked an outsider. As an outsider she is further marked as not working for the interests of the people. *Owaphetsheya* denotes a boundary that has been crossed. It may be two adjacent villages separated by a river and the people called *abaphetsheya*. Marking the filmmaker as from overseas denotes constructing her as an outsider by using the boundary of being from overseas as a significant difference that exists and that has been transgressed in the making of the film. It also marks the filmmaker as someone who would never work for the beneficence of the speaker.

In the above quote he asks the question as a way of confirming what he has already concluded, that the maker of this film was not on his side. He explains that as expected *Gukurahundi* is not portrayed in the way he wants by saying it *is not there at all*. Here the racial identity of the filmmaker is linked to her ability or willingness to make a film that would portray *Gukurahundi* in a way that the victims would be happy with. Her racial identity also positions her as one who benefitted from colonialism and continues to benefit from its continuing forms. Positioning the filmmaker in this way means that she is unable to provide a critique of the colonial system that for example *Ithemba lamaNguni* because of their disenfranchisement are able to give in their remembering *Gukurahundi*.

In addition to the above, the colonial legacy and its influence on racial identities in Africa influences these views. This will be visited in further details in the following chapter. It is important here to highlight that focus on the filmmaker's racial identity is about the social position that she occupies. The participant quoted above also presents essentialist views on race. There is no possibility that Bass could tell a story of *Gukurahundi* that would be acceptable for them as black people. In South Africa and most of Southern Africa, being white is synonymous with having access to better education, better employment prospects and better access to the rest of the world, coupled with the exploitation of Africa and Africans. As such for the focus group discussants, the filmmaker being white represents a world they can never access. Because of her race she has inherited a social position of privilege. *The Tunnel* has had audiences across the world, unlike the music and plays produced by some of the research participants. The film was also funded by an American

agency. Participants in the focus groups do not have access to this funding, as they have not been formally trained as artists.

Reflecting on other vernacular names used to refer to white people in everyday conversations such as *umlungu* or *ikhiwa* and the other ways these names are used gives a contextual background to the above discussion. Growing up in Bulawayo passengers in a taxi were commonly addressed as *amakhiwa*. The implication of this is *amakhiwa* have money and so, when asking people to pay, referring to them as *amakhiwa* was inferring that they had money. In South Africa *umlungu* is commonly used to refer to your employer even when your employer is not racially white, the name *ikhiwa* is used similarly in Zimbabwe. These names speak to the status of whites in this post-colonial context. They are the employers and also those with the money. This status results from colonial policies that disenfranchised the indigenous people while enriching the settler populations. As such, it is important to understand the white racial identity from this context. Structural inequalities continue, inherited from the colonial state. As such the resistance to the white identity in the focus group discussions about the filmmaker's race and her entitlement to speak about the *Gukurahundi* reflects the positioning of the white viz participants in this study.

Conclusion

Participants use *Gukurahundi* victimhood to claim their entitlement to speak about it. I also used this claim to victimhood to gain access to these stories I am telling in this study.

As a 'ndebele' researcher, some people agreed to participate in the research and share their stories even though they thought I would not represent their interests. For example they said *it is better to be sold out by one of them (victims) not an outsider*. My position as a 'victim' of the *Gukurahundi* in this instance gave me access to be told the stories even though I may not have represented them well. It was better if I benefited from telling their story than the filmmaker. My racial identity was also significant in that I would not do what a white person would do with this story.

Behar (2003) writes about Esperanza, a Mexican woman making a living as a street peddler and accused of being a witch. Behar (2003) reflects on Esperanza's choice to tell about certain events and not about others in her story. Her metaphoric use of borders is important in this reflection of who is entitled and who is not entitled to speak about the *Gukurahundi*. Esperanza's story crosses the physical borders to North America but this is not the only border crossed as it also crosses the cultural and life world borders. These borders that are crossed in the telling and retelling of a story are important when considering who is entitled to tell the story of *Gukurahundi*. Important in the crossing of borders however is the use to which the stories are put. Depending on who causes the border crossing, stories may not remain authentic to those who own or tell them.

This highlights the purpose for telling stories of the past, which is to explain and justify the present (Freeman, 1993). Stories are told to link the past with the present and justify the present. As such, the story of *Gukurahundi* is being told to link the past; what happened in the atrocities, living in Zimbabwe today and living as migrants in Johannesburg. The story needs to link *Gukurahundi* to people's lives in Johannesburg today. In this way *Gukurahundi* cannot be told as the story of violence that occurred in the 1980s. It needs to be linked to what is happening today. To make sense of the West's discourse that says Robert Mugabe is a 'dictator' in contrast to the heralded exemplary president of the 1980's, *Ithemba lamaNguni* want a story that asks the question; What has happened in the interim to cause a change in the discourse about Robert Mugabe from the West?

The victims want a story about *Gukurahundi* that implicates the global community and brings to the fore the systemic violence that ignores the *Gukurahundi* but is outraged by the *third chimurenga*. Such a telling of the story of *Gukurahundi* would be effective towards efforts to change the world for future generations. A different world for the future can be created by uncovering the systemic violence that ignored the *Gukurahundi* when the West's interest were not at risk. *The Tunnel* is telling a story that maintains the world as it is. It is a generic story of war in Africa that normalises dysfunctionality to African states. It presents Africans killing each other and needing the West's intervention.

Chapter 6: Past Atrocities: Present Identities

Zimbabwe at Twenty-seven years!

Is it my independence?

Is it my freedom?

18 April 1980

Victory heralds sounded

The war has been won

Celebrations and ululations

We have conquered the enemy

Have we?

How can this be?

Who shall I turn to?

My brother has risen against me

A father against his own

The future strength of our time

Twenty thousand valiant sons and daughters

Stolen from their time,

From our land, our hands

Is it his independence?

Shall I live on?

Can I carry this burden?

Our nation flourishes and thrives

Education, water, health to the people

The envy of our neighbours

The bread basket of Africa

But who shall heal these wounds?

War veterans?

Who are they?

They fought for freedom

They fought for sovereignty

Fifty thousand Zimbabwean dollars is their asking price

Perpetual damage to the Zimbabwean Dollar

An irreversible descending road for the economy

Is it their independence?

Is it their land?

How is it their land?

I stole their land, I should give back their land

The language they know is of their hands

They beat me up so I can hear

This is their land

I should leave it to them

What shall I do?

Who shall I tell?

My vote is my voice

But how can it be

My vote is stolen from me

The night is a terrifying place

It has hands that beat me up

Hands that make me disappear

Who shall I tell?

How can I speak?

What shall I say?

My voice is taken away from me

My mouth is eternally sealed

AIPPA and POSA

They have cut my tongue

I am damned, silenced from my view

Silenced from my choice

Am I the dirt?

Is my house the dirt?

Murambatsvina like a flood

Destroyed my house

Left me out in the open

Cold and hungry

Where shall I go?

(Poem by Duduzile D Ndlovu, 2007)

Introduction

In the two preceding chapters, I have explored the different ways people are speaking about the *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg. *Gukurahundi* is remembered against the discourse of silence from the Zimbabwean government in order to locate the *ndebele* within the global order as victims. The *ndebele* are being storied as victims not just of the *Gukurahundi* but of colonialism as a strategy for claiming space for their inclusion within global discourses. This is done through a telling of the story of *Gukurahundi* in a form that reclaims *ndebele* cultural identity that colonialism disrupted. The story of *Gukurahundi* is not only aimed at a global audience but at the Zimbabwean nation as well. Against this background, this last empirical chapter shows the different ways migration trajectories, memories of *Gukurahundi* and xenophobia in South Africa converge to produce a narrative about the Zimbabwean identity. The Zimbabwe that was left behind is no longer a suitable home for the migrants (Ahmed, 1999). Instead a new nation *uMthwakazi* is imagined, or Zimbabwe is imagined in a different trope, not as a Shona nation but a multiethnic nation where nationhood trumps ethnicity.

The way in which the memory of *Gukurahundi* is invoked is pivotal to these imaginings. There is work that is put in to draw boundaries of similarity and difference as well as to allocate which are significant and which need to be overlooked (Yuval-Davis, 2006a). *Gukurahundi* is invoked as genocide against the *ndebele* or an imperialist project that benefits a minority. These are the narratives that are possible in Johannesburg and which are utilised to define belonging and non-belonging to Zimbabwe. In the case of the *Umthwakazi* state, the fissures between the ethnic groups subsumed within the *ndebele*

identity are minimised in order to magnify the differences between the *ndebele* and Shona identity. So *Gukurahundi* has to be remembered as an ethnic attack to annihilate the *ndebele*. The stance taken by those committed to a Zimbabwean nation is to remember *Gukurahundi* as an imperialist project. So building Zimbabwe, as a nation where both *ndebele* and Shona belong instead of the cessation agenda, is suggested as a way of fighting back against *Gukurahundi*. The differences between the ethnic groupings are overlooked while the Zimbabwean identity is adopted and prioritised.

As Ahmed (1999, p. 343) says “it is impossible to return to a place that was lived as home, precisely because the home is not exterior to a self, but implicated in it”. In the memory of *Gukurahundi* Zimbabwe is reimagined as home by defining who truly belongs to it. This chapter starts by looking at the poem *Zimbabwe at twenty-seven years*. The central theme of the poem is independence as the genesis of Zimbabwe and the locus point for defining who belongs. This is followed by a discussion of the idea that defines Zimbabwe as an anti-colonial project that began with the resistance to colonial conquest. In contrast to the poem this view does not frame independence as a victory but a defeat because the national identity is being challenged by ethnic identity in independent Zimbabwe. Lastly the chapter explores how racial identity is constructed using the narrative about *Gukurahundi*.

Whose independence is it?

The poem, *Zimbabwe at twenty-seven years*, remembers the *Gukurahundi* and presents Zimbabwean identity as hanging in the balance. It raises questions of who is the Zimbabwean. The ending of the poem speaks to the *voting with their feet* (Gaidzanwa, 1999) that a significant number of Zimbabweans have ‘chosen’ to do in response to the Zimbabwean crisis as it ends with the question of where I can go? The poem poses the question, where is it that one can find the refuge and protection that is expected from the Zimbabwean government but has not been received?

I wrote *Zimbabwe at twenty-seven years* in 2007 commemorating Zimbabwe’s independence a few months after moving to Johannesburg. Growing up, Johannesburg or South Africa, had never been my aspiration. School dropouts and those who failed went to work in Johannesburg. I had passed my O’levels and A’levels and graduated with an honours degree and South Africa was not part of my aspirations. Yet I ended up in Johannesburg looking for employment. Celebrating Zimbabwe’s independence for the first time outside its borders and looking to make a life in this new world, I questioned the celebration of Zimbabweanness by asking who benefits from the Zimbabwean state’s projects. My location in Johannesburg is reflected by the questions I ask, which are not possible to ask in Zimbabwe. Being situated in Johannesburg accorded me the voice to speak as many others in this study have done. In Johannesburg it is possible to speak of the *Gukurahundi* which the government of Zimbabwe discourages people from doing.

The move from Zimbabwe to Johannesburg is significant in not only creating space to speak about the *Gukurahundi* but it also distances one from the space of experiencing the terror of Zimbabwe. Another outcome of this disconnection is that the poem ends abruptly with events of 2005 because I left Zimbabwe in 2006. This abrupt end further highlights the significance of migration to Johannesburg. I am unable to write about events after 2005 because I am shielded from directly experiencing them by my location. On the other hand a different terror exists in Johannesburg as the song *Usizi* in chapter four points out. The song says migrants from Zimbabwe have become the *hunted to be killed*. The narrative about *Gukurahundi* reported here is thus filtered through the lens of the present experience in Johannesburg, of xenophobia and everyday struggles to make ends meet.

The Zimbabwean independence is central in the reflections of the above poem. Zimbabwe's national project is imagined to have begun with independence and therefore its evaluation focuses on this inception point. In this way the poem centralises independence as a reference point that defines Zimbabwe and who is a Zimbabwean. The poem, *What is the Gukurahundi?* in chapter four, also presents Zimbabwe's independence as a significant moment. However Mabuya's view stretches the inception of Zimbabwe further beyond 1980. Instead of talking about 1980 he brings into focus the colonial resistance of the 1890s. In this way Mabuya anchors Zimbabwe as an anti-colonial project and contextualises the hope he lost in 1980. He feels that at independence he was short changed of this anti-colonial struggle that he was part of, which according to him, began with Lobhengula and Nehanda

We went to a wedding: The Bride did not come

I lost hope in 1980

We went to a wedding

The bride didn't come

The husband independence appeared

Freedom never appeared

I was a freedom fighter not a war veteran

Not an ex combatant

We were fighting for a marriage

The most stupid generation

Allowed the country to degenerate

We owe it to our children

We owe it to our ancestors' resistance in the 1890s

But if you say

Lobengula you are Zimbabwean

Nehanda you are Zimbabwean

no no no no no no very emphatically NO

You are mad

(Poetic transcription, interview with Mabuya)

Mabuya uses a wedding metaphor to problematise the inception of the Zimbabwean nation. *Freedom* is the bride who does not show up to her wedding. In a wedding the bride is the highlight; her beauty and attire are the spectacle of the day. As such if the inception of Zimbabwe was a wedding without a bride, it was a dry and dull non-event. *Freedom* is a woman, important in bearing children in the marriage relationship. The woman is the nurturer, non-violent and life-giving part of the marriage union. This trope of imagining Zimbabwe positions women as producers of the nation. So Zimbabwe's independence as a wedding without a bride heralds a nation that cannot reproduce itself according to Mabuya. This wedding of independence and freedom also speaks to the bringing together of the ethnic groupings, in the same way that marriage brings together non-related members to form a family unit. The marriage that Mabuya fought for was to bring together the different ethnic groupings to form one family unit, the Zimbabwean family. An article in *The Zimbabwean* quoted below advances similar ideas about the ethnic groups making up Zimbabwe.

What the sharp assegais of 1893 and the lethal *Gukurahundi*
bayonets of the 1980s taught us – if not the evil of man – is that

whether born from the sacred womb of Nehanda or the royal loins of Mzilikazi, we all bleed the same colour. Sonke sopho elibomvu. Tese tinojuja ropa dzvuku. (Jera, 2013)

The above quote is the concluding remark of an article, titled *Ndebele vs Shona: A Nation Divided*. It was published in the online newspaper, *The Zimbabwean* commenting on a Facebook Group called *Ndebele vs Shona: Battle of Stereotypes* where “Shona and *ndebele* people insult each other” (Jera, 2013). The writer decries that the *ndebele* and Shona see each other as enemies and concludes by challenging the two groups’ imagined origins. The Shona are said to be coming from the sacred womb of *Nehanda* and the *ndebele* from the royal loins of *Mzilikazi*. It is not possible that a womb can produce offspring on its own and neither can the loins. The writer could have used a male Shona cultural symbol, *Kaguvu*, and spoken of the Shona coming from his loins. The choice of using a man and woman in imagining the origin of the Shona and *ndebele* speaks to the idea of sexual reproduction and associated notions of bloodline and lineage that mark some as belonging and others not. Mabuya also uses this notion in the metaphor of the *wedding* of independence and freedom.

In this article, as much as *Nehanda* and *Mzilikazi* may have been different, their offspring is one group of people, the Zimbabweans. Importantly however, is the fact that *Nehanda* and *Mzilikazi* or *Lobhengula* were not Zimbabweans. To emphasise that the origin is irrelevant the writer says *we all bleed the same colour*. In this sense therefore the

differences constructed between the Shona and *ndebele* using the cultural symbols and myths about who occupied the area first are challenged. Instead, the common trait of being a human being, is enough similarity to share in being a Zimbabwean.

By presenting the woman, Nehanda, and the man, Mzilikazi singularly the writer presents the impossibility of a pure ethnic identity. It transgresses the idea that identity is passed on through paternity when the Shona are imagined to come from a womb. The sacred womb will require a seed for it to produce offspring. In the same regard, the royal loins require a womb to carry the seed for offspring to be produced. As such the nation is born out of the coming together of the different and separate people to produce offspring that cannot make claims on the nation based on the purity of their ethnic identity. Here, membership of the nation can only be claimed based on the universal trait of being a human being.

Similarly, Mabuya argues that Zimbabweans should be imagined using a different trope from that of the ethnic myths, cultural symbols or descent from a common ancestry. They are the product of a marriage of the different ethnic groupings defined by a common vision of a future together against imperial forces. Zimbabweans are those who will advance a project for the people and not of a political party or individuals. Zimbabweans are those who have made ethnic identities secondary to the more 'noble' and sacrifice worthy national agenda. This is a nation whose origins are imagined to come from colonial resistance; Where the liberation struggle was about a national agenda serving the

majority and building the nation of Zimbabwe to be the answer to all the problems that Zimbabweans face. Mabuya argues that the ZANU government has not committed to this national agenda, which by default means it is against the people of Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwean government is said to have instead pursued an imperialist agenda of dividing the people along ethnic lines. This self serving politics has been built on the lie that there are two groups of people in Zimbabwe the “*ndebele*” and “Shona”. This contestation of the ethnic identity is important to highlight here as it shows the instrumentality of the different ways *Gukurahundi* is remembered. *Gukurahundi* is invoked in ways that justify the claims to belonging that people make. When one remembers *Gukurahundi* as an ethnic assault, they see Zimbabwe as a Shona nation that is not a good home for the *ndebele* and so people pursue Mthwakazi as their home. From the perspective of *Gukurahundi* being an imperialist project, the Shona have been equally shortchanged in the same way that the *ndebele* feel left out, in this case the *ndebele* claim Zimbabwe as their home. This view of the *Gukurahundi* being an imperialist project challenges theories about the 1979 Grand Plan which I turn to discuss below.

The 1979 Grand Plan

The Ndebele’s had no legal claim whatsoever upon Zimbabwean sovereignty just like their earlier cousins (followers of Soshangane)... The simple question is why would these two black groupings fight for what did not legitimately belong to them.

Participating in the struggle only meant that they were offering themselves for use by the Majority Shonas. ('For Restricted Circulation', 2011)

Above is a quote from a document called A Progress Review of the 1979 Grand Plan. I introduced The 1979 Grand Plan in chapter four and indicated that it outlines plans to remove the *ndebele* from Zimbabwe. Recently, two more follow up documents have been circulated detailing how the *1979 Grand Plan's* strategy had been implemented successfully and with further plans on how to complete the project. The documents are quoted as evidence that the *Gukurahundi* was an attack aimed at the *ndebele* and part of a bigger strategy to marginalise them from Zimbabwe and create a Shona State. *The 1979 Plan* details economic and social marginalisation of the *ndebele* which lends materiality to claims about experiences of unemployment in government departments in Zimbabwe narrated about *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg. This marginalisation is based on the construction of the *ndebele* as a minority who are settlers in a territory belonging to the majority Shona who are indigenous to Zimbabwe. It provides evidence of the role of the government of Zimbabwe in the current marginal position of *Gukurahundi* victims in the Zimbabwean nation. This fuels the hatred of the Shona and anchors the view of the *ndebele* as victims of a Shona nation that has crafted a strategy to annihilate them.

Nobody is a minority

We fought for a majority government

Should a Tonga be called *Ndebele*

You are *Ndebele* Tonga or Kalanga

Karanga or Zezuru or whatever

Different languages made to disappear

Into a lie called Shona

You don't behave the way you behave

Because of the blood in you

You behave the way you behave

Because of the information around you

(Poetic transcription, Interview Mabuya)

In contrast to the popular response that view *The 1979 Grand Plan* as evidence of the *ndebele's* victimisation, Mabuya tells a different story. He challenges the story of *Gukurahundi* being a genocide of the *ndebele* in Zimbabwe. He challenges the view of essentialising the ethnic identities and divisions of Shona and *ndebele*. Instead Mabuya places prominence on the national identity. In Mabuya's view, preoccupation with the *Gukurahundi*, and the view that the *ndebele* were victimised by a Shona nation, is playing into the hands of the perpetrators of the violence. The *Gukurahundi* in his view was a political move by ZANU PF, supported by the British government who were against

ZAPU because ZAPU had the vision of reclaiming land. This is further linked to the Cold War relations in that ZAPU received support from Russia and as such Britain would not have allowed a Russian backed party to rule in Zimbabwe.

This view of the *Gukurahundi* is further supported by the silence of the British government to the atrocities despite Joshua Nkomo, during that time, at one point seeking refuge in the UK (Phimister, 2008; Scarnecchia, 2008). This story of the *Gukurahundi* places the *ndebele* as unfortunate victims of world superpowers. They were the dispensable lives that could be ignored in the fight for the control of Zimbabwe. The popularity of the Zimbabwean president at the time and the reception he got from the western world, a big contrast to the current image and relations he has with the western world, is interpreted as confirmation of this. This perspective challenges a focus on *Gukurahundi* as an ethnic driven violence, which pits the Shona against the *ndebele*.

In many popular stories the *ndebele* are said to be a minority in Zimbabwe. Mabaya challenges this story of the *ndebele* being a minority who are annihilated by posing the question, how can a majority become a minority? His question seeks to invoke the independence war goal which was for majority rule, meaning black Africans wanted to rule in Zimbabwe instead of being ruled by the minority whites. In post -independence Zimbabwe however he questions the shift from a unified black identity, 'the majority', now divided into separate ethnic identities. Mabaya bemoans this shift from being the majority to ethnic identities that results in some who were once the majority becoming a

minority. This he argues is a view that Robert Mugabe wants people to have so he can continue to rule Zimbabwe without a united people coming together to hold him accountable. This divide and rule strategy is seen as a continuation of the colonial strategy of dividing the African people according to their ethnic groupings in order for the colonial governments to remain in power.

Mabuya puts forward this understanding of the *Gukurahundi* as the better and more complicated explanation of the events. It does not place blame on the Shona but views the violence as an unfortunate outcome of larger political issues. As a result people are expected to move away from victim narratives and look at the ‘bigger issues’ of the nation. The suffering they endured during the *Gukurahundi* should be put aside for the sake of building the nation. In this narrative of *Gukurahundi* as a war between the world super powers, victims are summoned to put away the loss of life and other injury for the sake of the nation. Instead of speaking about their pain and loss they should focus on building the nation and moving forward because the *Gukurahundi* was a strategy aimed at derailing the national project. From Mabuya’s perspective, *Gukurahundi* has been a successful endeavour because there is ethnic tension among Zimbabweans currently.

The government of Zimbabwe has justified its promotion of a silencing of the memory of *Gukurahundi* in Zimbabwe’s social memory as a way of ensuring the nation is not divided into ethnic enclaves. The division of Zimbabweans into ethnic grouping would work against the project of nation-building. Mabuya on the other hand says the *Gukurahundi* violence, not how it is remembered, was aimed at destroying the nation by

dividing Zimbabweans into ethnic groups. So when *Gukurahundi* is remembered as an assault on the *ndebele* it means its goal had been accomplished by pushing Zimbabweans to view themselves as ethnicities and not members of a nation. For Mabuya a good reaction to the *Gukurahundi* is building a Zimbabwe that benefits the black majority equally and putting aside all grievances for this nation building project.

Mabuya represents the views said to be held by many first generation victims of *Gukurahundi*. They want silence on *Gukurahundi* in order for peaceful coexistence with the Shona within Zimbabwe. Some in the second generation similarly want to build Zimbabwe however they want this to be founded on the acknowledgement of the *Gukurahundi* so that there may be true reconciliation between the *ndebele* and the Shona; for the groups to work together towards a common future as Zimbabweans. Yuval-Davis (1993) argues that people construct themselves as members of a nation not just because of a shared past but also because they believe their futures are interdependent. In a similar way here the focus is on the future of Zimbabwe and not only its origins.

The above discussion outlines the ways in which a Zimbabwean identity is imagined and justified as one which cannot be claimed through ethnicity because it is about the mixing of ethnic groups. As such, belonging to Zimbabwe is to be claimed by a forward looking agenda of nation building and not a revisiting of origins and constructing differences between the groups. This proposition is not accepted by all as the following discussions will show.

Arrival in the territory now called Zimbabwe

Even though the Shona say we came from South Africa yes its our origin we got there and found the Abathwa who were led by the mother uMthwakazi, Mzilikazi got there with Nyamazana They (the Shona) were also not there, no one was created in Zimbabwe where it says God created man in Zimbabwe They came from as far as Gabon ... some of them came from Tanzania when it was called Tanganyika it had a Shona name others came from DRC others from Rwanda that is where they got this name *Gukurahundi* its a Rwandan name meaning sweeping clean If you find a Rwandan person they will tell you *Gukurahundi* means cleansing... they got there and took their portion and we took ours that is how we could stay together (Focus Group Discussion)

In the above quote pre-colonial history is used as a more authentic narrative to justify people's presence in Zimbabwe, both the Shona and the *ndebele*. The Shona are narrated as having migrated from the north of Africa whereas the *ndebele* migrated from the south. Although the *Abathwa* are mentioned, it only ends in their mention and their interests do not seem to be of any further significance in this story. Instead the two groups Shona and *ndebele* got there and each took their portion.

The Shona *and ndebele* could coexist, side by side, independently but not when forced to be one nation like the current situation in Zimbabwe requires. In this way the imagined origins of the groups making up Zimbabwe today are used to construct immutable borders. This narrative presents the *Gukurahundi* as something that was inevitable, because the Zimbabwean nation is a project attempting to bring together different and separate people groups. Secondly it constructs the Shona as naturally violent because of their origins.

The origins of the Shona are linked to Gabon, Tanzania, DRC and Rwanda. This link to nations such as to DRC and Rwanda serves to give the Shona group the same characteristics of violence and ethnic tension that is prevalent in the Great Lakes Region. This constructs the Shona as prone to ethnic tension supported by the tracing the word *Gukurahundi* to Rwanda, popular for the 1994 genocide. This is also used to define *Gukurahundi* as a genocide that the Shona perpetrated in the same way that their ‘relatives’ in Rwanda did. The different origins of the two groups are employed to justify pursuance of a separate state for the people of *Mthwakazi*. There are inconsistencies however in the way the past is used within this justification. While the *Mthwakazi* nation is brought forward as what was, before colonisation, the justification of who belongs to *Mthwakazi* falls back into borders defined by colonialists. For example Tshengi further goes on to say:

Why did I say *ngamandebete* (they are *ndebele*) its because during the days of Mzilikazi and the whites it was called

Matebeleland you know, that included all of us (Interview, Tshengi)

She traces the *ndebele* name to what the “*the whites*” called the area, Matabeleland. While *Mthwakazi* is invoked as what was before colonisation, the challenge of recouping the precolonial ideal is shown in the difficulty to define the territory and who belongs to it without using colonially drawn boundaries. The definition of who belongs to *Mthwakazi* is drawn from the colonial categorisation of space. Mabuya speaks of the Europeans deciding on the borders and does not challenge them. Instead he distinguishes the national borders from the ethnic borders, positing the former as acceptable while the latter are to be rejected. I will return to this concept of borders in relation to racial identity further below.

Inkomo Zikababa⁴

Why are you crying?

We are weeping for our father’s cows

They were being led by the black bull

The rooster came and disoriented them

Sent them out into the jungle

⁴ *Our father’s cattle*

Lucky you strong man

Because Mthwakazi stabbed herself with her own spear

When Mqabuko said lets become one herd

Let me build with you

He didn't know he was building his children's grave

While they were still alive

That young man from the east

Even then was like a maggot

That comes in through a wound

But our tears are seen by our ancestors

The day they answer you will meet your fate

The Dabane will arise

The same one that rose against the white Rhodesians

And made them cry like girls

The bloom that sprouted in Gadadi

May the ghosts of Mthwakazi arise and scare them

What kind of sleep are you in?

Why don't you choose the leader from the young ones

Like you have always said

Choose it now the one that must lead the herd

Your generations are dying in foreign lands

How long will you watch this silently

What will you gain from this

Choose the leader now

A beautiful nation is dying

(Song Inkomo Zikababa by Ithemba lamaNguni)

The song above speaks of cattle that were being led by a black bull but are now being led astray by a rooster. The black bull represents Joshua Nkomo, the leader of ZAPU that later joined ZANU with the signing of the *Unity Accord*. Lobhengula is also praised as a black bull. Here the black bull represents the *ndebele*, descendants of Lobhengula and ZAPU supporters. The symbol for ZANU PF is the rooster and so here the rooster represents Robert Mugabe. The cattle being spoken of here are thus the *ndebele* who have been disoriented and led into the jungle. In this metaphor the song speaks of the migration of the *ndebele* from Zimbabwe as disorientation and being led into the jungle. Migration is constructed as unnatural and Robert Mugabe is responsible for it. In addition

imagining the *ndebele* as cattle and Robert Mugabe as a rooster serves to show the unnatural situation where cattle are being led by a rooster instead of a bull. In this way the song constructs the non-relation of the *ndebele* to the Shona and further speaks to the construction of the *ndebele* as not belonging to Zimbabwe.

When signing the *Unity Accord*, Joshua Nkomo is said to have been building his children's grave and *Mthwakazi* was stabbing herself. Robert Mugabe is the young man from the east who is like a maggot coming into the wound. A maggot causes a wound to fester. So this song metaphorically constructs the signing of the *Unity Accord* in the negative. The *Unity Accord* which is usually invoked as the solution to the *Gukurahundi* question is here pitted as the source of problems for the *ndebele*. The metaphors used further justify the pursuance of a separate state for *Mthwakazi* as staying within Zimbabwe is a continuation of stabbing her own children and digging their graves. Similar to the song *Usizi* which is a prayer for divine intervention for the *ndebele* now living in South Africa, this song calls on the ancestors to appoint a leader who can take the *ndebele* out of Zimbabwe. There have been debates about the possibility of a *ndebele* president in Zimbabwe that this song also alludes to here. It is possible this song is asking the ancestors to choose a Zimbabwean leader among the *ndebele* so that they are not led by a 'rooster'.

In reference to the place of the *ndebele* in Zimbabwe, Tshengi says they have been spit out. The *Gukurahundi* is viewed as a *pushing out* of the *ndebele* as discussed in chapter four and in the quote below Tshengi says the *ndebele* were *spit out*. She says:

So when we looked at it we saw that for the *ndebele* people we are ill-treated, but we have been patient and long suffering, we have tried to say even though these people are ill-treating us lets live together but they are spitting us out they don't want us, which is what made us stand up and say we want our own country ours that used to be led by Shaka, I mean Mzilikazi, that is what caused us to say no, these people are making us remember that these nations used to be two separate nations, we now want our country so that we also have our own country and we can suffer on our own (Interview, Tshengi).

In the above quote, *Tshengi* one of the founding members of the South African chapter of the *Mthwakazi* Liberation Front (MLF) speaks about the formation of the MLF. MLF was formed because the *ndebele* were spit out of Zimbabwe. Tshengi says the *ndebele* were ill treated in Zimbabwe referring to the *Gukurahundi*. Despite this ill treatment she says the *ndebele* continued to have hope in building a nation together with the Shona but this has not succeeded. As such this invokes the memory of two nations that were only brought together by colonisation.

Instead of a forward looking construction of the nation, MLF retreat to foreground the origins of the two groups that make up the imagined Zimbabwe nation. MLF invokes the pre-colonial era as a response to the feelings of being a foreigner in Zimbabwe. So the MLF is now pursuing a project of distinguishing the *Mthwakazi* nation from the Zimbabwean nation. In 2013 they burned the Zimbabwean flag during a march on the streets of Johannesburg. In the following section the discussion centres on this project of constructing a *Mthwakazian* in contrast to a Zimbabwean. The *Gukurahundi* is used in this way to justify why the Shona and *ndebele* cannot share a common future as Zimbabweans as Mabuya propositions. Instead, the *ndebele* are actively imagining themselves out of Zimbabwe and constructing a *Mthwakazi* identity. In the following section I discuss how the *Mthwakazi* identity is narrated in Hillbrow through contestations over space, employment opportunities and cultural identity.

We are not Zimbabweans anymore, we are Mthwakazian

Tshengi in the following quote speaks about an incident that occurred in Hillbrow. This was the first thing she told me as a warning about the dangers of doing research on *Gukurahundi* after I had introduced my research and the reason why I had asked to interview her. She told me the story of how she refused to calm down the *Mthwakazi* youth, as a sign of her bravery and commitment to the *Mthwakazi* nation, even though there was possibility of being seen by the Zimbabwean Central Intelligence Officers (CIO). Her refusal was breaking the gendered expectation that as a woman she would be against violence. Secondly as a mother she would take up the role of disciplining the youth and thirdly she would do this because of fear of the CIO. This story also equally served

the purpose of drawing a similarity between what she does as a member of MLF and her views of what it means that I am doing research on *Gukurahundi* as a Zimbabwean young woman:

You (the ZANU PF people who organised the rally) came to the wrong place, this place is for the *ndebele* people. You came knowing fully well that Hillbrow, Berea, Yeoville is for the *ndebele* people. You should have gone and held your rally in Zimbabwe, not here in South Africa, or maybe you should have gone to Pretoria where there are a lot of Shona people, where they go and get asylum papers, not here places that belong to the *ndebele*. You came to start a fight... I even said, these are not your people, these people do not belong to Zimbabwe, we are not Zimbabweans anymore, we are *Mthwakazians* (Interview, Tshengi).

In the above excerpt, Tshengi differentiates between Shona and *ndebele* and what these two identities mean in South Africa. The Shona have access to the asylum seeker permits and Pretoria and Zimbabwe are the demarcated spaces to which they belong. The *ndebele* on the other hand do not belong to Zimbabwe but to *Mthwakazi*. They have no access to the asylum permits and Hillbrow, Berea and Yeoville is their turf. She says this in response to a request for her to reprimand and stop *ndebele* youth that disrupted a ZANU PF anti-sanctions rally which Minister Mutasa,⁵ had come to address. Tshengi says the

⁵ ZANU PF minister that had come to address a rally of Zimbabweans in Hillbrow on the 7th of May 2011

ndebele youth wanted to sing the South African Zulu national anthem when the ZANU PF youth sang the Shona anthem. In response to the mayhem she blames the location of the rally and not the *ndebele* youth who were being violent and beating up the Shona youth.

By demarcating Hillbrow, Berea and Yeoville as *ndebele* places and the *ndebele* as Mthwakazians, Tshengi normalises the disruption of the rally as something that should have been expected. The Shona should not come and have public performances of their nation, Zimbabwe, such as holding a rally or singing an anthem in a space in which they do not belong. In addition she refuses to do anything about the disruption. The organisers of the rally approached her as a mother and a leader of the MLF, however she distances herself from the expected intervention a mother ‘should’ make. Earlier on she says “I told them I am not going to do it” and then explains her refusal by explaining why the disruption of the rally was inevitable. Pending the Mthwakazi state, the *ndebele* claim space in South Africa as their own. The Hillbrow community hall in which the rally was held is a common meeting area for *ndebele* events. One of the events I attended at the community hall was a Mzilikazi day in 2013.

Mzilikazi Day

The Hillbrow community centre is the main site for most of the cultural events hosted by and for the *ndebele* in Johannesburg. It is a place where migrant artists perform and in the events I have attended, the *ndebele* are encouraged to support the performances

happening at the Centre. In the gathering on Mzilikazi day, Zimbabwean, descendants of Mzilikazi, came to meet with their South African counterparts, *Ndebele* chiefs from Mpumalanga and a representative from the Zulu King. Speeches were given by the Zulu King's representative as well as by one of the chiefs from Mpumalanga. There were performances from different *ndebele* cultural groups singing traditional music.

The *ndebele* have been coming together in Johannesburg to observe Mzilikazi Day, a celebration of the king of the *Ndebele* who migrated to the Zimbabwe territory in the 1830s. Even though Lobhengula became King of the *Ndebele* after the death of his father Mzilikazi, people come together to celebrate Mzilikazi, the King of the *Ndebele* who led his people away from South Africa into Zimbabwe. Celebrating Mzilikazi provides a link to claiming affinity and belonging to the Zulu in South Africa. By claiming affinity to the Zulu, the *ndebele* construct their presence in South Africa as a return 'home'. This has not created the intended consequence as they have not been welcomed back 'home' by the Zulu.

The Zulu King representative, a woman that was addressed by the title '*umtanenkosi*', directly translated the king's daughter, brought a message from the king to say that Mzilikazi's bones were laid in Zimbabwe and as such that land belonged to Mzilikazi. The king therefore, asked Mzilikazi's people to go back to their land and put things in order. The king also promised to visit Zimbabwe in the following year, 2014. Similarly in

2015, the Zulu king made remarks which sparked violent attacks on foreigners across the country. In his remarks, he had asked foreign nationals to leave South Africa.

A chief from Mpumalanga spoke in solidarity with the *ndebele*. He spoke about how the Shona had mistreated the *ndebele* through the *Gukurahundi*, and had now followed them to South Africa. He said the Shona were presenting unfair competition to the *ndebele* in South Africa and he encouraged the *ndebele* to be strong and stand their ground. This performance of kinship between the *ndebele* from Zimbabwe, the *Ndebele* in South Africa and the Zulu is one of the ways victims of *Gukurahundi* distinguish themselves from the Shona.

On the day of the event women and men were in traditional dress that I have not seen people wear in Zimbabwe. The outfits, that are characteristically Zulu, showed the South African influence as well as the desire to identify with the Zulu as the origins of the *ndebele*. This is an effort to portray the ‘true’ *ndebele* culture and to find similarities with South Africans. In the same way that South Africa still holds events with virgin girls where young women present themselves to the public bare breasted, there were about fifteen teenage girls who were in short skirts and bare breasted. The girls were called on to welcome the arrival of the different royal groupings and it was quite a spectacle with young men jeering and joking about the bare breasted girls.

I was very uncomfortable with the display, especially when they were called out to dance and usher in the arriving royal attendees. In the urban setting of Hillbrow the display of the bare breasted girls was conspicuously out of place. It was important however that the *ndebele* from Zimbabwe perform this cultural expression to make visible the similarity with their South African counterparts. This makes the *Mthwakazi* nation to be imagined from a patriarchal view where women's bodies are used to produce the nation. Here the idea of the *Mthwakazi* nation is premised on the performance of a culture that disciplines women's bodies and displays them. The control of the female body is integral to this performance of the *ndebele* identity.

Asylum Seeker Permits

Another differentiating feature between the *ndebele* and Shona in South Africa used by Tshengi is the asylum seeker permit. The asylum seeker permit has been critiqued extensively in migration literature that it does not offer much protection (Landau & Amit, 2014). In this context however Tshengi sees it as an advantage that the Shona have over the *ndebele* in South Africa. It is not the protection that the Asylum Seeker Permit gives the Shona as they may equally be asked to pay bribes to the police despite holding the document. It represents an official recognition by the South African state of the Zimbabwean in South Africa.

Some of the victims of *Gukurahundi* fled to South Africa when the atrocities were taking place in the 1980s. Since then migration to South Africa has been popular from

Matebeleland as Maphosa (2010) has argued that it became a rite of passage for young men from these provinces. However the *ndebele* have mostly used fraudulent documents, or valid South African documents that have been obtained irregularly. These fraudulent documents accord migrants the same vulnerability and protection as the official asylum permits. The difference however is that the asylum permits are legitimate documents issued by the state in response to people recognised as Zimbabweans in South Africa. This distinction between the Shona and *ndebele* through asylum permits is significant in that it speaks to who is recognised by the South African state as a Zimbabwean.

In 2010, the South African government implemented an amnesty for undocumented Zimbabweans and those who were resident in the country irregularly through the Zimbabwean Dispensation Project (ZDP). This involved Zimbabweans presenting themselves to DHA to apply for a permit and to surrender the fraudulent permits or South African identity documents they were using. In addition, applicants required a police clearance certificate as well as a letter from an employer testifying that the applicant was employed. Applicants needed to have a passport which is expensive to obtain for many in Zimbabwe. Apart from the challenge that some people may have had to obtain the documentation required to support an application for the ZDP process, this was further confounded by people's suspicion of the process. The permits were only valid for four years without any information about what would happen once they expired and people saw this as a way to get them out of the country. Rumours were rife that the permits would not be renewed and instead this was a way for the government to get information about who is in the country. This would make it easy for the government to deport them

once the permit expired. Others feared being arrested for revealing that they had fraudulently acquired South African documentation.

Amit (2015) argues that the DHA issues documentation as a way of keeping a record of who is in the country and this corroborates people's suspicions. Furthermore the DZP was implemented in a short time meaning many people did not get a chance to apply before the project was concluded (Amit, 2015). As a result, many people especially those that consider themselves to be Mthwakazian and not Zimbabwean did not take advantage of the ZDP application window. The state, whether South African or Zimbabwean is a significant feature in constructing who is *ndebele* and who is a Shona. In addition to the way ethnic and national identity is contested as discussed above I now turn focus to the way racial identity is narrated in the memory of *Gukurahundi*.

Robert is saying I am a white man in a black man's skin

Similar to ethnic and national identity, racial identity was, for participants, defined in terms of demarcating spatial boundaries of belonging. Racial identity is defined in terms of whose interests it serves. For example, Europeans are those who built both spatial and ethnic borders in order to exploit resources. In this sense being white is defined as being divisive with the goal of enriching a few at the expense of the majority. Therefore one who is white can never be a freedom fighter. This classification of the white identity sets a rigid boundary where an African could never be white.

The African is a victim of colonialism and of the political elites, black nationalists (Fanon, 2004). Being African and black is defined in terms of victimhood. Additionally, it means being primitive, located outside technological advancements in communication, travel and weaponry as presented by *Ithemba lamaNguni* in the song *Hango*. The African is figured outside of Christianity and contemporary fashion.

There are some voices however that challenge these rigid classifications and allow for a possibility of a white African. In the previous chapter, Bass, the filmmaker's race, is significant to the reception of the story she tells of the *Gukurahundi*. She is framed as one coming from abroad who cannot tell the story of an African child. She is located outside of Africa and therefore unable to tell the story of Africa. Mabuya similarly speaks of Europeans, those who came to Africa from overseas:

1854 Europeans decided on the border

Create groupings to be controllable

We didn't create borders

Robert is saying I am a white man in a black man's skin

Interest of the people of Zimbabwe no!

People have stooped lower than ZANU

Retreat to their little corners

It is so good for the imperialist

That you think like Mthwakazi

The nation totally destroyed

(Poetic transcription of interview with Mabuya)

When ‘the scramble for Africa’ occurred it was a divide and rule strategy to benefit the Europeans. Borders were created for Europeans to claim territory, extract resources and position themselves as superior to the local populations. By invoking colonisation in the construction of the European to be white or one who has not been a victim of colonialism and has instead benefitted from it. By saying *Robert Mugabe is saying I am a white man in a black man’s skin* means he pursues the same values that the coloniser stood for, that is, constructing and maintaining borders for the benefit of the few while the greater population suffers. Robert Mugabe creates borders between ethnic groups for the benefit of a few ZANU PF political elites, for example, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008) says the Zimbabwean nation has been imagined through Shona cultural symbols that alienate the *ndebele* and other groupings.

In contrast to Robert Mugabe, Mabuya presents the freedom fighter as a nation builder fighting for the majority. The freedom fighters redeem the borders arbitrarily created by Europeans for the benefit of the minority and reimagine them for the benefit of the

majority. The colonial project is conjured up as the greatest vice which Zimbabweans must stand up to fight against. Despite the fact that Zimbabwe gained ‘independence’ in 1980, colonialism is not a past from which the nation emerges, however Mabaya warns of the possibility of being colonised without direct colonial rule (McClintock, 1995).

Robert Mugabe, for Mabaya, represents colonialism despite his outspokenness against the West. He has spoken against the United Kingdom Prime Minister for example in the famous words “Blair keep your England I will keep my Zimbabwe” at the 2002 Earth Summit in South Africa. Mabaya reminds us of neocolonialism with his definition of colonialism as the form of governing that divides and benefits the few at the expense of the majority. This is the *modus operandi* for many transnational companies that continue to extract resources and make exorbitant profits at the expense of local communities.

Robert Mugabe has therefore failed to pursue this vision that freedom fighters had of a Zimbabwe that benefits the majority of its citizens. Instead as outlined in chapter four, Zimbabwe has become a *kraal with hyenas preying on the sheep*. The hyenas are the fifth brigade who committed atrocities against the *ndebele*. They are also the ZANU PF government that has not worked for the uplifting of all the people of Zimbabwe. The hyenas could be the war veterans, unlike the freedom fighters who fought for independence and majority rule; the war veterans are now claiming compensation for their participation in the independence war. They are now claiming personal gain from what began as a service to the nation as a whole.

While challenging the ethnic borders, this narrative does not challenge the national borders. The MLF's main complaint however about the *Gukurahundi* is against the national borders, that make the Shona and *ndebele* one nation. They see them as a problem that impedes their attainment of wellbeing. This is different from Mabuya who redeems the Zimbabwean national borders by framing Zimbabwe as an anticolonial project that began in the 1890s.

Below I present two songs by *Ithemba lamaNguni* that speak to these themes. The first song tries to reclaim the African identity as it was before the colonial encounter by locating it outside advancements that have been made by humankind. The second song speaks about the African political elite as a terror to the masses thereby defining the African identity as one of being a victim of colonialism as well as of nationalist governments.

While they sang they were spying our riches through the church windows

Everything has changed

I am going back home

Back to where I belong

When they came with their faith

They made it as if we didn't know God

They said one thing while acting the opposite

They sent us to their books

Yet while they sang they were spying our riches through the
church windows

We also have the Great I Am and ours does not have a hell

Tell them to stop lying

They make it as if they found us as wild lawless people

We may be quiet but we know their secrets

They killed God's son by hanging him on a cross

This thing of not respecting God started in Sodom and
Gommorah

We were not part of it

Ask Lot if you think I am lying

I am going back home back to where I belong

This foreign culture is difficult for me

Give me my knobkerrie

The gun has destroyed the world

Lets barter using goats

Money has destroyed this world

Send your message through a little boy

Cellular phones have caused enough fight between lovers

Old woman tell the children a folktale

This television is disrespectful to our children

The radio keeps on talking you can never reply or ask it a
question

I am going back home back to where I belong

This foreign culture is difficult for me

Oh the good old days when our ancestors used horses to travel

When there were no cars that kill people

When our grandfathers used scotchcarts

When there were no aeroplanes that bury people in flames

Everyone respected each other and everyone was the same

No one was more educated than the other

Everyone wore amabheshu they all cost the same

I am going back home back to where I belong

This foreign culture is difficult for me

(Song Hango by *Ithemba lamaNguni*)

In this song *Ithemba lamaNguni* want to differentiate the black identity from what they view as foreign culture that came with the colonisers, the white people. The foreign culture that *Ithemba lamaNguni* distance themselves from in this song includes the Christian religion centered on the crucifixion of Jesus. Also included are technological advancements in the form of television, cellular phones, the radio and travel advancements of using aeroplanes and cars. It also extends to fashion and the economy. This correlation of identity with culture creates a rigid boundary but with contradictions. While the African culture is defined against what it is not, it is impossible to undo the 'damage' that colonialism is said to have brought. Furthermore this distancing of African culture from technological advancement leaves Africans outside the current world.

Ithemba lamaNguni reclaim pride in their culture by posturing it as an alternative to what they view as the foreign 'white' culture. The black culture is postured as authentic when following the past way of life. This however leads to the pitfall where black people are not given credit for technological advances. This reflects the racist thinking that black people are inferior and need white people to advance. This thinking carries currency in explaining the many failed postcolonial African states. Here black political leaders' corruption or inability to lead is understood to stem from their black identity. This song problematically positions the primitive as the 'authentic' African more ideal way of life.

To be black and to take pride in being black is made analogous to going back to primitive lifestyles. In this song *Ithemba lamaNguni* construct the black identity by comparing it to the white identity which is problematic. The song sets up a dichotomy that requires white culture to be defined in order for the black culture and identity to be defined. The black culture is therefore defined as that which is not white. When white culture is made synonymous with technological advancements, the black identity is thus located as primitive. As such black people who use these technologies are no longer authentic. Comaroff & Comaroff, (2012) argue that modernity has always been a north-south collaboration. This foregrounds the challenge of constructing rigid boundaries between the black and white culture instead of viewing it as a dialogical and contingent process (Hall, 1996). Further this attempt to define identity against an other falls into the trap of creating boundaries that gloss over other differences that may be socially significant (Yuval-Davis, 2006a).

The song constructs a possibility of going back to the way things were before colonialism. On the other hand, it may be invoking the way of life before disruption by colonialism as a way to show the absurdity of extracting a black culture from the current status quo. It is not possible to get to a way of life that is outside the influence of our current technology. Technology has overall improved quality of life although it comes with disadvantages. Travelling by aeroplane has made the world easier to navigate. However air travel has not made it possible for all people to access the broader world. Members of *Ithemba lamaNguni* are unlikely to go abroad. The cost of the travel is beyond their means and they are more likely to be declined a visa to Europe or North America. In a sense therefore, modern technology of travel in aeroplanes represents just the risk of a fatal crash for them and not the possibility of crossing the ocean to another continent. Modern technology has brought positive change to some but for many it has only magnified the structural inequalities

Robert Mugabe is therefore positioned as a white person, representing being anti-black. This song by *Ithemba lamaNguni* outlines the ways in which being white has been positioned in history and colonialism as better and superior to black. However in this desire for an authentic black identity and culture untainted by the colonial encounter with the whites, the song speaks to the unavoidable intertwined position. It speaks to the fact that, there is no black without white and there is no white without the black. As such, Fanon (2008) calls for an imagining of who the black individual is, outside of the ideas that posit the black as that which is not white. This is a worthwhile pursuit today for the reclaiming of African/ black identity against the onslaught of colonialism. One of the

continuing forms of colonial power is the invisibilisation of white culture and its positioning as the zero point against which other cultures are measured. The song above shows white culture as invisible within technology and therefore taken to be synonymous with technological advancements. If white culture was made visible, it would be possible to see technology as separate from the way it is utilised in the white culture. This would therefore make it possible that an African culture is found within technological advancements in the way Africans utilise the technology.

Fanon (2004) also speaks of the violence of colonialism but also outlines violence by the elite party officials who lead the struggle against colonialism. This positioning of Robert Mugabe as a white person, speaks to the African nationalist elites, who led the struggle for independence only to become corrupt self-serving government leaders, the *hungry lions*. The following poem uses the metaphor of moving from a frying pan into the burning fire, to describe the condition of Africans post independence. The song does not limit its focus to Zimbabwe but speaks to all Africans on the continent broadly. This song therefore places the *Ithemba lamaNguni* within the African community broadly as they identify with the wars and perils afflicting the continent.

Hungry Lions

Come men! Come!

Come lets talk

Come lets have one voice

And say what have the African done to deserve this from this
world

From the slave trade and the dark days of colonisation,

To be led by the/ Hungry Lions

From the Frying pan

Frying pan Frying pan

To the burning fire

Why are these cowards called comrades?

Why are these riggers called winners?

Why are these zeroes called heroes?

Why are these thieves called chiefs?

Why are these killers called kings?

Why are these dissidents called Presidents?

Why Africa why?

Gangsters with guns are called governments.

They pave their way by bullets not ballots

They call their confusion revolution.

Their corruption is called production.

While they fill their stomachs full until they look foolish,

Our poverty is called power.

Our pains are called our gains.

Why Africa? Why?

Why are these evil perpetrators called protectors?

Why are these demons called democrats?

Why are these dictators called doctors.

Why are these liars called lawyers?

Their tribalism is called nationalism.

Their poly-tricks are called politics.

They are the richest leaders from the poorest countries.

They blame everybody else except themselves

For their own mistakes.

They cut our legs before they race with us.

Then they declare themselves winners.

They prefer to cut our mouths than to answer our questions.

Why Africa? Why?

Why are these criminals honoured?

Why? Africa Why?

The black nation is destroyed

It is finished

The black nation is finished

Hunger has destroyed it

Wars have destroyed it

Diseases have destroyed it

(Song Hungry Lions by *Ithemba lamaNguni*)

The song calls for Africans to come and speak in unison about the condition of Africans in the world. It traces the wretched position of African people from colonisation to today where they are led by *hungry lions*. Using the image of *hungry lions* to speak about African leaders suggests that they are dangerous. A lion is dangerous but when hungry it is an even greater terror. So African leaders are a terror to the people they lead. African people are dying of hunger, wars and diseases while they have leaders. It is not just that Africans are suffering from diseases and hunger, but the hunger is caused by the leaders themselves as Sen (1980) has argued that famine is political.

So the move from colonial rule to being led by the African nationalist is described as moving from the frying pan into the burning fire. It poses the question, is being in a pan, shielded from the flames but feeling the heat, better than being in the open flames of the fire? This metaphor captures the challenge of differentiating the ill of colonialism from the terror of the *hungry lions*. Importantly this captures the disappointment in the state of affairs in the post-colonial African state if the freedom that many fought for is now described as being in a burning fire. Furthermore with this song *Ithemba lamaNguni* place their victimhood within a broader narrative of victimhood, belonging to Africans.

The African identity is endowed with victimhood as its marker, victims of colonial regimes and now victims of the elite of the ruling nationalist parties.

The song however does not simply construct this African identity imbued with victimhood but asks the question “*Why?*” This question rallies a call to the Africans to come together and work towards changing their situation. Africans are called to come together and ask the question “*what have we done to deserve this from the world?*” This call rings similar to Steve Biko’s assertions that black people have to do something about their condition themselves and not wait to receive or to have things done on their behalf. By marking the African as one who was a victim of colonialism, the white is constructed outside of the African identity. Mabuya however gives an example of Zambia that had a white vice president to show that it is possible to be white and African. At the time of the interview in 2013, Guy Scott was the vice president of Zambia. He later became the acting president for four months, from October 2014 to January the following year. In the Interview Mabuya ‘predicted’ this by using him as an example of a white African. He says:

for that matter we wanted to liberate eh eh ourselves from the white supremacy not us saying the whiteman does not exist they will exist unfortunately yes I'm telling you they will exist unfortunately if we dont understand it is very unfortunate they will exist not in Zimbabwe only not in Kenya only not in Zambia only not in whatever you understand If today that guy the President of eh Zambia dies his deputy is a white man and he is Zambian so there is no problem but do you think therefore people

must pick arms and fight that man when he takes over as president No! why He is a Zambian and he is as much of a Zambian as any other the fact that we were colonised we cannot take it away we cannot possibly and therefore we are not going to be able to sit around here and chase white people into the into the into the ocean its not going to happen you understand (Mabuya Interview)

While contradicting the notion of the African only being a black person, he phrases it as an unfortunate state of affairs. The way he talks about the presence of white people in Africa insinuates that people have to make peace with an otherwise unnatural thing. The white people do not belong to Africa but we cannot chase them away. Part of this, is a response to the land reform in Zimbabwe where land was taken away from white farmers. The narrative that accompanied the land grab was one that positioned the white farmers as not belonging to Zimbabwe. Raftopoulos (2008) speaks of the Zimbabwe nationalist project typified by the statement *Blair keep your England and I will keep my Zimbabwe*, in which he argues that Robert Mugabe has created a nationalist project that excludes the whites. Mabuya's statement therefore taken from this context is pushing back against this ideology of Africans having a separate exclusive humanity to any other race (Raftopoulos, 2008)

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the instrumentality to which the story of *Gukurahundi* is being put. Remembering *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today enables people to talk about their

status in the world. It provides an entry point for a critique of what it means not only to be a *ndebele* or Zimbabwean but to be African and black in the world. The *ndebele*, victims of *Gukurahundi* are remembered as victims of *Gukurahundi* in Zimbabwe. This allows them to claim refuge in South Africa and to be more deserving of the benevolence of the host country, if any is extended, than their Shona counterparts. Furthermore, this provides justification for the *ndebele* to pursue a separate state, *Mthwakazi*.

The *ndebele* are also remembered as Africans who have been victims of colonisation. The location of victims in this way allows for *Gukurahundi* to be remembered not only as violence within Zimbabwe but to also make linkages with the global community. In this way the *Gukurahundi* memory is used to critique global racial inequalities. This equally provides an opportunity for a narrative that disrupts global hegemonic discourses about Africa and its many ills. By locating the *Gukurahundi* within global issues, it is no longer a problem of African states and their natural proclivity to violence but the global order is implicated in the violence occurring within them. Remembering the *Gukurahundi* in this way provides space for a celebration of the *ndebele* culture. In this way the memory reclaims what the violence was aimed at destroying. There is a celebration of African culture although this is problematic in certain instances where it perpetuates the disenfranchisement of women. In the following chapter I will draw out the the main arguments of this thesis in a discussion of the issues raised in this research.

Chapter 7: Let me tell my own story

ULobhengula

Ibhide elimnyama ngomlomo

Elithethwa ngezinyembezi zamadoda

Umfitshane wakithi Konjobo kazinyathelwa

Kanti ezabade ziyanyathelwa

Utshani obude busemahalihali

Okothi nyakana kutshayo

Kotsha umitshi yamadoda

Inkwenkwezi enjengeslimela

Ilange elaphuma endlebeni yendlovu

Laphuma amakhwezi abikelana

Imbabala egxakaza ematsheni

Yesaba inzipho zayo ukonakala

Hamba ngomkhonto

Yemba ngenduku

Abalakhophe

Inkosi yabentungwa labathwakazi

Awu Awu Ingwenyama Yesilo Bo

Inkuz'emnyama ebukwa ngamanxebayo

Emadolo abomvu ngokuguqa

Engazini zabafo

ULobhengula wamawaba

Nangu jeqe ilembu elimnyama eleqa amanye amalembu

ULobhengula wamawaba

Ngwalo ngwalo Mahlinzinja wofa bakungwabe

Yemba ngomkhonto

Yemba ngenduku

Abalakhophe

Inkosi yabentungwa labathwakazi

Introduction

This thesis details the ways in which people make meaning of life at the margins through linking their past with the present. It explores the meanings drawn from *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today through comparing artworks; which include a film by an outsider and music created to document *Gukurahundi* by the victims. This research was shaped by three key questions; What does the *Gukurahundi* mean and what is its significance in Johannesburg today? What is the appropriate narrative for remembering *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today? And why are people talking in this way about *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today?

The narratives captured reflect on the contemporary spatial, social, political and economic location of the participants, as Freeman (1993) has argued that the past is remembered through the present. This thesis contributes towards an understanding of how people located at the margins, of both the Zimbabwean and South African society, make sense of their experiences and shows how art can be a useful entry point into understanding this meaning making. Unlike Vambe (2012) who says people have moved on after the *Gukurahundi*, as if the past can be left behind, in this thesis I have shown how the past is an always available resource for navigating the present and its meaning is constantly reframed by the demands of the present. The *Gukurahundi* memory is used to claim belonging to the global community through national membership. It is this

significant in defining modes of national and global belonging through redefining ethnic identities.

The power of a story: Translation and Transmission of Trauma in a Racist World

Stories wield the power of defining identity and negotiating belonging. There are certain stories that have a ready audience such as the atrocities in the Third Chimurenga in Zimbabwe where white farmers were killed and had land taken away. The *Gukurahundi* has not received a similar audience save in the recent years when it worked to bolster the discourse on Robert Mugabe as a dictator. Césaire (1972) reflects on this where the Holocaust provoked a response and yet similar atrocities were being committed against the black colonised and ignored. More recently, Žižek (2009) makes similar comments regarding a front page story of The Times, about violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo that similarly does not elicit much of a response.

I began this thesis presenting the culture of music as one way of telling stories whose meaning and function rests on the context of its performance. Opening this chapter is the song Lobhengula by *Ithemba lamaNguni*, that is celebrating Lobhengula the valiant King of the *ndebele*. This song about Lobhengula is the form *Ithemba lamaNguni* chooses to tell their story of *Gukurahundi* victimhood. It performs a multiple politics by invoking the *ndebele* pre-colonial way of life and using a language that is impervious to interpretation. The king is celebrated and given currency in the present as the refuge for

the *ndebele* against a world that has disowned them. This is the acceptable memorial of *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today.

My mother said she recited a version of this poem in primary school in the 1950s and so did my sister in the late 1970s. The poem has travelled across time and space similar to the song about Chief Gampu in Chapter One. It was recited in Rhodesia in the 1950s and 1970s and today it is heard in Johannesburg. I have included this poem here untranslated to represent the form of remembering the *Gukurahundi*, which refuses to be translated into a language that participants imagine the global community will be able to understand. It represents the demand from the memorialisations of *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg. The poem demands an acceptance of the *ndebele* as equal members of the global community, through their own terms, without being domesticated by translation (Venuti, 1998). Esperanza, a Latin American woman whose biography was recorded by an academic from the United States of America, exercised her power over the translation of her story by withholding aspects of her biography from the translator (Behar, 1993). This poem similarly refuses translation but is demanding attention in its indecipherability, which says the *ndebele* are people in their own right without translation. This poem also represents challenges of translation. There are aspects of a culture that refuse the domestication by a translation (Venuti, 1998). They continue to travel across space and time untranslated but providing resource for the contemporary life stories in different ways.

Participants are claiming the power of the story by redefining the genre, language and mode of narrating their history. The music on the *Gukurahundi* seeks to disrupt the hegemonic global discourses about violence in Africa by introducing a different way of speaking about the violence. This goes against the popular narrative genre about conflict in the third world. Victims are usually presented as innocent, weak unfortunate victims so the world can take pity and help. In this thesis, people want the victimhood status as a claim to entitlement to talk about the *Gukurahundi*. This claim to victimhood is used to renegotiate the terms on which *Gukurahundi* is memorialised.

The translation of the story of *Gukurahundi* is central to the contestation over the way the violence is memorialized. In *The Tunnel* Jenna Bass is unable to create a translation that will represent the story the way victims want. *The Tunnel* fails to perform the function that the music performs. This is a failure to tell the story of *Gukurahundi* and also transmit the unique identity of the victims. The Tunnel domesticates the story of *Gukurahundi* taking away all its foreignness. This reflects some of the ways that colonialism continues today in the silencing of some stories or when they can only gain an audience in translation. The *Gukurahundi* story is presented in two translations in this thesis. The one is an incomplete translation through the songs by *Ithemba lamaNguni*. *The Tunnel* presents a complete translation and has received a global audience. The music is distributed locally and remains within its originating community. This raises the question of what are the stories that the world is ready to hear. Whose victimhood is readily acknowledged in the world today?

Silence speaks

A nationalist discourse is salient in, and frames, the narration of *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg today. The migrants center the nation, and belonging to one, as the cornerstone of an ideal life. The nation is postulated as the way to access membership of the global family and citizenship, an entryway to a dignified life. In the memory of the *Gukurahundi* then the nation is an aspiration where victims believe their trauma will be resolved. Membership of a nation has become the most basic way of securing life in the contemporary world (Brysk & Shafir, 2004).

The Zimbabwean government has promoted a silencing of *Gukurahundi* because of an apparent fear that speaking about it would divide the nation along ethnic lines. This policy to overlook acknowledging the *Gukurahundi* as a way to ensure the unity of Zimbabweans has failed. Instead silence has facilitated the transmission of trauma to the next generation as Murambadoro (2015) and Ngwenya & Harris (2015) have argued about feelings of revenge being passed onto the next generation. Silence makes *Gukurahundi* a potent resource for the crafting of particular identity narratives. Although silence was put forward as a strategy for building national unity there are fissures in the imagined Zimbabwean nation. It has given occasion to the construction of the *ndebele* who are not Zimbabwean. The silence also facilitates, in Johannesburg today, the construction of a Zimbabwe with two ethnic groups the Shona and *ndebele* instead of other possible ethnic constellations such as Kalanga, Tonga etc. Laub (1992) argues that silence produces a narrative. As shown by Volkan (2001) trauma becomes an identity

marker and may be reactivated in the next generation. Acknowledgement gives dignity to the victims and a sense of belonging to the group (Summerfield, 1995 and Hamber & Wilson, 2002).

If stories define identities and are used to negotiate belonging, Zimbabwe's silence on the *Gukurahundi* narrates the victims outside of the nation and the global community. When the nation is the vehicle through which people can access a dignified life then it becomes important that victims belong to one. Therefore, on the backdrop of a failed Zimbabwean state, migrants in Johannesburg imagine their 'home'. South Africa figures with an ambiguous influence on this imagining of a nation for the victims of the *Gukurahundi*. On the one hand South Africa is to be emulated as the rainbow nation that accommodates multi-ethnicity. On the other hand it has xenophobic violence that frames the migrants as non-belonging to this rainbow nation. South Africa also has the history of the TRC which promoted the narration and acknowledgement of past atrocities. The Zimbabwe that was left behind therefore is no longer a suitable home for the migrants as they view it from South Africa (Ahmed, 1999).

In a context where Zimbabwe's economic failure continues and there is xenophobia in South Africa, victims then imagine another place where they can belong. The *Mthwakazi* nation is constructed in the narratives of *Gukurahundi* as a home for healing and respite for the *ndebele*. *Mthwakazi* is thus one way for the victims to achieve a state of being in the world (Takabvirwa, 2010). On the other hand Zimbabwe is reimagined not as a Shona

nation but a multiethnic nation where nationhood trumps ethnicity, a sort of rainbow nation like South Africa. While the South African rainbow cuts across racial lines, Zimbabwe is imagined as belonging to the black African and the whites as the minority foreigners who came to benefit at the expense of the majority indigenous populations.

In this way the memory of *Gukurahundi* occasions the construction of identities and is thus put to work in drawing boundaries of similarity and difference as well as to allocate which are the significant boundaries and which boundaries need to be overlooked (Yuval-Davis, 2006). *Gukurahundi* is an important factor to consider in the Zimbabwean nation building project. This is a point I shall return to in reflecting on the politics I have navigated in the writing of this thesis.

The partial translation in *Ithemba lamaNguni* music

The study presents the power of artistic creative expression in giving voice to the marginalised. Employing music created by participants prior to their involvement in the research means participants' views are engaged with in this study in their own terms. The use of the music or film produced by the artist at her own initiation and intent means that we engage with their authentic thoughts about the issue. Artists are influenced or inspired by different factors in their creation. The significant issue here is that this study engaged with creations that were not created by the researcher as is often the case with art based research see for example Chapter Two (Clacherty, 2015) in Palmary (2015) art based "interventions" with refugee children. They have not framed the issue to fit into the

confines of the research project in the way for example the interaction in an interview may influence the story told.

This does not make art a better form of engaging with people's experiences however it allows research to ask different questions about the form of meaning-making chosen. This has provided an opportunity to ask questions about the function of the art. The use of music in this study as an entry to understanding the meaning making of migrants facilitates the answering of questions about the role that this form of remembering plays. As such this research has interrogated the role that the specific genre and type of art used has in the memorial. This has allowed for the exploration of the role of cultural productions in gaining access to people's experiences.

A partial translation of the *Gukurahundi* is presented in the music by *Ithemba lamaNguni* in response to the silence. This partial translation allows the memorial to perform a multiple functions and I will highlight three evidenced by this thesis. Music transmits multiple traumas and histories across generations as colonialism is narrated together with the *Gukurahundi*. Secondly it provides for a celebration and affirmation of identity as the *ndebele* are constructed as descendants of warriors. Lastly, music allows for political participation in the everyday and in the domestic sphere. The ambiguity of meaning in the music allows for the safe participation in politics that can be denied facilitating a domestication of politics.

The partial translation of the *Gukurahundi* in the music by *Ithemba lamaNguni* is important in the function to which the memory is aimed at performing. Music is ephemeral and therefore works to capture the contemporary politics (Taylor, 2003). The celebration of identity in the music is important in a context where silence narrates an annihilation of a people. Using a form that is accessible to all members of the community is thus pivotal and music provides this. The genre of music chosen recalls a precolonial nation and works to denounce colonialism and its continuing forms. It also facilitates the imagining of a nation and thus claim space for the *ndebele* alongside the rest of the world.

For my participants, remembering *Gukurahundi* is not just about the violence that occurred in Zimbabwe and limiting it to that geographical location, or the story limited to the seven years from 1981 to 1987. It is a broader narrative that works to insert the *ndebele* people into the spaces in which they have been silenced and therefore annihilated from. The *Gukurahundi* is seen as a elimination of the *ndebele* from the Zimbabwean nation. The lack of acknowledgement of the atrocities by Zimbabwe and the global community is also seen as a confirmation of this intended annihilation. If the story of *Gukurahundi* is not being told in Zimbabwe or the rest of the world the *ndebele* are silenced and not members of these communities. The memory is intended to insert and justify the presence of the *ndebele* as equal members of the global community. Music provides this avenue and thus is the acceptable form for the translation of the *Gukurahundi* memory.

The song allows for a medium that documents and registers discontent over violation while celebrating the personhood the violation is aimed at destroying. This allows for a celebration of culture and history, the invoking of identities, while memorialising the *Gukurahundi* and providing commentary on contemporary issues. Music is a popular political tool in Africa too so it is used in Johannesburg even though the repercussions to speaking about *Gukurahundi* are not as serious as in Zimbabwe.

Speaking into the silences and creating silences

This political moment in the history of Zimbabwe after the GNU allows certain ways of remembering *Gukurahundi* that were previously not possible. In the euphoria of the formation of the MDC, when people had hope for regime change, *Gukurahundi* was remembered in Johannesburg with the aim of claiming back Zimbabwean nationhood for the victims (Ndlovu, 2010). Today the failure of regime change in Zimbabwe influences a different kind of narrative. There is no hope for a different party ruling Zimbabwe in the foreseeable future, so narratives imagining a separate nation for the *ndebele* have taken a greater currency.

Location in Johannesburg also facilitates a different way of narrating the *Gukurahundi* that is not possible in Zimbabwe. As already outlined, the Zimbabwean government has promoted silence and prevented the remembering of the *Gukurahundi*. South Africa influences the narratives by framing the migrants outside the rainbow nation but also has the TRC as a model of moving on from conflict. This opportunity to narrate the

experience also silences other narratives that could be told about the atrocities. Therefore this thesis presents a certain way of speaking about the atrocities that for example silences the sub-ethnic divisions within the *ndebele* group and magnifies the differences between the Shona and *ndebele*. The nationalist discourse used to talk about *Gukurahundi* also necessarily silences other possible ways of remembering it such as the feminine form of remembering in *ukuhela* (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2011).

The inconvenient truth of *ukuhela*

So the art remembering *Gukurahundi* in Johannesburg does not accommodate certain narratives and below I focus on *ukuhela*. Women and their bodies are given prominence in service to the nation albeit in problematic forms. They are biological producers of the nation that is supposed to heal the wounds of *Gukurahundi*. They are also custodians of its culture, customs and morals but the trauma expressed in feminine forms of remembering such as *ukuhela* cannot be part of the nation. Men are at the forefront of the crafting of this nation and this may be the reason why feminine forms of remembering are overlooked. As such there is an irony that women are put in service to produce a nation that does not heal them.

Mothers feature in their capacity to reproduce (Wilford & Miller, 1998; Yuval-Davis, 1993) the nation for example *Tshengi* is asked to speak to the youth who refuse to sing the Zimbabwean national anthem. *Tshengi* refuses to discipline the youth to comply with the Shona nation. Although in her defiance of the Zimbabwean nation she is occupying her role as the producer of a *ndebele* nation, she remains carrying the trauma of her son, a

child of rape for whom she does not have the capacity to discipline because she does not know which nationality he belongs to. The memory of *Gukurahundi* would rather silence this inconvenient truth of *ukuhela* in *Tshengi's* life.

Ukuhela remains a private trauma that cannot be publicly expressed because it creates fissures in the imagined pure nation passed on through bloodlines. The limits of the 'nation' are exposed by the inconvenient 'truth' from the women's positioning and their entanglements as mothers. It is important then for the memory to be crafted in a form that establishes a truth to support this imagined nation and this means silencing *ukuhela*. One of the criticisms of the South African TRC is the way testimonies were gendered resulting in featuring women as narrators of the violation of their male relatives. A similar pitfall rises with the art of remembering *Gukurahundi* and the cultural enactments geared at affirming the *ndebele* identity. The art of *Gukurahundi* provides a space for a memorial that takes the violence out of the geographical confines of Zimbabwean territory as well as out of the limits of an event in the 1980s. However it mimics the limits found in other forms of remembering at a national level for example what Buckley-Zistel, Igreja, Lundy & McGovern and Misztal, (2006; 2008; 2001; 2005) have shown in the silencing of memories.

The music gives voice to the marginalised migrants who are less powerful than the Zimbabwean state. However, it promotes a neutral and at times male centric truth and in this way creates a hierarchy of power where again it is the memories of the powerful in

this case men, that get preeminence over those of the women. This leaves women represented in particular gendered views and leaving out of view the other multiple roles they play. The way women are remembered is important and influences their roles in the present (Ashe, 2012; Jacobs, 2008). The way women figure in the memory of *Gukurahundi* thus limits them to the sphere of being nurturers who do not have a role in the political arena. Women take on the role of *ukuhela* without questioning as in misrecognition (Wacquant & Bourdieu, 2003). National remembering has been shown to have the challenge of not catering to the varied interests of the state or the people. In this sense the people crafting the *Mthwakazi* nation overlook the interests of the women. This is because they wield the power to define the state and this memory is a function of power. However it is possible for power to shift and for women to demand an equal hearing of their pain and trauma.

The ndebele victims of Gukurahundi

The *ndebele* are not only remembered but constructed in the story of *Gukurahundi* (Parker, 1992). The *ndebele* are constructed as victims of *Gukurahundi* and the sub-ethnic divisions, for example into Tonga, Nambiya, Venda, Kalanga, are glossed over. The memorial of *Gukurahundi* in South Africa requires this oversight for it to work in claiming space for the victims of *Gukurahundi*. The story is being used to find a home for people defined by *Gukurahundi* violence to be ‘outside’ of the Zimbabwean nation and by xenophobic violence outside the South African nation. It therefore needs to unambiguously identify the *ndebele* as unacknowledged victims. It is a strategic narrative to claim space in South Africa and show their presence in Johannesburg as more

desperate than that of their Shona counterparts. This is important in the context of increased migration from Zimbabwe as a result of the country's political and economic problems.

Foregrounding the *ndebele* identity works to make a clear distinction between the Shona and the *ndebele*. In this way the *ndebele* are narrated as more deserving of refuge in South Africa because their problems in Zimbabwe began long before the current challenges pushing the Shona to migrate. It also works to claim relationship with South Africans through establishing affinity to the *Ndebele* and Zulu in South Africa. Through identifying as the *ndebele* who migrated to Zimbabwe under Mzilikazi, their presence in South Africa can be framed as a return home. In this way people can claim space in South Africa.

Location in Johannesburg makes it important for people to overlook ethnic group ties, such as whether one is Tonga or Kalanga which may be more salient in Zimbabwe. To be *ndebele* means people have a larger circle of kinship unlike if the smaller group identities were mobilised. The unified *ndebele* identity also works so *Mthwakazi* state can be imagined as a nation for one group people that will not have the problems of ethnic divisions experienced in Zimbabwe. So location in Johannesburg allows people to concretise the differences between the Shona and *ndebele* which would not be possible to do in Zimbabwe. It also calls for a disregard of the differences within the *ndebele*. (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

This narrative therefore disciplines anyone speaking about *Gukurahundi* into silencing a different form of remembering *Gukurahundi*. Mabuya's narrative that centers the Zimbabwe nation as an important part of healing from the violence is not popular in Johannesburg. Similarly, I have found that my Kalanga identity does not have space in the discourse because it challenges ideas of the Mthwakazi nation. This means that the political mileage that movement across different identities brings, reported of Joshua Nkomo during the liberation struggle, is not possible as rigid ethnic boundaries are required for the memory to perform its function in Johannesburg.

The memory of *Gukurahundi* requires separation between the Shona and *ndebele* in Johannesburg, and therefore has no space for relationship between the groups. There is no place for a story about Shona Zimbabweans who hold similar views to the victims of the *Gukurahundi*. This has placed a burden on me as a researcher as I do not hold these views and have relationships with Shona people. Managing this aspect of the researcher-participant relationship placed me in an ambivalent position. I wanted to respect the views of the participant but also 'come clean' on my thoughts about their views. This brought research ethics into sharp focus as I found the negotiation to participate involved in the informed consent process inadequate.

Ethical issues in the insider/outsider researcher position

Participants' views of my position, imagined or factual, as a researcher influenced their consenting to the research. Many participants premised their decision to participate in the research on the 'trust' they had that I would tell a 'true' story about their victimhood. As a *ndebele*, black woman, participants not only positioned me as one who understood their lifeworld, but also as one with access to a language and lifeworld they could not access, the academic, 'western' world. To this end participation in this study was premised on that I would be a 'translator' and tell the story they wanted the world to hear.

I have carried a discomfort about this positioning as a translator for the duration of this research. This is because it is not possible that I will tell their story. I have therefore found it important that as a translator I make myself visible in the thesis using poetry. Poetry's ability to carry meaning served both the participants and myself to express our views about remembering *Gukurahundi*. Incorporating my poetry during the writing of the thesis meant that the convergence of ideas between myself and participants and their divergence is displayed. Poetry made me visible as a researcher so that the values and lens through which I was reading of the participants' narratives can be evaluated. This is further presented in the poetic transcription that shows how I interpreted the interview.

Further Questions

I used poetry to summarise the chapters in this thesis into a form that participants may be better able to engage in. In this way the poetry aims to bridge the gap between the participants and the final product of the research, the thesis report. I introduced the

methodological innovation of using poetry in the writing up phase of the study. The effectiveness of this strategy in disrupting power in the research relationship is yet to be explored. In this thesis, artistic creativity has enhanced the study and this needs to be explored further in other contexts. Other questions on this method include investigating how participants engage with the poetry written to summarise the thesis and the poetic transcription. Poetic transcription was done in only one interview where the narrator exclusively used English. It would be useful to investigate the possibility of poetic transcription of interviews conducted across languages.

In the thesis I have shown the different ways that colonial legacies, *Gukurahundi*, migration trajectories and xenophobia in South Africa converge in producing a narrative about Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean identity from people located at the margins of the nation. As such from the margins, the nation is imagined as a significant factor determining people's wellbeing. The memory that works in the imagining of *Mthwakazi* as a home where the *ndebele* can heal will silence or overlook memories that challenge the efficacy of *Mthwakazi* as an answer to the trauma of *Gukurahundi*. The political moment in Zimbabwe and the location of the victims in Johannesburg influence the nationalist discourse used in invoking the memory of *Gukurahundi*. Using art gives voice to the less powerful but mimics the problems of remembering at the national level creating silences for some victims. This calls for critical engagement post-conflict transitional justice mechanisms aimed at facilitating memorials to ensure that space is created for multiple narratives that redeem victims in their own terms.

Final Remarks

Own my life today

Let me tell my own story

What I own in this world

Is the word

It creates and destroys

It is power

Let me tell my own story

Use my words

Borrow your language

So you can hear

But tell my own story

For my children to hear

Let me tell my own story

Build castles in the air

Crown kings and queens

Warriors and heroes

Our mothers, sisters

Brothers and fathers

Will be

Let me tell my own story

Paint a picture with my words

Heavy and light strokes

The brush will paint

Blues skies, grey clouds

Black nights

And twinkling stars

Let me tell my own story

Power on my tongue

Trace my past

Chart my path

Define my name

Own my life

Will you listen?

(Poem by Duduzile S. Ndlovu, 2015)

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Annex 1

How the violence affected me? DSN 2008

I listened with shock to reports of xenophobic violence in Alexandra as I arrived back home, Johannesburg from an eleven day stay in Swaziland. I had been missing home strange as it may sound I call Johannesburg home. After being in the city of gold for a year I surely can call it home. This sentiment however does not seem to be shared by those I consider my brothers and sisters. I am a foreigner; others even call me an alien. I wonder from which planet I fell from seeing I am from just across the river Limpopo. In my mind I thought it would end with Alexandra, it possibly could not spread to other areas. I was wrong, it spread like a wild fire, shouts came from all ends, newspapers were in business, the selling story being refugees in crisis. Don't they know, not all of us are refugees. Some of us are just migrants, some of us have identity documents others do not but that doesn't make us less of a person does it. We have blood running through our veins just like you. We have loved ones, brothers, sisters, mothers and friends just like you. We have dreams, aspirations and ambitions just like you.

The phone calls start, emails and sms'es. Everyone wants to know if I am safe. Well I am safe, never in my life have I felt guilty about being safe like now. How is it that I am safe yet someone sleeps outside. Another is not sure if they will be alive tomorrow, they may attack their area nobody knows who, where next the fire will spread to. Yet I remain safe and confident my life goes on. Is there anything I can do? How can I help, can I help? No

I cannot! helping makes me vulnerable too, is this how life is to be, that I preserve my life at all cost even though it means another will lose theirs. Is this really about foreigners? I choose not to believe I am under attack for being born in a different country. We all are responsible, we have allowed violence to go unpunished. We have allowed them to beat up, rape and kill women, AIDS activists, lesbians just because they are different. Why should they not kill the foreigner he or she is not like them. Just wait and see tomorrow you will be the different one because you do not speak their language. Yes you were born in South Africa but because you do not speak their language it will be your chance to burn. It will be your chance to burn if we do not stop this now! Violence never was the solution, lets fight the war but at all costs let our weapon be peace which awards dignity to all.