UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND PEACE STUDIES

African indigenous conflict transformation approaches in post-conflict relational justice: A case study of the Richmond community in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa (1990-2018)

by
Ngwako Ramphadi
(Student Number: 222067313)

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies, Cluster of International and Public Affairs, School of Social Sciences, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Supervisor: Prof. Dorcas Ettang
Co-supervisor: Prof. Khondlo Mtshali

University of KwaZulu-Natal
July 2025

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the people of Richmond community and elsewhere who are still reeling from the devastating impact of the violent political conflicts of the past.

DECLARATION

I, Ngwako Ramphadi, declare that:

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
4. This thesis does not contain other persons' writing unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted,

   then:

   a. Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
5. Where their exact words have been used, then their writing has been placed inside quotation marks and referenced.
6. This thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet unless specifically acknowledged and the source being detailed in-text and in the references sections.

Student: Ngwako Ramphadi

Date:.... 18 July 2025

Signatur[redacted]

As the candidate's supervisor, I certify the above statement and have approved this thesis for submission.

[redacted]

Supervisor: Prof. Dorcas Ettang

[redacted]

Co-Supervisor: Prof. Khondlo Mtshali

ABSTRACT

The community of Richmond, which is located in the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa, has been experiencing intractable violent political conflicts since the early 1990s, albeit it at varying degrees and at different times. One of the prime casualties of these violent political conflicts has been disrupted relations. However, notwithstanding these harmed relations, ongoing Western methods of post-conflict intervention have given frugal attention to the relational dimensions of conflict and peacebuilding, particularly in the Richmond area. Using the Richmond community as a case study, the research examined indigenous approaches to post-conflict intervention and determined if and how such methods can be utilised to achieve post-conflict relational justice. This study employed a qualitative exploratory case study approach. Using non-probability purposive and snowball sampling, data were collected from purposively selected participants during face-to-face interviews and one focus group discussion. The collected data were analysed using the thematic approach for evaluation and interpretation.

The study was anchored in two theoretical frameworks. The first was the conflict transformation theory which has its focus beyond cessation of physical violence. It focuses on mutual understanding in communities to give them the capacity to resolve conflicts in a manner that is effective and guarantees sustainable and durable peace. The second was the conflict theory, which is a power matrix analysis tool that demonstrates how elites and powerful groups in communities manipulate societal institutions to maintain their dominance. This theory contributes to a broader understanding of power dynamics in a conflict situation. The findings revealed a penchant for indigenous approaches by the residents in the Richmond area as they viewed such methods as an instrument to attain relational justice. However, such indigenous approaches were minimally applied by the Richmond community, if at all.

Based on the findings, the study recommends the use of indigenous approaches to restore interpersonal relations among individuals and groups in the Richmond community. The study argues that post-conflict interventions that are locally designed and enacted will ensure self-determination, legitimacy, ownership, and sustainable

relational justice in communities emerging out of conflicts and years of political violence.

In terms of its contribution to scholarly knowledge, this thesis enters the debate on the use of indigenous approaches to resolve issues and heal post-conflict relations. Hence, the conflict transformation theory was utilised as it was applicable to the context of the African community under study. The study offers a unique point of reference for relationship reconstruction through indigenous approaches following violent political conflicts. Moreover, it foregrounds the use of indigenous African approaches as a viable intervention mechanism in the resolution of post-conflict situations, particularly in traditional African communities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is a culmination of contributions and efforts of several persons without whom it would not have been completed. My heartfelt gratitude goes to them for their invaluable support and assistance.

My gratitude and deserving honour goes to the Almighty God, for the gift of life, sustenance and shinning the light throughout the journey. This was made possible by the grace of God.

I am indebted to my supervisor Professor Dorcas Ettang who took me through by hand from the beginning to the finish line of my PhD project. I am grateful for your scholarly acumen and timeous feedbacks which made the journey academically interesting and mentally bearable. To my co-supervisor, Professor Khondlo Mtshali, I am grateful for your assistance.

My appreciation goes to Mrs. Linda Coetzee, who painstakingly but meticulously edited this thesis. Thank you for stepping in when I needed the assistance.

To my wife, Makhanana Mashele, thank you for allowing me to use our family time to pursue my academic dream. Your love, patience, encouragement and help during this journey is astounding. You have been a pillar of strength throughout. I love you, mogatjaka. My children, Lesedi, Mamodike and Uhuru, thank you for the resilience when I could not spend sufficient time with you. We are now back to normal family routine. This is also meant to demonstrate to you how commitment makes dreams possible.

To my father, Mr Mpopene Ramphadi, *Tau, Muzweda, Morita,* your encouragement and support carried me throughout since my first degree. I will forever be grateful. We can now resume our full conversations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

ACCORD	- African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
AMISOM	- African Union Mission in Somalia
ANC	- African National Congress
AU	- Africa Union
CAR	- Central African Republic
CSVR	- Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DDR	- Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration
DRC	- Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	- Economic Community of West African States
EFF	- Economic Freedom Fighters
EU	- European Union
KZN	- KwaZulu Natal
IFP	- Inkatha Freedom Party
UDM	- United Democratic Movement
TRC	- Truth and Reconciliation Commission
SADC	- Southern African Development Community
SAPS	- South African Police Service
SADF	- South African Defence Force
SDU	- Self Defence Unit
STATS SA	- Statistics South Africa
UDM	- United Democratic Movement
UKZN	- University of KwaZulu Natal
UN	- United Nations
UNDP	- United Nations Development Programme
MEC	- Member of Executive Council
MINUSCA	- United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission
MK	- Mkhonto WeSizwe
NDP	- National Development Plan
NFP	- National Freedom Party
PAC	- Pan African Congress
IDP	- Integrated Development Plan
WHO	- World Health Organisation
HSSC	- Hague Centre for Strategic Studies
VOM	- Victim Offender Mediation

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and Background

Conventional Western models of conflict intervention and resolution that were applied in many African communities were often marred by failure to achieve durable peace agreements. This could be because local communities and leaders are sometimes unwilling, or unable, to relate to such initiatives (Murithi, 2020). In 1995, the communities of Telewoyan village in Liberia implemented a process of demobilisation, disarmament and the reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants in order to build peace. However, following the rather flawed Western approach to DDR, these communities relapsed into political violence soon afterwards as dissatisfied and still-armed factions were quick to return to conflict.

In another instance, the implementation of a formal agreement in Zimbabwe, referred to as the Lancaster House Agreement of 21 December 1979, was flagged for lack of sustainable peace which culminated in post-election violence in 2008, resulting in loss of lives, destruction of properties, and displacements in the Chinhoyi and Chaedza communities, amongst others (Murambadoro, 2020). Moreover, since 1999, numerous agreements, summits, and dialogues have been pursued to bring peace to the Democratic Republic of Congo, a nation ravaged by internal strife and external interventions. However, all these efforts have been in vain (Holtslag, 2024). As a consequence thereof, the path to sustainable peace in Kivu communities in the DRC has been fraught with challenges, ranging from deep-rooted political rivalries to external interference and the complexities of resource exploitation. Cyuzuzo and Jones (2024) and Mukoni (2024) posit that the DRC remains ensnared in a cycle of instability where sustainable peace that addresses the underlying causes of conflict is essential to eradicate decades-long suffering.

Similarly, a regional intervention mechanism of arbitration steered by the African Court of Justice failed to extinguish perennial conflicts in the Oromo and Borana communities in Somalia and the Kordonfan community in Sudan (Khadiagala and Mati, 2011). Before this, other formally crafted conflict intervention strategies such as negotiations by NGOs like Oxfam and Care International could not secure peace to

end conflicts. In these cases, the approach that was followed embraced hybridity as it engaged both local leaders and state agencies. The current study argues that the cases mentioned above are not a critique against the failures of formal methods of conflict intervention, but a reflection of the ineptitude in ushering in peace in certain conflict contexts, especially in indigenous communities.

Be that as it may, a prime casualties of the epochs of violent conflicts in and among communities is the harmed interpersonal relations that bound people together prior to these conflicts (Casanovas and Poblet, 2008). Apart from the apparent harm to relations that stemmed from conflicts, the relational dimension received diminutive attention during the reconstruction of communities (Murambadoro, 2020). In the few instances where relational aspects were considered, Western methods were preferred. However, Western procedures such as truth commissions, peace accords, and political settlements are frequently limited and uncontextualized; hence, they were often unsuccessful in restoring relations that existed before the conflicts (Mamdani, 2002). Western techniques are critiqued as they fall short of meeting the most fundamental need for relational justice as they focus on rebuilding state machinery, national reconciliation, and political transformation projects without considering the relational dynamics within affected communities. For instance, Ani (2019) argues that, in relational contexts, Western methods were limited in responding to the deep-rooted factors that had ruptured interpersonal relations during conflicts. In this context, Daso (2017) notes that trauma, resentment, and mistrust emanated from conflicts, destroyed relationships, and sowed enmity among conflict-stricken communities. Also, the cessation of physical violence through peace agreements did not necessarily bring about restoration of relations harmed during conflicts. Rather, enmity and resentment prevailed well beyond the end of periods of violent conflicts and placed post-conflict peace in jeopardy (Miall, 2004). Thus, the role of Western methods remained visible in bringing stability, but they seemed inadequate or unsuitable for reconciling relational divisions and fragmentations in communities subjected to years of conflict (Murambadoro, 2020). Moreover, Murambadoro (2020) notes that, where Western methods were not successful, there was a need to bring justice to survivors and those affected by the conflict in the quest to acknowledge locally enacted strategies.

In many African communities, the pervasive and entrenched Western methods of post-conflict intervention were marred by the constant failure to achieve durable peace (Genger, 2020). This prompted the United Nations (UN's) Agenda for Peace (1992), which lobbied for change in intervention strategies in order to accord locals their self-determination, sovereignty, and self-sufficiency. The aim was to allow them to enact their own preferred ways of dealing with conflict and the post-conflict situation in their communities (Ljungkvist and Jarstad, 2019). This means that the resurgence of conflicts in African communities following the use of conventional models triggered the scrutiny of their efficacies and fanned calls for an alternative intervention strategy (Ani, 2019). However, despite the apparent flaws in Western procedures, indigenous approaches, which should play an important role in enabling peace and healing in post-conflict communities, are still largely ignored (Ani, 2019). Many African governments, including South Africa, are hesitant to investigate the efficiency of indigenous African approaches, thereby exacerbating their quiescence.

The Richmond community historically experienced intractable conflicts of varying degrees of violence at different times (Van Baalen and Höglund, 2019). During these various episodes of conflict, this community suffered intense relational harm that was characterised by deaths, displacements, the separation of families, community disintegration due to distrust among members, political intolerance, and the proliferation of arms, with many of these challenges still persisting (Clarke, 2018; GroundUp, 2018; Van Baalen and Höglund, 2019; Arde, 2020; Mavuso, 2021; Mercury, 2021). Some of these remnants of political conflicts in the Richmond community have been dealt with by earlier scholars, such as the proliferation of arms (Clarke, 2018), the Richmond killings (Van Baalen and Höglund, 2019), and political intolerance (Onwuegbuchulam, 2021). An array of interventions that were mainly Western oriented failed to restore relational harm suffered by members of the Richmond community between 1990 and 2018, as was evidenced by a resurgence of conflicts.

Many African states that gained independence in the 1950s and 1960s have not made much effort to investigate ways of recalibrating indigenous post-conflict intervention

systems that were gradually undermined throughout the colonial era (Danso, 2017; Ani, 2019). Discord was sown as a result, especially among indigenous groups. For instance, in South Africa the apartheid system resulted in the majority of Black South Africans living in balkanised ethnic cleavages known as Bantustans where they were subjected to the policies of the government of the time. The erosion of African culture and beliefs was impacted by this disjunction. In fact, indigenous knowledge, religion, and customs were depicted by colonialism and apartheid as archaic and illogical manifestations of a 'lesser race' (Ani, 2017). Hence, some Africans feel negatively about and dislike their traditional values as a result of the post-colonial era's unfavourable portrayal of Africa in popular literature and media networks (Murambadoro, 2020). This is compounded by the fact that many African countries still rely on outside parties to provide answers to their current problems.

In search of an answer to this conundrum, the African Union (AU) debuted the mantra of 'African solutions to African problems' in 2002 in an attempt to decimate Africa's reliance on externally designed solutions in favour of home grown conflict intervention strategies (Genger, 2020). In the same year, the AU reinforced the discourse when self-determination for Africa and its people was enacted in a policy stance for member states. However, this was not entirely a new determination, but a renewed call that was first made by earlier African-born and aligned movements such as Pan-Africanism and Black Consciousness, to mention only two. The latter's quest was for independence of the African continent from the claws of Western colonial powers. The Black Consciousness Movement's aim was to conscientize Black people across Africa, to mobilise them to resist the diaspora of African communities, and to embrace a critical awareness of their situation and their ability to change that (Genger, 2020). The resolve for 'African solutions to African problems' remains a minefield of debate as it is yet unknown what it practically entails in light of the actual situation that Black communities face (Ani, 2019). South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP Vision, 2030) envisions a South Africa that is socially cohered by 2030 (NDP 2030); however, the plan to achieve this aspiration is yet to be revealed, if it is in existent at all.

1.2 Problem Statement

The Richmond community experienced intractable violent political conflicts between 1990 and 2018. These conflicts fractured the interpersonal relations that had bound and maintained harmony in the community before. However, the intervention strategies that were implemented to end conflicts in the Richmond area paid little or no attention to the relational aspect. Hence, the Richmond community battled persistent anxiety, animosity, distrust, and generally poor interpersonal relations stemming from limited efforts to address the harmed relations the persistent conflicts had caused. Despite the Richmond community being homogenous in terms of their lingua franca, values, customs, and heritage, almost all the intervention strategies ever implemented were Western oriented. Much of the existing scholarly works on this subject are concerned with national, regional, and continental solutions, thereby neglecting the need to customise post-conflict interventions in local communities inhabited by indigenous people. In fact, indigenous approaches to rebuilding and maintaining relations following conflicts, as may be preferred by locals in the Richmond area, are rarely implemented or acknowledged.

1.3 Overview: The Richmond Community in Focus

Richmond is situated in the Midlands area of KwaZulu-Natal Province, about 38 km south-west of Pietermaritzburg and 100 km west of Durban. According to the Richmond Local Municipality's (2022) Integrated Development Plan, agriculture is the main driver of economic activities in the area. According to the IDP, more than 4 000 of the 17 624 homes in this area lack access to potable water, and solid waste removal services are exclusively offered in the vicinity of Richmond town and not in more remote rural areas. Following the December 2000 local government elections, the Richmond Local Municipality's boundaries were significantly altered through a local government initiated demarcation process, resulting in a roughly 1 050 km^2 geographical area.

Richmond's location in the KwaZulu-Natal Province is depicted in red on the map below.

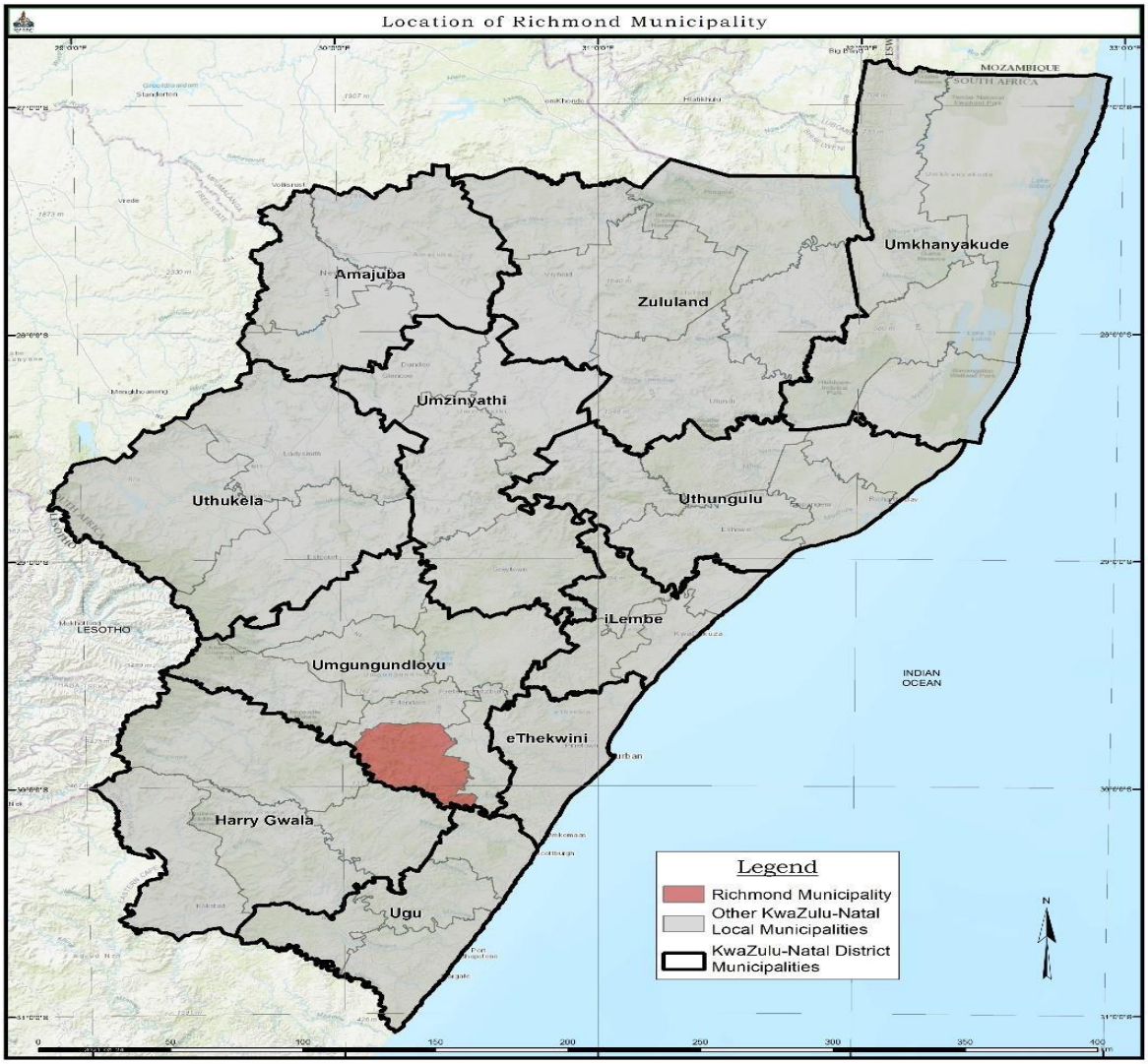

Figure 1.1: Map of the Richmond municipal locality

Source: Richmond Local Municipality Final Integrated Development Plan 2021/2022 [Reviewed]

In the 1990s, the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) fought fierce territorial disputes that severely split the community. Paramilitary training was progressively provided to both sides and exacerbated the raging conflict. As a result, more than 140 people lost their lives at the height of the conflict in 1991. To this day, the informal rural areas of Mkhobeni and Patheni are under IFP control while the more affluent semi-urban areas of Magoda and Ndaleni are generally under ANC control.

According to a Statistics SA (2022) community survey, the Richmond area is home to over 74 000 people and 17 570 households living in semi-formal and informal settlements. The graph below provides a schematic presentation of the population of interest. As the data were obtained from a Statistics South Africa (2022) community survey, a population category (50 years then) which would now fall into the age group of interest is also included.

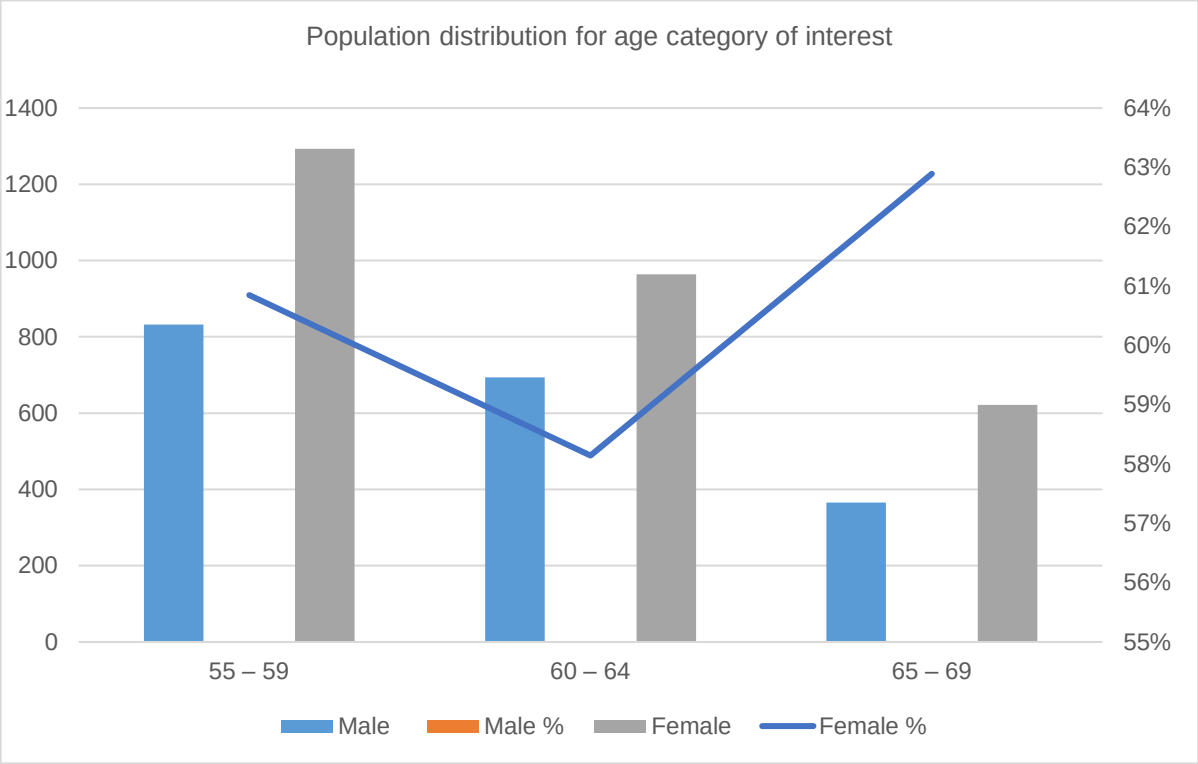

Figure 1.2: The population of interest and gender distribution in Richmond

Source: Statistics South Africa, 2022

1.4 Significance and Originality of the Study

The study contributes towards the discourse of the use of indigenous approaches towards post-conflict relational justice. It is the study's contention that indigenous approaches broaden ways to restore relations in communities emerging out of conflict. While some research has shown the efficacy of indigenous approaches in conflict intervention, evidence is scant regarding their role in post-conflict relational justice. The current study thus contributes to filling this critical knowledge gap that emanated from the dearth of literature on indigenous approaches in the restoration of relations

harmed by violent political conflicts. Moreover, the study validates the conflict transformation theory which explains that transforming relations troubled by conflict predicates long-lasting solutions to co-existence and harmony (Miall, 2004). The study offers findings that could be a utility for outcome 13 of the South African National Development Plan (NDP), which envisions national unity by 2030. This may be achieved by learning how indigenous pedagogies may be used to transcend relational stalemate in indigenous communities. This study enters the debate on the AU's mantra for 'African solutions to African problems' as it shares findings that will not only be useful to the cause, but will also enrich it.

1.5 Research Aim, Objectives and Key Research Questions

1.5.1 Aim

The study's overarching goal was to examine the role of indigenous approaches in the Richmond community to resolve conflict and to determine how these approaches can be used to achieve post-conflict relational justice.

1.5.2 Objectives

The study's objectives were to:

- Examine the neglect of indigenous approaches to post-conflict interventions in the Richmond community;
- Assess the role of indigenous approaches towards rebuilding post-conflict relational justice in the Richmond community;
- Examine ways in which indigenous approaches can be applied to achieve post-conflict relational justice; and
- Identify and examine overarching principles that may guide the application of indigenous approaches in the quest to resolve conflicts in the Richmond community.

1.5.3 Key research questions

The objectives of the study were achieved by addressing the following questions disaggregated into primary and secondary questions:

Primary research question:

- What is the role of indigenous approaches towards rebuilding relations in post-conflict Richmond community?

Secondary questions:

- How and why are Western approaches applied by actors in post-conflict interventions in the Richmond community?
- What role can indigenous approaches play in achieving post-conflict relational justice in the Richmond community?
- Why are indigenous approaches and post-conflict interventions not utilised to achieve peace among the communities in the Richmond area?
- What overarching principles should guide the application of indigenous approaches in achieving modern-day post-conflict relational justice?

1.6 Clarification of Terms

Terms carry different meanings depending of a variety of factors that include, but are not limited to, their contexts, the meanings conferred on them, and their essence or characteristics. In this sub-section, a number of terms that were central to the study are defined and ascribed a particular meaning as they applied to the study. These meanings are not imputed arbitrarily but are ascribed to them on the basis of their essence or essential characteristics and the context in which they were used in the study. This section is important for two reasons. Firstly, it illuminates the rationale for the usage of these terms in the study and, secondly, it foregrounds their context as they were used in the theoretical framing of the study.

1.6.1 Conflict

Different definitions of the term ‘conflict’ have been offered by writers and professionals in the field of conflict and peace studies. In order to analyse conflict intervention strategies, it is crucial to conceptualise conflict as it applied to this study. According to Effendi (2010), conflict is often understood as disputes arising from competing groups over limited resources, conflicts between individuals inside and across states, and clashes of interests, ideologies, and values. For Wallensteen

(2002, p.16), conflict is “a social situation in which a minimum of two parties strive at the same moment in time to acquire the same set of scarce resources”. Although Effendi (2010) does not stipulate the number of parties who may go into conflict, Wallensteen avoids ambiguity and mentions that, for a situation to be considered a conflict, at least two parties should be involved. These parties can be individuals, groups, or states. Generally, practitioners and scholars lend support to Wallensteen’s view that there should at least be two parties who disagree on some interest or the other for a situation to be considered a conflict.

The absence of violence as a constitutive element of conflict in these definitions does not mean that non-violent differences cannot be classified as conflict. As will be shown in subsequent sections in this chapter, violence is an eminent and imminent consequence of heightened and unresolved conflicts. Therefore, to dismiss non-violent incompatibilities as not conflictual is to miss an opportunity to understand the resultants of unresolved differences between warring parties (Wallensteen, 2002). Although the definitions above do not comprehensively define the violent political conflicts experienced in the community under study, they affirm the view held by some authors that there are different types of conflict.

For Tschannen-Moran (2001, p.5), conflict can be described as “a state of tension, disagreement, or disharmony experienced between individuals or within a group when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of another group”. In this case, conflict is conceived as opposing ideas and actions of warring parties that give birth to an antagonistic situation. In the Richmond community, political polarisation sharply balkanised the community around political affiliations; i.e., between IFP and ANC factions. This relationships was fragmented further when the ANC’s splinter party, namely the United Democratic Movement (UDM), entered the fray. This created further disharmony which ignited epochs of violent political conflicts in the community.

The definitions of conflict that have been provided thus far are considered traditional definitions that define conflict as conflicting interests involving the access to limited resources, divergent ideologies, and friction. However, Mitchell (2002) cautions that

disputes should also take into account the incompatibility or "differences in issue position" and should not only be described in terms of violence (behaviours) or hostility (attitudes). The idea here is that the latter form covers conflicts that fall outside the purview of traditional warfare, like those involving historical issues, economic orientation, human security, and the environment. These disputes do not always centre on resources and, even when they do, those resources are not always in short supply. Furthermore, a conflict is frequently founded on perceptions rather than the attitudes or behaviours that are typically associated with it. For example, conflict in the workplace may take the form of disagreements on the allocation of workload while, in a domestic environment, it may be parents disagreeing on the model of raising their children. Jehn and Mannix (2007) have consolidated these varying definitions of the concept of conflict, identifying four kinds of conflict that are briefly expounded below:

1. Interpersonal conflict occurs between at least two individuals. This kind of conflict does not have a far-reaching impact. Usually, a third person acting as a mediator may assist the individuals involved to break the impasse and find a mutually beneficial solution.
2. Intrapersonal conflict takes place within the mind of an individual. It is psychological in that it is a contestation of the thoughts of an individual. Although it may affect the person's immediate environment, it is unlikely to affect the community.
3. Intra-group conflict is the type of conflict that occurs amongst individuals within a group. The Richmond community under study can be viewed a homogenous group with common ethnic orientations such as language, values, traditions, and customs. Despite these commonalities, the political scene became a dividing factor in the community. The nature of the violent conflicts experienced in Richmond can serve as the reason for classifying these conflicts as intra-group conflicts.
4. Inter-group conflict occurs between different groups that usually have varying characteristics that allow one to differentiate them in the first place. The Rwandan genocide is a classic example of inter-group conflict.

When definitions and types of conflicts are considered, it becomes evident that context shapes the definition ascribed to a particular conflict. In fact, it is impossible to define a conflict situation without first understanding the context in which it occurs.

1.6.2 Political violence

It is common practice in peace and conflict research to treat political violence differently from other types of violence. This differentiation is based on the claimed public legitimacy and the motive of political conflict as well as the nature of the protagonists involved in violence (Du Toit and Manganyi, 1990). As will be shown in the sub-section that follows, the motive for political violence is to accomplish a particular political goal, and political violence is perpetrated by politicians and/or their supporters. However, Schuld (2013) suggests that it is a semantic mistake to attempt to extricate one type of violence from others and name it 'political'. The proponents of the latter view argue that it becomes difficult to discern political motive in some cases of violence said to be 'political'. However, there are at least two reasons that justify the separation of violence into its own category. First, violence can be experienced in a number of ways, such as physical assault, sexual violence, emotional or psychological violence, verbal abuse, or even economic violence. In other words, this separation acknowledges the existence of varying types of violence. Moreover, violence manifests in different ways and settings, such as in homes, the workplace, schools, communities, or even at international level between or among states. These differences require the application of distinctions among types of violence.

The argument above does not imply that various types of violence are not interlinked, as violence in one setting may permeate into another. For instance, the 1976 student uprisings in South African schools engulfed many township communities in which the schools were situated. However, violence is multifaceted and bears unique features in each of the settings in which it occurs, be it in the characteristics of the protagonists involved, the cause of the violence, or the goal to be accomplished. It is therefore important to define violence as it occurs in a particular setting. This study was concerned with political violence in the Richmond community; hence, it explored the nature of the violence that disrupted people's relationships and caused them to live in fear and mistrust, scared of the animosity that haunted the community. The next

section debunks the term ‘political violence’ and imputes meaning to this term as it is used in this thesis.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2002), the African Union (AU) (2004), as well as the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS) (2016) agree that political violence is the commission of violent acts by a state and/or any other non-state party in pursuit of a political course. Similarly, Cilliers (2018) views political violence as a means to coerce or intimidate political opponents to attain particular political goals, and argues that it can be perpetrated by governments, political organisations, or individuals. Both these views suggest that political violence can be perpetrated by either the state or any other party. The HCCS, however, does not state if any other non-state party is limited to national (internal) or international (external) actors. At national level, the state wields huge sources of violence such as arms, the police, the military, and its affiliation to regional, continental, multinational, and international bodies that no local protagonist within that state can match. However, this power imbalance does not preclude a non-state party from acting violently against a state, particularly if that state has weak military capacity. In fact, several incidences of insurgency have occurred across the globe when para-military groups launched violent attacks against states to further their political goals.

In contrast, Onwuegbuchulam (2021) defines political violence as the physical violence meted out by both the police and the South African Defence Force under apartheid against the masses, arguing that liberation movements retaliated against this violence . This view situates political violence within South Africa’s history of violence during the apartheid years (1948-1994). In this context, the author implies that political violence was instigated by the apartheid government and that liberation movements only resorted to violent measures in response to the state’s violent attacks. Although they vary, the definitions by WHO (2002), HCSS (2016), Cilliers (2018), and Onwuegbuchulam (2021) do not adequately describe the spate of political violence that once marred the Richmond community as they all mention the state as the only antagonist. Even though the state may have had a subtle role in abating either party to the conflict, it is difficult to identify it as the frontier in the several episodes of

violent conflict that occurred in the Richmond area. This warrants further consideration of the views by other scholars.

Unlike Onwuegbuchulam who views political violence as a horizontal encounter with the state being the perpetrator, Mthethwa (2018) asserts that political violence can virtually be executed by the state, a political party, or a group of individuals. Therefore, it can be committed by state actors, such as the police or a military force, or by non-state actors, such as terrorist organisations or rebel groups. Balcells (2015) adds that the use of physical force to cause harm to an antagonist in pursuit of political objectives leads to political killings and assassinations. It should be kept in mind that the killing of political opponents and/or their supporters, which is inherent in political violence, is a way of exerting political dominance and instil fear in the heart of the opponent. In this study, the term political violence was applied to actions that involved perpetrating physical violence on opponents to achieve a political goal or goals through killings, displacements, and assassinations.

1.6.3 Indigeneity

The term ‘indigeneity’ has not been universally defined as scholars, politicians, policy makers, practitioners, and researchers continue to offer different definitions of what indigeneity means in various context. For Bukari (2013), indigeneity includes all of the habits, traditions, and worldviews of a particular African indigenous population in a particular society, arguing that it entrenches various social, economic, cultural, and religious-spiritual components. Indigeneity refers to a combination of factors that, together, constitute the long-held practices of indigenous people. According to the Marry-Webster (2020) dictionary, indigeneity means “being related to or descended from the area's first known inhabitants, especially if that area was being colonised by the present dominant group”. Here, indigeneity is understood to speak of practices that originated independently and have been used for a long time in the context of pre-modern societal structures in the Global South.

Common features in the definitions by Bukari (2013) and the Marry-Webster (2020) dictionary are locality and originality. Locality suggests that indigeneity implies being peculiar to a region or particular geographic area. It is therefore possible to have

several indigenous peoples in one society. Furthermore, indigeneity is unique as it differs from one indigenous people of a certain locality to the other. The second tenet of the definitions is originality. This means that indigeneity refers to something that is not only local but also that, as far as is known, has never been imported or transported from another place. In making this point succinct, Olowu (2017) asserts that what is indigenous in Africa has not been tainted or infused with the consequences of the colonisation experienced by African people. The Marry-Webster (2020) dictionary lends support to this view as it posits that indigeneity relates to what was known by indigenous people before colonisation. A third component of the offered definitions admits the introduction of colonisation and the subsequent imposition of Western dominance over Africa that marginalised African people and forced them to change their ways of life. Conflict handling interventions were not spared from these violent intrusions. For instance, the Oromo people in Ethiopia had been following their own indigenously developed methods to resolve both internal and external conflicts and these methods sustained them until the late 18th and early 19th centuries when they were forcefully incorporated into the British controlled Ethiopian empire (Boru, 2017). Since the years of slavery, oppression, colonisation, and apartheid, South Africa has been experiencing modifications of one kind or the other to indigenous ways of living, including the disenfranchisement of African people's conflict intervention approaches in favour of Western methods (Rammala, 2021).

Be that as it may, these definitions perceive indigeneity as something cast in stone, a view which fails to recognise the ever changing nature of indigeneity. Socio-economic and political activities are amongst the factors that have modified what indigeneity meant for an example five decades ago. Each generation of indigenous peoples will inevitably experience some form of modification to their indigenous ways of doing certain things. While indigeneity is rooted in old and traditional practices, it is not necessarily the customs of ancient times any more, as it these evolve and adapt to ever-changing times.

However, there seem to be two challenges that stem from the susceptibility of indigeneity to modification. First, it makes it difficult to define a term that is so prone to influence and change. Definitions are by nature intended to provide firm ground

upon which a particular concept can be discerned, therefore a mutative phenomenon presents difficulty in this regard. Secondly, fluidity can lead to much contestation about how the unwritten norms of indigeneity have to be applied in a practical situation. On the other hand, this fluidity creates an opportunity for indigenous pedagogies to be adapted into something modern that is not ancient but having its roots in the customs of the people. The term is used in this thesis to refer to pre-colonial, traditional, and African culture as opposed to forms that were imposed on African people by colonisation and oppression.

1.6.4 African

Africa is increasingly becoming part of the global village and Africans are now found literally on every continent of the world (Majavu, 2020). The subjugation of indigenous ways through slavery, colonization, oppression, and other forms of Western domination such as modernity, hybridization of cultures, and globalization have injured what was meant by the term 'African'. To date, this term and its applications have continued to be influences in various ways (Matlosa, 2017; Ngwena, 2018). This means that the experiences of African peoples have precipitated a conceptual identity challenge of the term 'African'.

However, one can discern what concept 'African' entrenches by asking two questions: *What is African?* and *Who are African?* African diversity and contested identities are some of the considerations that make answering the two questions rather less obvious. This difficulty does not mean that there are no Africans or that it is unknown who Africans are, but it is compounded by scholars (Uduma, 2014; Surakat, 2015; Hewitt *at el*, 2018; Douglas and Alanamu, 2019; Igboin, 2021) who continue to offer varying answers to these questions. Nonetheless, it is not the objective here to serve universally accepted answers but to elucidate the complexity of the concept 'African'. The question *What is African?* hinges on the geographical location of a person, while the question *Who is African?*" leans towards the 'person of'. It must be noted that both these propensities are contested but extricable from each other.

Uduma (2014) warns that the term 'African' can refer to both the 'person of' and being within the "geographical location of" the continent of Africa. The former relates to

persons of African origin regardless of where they find themselves in the world, whilst the latter points to the cohort who are physically on the continent of Africa. This view is rather simplistic as neither geography nor a particular description offers a definite identifier to what and who is or are African. According to Igboin (2021), reference to the 'person of' in trying to define Africa should be preferred as it carries within itself a feature that is unique to Africa rather than a geographical tenet. This then makes it possible to offer a definition that is inclusive of those who originate from Africa but reside in the diaspora. The conviction of the erstwhile South African President, Thabo Mbeki, in his "*I am an African*" poetic speech in which he used the 'person of' to describe his 'Africanness' lends support to Igboin's assertion. The poem by President Mbeki describes the characteristics and attributes of who an African is without reference to the geographic location of a person. This was yet another departure from using geography as a factor in defining who an African is.

Africa is a pluralistic continent. For example, South Africa recognises people of other races from other continents as Africans, such as Europe (Afrikaners) and Asia (Chinese and Indians). In this regard, African is defined in part as an inhabitant of this continent and would offer fluid and ill-definition of what is African (Thomas and Alanamu, 2019). A further complication emanates from globalisation and continental interconnectedness which make it difficult to sustain a definition of what is African by a geographic location. In this regard, it should be accepted that geography ought not to be used to the exclusion of other factors to deem everyone residing on the continent as African.

According to Surakat (2015), the term 'African' connotes the cultural, historical, political, ideological, and social realities of African people. In this view, Surakat opts for the use of characteristics to define what the term 'African' contains. In an attempt to navigate out of the quagmire, Hewitt and Kaunda (2018) posit that it is more feasible to define what 'a South African' rather than trying to define the broad, fluid term 'African'. This suggestion implies at least fifty-four (54) definitions as each African country tries to define itself. Therefore, this study adopted a less critical understanding of the term 'African', arguing that it means the wide geo-cultural land spread in Africa

and its indigenous demographic mix of people, some of whom are found in the diaspora.

1.6.5 Relational justice

Daly (1999) avers that conventional and African indigenous approaches to conflict interventions embrace the idea of relational justice post conflict. In simple terms, the relational justice field includes resolutions that are referred to as alternative dispute resolution (ADR), online dispute resolution (ODR), victim-offender mediation (VOM), restorative justice (dialogue justice in criminal issues, for juvenile or adults), and transitional justice, which is a negotiated justice in the aftermath of violent conflicts in fragile societies (Daso, 2017). Notwithstanding the applicability of relational justice in both conventional and African indigenous approaches, their orientation and focus differ. For example, for Wood and Suzuki (2016), conventional relational justice is rooted in individualistic pursuit. They argue that mechanisms such as VOM are driven by a narrow and binary conception of conflict which is seen as the violation of one's right and dignity (the victim) by the another (the perpetrator). Hence, it is obsessive with the reinforcement of individual rights while emphasising punishment. D'Souza and Shapland (2023) note that the architecture of such a conventional approach pays little or no regard to the interest of the family and community in the quest for relational justice.

Indigenous African approaches perceive relational justice as an inclusive group/community process with the aim of resolving and restoring the social order that was harmed by conflict (Tushini, 2011). In the African indigenous view, whilst the victim remains the central figure in relational justice building, the communal suffering that stemmed from a conflict is acknowledged and the community as a whole is invited to the negotiation process as part of the quest for conflict resolution (Rammala, 2021). Furthermore, a dispute is viewed as the disruption of the order and peace that existed between families or individuals in the community and thus requires resolution. Hence, it needs to atone for the harmed relations of all affected parties. The main aim of conflict intervention should not only be about finding a solution to the conflict, but to restore the harmony and peace that was upset by the conflict. African indigeneity emphases the significance of enhancing the interpersonal sphere in post-conflict

communities with the ultimate goal of restoring the interrelations in the ecosystem that comprises the victim, the victim's family, the offender, the offender's family, and the community at large (Tushini, 2011). The purpose of African indigenous conflict intervention is, amongst others, to design mutual solutions from living African indigenous practices and to restore balance and harmony in the community.

Relational Justice (RJ) is thus broadly defined as a bottom-up approach to justice, or justice produced through cooperative behaviour, agreement, negotiation, and dialogue among all actors in a post-conflict situation (Wood and Suzuki, 2016).

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on two principal theories that guided it, namely the conflict transformation theory and classical Marxism as the form of conflict theory. According to the conflict theory, those with wealth and power try to hold on to these by any means possible, but chiefly by suppressing the poor and powerless (Kebede, 2019). For classical Marxists, the domination will end in a revolution or civil war or some other form of violence leading to the overthrow of the exploitative system. The classical Marxism theory enhanced understanding of the origin and manifestations of several episodes of political conflicts experienced in the Richmond community during the period 1990-2018, and it enabled the examination of political polarization that caused intractable conflicts in the Richmond area. Communities that emerge out of conflict require a sustainable conflict transformation strategy to transform the relations harmed by the conflict, and as the theory is predicated on the conflict transformation approach pioneered by Lederach (2003) in the late 1990s, it was highly suitable. Lederach (2003) shifted focus from just ending a conflict to paying more attention to deeper structural, cultural, and long-term relational aspects of conflict issues to go beyond the mere ending of violence.

The conflict transformation theory, on the other hand, was useful as it hinges on a transformative model that is relationship centred (Adebayo *et al*, 2015).

These two theories were utilised as a framework to guide this study in achieving its aim of establishing a theoretical basis on which post-conflict communities may achieve long-term relational justice.

1.8 Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative exploratory case study. A qualitative study enhances the involvement of everyone related to the study as represented by the sample. The sample that this study recruited involved ordinary community members residing in Richmond, relevant politicians and traditional leaders, as well as academics and civil practitioners. The qualitative research approach was used to answer questions about the complex nature of the studied phenomenon, with the aim of describing and gaining a better understanding from the participants' perspectives, as posited by Leedy and Ormrod (2019). A case study was chosen as the research design as this approach enabled the researcher to capture concrete, practical, and context-based knowledge within a bound system, namely the Richmond community. As a case study is rooted in a particular context, the peculiarities of the Richmond community provided one such case to explore indigenous approaches to post-conflict relational justice.

1.9 Data Collection

Using purposive, snowball, non-probability sampling, the researcher collected data from thirty-three (33) face-to-face interviews and one focus group discussion. The participants were purposively selected on the basis of their knowledge and experiences of several episodes of intra-community conflicts in Richmond. The selection of these participants was purposive as the researcher's purpose was to provide information on the impact of the conflicts that had experienced and/or witnessed with particular focus on the relations amongst members of the community and the role of indigenous conflict approaches in rebuilding relations harmed by conflicts. Following purposive and non-probability sampling, one participant was requested to refer the researcher to other community members with similar experiences. This procedure was repeated until data saturation had been achieved (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

A semi-structured interview schedule was used to guide the interviews and focus group discussion. Data were generated from a variety of participants, key informants, experts, practitioners, and politicians. Key informants consisted of ordinary members of the community and traditional leaders in the Richmond Community, while experts were academics from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Practitioners were workers at a non-governmental organization (NGO), known as the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD). The politicians who were included were ward councillors from the Richmond Local Municipality.

1.10 Data Analysis and Presentation

Processing the data followed a thematic approach for data analysis and interpretation in order to acquire understanding of the meanings the participants gave to their experiences. This was done by thoroughly analysing the transcripts, arranging comparable themes and further categorizing and interpreting them into specific groups, or themes. This process was guided by the research questions as it was necessary to address the objectives of the study. The data are presented under the themes that emerged from the data. The discussion and findings are presented as sections with appropriate sub-sections.

1.11 Delineation of the Study

Although the literature shows that conflicts in the Richmond occurred predominantly in the 1990s, earlier conflicts had erupted before that time over land disputes and traditional leadership succession battles. The study focused on intractable violent political conflicts which engulfed Richmond community during a period that spanned 1990-2018 as a result of political polarisation. These conflicts sowed tenacious interpersonal relations among community members in the Richmond area.

Notwithstanding the many consequences of violent conflicts, the study was concerned with harmed interpersonal relations as a result of the protracted violent conflicts within the Richmond community. The study excluded persons younger than 60 years of age both as interview participants and key informants. It was argued that people over the age of 60 years would possess deep knowledge of interpersonal relations in the Richmond community before and during the violent political conflicts in the period

1990 to 2018. The study thus assumed that younger generations might not have direct experiences and knowledge of these conflicts. Hence, they were excluded as informants or the study sample in the research.

The sampling also excluded persons who, despite being 60 years or above at the time of data collection, did not reside in the Richmond area before or during 1990. It was assumed that they would lack the requisite knowledge and experience of interpersonal relations before intractable conflicts in the community in the targeted period. Consequently, only persons who resided in Richmond before or during the 1990s were selected to participate in the study. The purpose was to learn from the Richmond participants' lived experiences and capture their realities as they saw them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

At the planning phase of the study, a focus group discussion as a data collection tool was excluded as a precaution as it might be a risk to bring together people who might have harboured resentment towards one another. This was due to the persistent anxiety and animosity among community members in the Richmond community that the researcher had observed and that had been communicated by residents. It was also difficult to establish which members from the different factions within the community could be brought together under one roof where past violent conflicts would be discussed. The researcher was also aware that the Richmond community is the physical embodiment of its past, standing today as it did in the 1990s. Different sections within the community have not changed and remain as they were with little unoccupied patches of land between them. Many of these patches have since been occupied due to population growth. It was also assumed that the venue where the focus group discussion would be hosted would not escape factional viewpoints and ultimately hamstring participation. Hence, individual interviews were preferred and planned as the data collection technique of choice.

1.12 Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is presented in eight sequential and interrelated chapters.

Chapter 1: This chapter sets the tone by presenting the general introduction to the study and presenting the problem statement. The discourse situates the study in the particular historical period and also clarifies the aim, objectives, and key questions that were posed. The key terms used in this thesis were clarified, followed by a brief discussion of the theoretical framing of the study and the methodology that was utilised for data collection and analysis. The study was also delineated.

Chapter 2: In this chapter, the theoretical frameworks that underpinned this study are presented. The researcher gives a descriptive and detailed explanation of the theories that were applied to realise the objectives of the study. These theories are the theory of conflict transformation and the conflict theory. Fundamentally, the chapter provides the background to, the tenets of, and the contributions of each theory to the study.

Chapter 3: This chapter presents a review of literature. It commences by focusing on the entrenchment of Western methods of post-conflict intervention in communities emerging out of conflict. A selection of books, journal articles, student dissertations, reports, and newspaper articles were scrutinised to expose the foundations of hegemony and subjugation of indigenous approaches to post-conflict intervention strategies, and the chapter lays bare the limitations of Western methods to secure the restoration of relations in post-conflict communities. The discourse emphasises the call for a shift from the use external and Western methods of conflict intervention in favour of indigenous approaches. The chapter takes stock and draws lessons from an assortment of indigenous conflict approaches that were applied in conflict-stricken African communities that emerged out of conflict with a view to restoring interpersonal relations. In particular, the review delves into the ideas and approaches by the *Sinani* NGO and the *Lekgotla* custom in South Africa, the practice of *Palava Hut* in Liberia, the *Gacaca* court of Rwanda, the *Baraza* custom in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the *Mato Oput* in Uganda. The chapter demonstrates the capability (or lack thereof) of indigenous approaches to resolve strife in post-conflict communities,

and exposes the healing value of some which, unfortunately, has remained untapped in the South African context, and more particularly in the Richmond community.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents the historical background of the study by discussing several intractable and violent political conflicts that bedevilled the Richmond community between the years 1990-2018**.** Through periodisation, the chapter reflects on the factors that characterised each conflict period. The aim of this chapter is to provide pertinent facts about these historical events to predicate what it was that had caused the intractable political conflicts in the Richmond community.

Chapter 5: A qualitative exploratory case study approach was adopted for this research. This chapter outlines the reasons for selecting this approach and explains the scientific research techniques that were used, namely the sampling procedures, the data gathering tools, and the data analysis method. The statement of positionality and the research ethics that were adhered to on the execution of the study are also presented.

Chapter 6: The findings of the study are discussed, evaluated, and interpreted in this chapter. The participants' narratives of their experiences and their perspectives on the nature and role of indigenous conflict approaches are presented. The data are analysed and interpreted based on the themes that had been developed from the gathered data. To better understand and effectively communicate the outcomes of the data analysis process, the participants' verbatim quotes are presented and discussed.

Chapter 7: This chapter presents a discussion of the key themes that emerged in response to study's research questions. The chapter assesses the usability of both the conflict and conflict transformation theories to bring about post-conflict relational justice in communities emerging out of conflict. The researcher acknowledges the limitations of the study and reflects on how the findings may impact policy formulation and practice in the future.

Chapter 8: This chapter presents a summary of the dissertation. The study's main conclusions are summarised and recommendations are offered to encourage further

research in this field. A broad conclusion and some pertinent reflective thoughts conclude the chapter and the thesis.

1.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter was a prelude that provided an overview of the study. This was accomplished by outlining the background of the study, propounding the problem statement, and discussing the significance of the study in broad terms. The discourse also outlined the theories upon which the study was anchored, and a brief discussion of the research methodology followed. The chapter also presented a glossary of terms such as political violence, relational justice, and indigeneity and the contexts in which they are used in this thesis was explained. The clarification of terms and a brief discussion of the theoretical framework complemented the literature survey and these will be utilised in more detail in subsequent chapters. The aim of the next chapter is to delve into a review of the literature, with particular reference to the historical background of the violent political conflicts that adversely affected the Richmond community between 1990 and 2018.

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter expounds the theoretical architecture that underpinned the study. Two theories were selected to guide the study, namely the conflict transformation theory and the conflict theory. The conflict theory foregrounds understanding of the origin and manifestations of conflicts in society, and in post-conflict communities in particular. The intractable violent conflicts that were experienced in Richmond demanded interventions that focused not only on the mere end of the conflicts, but also on changes in society, such as the structural changes from which the violent conflicts emanated. However, the study was built largely on the pillars and tenets of the conflict transformation theory. An overview of the history and key features of each theory is presented in this chapter. The emergence of the conflict transformation theory was precipitated by perennial failures of its successor frameworks, namely the conflict management and conflict resolution frameworks that have since fallen into disfavour due to the criticism that conflict transformation is a semantic mistake as it does not differ markedly from its predecessor theories. This chapter first discusses the two predecessor approaches to conflict transformation by contrasting them. The purpose is to extricate the conflict transformation theory from the tenets of both the conflict management and conflict resolution theories.

2.2 The Conflict Management Theory

Conflict management, according to Tanner (2000), is a process that seeks to quell and curb a conflict, but it actually does not resolve it. For him, conflict intervention should not be obsessed with solving the conflict but should focus on the management thereof. Conflict management, according to Wallensteen and Swanström (2002), should entail a shift in the type of contact from the one that destroys to the one that focuses on rebuilding. Conflict management, according to Zartman (1997), is putting an end to violent and violently connected behaviours and allowing the political elite to handle the dispute. Zartman's (1997) argument comes under criticism for leaving conflict handling in the hands of politicians and for disregarding the fact that non-political actors such as NGOs and academics are emerging role players in conflict

management. Hence, conflict management can be described as a flawed planning measure to avoid conflict and to adopt rapid and effective measures when it occurs.

The idea that conflict management is a collection of actions to lessen, quell, and curb violent conflict without endeavouring to resolve the conflict itself is a fundamental component of the definitions posed for this theory by various authors (Zartman, 1997; Tanner, 2000; Wallensteen and Swanström, 2002). More precisely, conflict management refers to one or more actions taken with the intention of managing or lessening the degree of violence, restricting or controlling the geographic range, restricting or controlling the number of participants, restricting or controlling the weaponry employed, limiting the size of the military forces engaged and/or the degree of violence with the help of an outside party, and negotiating a series of issues, either openly or covertly, in an effort to accomplish goals and keep the conflict under control or limited to prevent it from getting worse.

The conflict management strategy frequently places a great deal of reliance on powerful specialists and scholars to act as intermediaries in order to influence the conflict context and actors alike without aiming to modify community perceptions. Paffenholz (2008) argues that the key goal of the conflict management approach is to locate and invite the leaders of the disputing parties to the negotiating table in a controlled setting. According to Holmes (2001, cited in Phungula, 2020), this helps conflicting parties understand one another's concerns, interests, and goals and makes sure that they communicate their feelings in an appropriate and open manner. The end product of the management pedagogy is negative peace, political compromise, and the end of war – but, in this researcher's view, not the end of the hostile feelings harboured by affected communities.

The conflict management approach is therefore widely criticised for its focus on containing conflicts rather than resolving them (Berghof Foundation, 2012). As was shown above, the cornerstone of the conflict management approach is its obsession with short-term management of the conflict despite it being a long-term phenomenon. A practice followed by the UN and the AU in deploying peace-keeping missions in conflict-stricken countries is a classic example of the conflict management

perspective. Whilst it is important to limit fatalities in a conflict situation as far as possible, negative peace should not be the ultimate goal of conflict intervention. Moreover, conflict management is elitist in approach as it concentrates on senior politicians and other key stakeholders, but is deprived of context-based values and suffers due to legitimacy and poor ownership for locals. It clings to the role players on the top-tier of the state and, as a result, detaches itself from the masses at grassroots level. These deficiencies of conflict management propelled the emergence of the currently favoured conflict transformation approach, which goes beyond the mere cessation of a conflict.

2.3 Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is defined differently by authors and practitioners as it is difficult, if not impossible, to formulate a definition that is accepted for all stakeholders involved. Some authors (Zartman, 1997; Wallensteen, 2002; Swanström and Weissmann, 2005) concur that measures in conflict resolution are meant to resolve political issues and foster peaceful cooperation between (or among if more than two) warring parties. According to Paffenholz (2009), conflict resolution is concerned with mending damaged connections between/among opponents and addresses the cardinal factors that stir up conflict. Conflict resolution, according to Wallensteen (2002), is negotiated when disputing parties come to a compromise that resolves their fundamental differences, acknowledges their co-existence, and puts an end to any violent acts directed at one another.

According to Phungula (2020), conflict resolution is premised on the presence of three key features, namely: (1) a settlement agreement that negotiated the disposal of the differences between the adversaries; (2) the recognition of mutual existence and rights; and (3) the termination of violence against each other. All three of these goals may be contained in a settlement agreement reached through a combination of mediation, negotiation, and diplomacy strategies. Furthermore, these can be seen as a precondition for conflict resolution as it is impractical to end a conflict without a settlement that is accompanied by the involvement of each party in the conflict and in the termination of the (usually) armed violence. Conflicts in any society (particularly

armed conflict) disrupts human lives in a significant way; hence, the primacy of protecting lives preoccupies all attempts to resolve the impasse or conflict.

A fundamental focus of conflict resolution is to address human needs. The history of this perspective is found in Maslow's idea of a hierarchy of needs which he proposed 1943 in a paper titled *A Theory of Human Motivation* (Uysal *et al.*, p. 213). According to this hierarchy, human beings are preoccupied with meeting their day-to-day basic needs before endeavouring to meet their more abstract needs. According to Burton (1990), human beings take every necessary step to make certain that their needs are realised and, in an instance where their needs are not met, humans may resort to violence to achieve this goal.

This stems from the idea that, in addition to basic necessities like food and water, humans (individuals as well as groups) need protection from harm. They also need care and to attain a sense of self-worth, belonging, personal achievement, identity, liberty, and justice to deal with their day-to-day challenges (Paffenholz, 2009). Clements (2004) states that it is generally accepted that adversaries may abandon a conflict contingent to assistance to realise, examine, and re-assess their standpoints and interests. Therefore, the theory posits that restoring damaged relations between disputing parties requires a qualified external actor (i.e., a party not involved in the conflict) to resolve the issue. Here, the role of the external actor is to facilitate a process to pinpoint the origins of the disagreement and to propose novel approaches that the opposing parties might not have considered when forming their separate positions.

Conflict resolution perceives conflict as destructive, dysfunctional, and pathological; hence, it aims to have it removed from the affected society as quickly as possible (Phungula, 2020). This disregards the reality that conflicts at times are a consequence of people's attempt to challenge systemic and structural injustices in the society in which they live. Based on its conception of conflict resolution, proponents of this approach deprive themselves of the much needed attention it should be according to the root cause/s of conflict. Thus, the conflict resolution approach overly focuses on

eliminating the conflict through mediation, negotiation, and/or diplomacy, but it marginalises the seep-seated needs of affected societies after this 'resolution'.

2.4 Comparison between Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution

It is necessary to distinguish conflict management from conflict resolution because the two ideas are frequently confused or improperly integrated. Conflict management means actions that quell or curb conflict but do not resolve it, while conflict resolution is a process that seeks to procure the settlement of the cardinal antagonists' conflict in a reciprocal manner where the two parties embrace co-existence. Swanström *et al.* (2005) note that, to reach a satisfactory conclusion, both conflict management and conflict resolution are required. He contends that they belong to the same continuum and are its ends. While one goal is to stop the current disagreement quickly to allow for business or peace to resume, the other is to gradually resolve the deeper underlying problem/s.

Many academics hold the strong belief that conflict management is an effective intervention for resolving intractable conflicts in societies where conflict persists, arguing that it lays the groundwork for effective conflict resolution, especially in societies other than the global north (Zartman, 1997; Wallensteen, 2002; Swanström *et al.*, 2005; Swanström and Weissmann, 2005). The Western viewpoint contends that the value of conflict management is derived from its capacity to resolve immediate disputes. It may just be a matter of culture, yet both these points of view are perfectly applicable and consistent. It is therefore important to incorporate their tenets in the theoretical underpinnings of conflict management and resolution as they contain some valuable compatibilities. Actually, they should preferably be used at various phases of dispute resolution to deal with essentially distinct problems.

2.5 The Conflict Transformation Theory in Context

For a long time, conflict and peace studies have focused on grand national projects that were devised to negotiate peace by major actors, such as political parties and international mediating actors like the UN (Genger, 2020). However, this top-down view on solving conflict has in recent years been challenged by new theories on conflict intervention. The conflict settlement theory had to make ideological and

practical space for others like conflict resolution, conflict management, and conflict transformation in the broader arena of conflict resolution (Lederach, 2003). In the last three decades, conflict transformation has grown into a formidable approach in explaining conflict and moving towards peacebuilding (Miall 2004; Lederach, 2002; Boege, 2006).

On the African continent, the early 1990s was marred by recurring civil wars that had previously been 'ended' through the use of conflict resolution and conflict management approaches (Phungula, 2020). The fact that so many countries collapsed back into civil war after these settlements surely has something to say about the lack of longevity of the conflict resolution and conflict management approaches that were utilised. According to the proponents of the then emerging concept of conflict transformation, this relapse was a consequence of deficiencies in the dominant theories of conflict management and conflict resolution as they did not bring about durable peace (Lederach, 2003). Critics held that the conflict management and conflict resolution and settlement approaches were inadequate historically, epistemologically, and ontologically in responding effectively and sustainably to the complexities of multifaceted modern-day conflicts (Mamdani, 2002; Lederach, 2003; Miall, 2004; Boege, 2006). For them, conflict transformation, whose focus goes beyond negative peace, should present itself as an alternative with a wide range of capabilities to facilitate positive and sustainable peace. For instance, in the current study it was evident that the weaknesses of conflict resolution and conflict management made conflict transformation an attractive approach, especially in South Africa.

The political settlement of the conflict early in the 1990s in South Africa led to an official peace, and this peace was backed by policies and programs that dealt with the underlying causes and grievances that had caused the conflict (Kynoch, 2018). Later, the TRC was the chief agent to bring about peace post 1994. Although many surveys at the time indicated that South Africans had come to deal with the past to varying degrees and were seeing the various groups in the country as intertwined, there were still many worrying aspects that needed (and still need) to be addressed, such as interracial understanding, trust, and tolerance (Tabane and Human-Vogel, 2010; and Potgieter, 2017). The aim of this study was to explore how indigenous approaches

might be used as a transformation mechanism in the post-conflict community in Richmond to curb the persisting and intractable conflicts in this area.

The emergence of more recent conceptual frameworks in conflict and peace studies resulted in the formulation of the theory of conflict transformation (Lederach, 2003). This theory was introduced to complement the concept of conflict transformation which had begun to triumph over the historically dominant concepts of conflict resolution and conflict management in conflict and peace studies. The foundation of the conflict transformation theory lies in peace building, particularly in post-conflict societies, and was introduced by the writings of scholars like Galtung (2004) and Lederach (1995, 2003, 2008). In contrast to other approaches, the transformative approach that this theory posits views conflict as an inducement for social change because of its dual nature. It argues that, while conflict strains social relationships, it contains within it the propensity to bring about change in many facets such as attitude and troubled relations that can be transformed into more harmonious, constructive, and balanced ones.

2.5.1 Defining the conflict transformation theory

Definitions of the term ‘conflict transformation’ have been explored by several authors. For Miall (2004), conflict transformation is a protracted process that brings changes in the social, political, and cultural spheres together with systematic challenges in society’s social fabric. The primary aim is to determine immediate actions and requirements that are needed to address the specific episode and to encourage change towards meeting future goals. This strategic concept has two complementary components. First, conflict transformation makes the same theoretical assumption as the conflict theory, which is that conflicting power relations stem from deep-seated injustices. Secondly, they focus on the empowerment and capacity building of powerless actors through measures such as training (Lederach 1995; Botes, 2003). Thus, to foster more balanced intercultural interactions, these local capacity building programs specifically aim to promote a cultural diversity discourse on topics related to the root causes of conflicts.

Conflict transformation is an analytical method that offers resources for comprehending conflict dynamics and the various contexts in which they manifested, with particular focus on individuals, relationships, organisations, political systems, leadership styles, narrative constructions, and cultural frameworks (Berghof, 2012). Accordingly, from a descriptive standpoint, conflicts are dynamic for a variety of reasons (structural, contextual, actor strategies, etc.), and we may and should engage with them to go beyond a conflict's immediate expression. Prescriptively speaking, conflict transformation also refers to the dedication to change the nature of interactions, norms, discourses, and the structure of society itself, as all these give rise to conflict. This necessitates going beyond the ‘episodic’ expression of conflict and to concentrate instead on the historical and relational patterns that propelled the conflict as well as the areas that created or concealed inequities. Such an approach nuances any required changes and provides practical solutions to resolving pressing issues.

The goal of the conflict transformation method is to create tactics that work on various scales and levels. Moreover, to encourage processes of positive change at individual, interpersonal, and community levels that will result in the achievement of fair justice and curb violence in a society as a whole, it promotes the concept of transformative platforms (Lederach, 1995).

2.5.2 Characterisation of the conflict transformation lens

A theory must stand or fall on its merits. This section concerns itself with the constituent factors of the conflict transformation theory to determine whether it can withstand scrutiny. The basic tenets of the theory of conflict transformation illustrate an improved focus and more added value than its predecessor theories of conflict management and conflict resolution (Lederach, 2003).

A key characteristic of the approach is that it sets out to achieve not only the cessation of violence, but durable peace (Lederach, 1995; Botes, 2003). Critics argue that the current conflict transformation theory is an extension of the conflict resolution approach, but the focus of the former exceeds the mere cessation of conflict. Thus, the adapted conflict resolution approach may potentially achieve the aspirations of

conflict transformation that go beyond the ending of conflict. Given this partial overlap between the conflict transformation and conflict resolution perspectives, both Mitchell (2002, p. 8) and Spangler (2003, p.258) refer to conflict transformation as “the highest and most advanced stage of conflict resolution". This point of view is supported by Kriesberg's (2011) argument that conflict transformation is uniquely broad when compared to conflict resolution. McNamee and Muyangwa (2021) argue that regional and multinational bodies, such as SADC, should encourage lasting conflict resolution and make investments in eminent persons and institutions. Imploring SADC to pursue positive peace instead of negative peace, the author endorses conflict transformation as an unorthodox approach towards a paradigm shift in conflict and peace initiatives within SADC’s jurisdiction.

It is important to remember that, despite disagreements, the majority of writers and practitioners agree on one crucial point: conflict transformation moves the conversation about managing long-lasting, destructive conflicts beyond resolution; that is, beyond stopping the violence, reaching a compromise settlement, or even working together to jointly create a workable solution to the problems that separated the feuding parties.

The focus that the conflict transformation theory places on the necessity for systemic change to modify the social structures, actors, and institutions that caused a conflict sets it apart from the theories of conflict management and conflict resolution. As every conflict has a social context that instigated and sometimes even sustained the conflict, altering the environment of the conflict is frequently necessary to transform it. The conflict transformation theory thus does not only broker limiting or ending the violence, but also focuses on post-conflict issues that include, but are not limited to, rebuilding relationships. The conflict transformation strategy takes a broad approach to addressing the fundamental causes of a conflict by altering the social norms and factors that preceded it in the first place. The main strengths of the theory are its broadness, its focus on addressing the underlying causes of conflict, and its acknowledgment of the necessity for altering not just situations, but also the individuals, relationships, organisations, and institutions that contributed to the conflict (Makanda, 2016).

The conflict transformation approach focuses on three dimensions in a conflict situation, namely: the causes of the conflict, the solutions for it, and the sustainability of these solutions. These goals are its unique foundational pillars that are not found in the conceptions of its predecessors, namely conflict management or conflict resolution/settlement.

The evolving and complex nature of factors that cause conflicts in the current global context have exposed the limitations of previously favoured conflict management and conflict resolution strategies. Using the conflict transformation praxis of inclusivity, the study design and research questions sought to explore the underlying causes of several waves of violent conflicts in the Richmond community. Furthermore, the study endeavoured to explore from the participants' responses how indigenous approaches of conflict resolution can be utilised to realise post-conflict relational justice. Relying on the latter, the researcher will discern how the participants' contribution juxtaposed with the available literature on indigenous approaches may be adapted in the post-conflict Richmond community. According to the Institute for Mult-Track Diplomacy, conflict resolution purports to bring about a 'resolution' to end a conflict, but its intervention outcomes become short-lived as the approach neglects to attend to the deep-rooted issues that preceded the conflict (Botes, 2003), as was argued earlier Thus, conflict transformation surpasses the immediate focus of ending a conflict as it delves into various facets that underpinned the eruption of the conflict.

Therefore, the theory of conflict transformation was relevant to this study that aimed to comprehend how members of the Richmond community managed their coexistence and how communication and non-violent actions were encouraged to establish relational justice. A key issue was also the ownership of the intervention programmes as external attempts to solve conflict remove key local people and agents from the centre stage. As far as could be established, the Richmond community never initiated any attempt to find a solution to recurring violent conflicts in this area. Moreover, the theory was significant for this study because it helped to demonstrate how the conflict had to be transformed by using and adapting indigenous conflict transformation techniques to go beyond the simple ending of conflicts and guarantee the rebuilding of relations among the warring groups.

Unlike conflict management and conflict resolution, conflict transformation recognises that not all conflicts end through definite solutions. Galtung (2004: p. 439) succinctly illustrates this idea when he contends that some conflicts never truly achieve a "resolved condition; rather, they just undergo temporary suppression and abandonment in the service of other objectives, which can lead to their recurrence". Conflict transformation thus addresses the gaps that might have been neglected by the conflict management and resolution approaches. For instance, the National Peace Accord signed in 1993 did not stop the resurgence of violent conflicts in the Richmond area in 1996, and the local peace agreement concluded in the aftermath of the 1996 violence could not prevent yet another violent conflict in 1998. The list is endless, and it is imminent that another episode of violent conflict might erupt in the Richmond community. This recurrence of violence is not unique to South Africa, as short-lived peace agreements were also experienced in Zimbabwe (2007/2008 and 2013), Lesotho (1998, 2014 and 2017), and Madagascar (2009-2014) (McNamee and Muyangwa, 2021). The limited duration of peace settlements in the Richmond community is a demonstration of, amongst others, a lack of attention to conflict dynamics by conflict management agents and conflict resolution measures. This distinctive inability to achieve lasting conflict resolution affirms the current researcher's intention to apply the framework to explore indigenous approaches as an alternative solution to conflict in the Richmond area.

The ontological lens of conflict and conflict transformation is a positive rather than a negative view held by conflict management and conflict resolution agents. Agents are often more concerned with curbing conflict and achieving a settlement than with the deep-rooted causes of the conflict, and therefore they only achieve negative peace. The transformative method views conflict as a catalyst for societal development in contrast to other approaches that view conflict as something bad that needs to be eliminated or minimised. Conflict in social relationships stresses the need for resolutions, but it also has the power to conquer, modify, and transform antagonistic relationships into ones that are more harmonious, positive, and balanced.

Metaphorically, the conflict management and the conflict resolution approaches view a conflict as a raging fire that destroys society, therefore interventions in conflicts are like fire-fighters who are obsessed to extinguish the fire. Conversely, conflict transformation theorists, like a fynbos farmer, see a wild fire as an opportunity for fynbos seeds to germinate and again grow lushly after a fierce fire. According to Mitchell (2002), conflict transformation views conflict as a chance for development and a way of ushering in positive change. According to the conflict transformation perspective, conflict is not inherently bad. In fact, if the parties involved in the conflict work together to find reasonable, if not ideal, solutions to their problems, then conflict may, paradoxically, foster and increase peace while reducing violence. Conflict cannot be completely prevented because it is an inevitable by-product of human contact and relationships, as Kimemia (2022) notes. To maintain lasting peace, security, and stability, it must be properly handled, resolved when feasible and, most significantly, transformed.

2.5.3 Areas addressed by the conflict transformation theory

A key question that has been posed is: *What does transformation really transform?* This question was first addressed by Vayrynen (1991), who identified four areas that need transformation: the actor, the issue, the rule, and the structural. In deepening the exploration of the question during peacebuilding and conflict transformation efforts, Miall (2004) proposes five dimensional areas that, if accorded enough observation, can successfully lessen violent conflict. These require emphasis on ‘context’, ‘structural’, ‘actor’, ‘issue’, and ‘personal’ transformation. Conflict transformation is defined by Lederach (2003: p.217) as “the gradual conversion of a conflict situation's negative peace into a positive peace system”. According to him, the four parts of a conflict, namely personal, structural, relational, and cultural, must be accorded priority in the process. However, the current study explored the five areas mentioned by Miall (2004) due to their explicit broadness, as summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Summary of transformational dimension and its intended outcomes

Transformational dimensions	
Area	**Outcome**
Actor transformation	Seeks to introduces new actors
Issue transformation	Brings about adjustments to the conflict's agenda, topic, or root cause
Context transformation	Results in shifts in the conflict's setting and how it affected the main players' perspectives and motivations
Structural transformation	Facilitates a changed conflict structure, be it the issue or irreconcilable goals
Personal transformation	Resolves unbalanced and contested relationships before transformation can take place

Source: Miall, 2024

Each of these areas of transformation is now briefly explained.

Contextual transformation: Prioritising contextual factors in conflict intervention can help resolve disputes by enhancing understanding of the conflict itself. Contextual factors include social relationships and resource availability. Miall (2004) argues that altering the context can have an impact on adversaries' attitudes, which can then modify how they perceive the dispute. As disputes arise from contextual unhappiness, changing the situation is essential and this, in turn, modifies the surroundings on a local, national, regional, and world-wide scale. Modifications to the conflict's context may also alter antagonists' understanding of the circumstances and goals of the dispute.

Structural transformation: Mitchell (2002) writes that the main objective of conflict transformation is to modify the structural facet, which encompasses addressing the full relationship and power dynamics inside the dispute (Miall, 2004). Marxian theory

of conflict holds that structural inequalities are the reason society is always in a state of conflict, as the next sections will demonstrate.

Changes in this area seek to comprehend the fundamental problems and societal contexts that give rise to violence. Because of this, stakeholder interventions must be able to support systemic changes, guarantee the satisfaction of fundamental human needs, and promote local process ownership (Lederach, 1997). This entails alterations to the conflict's fundamental structure, the structure of relationships within it, and the way power is distributed. A shift in power structures, relationships, and the underlying causes of violence occurs from the asymmetric to the symmetric.

Actor transformation: Actors in conflict interventions made the unusual and amazing admission that they themselves needed to be rejuvenated and that they needed to evolve. According to Mitchell (2002), actor transformation can involve eliminating or substituting certain actors from conflict intervention initiatives so that the remaining actors can pursue the proper kind of help. A shift in actors' objectives, or a modification in their overall conflict resolution strategy, requires shifts in the objectives to be achieved as well as in the leadership that drives the conflict intervention. Actor transformation should incorporate the empowerment and capacity building of locals whose agency to address their affairs was usurped by external actors. Boege (2006) writes that the entrenchment of external actors in conflict intervention will erode local actors' agency. As NGOs and the political elite spearheaded a number of the interventions in the Richmond area, this concept was one of many that underpinned the investigation in the current study.

Issue transformation: Standpoints taken by conflicting parties are critical in conflict intervention as transforming the viewpoints of antagonists can be a catalyst for success. Thus, modifying what antagonists perceive as the cause/s of the conflict may nurture an environment for intervention. For Miall (2004), issue transformation involves changing the political agendas of the feuding parties. This entails, amongst others, rephrasing their opinions on important conflict concerns, such as the transcendence of disputed matters, the de- or re-linking of issues, and a constructive compromise that results in a constructive settlement.

Personal transformation: The personal dimension directly points to protagonists who hold powers to make and enforce decisions. The need for personal transformation demands that leaders reconsider their initial position in the conflict and to accept a compromise. Conflict transformation necessitates ways to lessen circumstances that led to the conflict and that had a detrimental impact on the physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of many individuals (Lederach, 2003). The relational aspect addresses how conflict affects interactions and communication in relationships and aims to enhance these by fostering understanding and group communication (Lederach, 2003).

Consequently, conflict transformation offers inclusive strategies for peacebuilding that concentrate on bringing about positive, long-lasting changes in these five areas (USIP, 2011). Lederach (1998) outlines three levels that require the influence of conflict transformation initiatives: (1) leaders at the highest levels of government, especially those involved in negotiations to end hostilities; (2) leaders in influential fields, such as professionals and academics who stand to gain from conflict resolution and problem-solving training; and (3) local leaders, NGOs, and other organisations that are relevant to the community and that can facilitate training. Shifting viewpoints, dispositions, and conciliatory actions is a necessary condition for personal transformation in conflict intervention.

These five modes were helpful in the context of the Richmond community as multiple conflict epochs had a negative influence on people, communities, religious orientations, and the overall structure of the Richmond society. Remarkably, these five patterns offered pathways towards constructive transformation. Lederach's (2003) prescriptions were immensely helpful as a starting point because he mentions critical ways that guide the course of transformation, such as attention to the root causes of the conflict, the need to stray from violent dynamics, the lack of conflict reports, and the need to nurture relationships for durable relational justice in a post-conflict community.

2.5.4 Aims of conflict transformation

The previous sub-section dissected the need for transformation in a conflict situation and how this transformation can be enacted. It is now important to discuss the goals of conflict transformation. Fisher *et al*. (2009) believe that the following goals are important:

- To alter the frameworks and institutions that give rise to injustice and inequality, such as economic redistribution;
- Improve and ensure lasting relationships and end hostilities between the disputing parties; and
- Establish protocols and structures that will promote capacity building, unity, and social cohesion.

Schmid (2000) adds to the list as he writes that the term 'conflict transformation' intends to achieve the following on a continuous basis:

- Changing the goal in a conflict situation;
- Bringing about structural changes in society;
- Reorientating in the focus; and
- Conscientising all role-players towards the capability of conflict transformation.

2.5.5 Application of the conflict transformation theory in the Study

The conflict transformation theory is particularly useful in a variety of contexts, including the study of ethnic and religious conflicts, social injustices, and political disputes as it provides a framework for an in-depth analysis of how conflicts affect and are affected by social structures, relationships, and cultural norms. For example, in post-apartheid South Africa, the TRC not only aimed to address past atrocities, but also to fostered a new national identity and social cohesion (Tutu, 1999). Unlike previously preferred theories such as the conflict resolution and conflict management approaches, the conflict transformation theory provides a comprehensive view of conflicts by addressing their underlying causes and the structural and cultural factors that caused them. Hence, this theory was employed in the current study as its holistic approach was essential for proposing long-term solutions that would foster sustainable peace (Galtung, 1996). The TRC's approach reflected the principles of conflict transformation as it sought to rebuild relationships and societal structures. In

political conflicts, like the ones experienced by the Richmond community, the conflict transformation theory helped researchers to analyse how power dynamics and institutional structures contributed to ongoing tensions while it aided them in understanding the multidimensional aspects of peacebuilding.

Riemann (2004: p. 14) suggests that the test of the relevance of a particular theory is discerned “in the degree of its usefulness and technical ability as it seeks to guide and orient policy towards given ends, such as the settlement of conflict,” which makes an assessment of the applicability of conflict transformation theory crucial. The conflict transformation theory has been successfully utilised to scrutinise various sectors of society, such as government agencies, peacebuilding practitioners, and academic institutions.

Miall (2004) contends that there is always a chance that the ties between opposing sides could be caught in a web of contentious relationships that predate a current conflict. Thus, a process of engaging with and transforming relationships and interests should be used to conceptualise conflict transformation, as was applied in the current study as an exploratory endeavour.

The hegemony of Western conventional methods in conflict and peace resolution has resulted in the entrenchment of the involvement of various role players. In the process of conflict transformation, community members and their leaders collectively take responsibility for devising and implementing strategies to resolve the problems that plague their peaceful co-existence. The shift towards the empowering of local actors in conflict intervention measures is a result of Lederach's (2003) methodology. Lederach's main argument is rooted in the idea that creating "long-term infrastructure" is both desirable and necessary, and this idea was applied to explore transformation in the Richmond community. The conflict transformation theory's emphasis on a bottom-up approach in conflict intervention rather than a top-down one was another aspect that made it suitable for this study.

Thus, the conflict transformation theory provided a valuable framework for studying and addressing the complexities of the conflicts in the study area as it guided the

researcher to focus on the deep-rooted causes of the strife and fostered ideas for systemic changes. The holistic approach emphasised relationships and focused on structural issues, which made it a powerful tool for understanding and proposing resolutions for the persisting conflict. However, its practical application was complex and idealistic and thus required a careful consideration of cultural contexts and realistic, context-appropriate strategies.

2.6 Classical Marxism as Conflict Theory

The conflict theory, which is a key sociological framework, provides a robust lens through which to examine social dynamics and structures. Originating from the works of Karl Marx, this theory posits that social life is characterised by ongoing conflicts among different groups and is primarily driven by economic interests and power inequalities. The study is nestled in classical Marxism. Classical Marxism, founded by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, remains a cornerstone of critical social theory and political practice. This intellectual tradition provides a framework for understanding the dynamics of capitalism, class struggle, and social change. Its enduring influence is evident in both academic discourse and political movements worldwide.

This section affirms the relevance and application of the classical Marxism as a theoretical framework for the current study. Its foundational concepts, advantages, limitations, and implications for research are briefly discussed.

2.6.1. Key concepts of classical Marxism

Classical Marxism is anchored on the following key concepts that are relevant to the study;

(i) Dialectical Materialism

At the core of Marxist theory is dialectical materialism, a philosophical approach that posits the material conditions of society as the foundation for its development and change. According to this view, historical progress is driven by the dialectical interaction of conflicting social forces, particularly the contradictions between the forces of production and the relations of production.

In essence, the conflict theory postulates that disputes between two or among more rival groups are what drive people's actions in social situations. Within this framework, power can be interpreted as encompassing authority over tangible assets and amassed riches, command over political processes and the establishments that constitute society, and one's social standing in relation to that of others.

(ii) Class Struggle

Marxism is fundamentally concerned with class struggle, the ongoing conflict between different social classes over access to resources, power, and status. Marx identified the primary classes within capitalist society as the bourgeoisie (the owners of the means of production) and the proletariat (the working class). He argued that the exploitation inherent in capitalism would inevitably lead to revolutionary upheaval as the proletariat sought to overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish a classless society.

Marx envisioned the culmination of class struggle in the form of a proletarian revolution, leading to the establishment of socialism and ultimately communism. In a communist society, the means of production would be collectively owned, abolishing class distinctions and enabling the full realization of human potential. Marx's revolutionary vision called for the active participation of the working class in dismantling the capitalist system and building a new, egalitarian social order.

Positing conflict, Karl Marx focused on the underlying causes and results of conflict between those who owned the means for production and creating wealth (i.e., capitalists) and the poor, working class proletarians (Marx and Engels, 1973). Per Sedek (2018) asserts that wealthy individuals who are in possession of a country or society’s wealth may do anything to sustain their status, even going to the extent of oppressing the poor and destitute. According to the conflict theory, tensions and conflicts result from an imbalance in access to and the allocation of society’s resources. Various scholars have expanded the views on and tenets of the conflict theory. For instance, Max Weber (1991) introduced the concept of social stratification beyond economic class, emphasising the role of status and power in societal conflicts. Later theorists like C. Wright Mills (2008) explored how elites and powerful groups

manipulate societal institutions to maintain their dominance. Works like these have contributed to a broader understanding of power dynamics in various social contexts.

(iii) Historical Materialism

Historical materialism is Marx's framework for understanding historical development. It posits that the economic base of society conditions its superstructure, which includes politics, culture, and ideology. Changes in the economic base, driven by technological advancements and shifts in production, lead to transformations in the superstructure. This perspective offers a materialist explanation for historical processes, emphasizing the centrality of economic factors in shaping human society.

As was shown in Chapter two, the Richmond community was marred by political polarisation which sharply divided the community. The two politically aligned antagonists intended to amass political power as leaders in the local municipality, which would allow them access to resources. The conflict theory provides scholarly explanations for the broad characteristics of conflict in society, including its causes, stages, and outcomes. These theses and works enhanced understanding of the power relations in the Richmond community and demonstrated how such tensions contributed to intractable conflicts and influenced the intervention strategies that followed. This facility was not found in other theories on conflict and peace.

(iv) Alienation as a motive

Marx's concept of alienation describes the estrangement of workers from the products of their labour, the labour process, and their own human potential under capitalism. He argued that capitalism reduces workers to mere commodities, stripping them of their agency and creativity, and resulting in a profound sense of disconnection and dehumanization.

Gurr (1993b) argues that political discrimination has an impact on the risk of violent revolt and the potential for the secession of conflict. Cederman *et al*. (2010, cited by Kimemia, 2021), argues that excluded groups, regardless of their wealth status, are three times more likely to start a conflict against a state than groups who have representation at the core of the government.

Kimemia (2021) claims that prejudice against some groups in a society might result from an uneven distribution of power. In such instance, politically marginalised groups search for the means to obtain resources and, depending on the issues involved, they may resort to violence to attain their goals. The literature is rich in stories of the disproportionate representation of various groups in governments and other important structures that resulted in fatal conflicts on African soil. For example, the low representation of the Hutus, who were the majority population in a country with a minority Tutsi-led government, is mentioned as one of the key factor that caused the genocide that devastated Rwanda in 1994.

(v) Power and Domination

Conflict theory argues that social order is maintained through power and domination rather than shared values. Those in positions of power use their authority to enforce rules and norms that benefit them, perpetuating inequality and suppressing dissent. This perspective challenges the notion that societal consensus and cooperation are the primary drivers of social stability (Marx, 1867).

However, proponents of the conflict theory assert that the unequal distribution of resources is inevitable in society. This resonates with Karl Marx's (1867) view that conflicts in society are a vehicle to bring about equilibrium in the distribution of resources. Moreover, the conflict theory also perceives conflict in a positive light as it is deemed a catalyst for change when societies remain in status quo. Conversely, the obsession for power sustains and entrenches domination and exacerbates the marginalisation of some groups and the power of others. It is the paternalistic fractionalisation of society along political affiliations that gives birth to conflicts as a result of increased tension caused by persistent domination.

According to the conflict theory, several factors may trigger conflict in any society such as the unequal distribution of scarce resources, domination, and power imbalances. The focal point of the conflict theory is the imbalanced access to and sharing of scarce resources, which creates situations and tensions that generate disgruntlement among those with access to fewer or no resources.

Antonio Gramsci expanded upon Marxist ideas, introducing the concept of cultural hegemony. In his Selections from the Prison Notebooks (1971), Gramsci argued that the ruling class maintains control not just through economic power but also through ideological dominance, shaping cultural norms and values to legitimize their authority. This insight highlights the multifaceted nature of power in perpetuating inequality. David Harvey's work, A Brief History of Neoliberalism (2005), further explores how neoliberal policies have exacerbated social inequalities. Harvey argues that neoliberalism, characterized by deregulation, privatization, and free-market policies, has intensified economic disparities and reduced social welfare, leading to increased conflict between different social groups.

In light of the above discussion, it is affirmed that the contribution of the conflict theory to this study enabled understanding of the causes of several episodes of violent conflicts in the Richmond area over the years, and this theory paved the way for understanding the value of indigenous approaches to conflict intervention and resolution.

2.6.2 Relevance of the classical Marxism for the study

The classical Marxism is useful for the analysis of a wide range of social phenomena. Its application is particularly relevant in studies concerning class struggles, power imbalances, and systemic inequalities. In this study, when the researcher examined the persistence of conflicts in the Richmond community, the classical Marxism revealed how and why political leaders perpetuated social inequality. For instance, they reinforced political cleavages and provided unequal resources to the different socioeconomic groups in the community based on political alignments. Of the several theories on conflict and peace, the classical Marxism was instrumental in uncovering and critiquing the underlying political power structures and inequalities within the Richmond community. By focusing on the nature of the conflicts among the different groupings, the researcher could explore how social disparities shaped individuals' experiences and opportunities. This theory thus enlightened critical understanding of how societal norms and institutions perpetuated inequalities that bred the intractable

conflicts in the African community under study, and it was effective in explaining how this impacted the Richmond community.

Additionally, the theory encouraged this study's focus on social change. By identifying sources of conflict and inequality, strategies for addressing and mitigating these issues were highlighted. Moreover, the proactive approach that this theory encouraged was valuable in understanding practical issues, such as policy development and advocacy efforts.

The conflict theory in general offers a valuable theoretical framework for studying social phenomena as it highlights the dynamics of power and inequality. Its focus on the conflicts between and among different groups exposes valuable insights into the underlying structures that shape social interactions and institutions. While it has limitations, particularly in addressing the complexities of modern social identities, the conflict theory remains a powerful tool for understanding and addressing the root causes of social disparities. Utilising the classical Marxism in this study thus elicited a comprehensive understanding of the societal issues that perpetuated violence in the Richmond area.

2.7 Chapter Summary

The discourse in this chapter considered various key theoretical issues that were relevant to the study. It presented a historical overview of the selected theories as illuminated in conflict and peace studies, and discussed the deficiencies of previously preferred conflict management and conflict resolution theories. An attempt was made to extricate conflict transformation from the two previously dominant theories of conflict management and conflict resolution and enunciated the unique building blocks that strengthened the conflict transformation theory. The discussion demonstrated the growing importance and applicability of the conflict transformation theory that differs fundamentally from the earlier conflict management and conflict resolution viewpoints. It was averred that conflict transformation is not a panacea for conflict resolution, but a desirable analytical tool for conflict analysis and intervention. In this regard, the discussion demonstrated the propensity of the conflict transformation theory to surpass the attainment of negative peace as it focuses on sustaining peace and

building capacity in post-conflict communities. The praxis of the classical Marxism demonstrated how unequal distribution of resources and power imbalances in society may lead to conflict. Moreover, the discussion provided an exposition of the types and features of the theoretical lenses that were utilised in the execution of this study. The next chapter details the scientific techniques that were used to recruit participants and to collect, analyse, and interpret the data.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW
FROM CONVENTIONAL TO INDIGENOUS APPROACHES

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter exposed waves of violent conflicts that marred the Richmond community during the 1990-2018 period. It emerged from the discussion that one of the prime casualties of the spates of violent conflicts in this community was disrupted relations that separated previously bonded people. Moreover, there were no restorative justice initiatives due to the hegemony of conventional methods of conflict resolution. This was undoubtedly one of the most significant issues of the post-conflict era in the area and ways had to be found to restore relations after the turmoil of violence and separation. However, it is a topic that has received the least attention in conflict and peace studies and in practice (Fortna, 2018). This chapter discusses the historical background of the entrenchment of Western methods of conflict intervention through the internationalisation of their standards and strategies. Understanding this phenomenon is crucial as it was the foundation that supported the hegemony of Western influences and the subjugation of indigenous approaches by actors in conflict restoration initiatives. Hence, the chapter surveys and compares selected Western methods of conflict resolution and indigenous approaches to conflict intervention. The purpose is to explore the methodologies that neglected the real issues in traditional communities and to expose the limitations of these initiatives. It is also important to scrutinise both international and continental standpoints in relation to the glaring call to shift from ostensible hegemonic Western methods to indigenous strategies to achieve sustainable post-conflict resolution. Pursuant to this, the discussion takes voyage on two major calls, namely: the global call to ‘local turn’ and the African Union’s call for ‘African solutions to African problems’. This discussion explicates the uniqueness of African indigenous approaches to conflict resolution by demonstrating the various features of this approach. The purpose is to disentangle indigenous approaches from the conventional Western methods by way of comparison.

3.2 The Internationalisation of Conflict Intervention Strategies

Western methods of conflict intervention that are characterised by Western legal frameworks, institutionalised mediation, and structured arbitration are predominant in

the global conflict resolution arena. These approaches, rooted in enlightenment-era rationalism and the development of modern state systems, have significantly influenced how conflicts are managed and resolved worldwide. Western methods of conflict intervention are grounded in principles of legalism, procedural fairness, and institutional authority. These methods often involve international law, state-based legal systems, and organisations such as the United Nations (UN). The rise of these methods can be traced to the development of the international legal system, which formalised conflict resolution through Western-based treaties, conventions, and institutional mechanisms.

According to O'Neill and Clarke (2023), Western approaches offer clear procedures and guidelines to enhance the consistency and reliability of conflict resolution processes. They argue that this standardisation helps ensure that conflicts are resolved according to established norms and rules, thus reducing the potential for arbitrary or biased decisions. Adams and Gomez (2022) highlight that Western legal frameworks have been instrumental in establishing international norms for conflict resolution based on the principles of self-determination, the prohibition of the use of force, and the protection of human rights. These norms have provided a foundation for global governance and have influenced conflict intervention strategies worldwide. Williams and Lee (2023) emphasise that Western institutions, such as the UN and various international courts, have substantial financial and technical resources that enable them to engage in large-scale conflict interventions. This institutional support enhances the capacity to address complex conflicts and coordinate international responses. However, it has been argued that the African culture and traditions are rich and well-established in a unique system of restorative justice (Davis and Thompson, 2023), and the current study thus explored the nature and efficacy of indigenous approaches to restorative justice, with specific reference to the views of locals in the Richmond community. This was achieved by collecting and analysing data pertaining to the lived experiences of residents and other key informants associated with the Richmond community. By juxtaposing these findings with those of Western approaches emanating from the literature, the study foregrounds indigenous approaches towards restorative justice by highlighting local norms, values, and traditions that were peculiar to the community under study.

Roberts and Martin (2024) note that the focus on negotiation, arbitration, and legal adjudication by Western methods promotes peaceful resolutions and can prevent conflicts from escalating into violence. This emphasis on legal and diplomatic processes aligns with international efforts to resolve disputes through dialogue and consensus. However, Davis and Thompson (2023) opine that Western approaches often overlook local customs, traditions, and values, leading to interventions that may not align with the cultural contexts of affected communities. This cultural imposition can result in ineffective or even counterproductive conflict resolution strategies. Turner and Martinez (2022) highlight that the focus on Western legal and institutional frameworks can side-line the traditional practices that have been effective in managing conflicts within specific cultural contexts. This exclusion can undermine local knowledge and reduce the overall effectiveness of intervention efforts in traditional societies (Turner and Martinez, 2022). This study bridged this apparent gap as it accorded local people an opportunity to discuss and explore indigenous ways to atone for relations harmed during violent political conflicts.

Clark and Green (2024) note that Western interventions are sometimes perceived as neo-colonial or hegemonic, particularly when they impose external solutions on sovereign states. However, this dynamic can exacerbate power imbalances and create resistance among local populations, thus complicating conflict resolution efforts. Wilson and Nguyen (2023) indicate that Western approaches often emphasise legalistic and procedural solutions, arguing that such an approach may not fully address underlying social, economic, and political grievances. This limitation can result in temporary or superficial resolutions that do not resolve the deeper issues driving the conflict. To better understand this dichotomy, the study explored indigenous approaches based on non-legal and non-linear ways of rebuilding relations upset by violent political conflicts.

The idea of internationalising post-conflict intervention “is predicated on the assumption of a universal human nature”, which accords human rights as "natural rights inherent" in all people (Williams, 2022, p.119). A key element of post-conflict intervention is the requirement to implement criminal accountability mechanisms in addition to normative requirements to defend human rights. For instance, the UN

established many international criminal tribunals to address war crimes in various nations, such as the Nuremberg trials. Moreover, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was established by a UN resolution in 1993 to try those who were committed war crimes and broke international humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavian territory (Schabas, 2006). Also, to bring those accountable for the Rwandan genocide and other transgressions of international law to justice, the United Nations established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in 1994. This occurred in spite of the Rwandan *Gacaca* court's efforts.

Since then, nations who have recently experienced conflict have been importing techniques for post-conflict intervention. According to some academics (Genger, 2020; Murambadoro, 2020; Bayor, 2021), the majority of national and international transitional justice procedures are guided by liberal democratic ideals that may not always be relevant in all political and conflict situations. Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013) note that, in post-conflict cultures where socio-political experiences are distinct from those of the West, the liberal democratic framework has had an uncritical influence on peace-building and transitional justice. According to these authors, post-conflict intervention has to shift its emphasis from its current obsession with liberal state-building and global 'universal' standards towards a model that takes into account and makes use of local norms, practices, and alternative conceptions of justice. Their call is premised on a myriad of challenges stemming from allegiance to the internationalisation of conflict intervention strategies.

In light of the above discourse, it is noteworthy that the literature on post-conflict interventions continues to accord relational dimension an insufficient attention (Daso, 2017; Gender, 2020; and Murambadoro, 2020). From a practice perspective, more focus tends to be given to national issues that include, but are not limited to, humanitarian interventions, the creation of a universal human rights culture, the rebuilding of state machinery following conflicts (e.g., the formation of governments of national unity, truth commissions, constitutions containing a Bill of Rights, and capacitating the criminal justice system), which are all processes that are endemic to democratisation projects. However, these are often implemented at the expense of the restitution of harmed relations (Mamdani, 2002). The next section surveys studies

on some Western methods of conflict intervention and situate the study within the gaps and limitations of their application.

3.3. Western Methods of Conflict Intervention

Western methods of community conflict intervention in Africa encompass various strategies such as diplomatic mediation, development aid, peacebuilding initiatives, and community engagement programs. These methods are designed to address both the symptoms and root causes of communal conflicts and aim to foster dialogue, enhance social cohesion, and promote sustainable peace. This subsection reviews recent studies on the types and application of Western intervention strategies in Africa and elsewhere.

3.3.1 Mediation and Dialogue Facilitation

Mediation and dialogue facilitation are approaches that are central to Western methods of conflict intervention (Ramadhan, 2017), and several studies assessed the impacts of these methods in various contexts. A study by Schirch (2020) on community mediation in Colombia highlights the role of international organisations in supporting local peacebuilding efforts. Schirch (2020) avers that Western-supported mediation initiatives, such as those facilitated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and local NGOs, were successful in bringing conflicting parties to the negotiation table and achieving localised agreements. However, the study also notes that the long-term sustainability of these agreements often depended on ongoing support and the inclusion of marginalised groups (Schirch, 2020). The latter method was used to encourage conflicting parties to negotiate, which means that the inclusion of those who had been subjugated was pertinent to the success of the interventions. Schirch (2020) does not indicate who the mediators and facilitators should be; however, the use of external actors in the application of Western intervention strategies seems to undercuts its legitimacy in local communities as it usurps local agency. To close this gap, the current study gave voice to local people by encouraging them to design and enact their ways of dealing with post-conflict relational justice.

In the case of the conflict in Northern Ireland, McCormick (2021) explored the role of international mediation in addressing community tensions. McCormick's study evaluated the impact of programs supported by organisations such as the European Union and the British government. The research highlights successes that were achieved in fostering dialogue and reducing tensions, but also exposes limitations related to the enduring divisions and sporadic violence that continued to affect communities despite these efforts (McCormick, 2021). As was the case in Columbia, the resurgence of conflicts in societies that brokered peace settlements using Western methods was a concern that raised dissatisfaction with this approach. Similarly, in Chapter two of this thesis it was demonstrated how conflicts in the Richmond area persisted following various intervention strategies.

Africa has also seen the use of diplomatic mediation designed and driven by Western ideology. One notable example is the mediation in the Sudanese political crisis following the ousting of President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019. The mediation process, involving the African Union (AU) and facilitated by Western countries, aimed to transition Sudan towards democratic governance. Aremu (2010) highlights that, while Western-supported mediation played a critical role in establishing a transitional government, the implementation of the peace agreement faced significant hurdles. These included ongoing political instability and economic challenges that impeded the transition process and the fulfilment of the peace agreement's terms (Aremu, 2010).

In the Ethiopian conflict, particularly in Tigray, Western mediation efforts were also significant. Park (2010) discusses the role of Western diplomatic initiatives in mediating the conflict between the Ethiopian federal government and Tigray's regional forces in depth. While Western pressure and mediation contributed to a cessation of hostilities, the latter study argues that achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace might remain challenging due to deep-seated ethnic tensions and political disagreements.

It can be discerned from the above discussion that diplomatic mediation as a Western approach to conflict intervention has been characterised by external actors, a focus on the cessation of physical violence and hostilities, failure to achieve durable peace,

and the negation of relational restoration. It seems that, in such instances, diplomatic mediation usurped local agency and neglected the relational facet of these conflicts. The current study drew from these lessons and explored indigenous methods of restoring relations in a post-conflict situation through locally enacted and facilitated approaches.

3.3.2 Development aid and economic support

Development aid and economic support are frequently used by Western countries and multilateral organisations to address the socioeconomic dimensions of conflicts. Global Coalition for Africa (2004) examined the effectiveness of development programs in improving community relations in post-conflict communities. The study focused on projects in South Sudan and evaluated the impact of Western-funded development initiatives on local economies and social cohesion. The findings suggest that, while development aid contributed somewhat to economic improvement and stability, corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and the need for local ownership and capacity building mitigated against lasting success (Gagnon and Lamont, 2021). Similarly, Aremu (2011) notes that the impact of Western development aid in Sudan's conflict-affected regions showed mixed results. For instance, while aid supported infrastructural development and provided essential services, it also faced challenges such as alignment with local needs and political interference. The latter study thus highlights the importance of ensuring that aid programs are designed in consultation with local communities to maximise their effectiveness and sustainability.

Development aid and economic support have frequently been utilised by Western countries to address community-based conflicts in Africa. These initiatives commonly targeted the socioeconomic factors that contributed to the instability. For example, the European Union (EU) was active in supporting development projects aimed at mitigating conflict in the Sahel region, particularly in Mali and Niger. Reicheneder and Neureiter (2024) assessed the impact of these development programs, finding that while they tended to contribute to infrastructure development and economic opportunities, their effectiveness remained hampered by insecurity and local resistance. Their study emphasises that development aid should be closely

coordinated with security efforts and tailored to local needs to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Similarly, Wenson and Kniess (2021) observed Western development aid in Kenya's Rift Valley and provide insights into the impact of economic support on reducing inter-communal violence. In a similar vein, Swenson and Kniess (2021) highlight that, while aid programs improved local infrastructure and access to resources, they also faced various challenges related to local corruption and political manipulation. Tadesse (2022) avers that the effective implementation of development aid requires addressing governance issues and ensuring that aid reaches the intended communities.

Development programs funded by Western countries often aim to address the socioeconomic factors that contribute to community conflicts. In Somalia, for instance, Western development initiatives aimed to rebuild community relations by supporting infrastructural development and economic opportunities. Hur and Han (2024) state that these development programs achieved improvements in local infrastructure and economic stability, but they also highlight the challenges that occurred related to ongoing insecurity, corruption, and the need for effective local governance (Hur and Han, 2024). In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Western development programs aimed to address the underlying causes of the ongoing conflict by promoting economic development and social services. Oyekenu (2023) highlights the effectiveness of some of these programs in fostering community relations and reducing conflict, but argues that challenges such as persistent violence, logistical difficulties, and inadequate coordination with local actors limited their overall impact and efficacy.

Aid and economic support do not effectively and independently address conflict intervention as they deal with devastating socio-economic issues in the aftermath of conflicts. In fact, none of the studies cited above revealed what measures had been used in what manner to rebuild relations in post-conflict communities. This limitation prompted the current study's focus on relational justice following epochs of conflict. It may be assumed that aid and economic support alone are not capable of contributing to relational rebuilding in post-conflict communities; hence, the current study situated

itself as a baton to be picked up once negative peace has been achieved in order to restore relations that will increase the resilience of peace agreements. This was done by exploring indigenous approaches to restitution and rebuilding relations in a post-conflict environment.

3.3.3 Peacebuilding initiatives

Peacebuilding initiatives are another critical aspect of Western conflict intervention. The approach involves long-term strategies to address the root causes of conflict and promote reconciliation. Adedeji (1999) explored peacebuilding efforts in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and examined Western-supported programs aimed at fostering social cohesion and reconciliation. According to Adedeji (1999), these initiatives, which included community dialogues, training programs, and local governance support, had a positive impact on community relations. However, the effectiveness of these programs was often undermined by ongoing violence and the challenges of operating in an unstable environment (Adedeji, 1999).

Mtukwa (2015) explored Western peacebuilding efforts in the Rakhine State in Myanmar where tensions among different ethnic groups were severe. According to Hsu (2022), while Western-funded peacebuilding projects made strides in fostering inter-ethnic dialogue and collaboration in this area, it continued to face significant obstacles due to the entrenched nature of the conflict and restrictions imposed on the people by the government. Mtukwa (2015) thus underscores the need for more inclusive and flexible approaches to peacebuilding in the quest to adapt to rapidly changing and challenging environments

Peacebuilding initiatives supported by Western actors have been instrumental in addressing community conflicts across Africa. In the Central African Republic (CAR), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSCA), which is supported and funded by various Western countries, has been involved in peacebuilding efforts since its deployment. Khadiagala (2021) evaluated MINUSCA's impact on community conflict resolution and stabilisation and argues that, while MINUSCA has made progress in protecting civilians and supporting political processes, challenges such as insufficient resources, mandate limitations, and

ongoing violence by armed groups have affected its overall effectiveness (Khadiagala, 2021). In South Sudan, Western-backed peacebuilding efforts focused on promoting national reconciliation and community dialogue. Alabi (2006) examined the role of international organisations in facilitating peacebuilding programs in South Sudan, highlighting that successes were achieved in fostering local dialogue and reconciliation but also that the ongoing conflict and political instability continued to pose significant barriers to achieving lasting peace (Alabi, 2006).

Western-supported peacebuilding initiatives often aim to rebuild trust and cooperation among communities affected by conflict, and one significant example is the peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan after the 2006 conflict. Following the country's independence in 2011, South Sudan experienced severe internal conflicts, and the European Union and various Western NGOs have since then supported peacebuilding programs aimed at fostering dialogue and reconciliation among different ethnic groups. Bullen and Williams (2021) evaluated these initiatives, and highlight some successes in establishing community dialogues and local peace committees. However, they also point out that persistent violence, political instability, and insufficient resources limited the effectiveness and sustainability of these peacebuilding efforts.

In Nigeria, particularly in the Middle Belt region affected by communal clashes between farmers and herders, Western-supported peacebuilding initiatives were crucial. Piccolino (2023) assessed the impact of these programs, including conflict mediation and community reconciliation efforts, and argues that, while peacebuilding programs contributed to reducing local tensions and fostering dialogue, challenges such as entrenched ethnic rivalries and inadequate implementation of agreements undermined long-term stability (Piccolino, 2023).

As all the studies mentioned above aptly illustrate, Western peacebuilding initiatives are preoccupied with negative peace or, at best, encouraging dialogue between adversaries. The current study took this further as it went beyond the cessation of violence and focused on the restoration of relations disturbed by conflicts.

3.3.4 Community engagement programs

Community engagement programs are designed to directly involve local populations in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. Costanza (2015) explored the impact of Western-supported programs in Kenya that were aimed at enhancing local participation in peace processes. Deutsch (2001) found that these programs, which focused on grassroots involvement and local leadership, contributed to reduced community tensions and increased local resilience. However, challenges related to the scalability of successful models and the need for sustained funding and support were experienced (Costanza, 2015).

Arai (2019) notes that community engagement initiatives in Lebanon highlighted the role of Western-funded projects in fostering community dialogue and cooperation. The study found that these initiatives had a positive impact on local relationships and conflict resolution, but it highlights challenges such as the difficulty in reaching marginalised groups and the need for ongoing engagement and support to maintain progress. In Uganda, community engagement programs supported by Western countries aimed to empower local populations and enhance their role in conflict resolution. These programmes also focused on involving local communities in peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Allen (2022) evaluated the effectiveness of these programs in reducing local tensions and promoting social cohesion and found that community engagement led to positive outcomes in terms of increased local participation and trust-building. However, the study found that challenges such as limited resources and political interference remained significant obstacles.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Western-supported community engagement initiatives aimed to foster dialogue and cooperation among different ethnic groups. Schmitt and Mukungu (2019) examined these programs and their impact on reducing inter-ethnic violence and discovered that, while community engagement contributed to some improvements in inter-group relations, the persistent instability and economic difficulties in the DRC continued to challenge the sustainability of these efforts.

Community engagement programs are commonly designed to directly involve local populations in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts, and in post-apartheid South Africa Western-supported community engagement initiatives aimed to promote reconciliation and social cohesion. Cilliers and Sidiropoulos (2016) explored various community engagement programs and their impact on rebuilding relations among different racial and ethnic groups. They found that these programs contributed to increased dialogue and cooperation, but they also highlight some challenges related to achieving broad-based participation and the ability to address persistent socioeconomic inequalities.

In Kenya, Western-supported community engagement programs sought to address ethnic tensions and promote reconciliation following the 2007-2008 post-election violence. Muriuki and Karanja (2021) evaluated the effectiveness of local participation and the initiatives supported by the European Union and various NGOs. They found that community engagement efforts achieved some success in reducing local tensions and building trust among communities, but they argue that challenges such as political manipulation and limited funding hindered the overall impact of these programs.

3.3.5 Promotion of reconciliation in post-conflict societies

Reconciliation processes aim to address grievances and foster healing among divided communities (Aubyn, 2020). In Rwanda, the *Gacaca* court system, supported by international actors, was an essential part of the reconciliation process following the 1994 genocide. Alabi (2006) explored the role of international support in the *Gacaca* process and assessed its impact on community relations. The latter study found that the *Gacaca* courts, while supported by international funding and oversight, indeed contributed to reconciliation by addressing historical grievances and promoting community healing. However, Alabi (2006) argues that issues such as limited capacity and challenges in achieving full justice affected the effectiveness of the process.

In contrast to the studies mentioned above, the current study explored the self-reliance of the Richmond community by listening to the voices of local role players such as ordinary people and traditional authorities to find solutions for the phenomenon of

harmed relations post conflict situations. The study thus heeded to the AU's call for 'African solutions to African problems'.

In Northern Ireland, the legacy of the strife continues to be addressed through reconciliation efforts supported by Western actors. McGarry and O'Leary (2019) examined the impact of reconciliation initiatives such as truth and reconciliation commissions and cross-community projects on efforts to rebuild relations between that warring communities. Their study highlights the successes that were achieved in fostering dialogue and mutual understanding, but it also underscores persistent challenges related to sectarian divisions and political disagreements (McGarry and O'Leary, 2019). In a similar vein, the current study endeavoured to critically explore the role of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission towards rebuilding interpersonal relations in the Richmond area following the devastating political conflicts that wrought havoc in this community.

3.3.6 Military interventions

Military interventions by Western countries have been subject to intense scrutiny. Bove *et al.* (2020), in *New and old wars: Organised violence in a global era,* evaluate Western military interventions in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan. These authors argue that these interventions often exacerbated conflicts by creating power vacuums and fuelling insurgencies rather than achieving long-term stability. This work critiques the reliance on military force without a comprehensive strategy for political and social reconstruction.

In Libya, the intervention of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 2011 aimed to protect civilians but led to prolonged instability and civil war. UNHCR (2004) assessed the aftermath of the intervention, finding that while the immediate goal of preventing mass atrocities was achieved, the lack of a post-intervention plan contributed to a deteriorating security situation. This analysis underscores the limitations of military interventions that lack a coherent strategy for post-conflict reconstruction.

Recent evaluations of Western-led peacekeeping missions have revealed both successes and challenges. The UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan, for example, is the subject of much criticism in various studies. A report by the International Crisis Group (2018) highlights that, while peacekeepers helped to maintain a fragile ceasefire, their effectiveness was undermined by insufficient resources, lack of mandate clarity, and the complex political environment. Similarly, Fortna (2022) argues in *Does peacekeeping work*? that the impact of peacekeeping missions in various contexts can reduce violence and stabilise post-conflict areas, but argues that their success is highly dependent on the mission's mandate, resources, and the cooperation of local actors. Fortna (2020) highlights gaps in peacekeeping strategies, such as the need for better integration of conflict intervention and a workable reconstruction plan. A quagmire that most post-conflict communities step into is that they do not understand how to rebuild relations following the cessation of physical violence (Mamdani, 2002). The current study thus sought to address this gap by focusing on rebuilding relations disrupted by years of conflict in the Richmond community.

Military interventions in Africa, often led by Western powers or coalitions, have been the focus of significant academic scrutiny. Gegout (2024) evaluated the impact of French military operations in the Sahel region, particularly Operation Barkhane. Gegout argues that, while the intervention had some success in countering insurgent groups and stabilising certain areas, it also faced challenges due to the complexity of local dynamics and the difficulty of achieving long-term stability. Fortna (2020) similarly examined the effectiveness of the MINUSCA mission that faced challenges in its mission to protect civilians and maintain peace amid ongoing violence, and underscores the importance of adequate resources, clear mandates, and local cooperation for the success of military efforts.

Another significant case is the African Union’s intervention in Somalia (AMISOM), which received substantial Western support. The International Crisis Group (2019) assessed AMISOM’s role in stabilising Somalia, and the subsequent report states that, while AMISOM made progress in some areas, it also faced issues such as

inadequate funding, lack of coordination with local actors, and limited success in achieving lasting peace (International Crisis Group, 2019).

The studies cited above on various Western methods of conflict intervention reveal several critical issues and gaps. The strategies bore hallmarks of Western ideals embedded in universalism and prominence of human rights. Universalism is reflected in the use and implementation of same approaches in different communities with varying circumstances. Many interventions achieved success in the short term but struggled with long-term sustainability. Conflict interventions require ongoing support and adaptation to local contexts to achieve lasting impact (Williams, 2024). It can be deduced from these studies that Western strategies of conflict intervention ignore local ownership and contextualisation which, in turn, delegitimise them in affected local communities where they are applied. Studies highlight that interventions designed without sufficient local input or understanding of local dynamics may face challenges in implementation and effectiveness (Olsen, 2018). Effective interventions depend on local ownership and contextualisation. The current study enabled local people of Richmond community who were affected by several epochs of political conflicts to explore how their preferred indigenous approaches could be utilised to restore relations disrupted by conflict. In this way, their right to self-determination may be asserted whilst avoiding imposition of externally designed and facilitated Western methods. It is envisaged that the findings will assist locals to develop strategies rooted in the ideals of their indigenous practices, traditions, and heritage and to render them sensitive to these values.

The studies are silent on how Western methods are directed at rebuilding interpersonal relations in conflict-stricken communities. Moreover, the role of locals in developing and facilitating conflict intervention is ignored in favour of external actors and the imposition of approaches devoid of local peculiarities. Both these omissions are critical gaps in Western methods of conflict intervention which this study sought to address. Some studies (Schirch, 2020; Murambadoro, 2020; McCormick, 2021; Anderson, 2023) exposed a devastating state of interpersonal relations in post-conflict communities. Despite these revelations, the relational dimension of conflict ostensibly received little attention from Western methods of conflict intervention. The Richmond

community in KwaZulu-Natal Province has, to this day, suffered torn relations resulting from political conflicts of the past. The failure of Western methods of conflict resolution, in particular their insufficient attention to relational facets, have prompted calls for alternative conflict intervention strategies (Mengstie, 2022), which this study endeavoured to answer.

3.4 Local Turn Nostalgia: A Shifting Focus

After the UN failed to sustain durable peace in several nations plagued by years of intractable conflicts, the difficulties and limitations of international and national conventional techniques of post-war intervention became obvious (Von Billerbeck, 2016). For instance, the anticipated effects of post-conflict elections and democratic institutional reforms in Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, El Salvador, and Rwanda were not realised (Martinez, 2023). After examining the global conventional approach to peacebuilding and the factors that contributed to its limited performance, the UN, a number of international peace practitioners, and researchers came to the conclusion that a shift in strategy was required (Ljungkvist and Jarstad, 2021). International peacebuilding practitioners and academics came to agree that moving to a model driven by context was necessary in reaction to meagre liberal democratic peace successes (Carter, 2021; Smith and Brown, 2022). Davis (2022) notes that the UN made a call for “local ownership”, the cornerstone of its efforts to maintain and promote peace. This trend is also reflected in the rhetoric surrounding peacebuilding inside the European Union (EU), with an increase in the frequency of EU policy declarations stressing the significance of “the local” (European Union, 2016a).

Ljungkvist and Jarstad (2021) aver that the idea of a local shift in conflict and peace studies did not arise from an admission of the shortcomings of traditional approaches to conflict intervention; rather, it occurred as a result of their critique. The local turn debate is driven by disappointment with the results of conventional interventions in many nations, particularly those in African states like Rwanda and Somalia and in the Balkans (Paffenholz, 2015). According to international organisations (AU, 2013; EU, 2005; OECD, 2008) and aid organisations (DFID, 2010; USAID, 2009), conventional intervention efforts that partner only with the elite at macro level have a limited chance of being sustained. Now that it is unanimous, there is a need to change the

conventional approach, but to do so one has to understand what “turning local” actually means.

Although the concept of “being local” is commonly accepted, the term “local” can mean different things depending on the situation. Local, according to Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013: 764), is “the range of locally based agencies present within a conflict and post-conflict environment, some of which are aimed at identifying and creating the necessary processes for peace, possibly with or without international help, and framed in a way in which legitimacy in local and international terms converges". Supporters of this concept claim that local values shouldn't be defined separately from or in opposition to global ones, thus criticising binary formulations (Colpani *et al.*, 2022). This definition is reluctant to separate what is deemed local from standard procedures, at least in part. Instead, a seamless crafting of local additions is attempted. Proponents of genuine local turn express concern that initiatives that are designed and implemented locally would lose their independence if what is considered local has to be imbibed by conventional methods (Zondi, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Shokane and Masoga, 2018).

Bayor (2021) posits that formulations concentrating on the interface between the local and the external, or blending of “the global” and “the local”, aim to recast and reorient conflict intervention away from the fixation on conventional tactics. Sometimes, the term “local” is used to refer to everything that is not international, with scholars combining the whole targeted society (Shokane and Masoga, 2018). They support a paradigm that takes into account and makes use of local customs, traditions, and other conceptions of peace. They contend that this approach will be considerate appropriate for the social, political, and cultural contexts of societies that have just emerged from bloody conflict. However, in other contexts, such as dichotomous depictions of non-state indigenous society institutions and externally inserted state structures, “local” seems to refer to something more sub-national. Carter (2021: 52) posits that local in this context refers to "traditional, indigenous, and customary" social relationships that "aren't at the national level, but rather at the level of the individual or the community”. In keeping with the latter concepts, the current study’s intention was to strengthen indigenous people's legitimacy and their agency by according them the right to

determine the nature of the interventions they required to deal with their post-conflict relational challenges.

Two schools of thought give different interpretations of the idea of “going local” in post-conflict settings (Smith and Brown, 2022). The first school of thought espouses the value of local action, whereas the second school of thought advances critical post-structural scholarship and warns against the liberal peace paradigm's simplicity and concealed dominant rhetoric.

The first component of the shift to local makes the case for the need to empower local players and enhance their capacity to take control of actions for peacebuilding. According to this view, local actors are primarily seen as middle-level members of civil society, religious figures, and other domestic sub-national actors. Although it is clear that local actors still require "help from the international community in the form of training and the creation of peace infrastructures, agriculture, or health, local role players are empowered to define the agenda for peacebuilding” (Smith and Brown, 2022, p.27). Leaders of NGOs, religious organisations, and academic institutions may also be among this category. Importantly, middle-level actors must "know and be known by top-level" actors (Smith and Brown, 2022, p. 29). Nevertheless, institutional government power does not regulate their impact. The grassroots populace is represented by level three performers. They consist of representatives of indigenous groups and traditional institutions who intimately understand the fear and suffering with which much of the population must live.

The "middle-out" conflict transformation strategy as advocated by Lederach (2002) is one of the theoretical foundations for the idea that local actors must be given the necessary authority for effective peacebuilding. Lederach (2002) categorises the actors of peacebuilding into three levels. Leaders of opposition movements, high-ranking government officials, and significant political and military figures with an interest in the conflict are all examples of level one actors. Level two actors fall into the middle-range category and hold official roles in a variety of societal domains, including education, business, agriculture, and health. Leaders of NGOs, religious organisations, and academic institutions may also be among this group. Importantly,

middle-level actors must know and be known by the top-level actors (Lederach, 2002). The latter author avers that middle-range actors should be the main focus of conflict transformation to maintain the peace process, arguing that middle-range players have the "highest potential for developing an infrastructure that could sustain the peacebuilding process over the long term" because they "bridge the gap between top and grassroots actors".

Scholars have expressed concern about this particular conception of the idea of turning local. Those critical of it have pointed out that if turning local is seen as simply expanding the involvement and capacitating of local players, the inherent strength of multinational peace contributors under the pretext of building capacity for local role players runs the risk of being dominant. Some academics believe that carrying out conventional strategies under the pretext of local agency constitutes a sort of eurocentrism that favours the West's understanding of social reality while undermining alternative forms of knowledge. In the context of advancing the liberal peace agenda, Mac Ginty (2013:768) warns against the danger of enlisting the help of local elites, as doing so could "minimise the space for alternative versions of relational justice". The critique of the hegemony of the conventional peace efforts and its vulnerability to influence by local influential figures has changed how peacebuilding is conceptualised to focus on critical, locally generated approaches to thinking about relational justice in post-conflict settings.

This second school of thought, on the other hand, views the idea of turning local as possessing its own agency; it thus challenges the normative ways of doing things and the ideologies of the liberal framework, including the establishment of free markets, democracy, and the advancement of human rights. The second strategy advocates a "new" notion of relational justice that is built on local determinants and methods of knowing rather than liberal universal rules asserting technical supremacy. To put it another way, the local not only serves as a tool for ensuring efficiency, effectiveness, and ownership in peacebuilding, but also offers the possibility for the emergence of sustainable relational justice as a component of the social, historical, and cultural context of communities that have endured sustained conflicts.

The second school is in line with Paffenholz's (2015) concept of local, according to which non-elite and non-state players include NGOs, civil society organisations, local communities, diasporas, and even the general public (Paffenholz, 2015). According to this understanding, conflict intervention measures must be created with and owned by the local population. The local population should be the ones to determine what is in the interests of the community because peace building is often seen as a process that must be pursued from the bottom up (Ljungkvist and Jarstad, 2021).

It has been claimed that the current situation is essentially a reproduction of imperial violence unless the conflict community's original vision succeeds. Ljungkvist and Jarstad (2021) and other like-minded scholars vehemently urge local Indigenous communities to stop using predominantly conventional peacebuilding methods, arguing that they have an ontologically violent impact. To demystify ambiguities, however, the local turn nostalgia needs to be deconstructed. For instance, it should be obvious whose viewpoint defines the local conflict setting. At the continental level, as has already been mentioned, neither nations nor local communities are equal. This poses various questions, such as: *Whose local do opposing communities look to in such a situation of inequity amid power disparities?* And *Does the call for local turn signal a fundamental shift from internalisation to localisation, or is it merely a desire to boost local participation and ownership while using conventional methods?*

In essence, a move toward localisation may necessitate the coordination of a number of conflict intervention-related factors. To achieve localisation that is compatible with the traditions, culture, and customs of targeted local communities, the hegemony of the conventional that predetermines actors, issues, and procedures will need to be dismantled. According to academics like Mac Ginty and Paffenholz (2013), the local turn is the one that thoroughly explores the intricate and multifaceted components of the conflict. Hence, the current study's goal was to investigate how African indigenous concepts might be applied to the construction of relational justice following a period of divisive conflicts.

The second viewpoint makes an effort to highlight the complaint that the typical approach lacks local ownership and restricts involvement. To bridge this gap, it

maintains the liberal pattern while granting local people participation and some ownership. However, this notion continues to delegitimise the fundamental concerns at the root of the conflict, making it more superficial. It would tend to worsen the hegemony to increase involvement and give locals more power to take some ownership of an institutionalised process. However, proponents of the shift to local argue that there is no realistic alternative to some form of liberal peace building" and that “conventional peace can only be salvaged to the extent that it is made more contextually appropriate. This overarching perspective appears to mistakenly view liberal methods to intervening in conflicts as a cure. Since this proposition, numerous studies have shown the importance and effectiveness of African traditional practices, particularly when practised among indigenous groups. But how are people in Africa responding to the global push to go local? The next subsection lifts the lid on Africa's perspective on which way to turn in search of a lasting solution for post-conflict relational justice.

3.5 The African Union Mantra: ‘African Solutions for African Problems’

The decision by the AU to launch the adage ‘African solutions to African problems’ stemmed from the understanding that political independence would be meaningless if Africa continued to depend on outside parties to shape its future (Ani, 2019). However, credit must be given to the movements and ideals that came before this call as they created the conditions for the mantra's traction. Marcus Garvey's (1900) agitation for Africa’s self-governance under the slogan ‘Africa for the Africans’ is an example of a movement that sought the independence of the African continent from the shackles of Western colonial powers (Genger, 2020 and Mammo, 2020). The concept of self-reliance also drew inspiration from earlier African philosophies like African humanism, which was promoted by former Zambian statesman Kenneth Kaunda. This call emulated the concept of a United States of America for Africa and was also promoted by Ghana's inaugural President, Kwame Nkrumah after independence and spearheaded by Steve Bantu Biko of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa.

The AU introduced the phrase during its inauguration in July 2002, reinforcing the previously well-established appeal for the self-determination and genuine sovereignty of Africa. Massive obstacles plagued conventional tactics in conflict situations in Africa and also served as a clear indicator of failed interventions. As a result, these calls fuelled the demand for a different approach to intervening in African conflicts.

The slogan ‘African solutions to African problems’ began influencing policy decisions among member states, particularly when the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was converted into the African Union in 2002 (AU Assembly, 2013). This maxim was primarily utilised in peace practices and studies on the continent of Africa while it was also used to assert Africa's domestic initiatives in a wide variety of fields such as development and economics (Gardachew, 2021). In support of this dictum, Ayittey (1994) had previously urged that African states should put in place early conflict detection systems and never refrain from finding a solution because hesitation would open the door for foreign interventions that were not in Africa's best interests. Despite this call, Western war interventions continued to have a pernicious hold over areas of conflict and peace in various African nations, including Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, South Sudan, and Mozambique.

The history of colonialism, slavery, oppression, and colonial meddling in Africa appears to be the root cause of the issues that marred peace-making and peace-building in Africa. This era was predominantly characterised by models of governance and control that reflected Western values and traditions and speaks to the depth of the chronic psychological oppression of the African people by Western colonisers. This is not dissimilar to what *Ngugi wa Thiogo* articulated in his work *Decolonisation of the mind*. It is within this long and complex history of dominance and marginalisation that one should understand the delayed, confused, and uneasy journey to transform entrenched conflict intervention habits. In this regard, the conflict transformation theory illuminates indigenous communities’ potential to reclaim and reshape conflict interventions from the basis of their own identity, history, and heritage. It is acknowledged that the historical hold by the West on African people has made conflict transformation rather an uneasy journey, but it is the AU’s resolve to transform conflict intervention according to the African model.

The term "African solution" (or even African model) elicits a range of opinions because Africa is not one cohesive entity (Nwozor *et al*., 2021). Political disparities between and among various African regions and nations further complicate this issue. African nations with strong military capacities, such as South Africa and Nigeria, may put political, economic, and military pressure on others to develop what is referred to as an "African solution" (Nwozor *et al*., 2021). The AU has not yet presented a concept of "African solutions" that has been accepted across the continent. Until then, the phrase is susceptible to manipulation, abuse, and misuse–as is the maxim 'African solution to African problems'. In some instances, it is unleashed to ward off criticism over poor governance and weak leadership, graft, and human rights violations, amongst others (Gardachew, 2021). In such cases, the maxim is used to protect maleficence in African countries and not to benefit communities overwhelmed by intractable conflicts. Furthermore, the notion of 'African solution to African problems' is posited as a panacea; a fix-it-all approach to African problems. As Ani (2019) aptly observes, the latter is merely grand positioning as conflicts in Somalia, DRC, and Sudan remain unresolved whilst interventions are often negotiated without African actors.

The AU mantra is a call to, amongst others, guide conflict interventions facilitated by the AU itself, its regional bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and individual member states. With the exception of Rwanda' *Gacaca* court and the *Palava Hut* method used in Liberia, many African countries failed to use indigenous approaches in their transitional justice systems during post-conflict rebuilding periods or upon obtaining independence at the end of conflicts. Whilst the *Gacaca* court and the *Palava Hut* were implemented at national level (a sphere that was beyond the focus of this study), they have demonstrated the efficacy of what it is that resonates with the mantra. The efficacy of indigenous approaches will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Suffice it to say at this point that Africa is yet to implement the call for 'African solutions to African problems' in various conflict-stricken local communities in member states (Genger, 2020). The reality is that conflicts in African states occur in communities that

are inhabited by various indigenous groups of people. Murambadoro (2020) states that conflicts are central to the relations between or amongst indigenous groups of peoples harmed by conflicts. Conflict in the African context is therefore perceived as an unwelcomed disruption of healthy relations in African communities (Boege, 2017), while the unwitting disregard by local communities of their abundance of indigenous approaches to post-conflict resolution opportunities perpetuates the marginalisation and disenfranchisement they were subjected to under slavery, colonialism, and oppression.

Both the literature and practices in post-conflict interventions accord the relational dimension of conflict insufficient attention as more focus is placed on national issues associated with the rebuilding of state machinery following conflicts (Mamdani, 2002). The latter processes are commonly known as democratisation projects, but they occur at the expense of harmed relations, thereby achieving only wobbly negative peace. Despite sporadic strands of studies on the role and contribution of African indigenous approaches to post-conflict interventions, and in particular relational justice, their full extent is still unknown. There is a plethora of research on conventional methods, which makes it possible to discern its value and exact contribution in conflict and peace studies.

This dearth of literature on African indigenous methods seeded the need to explore and measure African indigenous pedagogies of post-conflict interventions. This study thus examined African indigenous conflict transformation in post-conflict relational justice by focusing on the local community of Richmond in an attempt to heed the call for ‘African solutions to African problems’. Both calls (to turn local and ‘African solutions to African problems’) search for lasting solutions to strife in post-conflict communities on the African continent; hence, the current study sought to address the problem by departing from conventional methods to find workable resolutions for conflicts fuelled by political disparities in an African community.

3.6 African Indigenous Approaches to Conflict Resolution

Several indigenous conflict interventions have been applied since time immemorial to resolve post-conflict challenges in African communities, and some are still applied to

this day (Genger, 2020). This section delves into the ideas and approaches of Sinani and *Lekgotla* as they are employed in South Africa, the *Palava Hut* practice in Liberia, the *Gacaca* court of Rwanda, the *Baraza* of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the *Mato Oput* of Uganda. Exploring these indigenous practices is important as it will demonstrate the versatility (or lack thereof) in indigenous approaches to post-conflict resolution. The discourse will expose the abundance of indigenous approaches to post conflict interventions that have remained almost untapped in modern conflict resolution practices in the African context. Against the notion of Africa as homogeneous, the chapter synthesises the analytical account of general principles underlying the practice of indigenous pedagogies in conflict and peace studies for two reasons: first, to provide a basis for the resilience of indigenous customs throughout the years of colonisation and subjugation and secondly, to demonstrate the feasibility for studying the indigenous approaches practised by various African societies and communities without the burden of unpacking the peculiarities of each community.

The selected approaches were traditionally used in countries that experienced different realities in terms of the conflicts they experienced. Various African people were exposed to constant and prolonged political tensions and violence in the post-independence periods that profoundly affected them. For instance, northern Uganda experienced 14 years of violent conflict between 1989 and 2003, while the highly ethnically charged Rwandan genocide is a case in point. However, little is known about how the approaches that were used (and are often still used) can be used to restore interpersonal relations in harmed communities in the modern era.

3.6.1 *Sinani*'s intervention in the Richmond community

This section delves into the ideas and practice of a South African NGO called Sinani which works among communities affected by political and social violence in the KwaZulu-Natal province. *Sinani* makes a contribution to indigenous approaches to conflict transformation through its approaches to peacebuilding and community development, which integrate African philosophy with systemic thinking and participatory interventions (Khuzwayo *et al.*, 2011).

3.6.1.1 *Sinani*'s philosophical approach

For Sinani, the collective understanding of personhood as a component of African meaning systems highlights how all people in a community are interconnected as part of a cosmic oneness (Khuzwayo, *et al*, 2011). In the African context, this has philosophical significance as "community" refers to an organic interaction between individuals who realize their duty to be receptive to one another's needs, rather than being a group of people who get together to accomplish shared objectives (Mkhize, 2004a, 2004b). The central thesis in this regard is encapsulated in the ideals of *Ubuntu,* which is captured in the saying, *"Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" (i.e.,* "One becomes a human being through other human beings"; or, "I am because we are and we are, therefore, I am". This conception does not disregard the role and existence of individuality but is an acknowledgement of the power of individuals who can transform the community to higher levels, thus serving the interests of the community as a whole. Khuzwayo *et al*. (2011) aver that communities are more than their sum parts, which challenges the sum parts to renew and reinvent themselves for the greater benefit of the entire community. One of the fundamental foundations of several African cultures is the belief in webs of relationships among organisms and objects. These objects are viewed as interdependent, interacting, and influencing one another. Furthermore, relationships shape our sense of self.

Mkhize (2004) juxtaposes the unique element enshrined in the principle of *Ubuntu* by aptly positing that Western psychological concepts treat the self as an autonomous entity, while African psychology views personality as context-dependent. Thus, in the African context personality is characterized by its relationship with family, community, rank, or position within a group. According to *Sinani*, for a community to attain sustainable peace and the development of individuals and groups it is required to contribute to the course of the change needed in the community.

Below is a schematic representation of the networks of relationship in the community that are necessary for peacebuilding and development as conceived by Sinani:

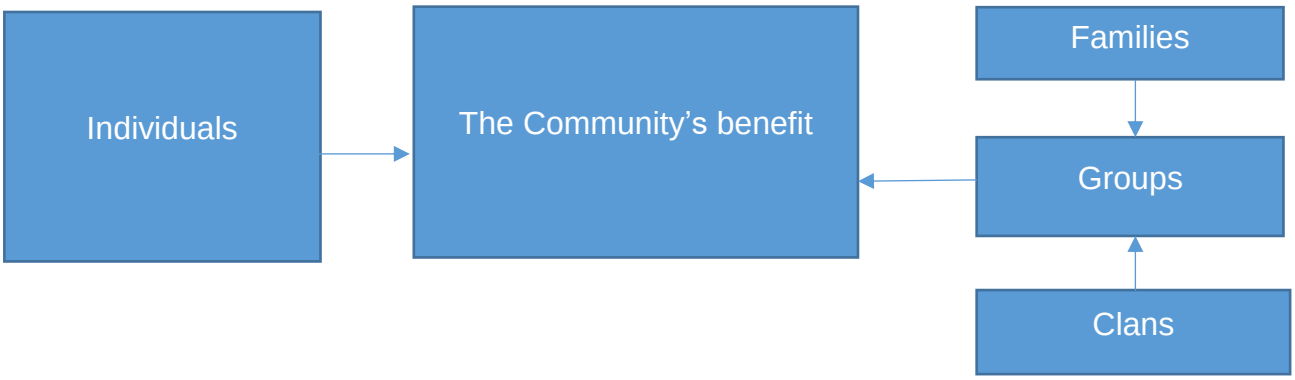

Figure 3.1: *Sinani*'s network of relationships

Sinani blends these components with systemic methods for peacebuilding which share fundamental characteristics with African cultural meaning systems, such as conceptualising relationships and network structures and viewing social interactions as circular processes (*Sinani*, 2008).

3.6.1.2 *Sinani*'s principles and practices of choice

Sinani identifies two principles as cornerstones of its work, namely (1) the need for change; and (2) community participation (Khuzwayo *et al.*, 2011). These principles lean on the philosophies of Steve Biko's (2002) Black Consciousness Movement and Paul Freire's (1996, 2007) emphasis on ownership of change. Drawing inspiration from these and other scholars, Sinani views participation as a profound and radical strategy. Additionally, the need for change stems from a belief that conflicts disempower relationships, create repressive structures, and erode people's faith in their own abilities, and therefore this NGO posits that intervention must occur through capacity building. *Sinani*'s intervention in the Richmond community thus aimed to strengthen the community's capacity for peacebuilding although it did not engage in peacebuilding initiatives itself. *Sinani* essentially focused on enhancing the community's overall strength, social cohesiveness, and problem-solving abilities. For *Sinani*, these were preconditions that were necessary for developing peacebuilding initiatives and implementing them.

Sinani usually starts a process of intervention based on a request received from a community (either from certain groups like the youth, leaders, or service structures like the police or clinics) or other actors (like municipalities, political leaders, and other NGOs) (Khuzwayo *et al.*, 2011). *Sinani*'s involvement is commonly engaged by a request from an interested party in the community, and in this case the Umbumbulu youth wrote a letter to *Sinani* to request their assistance following a spate of violent conflicts. *Sinani*'s intervention was therefore externally facilitated and not home-grown. Freire (2007) argues for locally developed and enacted indigenous approaches to conflict transformation, believing that such initiatives entrench ownership of the course for change. It begins with the conviction that all people, regardless of their level of wealth, oppression, education, or knowledge, are capable of thinking and acting for themselves. Hence, indigenous conflict transformation initiatives that are developed and implemented locally are based on the notion that individuals in violent conflict-affected communities have greater incentives than any external actor to engage in peacebuilding efforts (McNamee and Muyangwa, 2021). It is also believed that such communities are better suited to construct and maintain peace because of their intimate knowledge of local culture, community ties, and internal dynamics than passive receivers of externally directed peacebuilding efforts.

In the Richmond area, *Sinani* worked with the youth group in question to profile the conflict and design interventions that would curb the violence and encourage income generating projects such as a grass-cutting initiative (Khuzwayo *et al.*, 2011). Although conflict profiling was a first step towards intervention, it was not an intervention strategy itself. Moreover, it was not reported whether any tangible conflict intervention strategies had been developed through dialogues between *Sinani* and the youths in the group. The current study enabled local role players in Richmond community to explore, determine, design, and enact their own ways of restoring the relations that had bound the community before the conflicts erupted.

While *Sinani* was successful in mobilising young men using a combination of traditional and modern intervention methods, the same cannot be said of their work with young women, young adults, and old people in this community. Methodologically, if recruitment and inclusion in an engagement covers only one age group, the findings

may not be imputed onto others who were excluded from participation. However, this is a consideration which should be made on whether the intervention may benefit from heterogeneity or homogeneity in the composition. A heterogeneous approach brings together different group that have the potential for diverse views, while homogenous group members are more or less similar and this might limit the diversity of their views (Braun and Clarke, 2013). As conflicts affect members of the community regardless of their age, engagement with all age groups to find lasting peace is an important consideration. This hinges on the notion that the participation of affected people of all levels is key in restoring dignity and developing trust during a transformation period. Heeding this advice, the current study involved elderly women and men in the exploration of relational justice using indigenous approaches, thereby complementing the work already done by *Sinani* with young men to bring about a near complete picture of how post-conflict challenges in Richmond community might be navigated.

A cleansing ceremony that was facilitated by *Sinani* in the Richmond community was reportedly attended by 8 000 persons, of whom nearly 5 000 were traditional warriors known to have been the perpetrators of past political violence in the community (Khuzwayo *et al*, 2011). This composition demonstrates that the ceremony was not primarily victim-oriented as a lower number of victims than perpetrators participated. Moreover, the inclusion of inter-faith communities and people of various religions in the cleansing ceremony could not be traced.

In a secular state like South Africa, supporting and including various religions, especially in peacebuilding initiatives, is an important consideration which, unlike the Sinani intervention in Umbumbulu and Richmond, the current study addressed. Notwithstanding, the *Sinani* intervention succeeded in initiating better personal relations such as the sharing of public amnesties by community members. *Sinani* followed several African philosophies such as the centrality of community, spirituality, mutual respect, and consensus building. The section that follows explores a widely used South African traditional mechanism for conflict and dispute mediation known as *Lekgotla*.

3.6.2 South Africa's *Lekgotla*

Authors such as Olowu (2017), Tsegai and Rammala (2018), Mboh (2021), and Rammala (2021) describe *Lekgotla* as the procedures and customs of a traditional court system in South Africa. This system differs from the Western method of resolving disputes (Rammala, 2021). The name *Lekgotla* is used by the Setswana, Sepedi, and Sesotho ethnic groups. Similar systems are used by other ethnic groups in South Africa, such as the Nguni (Ndebele, Xhosa, and Zulu), although they go by various names (Moumakwa, 2011). According to Gebregeorgis (2015), this system is present in practically all traditional African cultures notwithstanding the diversity of linguistic forms found in this continent. Hence, although it is known by various names, the *Lekgotla* custom is found in virtually all African ethnic groups in South Africa.

Shoko (2022) writes that Lekgotla involves a broad spectrum of community members, including elders, leaders, and ordinary citizens. This inclusivity ensures that various perspectives are considered in decision-making processes. According to research on the participatory nature of *Lekgotla,* it embraces collective problem-solving and strengthens communal bonds. Mboh (2021) and Mokgosi (2022) highlight the central role played by elders and respected leaders in the *Lekgotla* process, arguing that these actors serve as mediators and facilitators who guide discussions and ensure that resolutions are aligned with traditional norms and values. Rammala (2021) asserts that elders are highly regarded for their wisdom and impartiality, which helps to maintain the legitimacy and effectiveness of the *Lekgotla* process.

Sabala (2019) avers that consensus is the primary goal of *Lekgotla* as it emphasises dialogue and mutual understanding over adversarial approaches. Decisions are typically made through discussion and agreement and resolutions are implemented with the support of the entire community. One of the notable successes of *Lekgotla* is its role in enhancing social cohesion. By bringing together community members to discuss and resolve issues, *Lekgotla* fosters a sense of unity and shared responsibility. Rautenbuch (2024) highlights that *Lekgotla* has been instrumental in strengthening communal relationships and reducing tensions within South African communities. This customary body is deeply embedded in the cultural practices of South African communities, making it a relevant and legitimate form of dispute

resolution, while its adherence to traditional values and customs enhances its acceptance by community members. Moeta *et al*. (2023) emphasise that the cultural resonance of *Lekgotla* contributes to its effectiveness and widespread use in resolving local conflicts. *Lekgotla* is effective not only in resolving conflicts, but also in preventing them. By addressing issues through dialogue and consensus-building, *Lekgotla* helps to address grievances before they escalate into more significant problems. Spaumer (2017) argues that *Lekgotla*'s proactive approach to conflict resolution contributes to long-term stability and peace within communities.

Despite its inclusive nature, Berhane and Macdonald (2018) posit that there are concerns that *Lekgotla* may perpetuate existing social inequalities and exclude marginalised groups from the decision-making process. Rammala *et al.* (2023) point out that, while Lekgotla is effective for resolving customary disputes, it may struggle with issues that require formal legal adjudication. Hence, *Lekgotla* should perhaps not be seen as a panacea for all conflicts in indigenous communities as its role is generally limited to customary disputes and it may fail to deal with matters outside the purview of customary differences. Dlamini (2022) also avers that the informal nature of *Lekgotla* may pose difficulties in ensuring the consistent and fair implementation of resolutions. Additionally, the lack of formal structures and resources can hinder the effectiveness of *Lekgotla* in addressing complex or large-scale disputes. However, Olowu (2017) argues that African indigenous techniques have been shown to be adaptable; hence, they may be successful in addressing modern disputes as was demonstrated in the resolution of conflict situations in Rwanda and Liberia.

In addition to *Lekgotla*, the Zulu nation in South Africa takes pride in other indigenously rooted mechanisms of post-conflict intervention, such as the *inhlambuluko* and *Ihlambo* customs. Tushini (2011) states that the goal of the reconciliation ceremony known as *inhlambuluko* is to mend family scars and soothe anger by resolving strained interpersonal relationships and re-establishing harmonious links with one's ancestors. In this procedure, two people who have misunderstood one another forgive and make amends, then formalise their reconciliation in front of a third party (Ngubane, 1977). However, it is not clear if the reconciliatory method of *inhlambuluko/Ihlambo* plays a role in restoring relations disrupted by political violence. Hay (1998) explains that this

is a ritual that was historically named *ukuhlanjwa kwemikhonto* (washing of war weapons) which was also enacted to remove the urge that warriors had to kill. This urge to kill was commonly attributed to *umuthi* (medicine) called *intelezi* that was given to them by *inyanga* to remove the fear of war. After the war, they would have to be cleansed of this *umuthi* before they returned to their villages so that the urge to kill was curbed and the *iqunga* (blood-lust) was removed. If this ceremony was not conducted, the affected person would become overly aggressive and always ready to kill (Hay, 1998; Ngubane, 1977; Msimang, 1975). As far as could be established, none of these indigenous cleansing approaches had ever been applied in the Richmond community following violent conflicts. It was therefore an objective of the study to explore such indigenous approaches to 'cleansing' to determine if they can be implemented to restore relations between members of the community under study.

The next section traverses similar traditional mechanisms of conflict/dispute resolution practised in selected African communities. The discussion illuminates the nature of these methods and explores their weaknesses and success in conflict intervention in post-conflict relational justice.

3.6.3 The *Palava Hut* custom in West African regions

The *Palava Hut*, also known as the *Palaver Hut*, is a traditional conflict resolution mechanism used primarily in West African societies (Raddatz, 2012). It is a community-based approach to resolving disputes and maintaining social harmony. The term "*Palava*" derives from the Krio word for "trouble" or "dispute", while the hut functions as the space where dialogue and conflict resolution occur (Akinbote, 2022). Dhizaala (2018) and Konneh (2020) emphasise that the *Palava Hut* custom is an important aspect of indigenous governance as it serves as a forum where issues ranging from land disputes to interpersonal conflicts are addressed through consensus rather than adversarial legal processes. Lawson and Flomo (2020) state that the *Palava Hut* technique has been greatly successful in rural Liberia where it is supported by a range of cultural customs and local conventions. The *Palava Hut* embodies a participatory approach where community members actively engage in dialogue and decision-making, reflecting deep-rooted principles of communalism and restorative justice (Steinberg, 2010).

Rahid and Niang (2020) note that the operational dynamics of the *Palava Hut* practice involve several key components, such as the crucial presence of respected elders and traditional leaders. These individuals, who are often chosen for their wisdom and experience, play a central role in facilitating discussions and guiding the resolution process. Blair *et al.* (2017) detail that the process typically begins with the presentation of the conflict by the parties involved. Following this, a period of dialogue ensues where each party is given the opportunity to present their perspective arguments. The elders then deliberate, consider the cultural and social context of the dispute, and propose a resolution that seeks to restore harmony and balance.

Daso (2017), who studied Liberia's post-conflict resolution practices, argues that the *Palava Hut* approach was employed successfully alongside formal institutions to address disputes in areas where the Western legal system was not accessible. In such cases, the outcomes could not be attributed exclusively to either Western or African customary interventions, but to their hybridity. The hybrid idea, according to proponents of indigenousness (Zondi, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Shokane and Masoga, 2018; Colpani *et al*., 2022; Day *et al.*, 2023), aims to impose conventional ways on underdeveloped indigenous approaches. However, according to Genger (2020), criticism of Western methods is not an uncritical endorsement of indigenous approaches. Boege (2002) echoes this view, arguing that most violent conflicts experienced today are hybrid in nature; hence, conflict resolution and peacebuilding must likewise be hybrid in nature by mixing and integrating conventional strategies, governmental institutions, and civil society strategies.

Alabi and Jiboku (2023) argue that, while *Palava Hut* practices are deeply rooted cultural customs, they can be integrated with Western legal processes to enhance access to justice through community involvement. In this context, Daso (2017) highlights that integration has facilitated better dispute resolution outcomes, particularly in remote and rural areas where traditional practices are more trusted by the local populace. The current study thus explored the feasibility of using indigenous approaches in co-existence with Western methods for improved relations building following intractable conflicts.

Despite its many advantages, the *Palava Hut* system is not without challenges. Critics such as All and Crocker (2021), Harris (2021), Osei and Appiah (2022), and Tieku *et al.* (2021) argue that its effectiveness can be limited by factors such as the lack of formal training for mediators and the potential for bias in the decision-making process. In such instances, the strengths of Western methods, such as intensive legal training, can be used to judge and enhance the capability of indigenous conflict resolution methods. Mabud (2022) avers that elders and traditional leaders who play a pivotal role during *Palava Hut* procedures are chosen based on their wisdom and experience, while formal training is not a measure of competency for a leader who plays a key role in indigenous conflict resolution. However, indigenous systems may face difficulties in addressing complex legal issues that require more structured legal frameworks such as in more intricate cases involving criminal offenses or cross-border issues (Ntuli, 2018). This limitation underscores the need to adapt indigenous approaches to deal with current challenges.

3.6.4 Rwanda's *Gacaca* court

Rwanda was the only country in the world that ever experienced senseless and massive genocide after colonisation (Mamdani, 2020). Although the genocide lasted nearly 100 days from 07 April 1994 to 15 July 1994, it marked the end of a four-year period that claimed tens of thousands of lives due to extremist violence and civil war. The *Gacaca* court system was an innovative and culturally rooted justice mechanism implemented in Rwanda in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide (Oyeniyi, 2017). Kariuki (2015) states that the post-conflict Rwandan government did not establish the *Gacaca* court system, but institutionalised it as it was a system that had already been in use in pre-colonial years. The government tapped into the arsenal of the *Gacaca* court system to attend to voluminous cases of gross human rights violations following the 1994 genocide. The *Gacaca* court system rendered expeditious justice which would not have been achieved by the Western mechanism of criminal trials.

O'Reilly and Zgang (2018) highlight the following key operational features of the *Gacaca* courts:

- Community involvement: Local communities were actively involved in the judicial process, including the identification of perpetrators and the provision of testimony.
- Public trials: Trials were conducted publicly, which promoted transparency and encouraged community participation in the reconciliation process.
- Sentencing: Sentences varied depending on the level of involvement in the genocide. Sentences ranged from community service to life imprisonment.

Nowotny (2020) notes that the *Gacaca* courts played a significant role in post-genocide Rwanda's reconciliation process, while Chaggu (2023) indicates that the courts contributed to enhanced social cohesion through the processes of truth-telling and public trials that helped to rebuild trust among community members who had been divided by the genocide. According to Casanabo (2019), truth-telling was a key objective of the *Gacaca* courts that aimed to uncover the truth about the genocide and its perpetrators, thus providing a more comprehensive historical record of the atrocities. Kritz (2023) adds that the *Gacaca* courts brought community empowerment by involving local people in the justice process and fostered a sense of collective responsibility and empowerment. Moreover, Boesten (2024) notes that victim participation in the *Gacaca* courts provided a platform for victims to voice their experiences and seek acknowledgment, which was important for their healing process. Based on these views, it can be concluded that the *Gacaca* courts promoted reconciliation and social cohesion.

However, it is still unknown how relations among community members, perpetrators, victims, and their respective families were impacted by the outcomes of the *Gacaca* court system. This limited knowledge on how the *Gacaca* courts contributed to atoning relations harmed by conflict was a gap that this study considered. Given the atrocious nature of the Rwandan genocide, it was imperative to repair the severely harmed relations in the aftermath of these atrocities. The current study consequently explored interpersonal relations following several intractable violent political conflicts in the Richmond community to determine how indigenous ways can be used to restore relations.

Nyseth *et al*. (2014) argue that, while these courts were effective in addressing a large number of cases, they were not without challenges. The quality of justice varied as some cases were handled more fairly than others, leading to perceptions of bias and inconsistency. This weakness is not unique to the *Gacaca* court system as it may be imputed on many other indigenous approaches. Pottier (2022) notes that, given the public nature of the trials, they sometimes exacerbated the trauma victims and survivors experienced, thus complicating the reconciliation process. Nyseth and Golden (2017, p.117) describe this as secondary victimisation as victims were forced relive their experiences of violence and abuse. Olowu (2017), who studied traditional reconciliation practices among the Bantu-speaking communities in Central Africa, highlights concerns about the stigmatisation of individuals who reportedly caused a conflict. Moreover, the rituals and public nature of these processes can perpetuate social stigma and hinder effective reintegration. Furthermore, concerns have been raised about political interference and the potential of the *Gacaca* courts to be used for political purposes rather than serving justice (Mamdani, 2023).

Scholars such as Ndiaye (2022), Thompson (2023), and Ntuli (2024) also highlight various weaknesses associated with *Gacaca* courts. They argue that the informal nature of these courts raises concerns about their adherence to international human rights standards and legal principles, thereby bringing in the question of legal validity. These concerns reside within the conception of the universalism of human rights and legal principles in conflict intervention. Bornkamm (2012) argues that the involvement of community members in adjudicating cases is a basis for partiality and has the potential for communal biases. Nyseth, Brehm, and Golden (2017) also raise a question regarding these courts' reliance on confessions for lighter sentences, arguing that this might be a factor that attracts accusations that some perpetrators might exploit to avoid harsh penalties.

3.6.5 Mato Oput

Mato Oput is a customary ritual that is performed following fights that resulted in intentional or unintentional killings among the Acholi people in northern Uganda. This custom aims to bring the victims and perpetrators together to restore peace (Genger, 2020). Mwaka and Olango (2023) define *Mato Oput* according to its constitutive

element and focus, stating that it involves consuming a bitter tea prepared from Oput tree leaves as a means of fostering reconciliation and forgiveness. Genger (2020) limits its application to intra-group resolutions whilst Mwaka and Olango (2023) argue that its focus is on forgiveness and reconciliation. It should be noted that the latter do not expressly limit the facilitation of forgiveness and reconciliation to intra-group resolutions. The process was traditionally employed to resolve serious disputes, including those involving homicide and theft. Currently, it emphasises restorative justice by focusing on reconciliation, restitution, and the restoration of social relationships rather than retribution (Hutchinson, 2022). Namusobya (2023) explains that the *Mato Oput* process involves a series of ceremonial steps that typically begins with the payment of compensation, called *diyo*, to the victim's family by the offender's family (Namusobya, 2023). This is followed by a formal reconciliation ceremony where both parties come together to resolve their differences. This cultural resonance enhances its acceptance and effectiveness in addressing disputes (Hinton, 2023).

Tshimba (2015) notes that the process of *Mato Oput* seeks to incorporate community involvement and achieve restoration of relationships. Oosterom *et al.* (2022) underscore that *Mato Oput* has played a significant role in promoting peace and rebuilding relationships in northern Uganda after years of conflict. The process was particularly effective in post-conflict settings where it helped to bridge divides between former adversaries. Sarkin (2015) highlights that the *Mato Oput* process has been successful in resolving conflicts in a manner that is consistent with local norms, which is crucial for its continued use and effectiveness. The process is perceived as legitimate and fair by affected communities, leading to higher compliance with the resolutions. In the case of Uganda, *Mato Oput* is an example of integration with Western peacebuilding efforts, particularly in the context of transitional justice (Andre, 2018). This integration helps to combine the strengths of traditional and Western justice systems.

Despite its successes, *Mato Oput* has faced criticism regarding its scope and exclusivity. One major concern is that the process is limited to certain types of disputes and may not be suitable for all cases, particularly those involving complex criminal activities (Finnström, 2020). According to Mutungi (2023), *Mato Oput* may be

ineffective in addressing issues such as sexual violence and large-scale crimes that require different forms of legal and social intervention. Mwaka and Olango (2023) posit that *Mato Oput* is not an appropriate mechanism for the atrocities committed against the Acoli people in Northern Uganda. Their argument is that the antagonists were members of the Lord Resistance Army and National Liberation Movement and not necessarily Acolis. For them, *Mato Oput* was used for intra-group intervention, and their assertion affirms that *Mato Oput* is effective in facilitating peace and co-existence in such contexts. Notwithstanding the nature of the antagonists, the application of *Mato Oput* received support from local clergymen and traditional leaders as it was effective in achieving post-conflict peace among the Acoli people.

What stands out is that the effectiveness of the process depends heavily on the integrity and impartiality of the elders facilitating it. However, issues such as corruption, bias, and unequal power dynamics within a community can undermine the fairness of the *Mato Oput* process (Nalin, 2018). Additionally, the process may be influenced by local power structures that can affect the outcomes and perceived justice of the resolutions. Critics also argue that *Mato Oput* can sometimes perpetuate existing social inequalities. For example, the process may not adequately address gender disparities or the needs of marginalised groups within the community. Research by Ferguson (2023) suggests that while *Mato Oput* aims to restore harmony, it may inadvertently reinforce traditional power struggles and inequalities, particularly in relation to gender and social status. However, these critiques are not unique to *Mato Oput.* For instance, Olowu (2017) observes that the *Barolong* people in the North-West Province in South Africa do not allow women to preside over proceedings in tribal councils and that women's roles are restricted to cooking and serving meals. This form of gender discrimination is in stark contrast with South Africa’s Constitutional values. The current study explored how democratisation brought about many civil liberties that impacted indigenous ways of post-conflict intervention.

3.6.6 The influence of *Baraza* on East African communities

According to Murhula (2022), *Baraza* is a community-based conflict resolution organisation that is active in the DRC's conflict-ridden region, especially in the

province of North Kivu, for resolving disputes at grassroots level. It is a customary arrangement in which elders gather to talk about a range of topics related to communal life and the resolution of conflicts that arise both within and across communities (Villa-Vicencio *et al*., 2005). Kiyala (2019) liken the *Baraza* process to *Palaver Hut*, characterising the former as a dialoguing institution and the main tool for peacebuilding, negotiation, and conflict settlement. For Kiyala (2010), *Baraza* works on three main tenets: settling conflicts peacefully, averting violent conflicts, and alleviating suffering following conflicts.

Based on these tenets, *Baraza* is understood as a mechanism enacted by communities to resolve conflict experienced in their localities. Their involvement is essential for maintaining the legitimacy of the process and fostering trust among participants (Omolo, 2024). Chivasa (2019) highlights that the authority and wisdom of elders help in achieving fair and balanced outcomes. The process is highly inclusive as it allows community members to participate and voice their concerns (Taringana and Zevure, 2024). This is a departure from conventional methods in which critical roles are played by external actors. As Miall (2004) conceives conflict transformation, actor transformation is more nuanced in the *Baraza* practice as it retains agency to resolve problems in the hands of locals.

Nyakundi (2024) shows that *Baraza* helps in strengthening community bonds and reducing tensions by addressing conflicts in a collaborative manner. For Shirambere (2018a), the *Baraza* technique is culturally relevant and widely accepted among East African communities. It aligns with traditional values and practices, making it a trusted and effective method for conflict resolution. Mofokeng, Nojiyeza, and Nxumalo (2023) indicate that the cultural resonance of *Baraza* enhances its effectiveness and ensures high levels of community participation and compliance with resolutions. The *Baraza* technique is flexible and can be adapted to various types of conflicts and changing circumstances. This adaptability makes it a versatile tool for resolving both simple and complex disputes. Kiyala (2019) writes that *Baraza* has been successfully adapted to address emerging issues, such as disputes related to modern land transactions and environmental concerns.

3.7 Principles of African Indigenous Approaches to Conflict Intervention

Based on the discussion above, it is clear that various African indigenous approaches are entrenched in similar principles. Authors such as Boege (2006), Ani (2017), and Olowu (2017) describe the guiding features that inform African indigenous conflict intervention strategies. Instead of having to navigate the specifics of each indigenous practice in Africa, their efforts underscore common elements that characterise indigenous conflict intervention. Ani (2017) lists three of these, namely: community, restorative justice, and a holistic approach, while Olowu (2017) highlights three features: consensus-making, reintegration, and reconstruction. Boege (2006) refers to five common principles: restoration of relationships, negotiation and consensus, community participation, as well as a context-specific and spiritual inclination. The current study leaned towards the features offered by Boege that are summarised in the figure below:

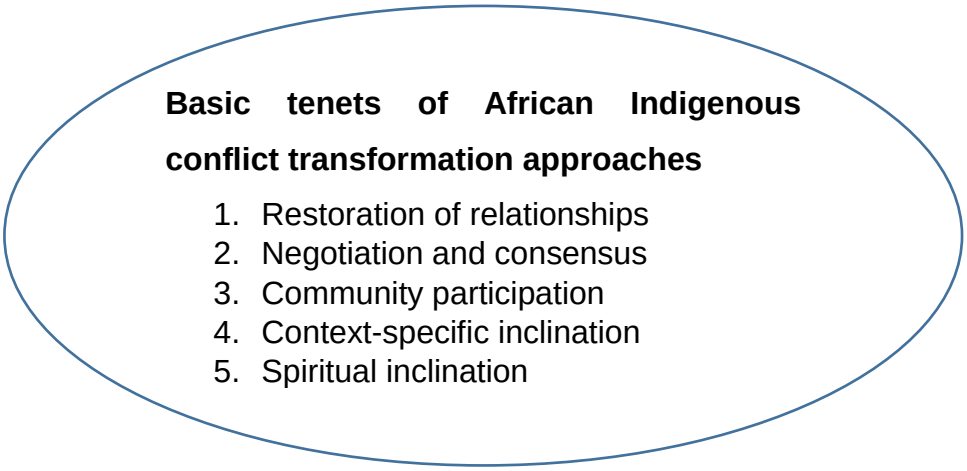

Figure 3.2: Features of African indigenous conflict intervention approaches

3.7.1 Restoration of relationships

Faure (2000) argues that African cosmology views conflict as the unwelcome disruption of harmonious relationships within a group. Consequently, indigenous approaches are obsessed with atoning relations harmed by conflicts as opposed to Western methods that seek to accomplish justice by means of prosecution and punishment that are characterised by a narrow and individualised focus (Danso, 2017). This view is echoed by Baker and Ntiokam (2023), who assert that traditional African conflict resolution mechanisms often focus on restoring relationships and reintegrating individuals into the community rather than merely addressing the immediate dispute.

This approach is grounded in the belief that personal and communal relationships are foundational to social stability and well-being. According to Murambadoro (2020), Western techniques concentrate on re-establishing state institutions like the legal system, especially the prosecuting apparatus, while indigenous perspectives place a high priority on cooperation and the repair of damaged connections (i.e., relational justice) as factors of restorative justice and the promoting peace among community rivals. Indigenous conflict intervention places a strong emphasis on mending strained relationships and promoting communal well-being (Olowu, 2017).

Vilanculo (2023) notes that the effectiveness of relationship restoration can be influenced by factors such as power dynamics, gender roles, and socio-economic conditions. Kamau (2023) avers that traditional authorities in Kenyan conflict resolution often operate within the patriarchal framework, which tends to perpetuate gender-based inequality. This undermines the effectiveness of relationship restoration, particularly in cases where gender dynamics significantly influenced the conflict. According to Wanjohi (2022), focusing on relational harmony can lead to superficial resolutions that do not tackle underlying systemic issues or grievances. For instance, a study on conflict resolution among the Ndebele people of Zimbabwe showed that Western reconciliation processes prioritised the restoration of peace over addressing structural injustices, and this led to unresolved issues and recurring conflicts (Moyo, 2022). Addressing challenges like the foregoing requires ongoing dialogue and adaptation to ensure that indigenous approaches remain relevant and effective in diverse contexts. In the context of South Africa, gender equity is a constitutional imperative and its incorporation in rebuilding relations is therefore a social demand. The current study explored ways in which indigenous approaches to post-conflict intervention might be utilised amid human rights demands, such as gender equity, that are part of the democratisation process. It was envisaged that the findings would fill the gap as they might highlight solutions for dealing with challenges posed by the imposition of civil liberties on the application of indigenous approaches.

Rammala (2021) states that connections that are anchored in a shared worldview are necessary for the proper functioning of conflict intervention modalities in indigenous approaches. Mboh (2021) states that, although many approaches may be used to

resolve disputes among African ethnic groups, all of them are based on the idea that peace is more about rebuilding connections than it is about putting an end to hostilities or resolving conflicts. The desire to restore relations is embedded in indigenous pedagogies whose aim is to achieve relational justice in post-conflict communities, which is an imperative that continues to receive less than the required attention in peace efforts.

3.7.2 Negotiations and consensus-building

Negotiation and consensus-building are integral components of indigenous conflict resolution systems across various cultures, particularly in Africa. Negotiation in indigenous contexts often involves structured dialogues facilitated by respected community members or elders. For example, in the Maasai community of Kenya, disputes are typically resolved through meetings involving elders who facilitate discussions and negotiations between conflicting parties (Nderitu and Kamau, 2023). The goal is to reach an agreement that is acceptable to all parties and restores social harmony. In the Zulu community of South Africa, the process of *ubuhlanti* (reconciliation) also involves negotiation (Zulu and Ndlovu, 2022). Elders play a pivotal role in mediating disputes, using their authority to guide discussions towards a consensus that respects cultural values and community norms.

However, Zulu and Ndlovu (2022) argue that negotiation and consensus practices can inadvertently reinforce existing power dynamics and social hierarchies. For instance, the influence of elders and/or traditional leaders in consensus-building processes may perpetuate existing inequalities, particularly in communities with entrenched hierarchical structures (Mubangizi, 2022). The consensus-building process, while effective, is also known for its lengthy deliberations that can slow down the resolution process in times of urgent need (Thomas and Lambert, 2023). For Zulu and Ndlovu, (2022), the potential for inefficiency and prolonged decision-making processes is a significant weakness in such negotiation and consensus processes. This issue is particularly evident in larger communities or during complex disputes where reaching a consensus among many stakeholders can be challenging

According to Rammala (2021), negotiations and consensus are procedural aspects of how indigenous approaches operate. Mwaka and Olango (2023) observe that, in the case of *Mato Oput*, indigenous approaches require that the truth must be revealed and facts established before negotiations can begin, and the attainment of truth only occurs once the facts that have been revealed are beyond doubt (Murhula, 2022). Once the established truth has been revealed, wrongdoers are free to confess what they did wrong, seek for forgiveness, and apologise. Victims are then free to accept these requests and forgive the perpetrator/s (Olowu, 2017). According to cultural traditions and circumstances, such processes frequently result in the trade of material goods as compensation in the form of cattle, goats, or pigs (Boru, 2016). The significance of this exchange resides in the alteration of reciprocity, wherein the reciprocity of gifts takes the place of the reciprocity of retaliation, of tit-for-tat, which is a defining trait in Western methods of conflicts intervention. Violence is replaced by compensation when disputes are resolved with payment of a symbolic comparable sum, which is subsequently acknowledged to have brought peace back to the affected society.

Choosing an appropriate present to exchange is also decided by consensus. The kind and type of the conflict in question may have a significant impact on the proper approach. The several approaches to dispute resolution are typically a process because they each call for a certain technique, time, and are not just one-sided. According to Bukari (2013), conflict resolution efficiently resolves the matter at hand and satisfies the conflicting parties, thus ending the dispute. Either way, the public is welcome to participate in the process, and endorsing the outcomes is entirely voluntary. The parties in a dispute can negotiate directly to end the problem and find a resolution, or they can ask a third person to mediate the process.

3.7.3 Community participation

Baker and Ntiokam (2023) state that, in many African cultures, conflict is viewed not merely as a clash of interests or a legal issue, but as a disruption of social harmony. Known by various names such as *Pitso* (Lesotho), *Lekgotla* (Botswana and South Africa), *Shir* (Somalia), and *Baraza* (DRC), these community-wide assemblies are attended by a variety of community members who can express their views on issues of shared concern and take part in consensus-based decision-making procedures

(Boege, 2006). This approach is grounded in the belief that personal and communal relationships are foundational to social stability and well-being. Individuals continue to be the fundamental building blocks of families which, in turn, make up communities that do not deny the sufferings brought on by violent conflicts (Olowu, 2017). This idea justifies involving the community in dispute resolution efforts.

The ability to restrict conflict-resolution agencies to the affected community is one of the distinctive features of the indigenous approach to conflict mediation (Miall, 2004). In Western methods, this agency is delegated to outside mediators, negotiators, and political leaders whose outlook is dominated by external models and devoid of local aspiration (Ljungkvist and Jarstad, 2021). Conversely, indigenous approaches draw local ownership and legitimacy due to their integration into the prevalent traditions and customs of the community.

According to Boru (2016), indigenous pedagogies of conflict intervention consist of: (1) long-lasting processes as observed and practised by generations; (b) an increased sense of ownership and accountability assumed by community members in atoning relationships; (c) sustainable negative peace based on other African philosophies like *Ubuntu*; and (d) an opportunity for redress facilitated by well-known and reputable community members who enable examining the root causes of conflict. Indigenous approaches encourage involvement and inclusiveness in adjudicating disputes/conflicts (Rammala, 2021; Murhula, 2022). Everyone must assume responsibility for the conflict's resolution in the same way that all parties (and every community member) are accountable for the problem in the first place. This widespread engagement largely ensures the durability and execution of the agreements that are reached.

Kiyala (2019) states that parties that are in dispute, their family members, witnesses, elders, and community members who actively participate in the peace-making circular set make up the participants in African indigenous peace-making procedures. They normally produce impartial justice through their active participation, with the eldest in the circle serving as an unbiased facilitator. As Boru (2016) observes, African indigenous peace making is dialogic and interactive from a methodological standpoint;

it is therefore not adversarial and does not seek to condemn but is restorative and seeks to restore and reinstall.

3.7.4 Context-based interventions

As was stated earlier, Boege (2016) asserts that indigenous approaches do not offer a magic resolution to conflict intervention that can be used in all circumstances. Indigenous conflict resolution systems are often deeply rooted in specific cultural and social contexts and rely heavily on context-dependent practices to address a dispute. These practices, which vary significantly across different indigenous communities, emphasise the importance of cultural relevance and contextual understanding in resolving conflicts (Bello and Olutola, 2016). This is so because there are as many different indigenous approaches as there are communities; hence, in local settings, traditional conflict resolution focuses on issues in comparatively small populations. This does not mean that indigenous approaches focus on accomplishing the bare minimum, but it is true that they work best in smaller communities. Indigenous approaches work well to resolve disputes that arise between and among families, neighbours, communities, or clans. However, while there is some indication of how indigenous approaches can be utilised to resolve disputes in pastoral communities, little is known of their role in achieving relational justice in communities emerging out of conflict. The current study thus explored how indigenous approaches might be used to achieve relational justice in post-conflict areas, with particular emphasis on the Richmond community as a case study.

The Somali situation strongly shows that the national level is where traditional peace-making mechanisms are least effective (Boru, 2016). However, even if conventional methods were restricted to a local setting, this could still be significant for conflict resolution and peacebuilding on a global scale because such geographically contained conflicts have the ability to escalate significantly. In fact, today's large-scale, violent internal conflicts frequently exhibit the permeation of so-called lesser conflicts (Kiyala, 2019).

Context reliance emphasises the importance of local norms and values in resolving conflicts. Indigenous conflict resolution approaches often reflect the unique social

structures, belief systems, and historical experiences of the community (Genger, 2020). This approach ensures that conflict resolution processes are not only relevant but also effective in maintaining social harmony. For instance, the use of traditional councils in many African communities, such as the *Palaver* system used by the Akan people in Ghana, reflects the community's values and social norms. These councils operate based on customary laws and practices that are specific to the cultural context of the community (Amoah and Mensah, 2021). This localised approach helps in addressing conflicts in a manner that is respectful of community traditions and expectations.

One significant weakness of context reliance is the potential for excluding outsiders or individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Indigenous conflict resolution approaches, while effective within their own context, may not be easily understood or accepted by individuals from outside the community. Lundy *et al.* (2022) writes that outsiders involved in conflict intervention might lack a deep understanding of the complex cultural contexts of a particular indigenous community. This lack of understanding can lead to the implementation of inappropriate or ineffective solutions, further complicating conflict resolution efforts. A study on the effectiveness of traditional justice systems in Kenya highlights how context-specific practices can sometimes create barriers for individuals who are not familiar with the local customs and norms (Randazzo, 2019). This exclusion can complicate conflict resolution in multicultural or diverse settings where multiple cultural perspectives are involved.

3.7.5 Spiritual inclination

Indigenous conflict intervention strategies often integrate spirituality and rituals as fundamental components that give credence to the profound role these elements play in the cultural and social fabric of indigenous communities. Spirituality and rituals are not merely symbolic but serve practical functions in conflict resolution as they are rooted in traditions that have been honed over centuries. Many people in African indigenous groups use their spirituality to make sense of their society and cope with violent situations (Murambadoro, 2020). Believing in the powers of the cosmos, which establishes a web of connections between entities in the physical and metaphysical realms, is what is meant by spirituality in this context. African indigenous culture views

disagreement as an offense against the ancestors, which is why it incorporates cosmos-specific rites meant to placate the deceased (Olowu, 2017). Violence affects the entire cosmological community, which consists of living things interacting with one another, nature, and spiritual beings. By using rituals, rites, and reparations to make amends for wrongs committed, African indigenous groups are characterised by a comprehensive system that restores cosmic balance.

Spirituality and rituals are central to many indigenous cultures and they shape how conflicts are understood and resolved. These practices often involve sacred ceremonies, traditional healing approaches, and spiritual guidance that align with the community's worldview. Nyawo (2023) emphasises that incorporating traditional spiritual practices into conflict intervention helps maintain cultural continuity and respects indigenous values. This cultural alignment enhances the acceptance and effectiveness of conflict resolution efforts as they resonate with communities' deeply held beliefs. Bhagwan (2017) notes that rituals can facilitate holistic healing by engaging with the spiritual dimensions of conflict. This approach can lead to profound reconciliation as it acknowledges and addresses the spiritual and emotional aspects of conflicts, which are often overlooked in more conventional methods.

One of the challenges of using spirituality and rituals in conflict intervention is the diversity of interpretations among communities. Marsh *et al*. (2018) aver that differing views on spiritual practices can lead to disagreements and exclude individuals who do not adhere to specific traditions and beliefs. This diversity can complicate the implementation of unified conflict resolution strategies. Davis and Robertson (2022) note that, in some cases, individuals may exploit spiritual rituals to consolidate their power or influence on decision-making processes in ways that are not always in the best interest of the community. As highlighted by Clark and Mitchell (2024), there can be conflicts between traditional spiritual approaches and contemporary legal frameworks. This integration requires careful negotiation to ensure that spiritual practices complement rather than conflict with Western legal processes.

Now that both Western methods and African indigenous approaches of conflict intervention have been discussed, it is important to conclude with a comparison of these two strategies.

3.8 African Indigenous versus Conventional Strategies for Conflict Intervention

Conflicts have always been a natural response in human civilisations as it stems from disparities in goals, ideologies, standards, and resources (Bukari, 2013). Eneyew and Ayalew (2023) assert that there is an undeniable need for efficient conflict intervention techniques as conflicts can result in social unrest, violence, and the deterioration of community cohesion. For Mekonnen (2016) and Lundy *et al.* (2022), conflict can also result in social transformation as societies evolve over time to handle and settle disputes through informal conversations to the use of more formal and structured interventions. Using indigenous or conventional methods to mend relationships and wounds caused by conflicts is a choice that many societies that emerge out of conflict make. The key components of the two predominant strategies (traditional and Western) are examined next. The elucidation of the characteristics that distinguish African native conflict approaches from Westers practices is the basis for this subsection's importance. Without this elucidation, the danger exists that the lines separating indigenous and mainstream post-conflict relational justice strategies might appear fuzzy. Table 3.1 summarises the comparison between conventional (Western) and indigenous approaches to conflict intervention.

Table 3.1: Comparison between conventional and indigenous strategies for conflict intervention

Indigenous Approaches	Conventional Methods
Rooted in history, culture and traditions	Embedded in human rights
Peculiar to communities	Founded on universal principles
Focus on collective hurt and healing	Focus on individual perpetrators and direct victims
Seek acceptance of responsibility for the wrong done	Seek to establish guilt

Desire reconciliation and reintegration	Aim to punish and focus on retribution
Restore harmed relationships	Rebuild institutions of the criminal justice system
Follow an interest-based approach	Driven by a formal rights approach
Rules and procedures are unwritten	Codified rules and procedures are used

According to some academics, a binary viewpoint that sees conventional methods as the only alternatives to indigenous ones is incorrect (Brown, 2009; Richmond, 2017; Wallis *et al*., 2018). Although the conventional is sometimes defined as distinct from and opposed to the indigenous, this binary formulation has come under fire for being unduly straightforward. For instance, Paffenholz (2015) asserts that the binary division between conventional and indigenous approaches does not prevent symbiotic outcomes because neither of them is monolithic. Furthermore, it has frequently been noted that, just because a solution is rooted in either a Western or an indigenous approach, it does not necessarily follow that it is just or sustainable (Paris, 2010 and Donais, 2012).

The hybrid idea, according to proponents of indigenousness, aims to impose conventional ways on less formal indigenous approaches (Zondi, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Shokane and Masoga, 2018; Colpani *et al.,* 2022; Day *et al.,* 2023). For these authors, indigenous approaches should be implemented free from conventional methods as this will allow the former a ‘clean’ opportunity in practice and studies. Whilst this assertion has the connotation of a trial-and-error approach, the view is justified by an abundance of failures of conventional methods across the globe. According to data from the Peace Treaties Matrix (Wallis *et al*., 2018: 342), "liberal ideals have been embedded in the vast majority of post-1989 peace accords”. As a result, hybridity has served as a cover for the implementation of neoliberal peacebuilding. Borer and Schneider (2023) state that combining Western legal mechanisms with indigenous practices can address the needs and expectations of diverse stakeholders, thereby increasing the legitimacy of the outcomes. Wilson and Turner (2021) observe that, when Western systems acknowledge and incorporate indigenous practices, they foster trust and cooperation among communities and legal institutions. This collaborative approach can enhance the effectiveness of conflict

resolution efforts and improve relations among indigenous groups and state authorities (Wilson and Turner, 2021).

One of the primary challenges of the application of a combination of these strategies is the potential for conflict between Western legal practices and indigenous approaches. Brown and Green (2022) posit that Western legal systems often operate under different principles than those underpinning indigenous approaches, leading to tensions and inconsistencies. These conflicts can undermine the effectiveness of the conflict resolution process and create confusion for those involved. Johnson and Rodgers (2021) aver that, without genuine engagement and respect for indigenous practices, the combination of these approaches can become superficial. Moreover, if such an approach is merely a case of tokenism, it can undermine the credibility of the interventions and fail to address the underlying issues effectively. Research by Nguyen and Roberts (2024) points out that many formal institutions lack the resources and expertise to adequately incorporate indigenous practices into their processes. This limitation can affect the quality and effectiveness of the combined approach and may hinder successful implementation. The combination of Western and indigenous approaches can also lead to jurisdictional conflicts, particularly when legal systems and indigenous governance structures overlap or diverge. Clark and Mitchell (2024) retort that such jurisdictional issues can complicate the resolution of conflicts and create ambiguity about which systems should take precedence in different scenarios.

Moreover, although a combination of Western and indigenous approaches of conflict intervention also offers significant advantages, including enhanced legitimacy, holistic resolution, increased accessibility, and strengthened community trust, it also presents challenges such as potential conflicts between legal frameworks and indigenous practices, the risk of tokenism, resource constraints, and jurisdictional conflicts. Addressing these challenges requires a thoughtful and respectful approach that balances the strengths of both systems while fostering genuine collaboration. By navigating these complexities, conflict resolution efforts can become more inclusive, effective, and culturally resonating.

3.9 Chapter Summary

The dominance of Western methods in conflict intervention has been accompanied by significant advantages, including standardisation, the development of international legal norms, institutional support, and the promotion of legal and diplomatic solutions. However, these methods also face criticisms related to cultural insensitivity, exclusion of local practices, the predominance of sovereignty, and limitations in addressing the root causes of conflicts. This chapter argued that, to enhance the effectiveness of conflict interventions, it is crucial to balance Western methods with a respectful integration of local and indigenous practices, ensuring that interventions are culturally sensitive, inclusive, and comprehensive when they are applied to address both immediate and underlying issues. The chapter exposed a plethora of indigenous approaches to conflict intervention that are used in various African communities. It seems that unfortunate that many of these approaches have remained unutilised and somewhat under developed.

CHAPTER 4
HISTORICAL CONTEXT IN WHICH THE STUDY WAS EMBEDDED

4.1 Introduction

One of the most significant turns in the peacebuilding history of local communities was the 'local turn'. This stemmed from failures of the liberal peace project to engage local communities, local actors, and civil society in peacebuilding and democratisation efforts in conflict-affected societies (Third World Quarterly, 2015; Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013). This failure was attributed to the fact that peace was 'too centralised' and that conflict in local contexts was neglected (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015; Höglund and Fjelde, 2011).

The Richmond community in KwaZulu Natal Province rose to notoriety due to the proliferation of violent political conflicts that plagued it between the early 1990s until 2018, and even before this period (Krämer, 2020). This community was historically the most conflict-ridden community in KwaZulu-Natal Province (van Baalen and Höglund, 2019) although such sustained violent political conflicts were experienced anywhere else in post-apartheid South Africa (Ndlovu, 2017). This chapter takes a voyage into the background of several intractable violent political conflicts which bedevilled the Richmond community with conflicts that erupted intermittently between 1990-2018. This discussion explores the history of violence in South African in general and in the Richmond community in particular in an attempt to situate the violent political conflicts within a pertinent historical context. The discourse relies on the plausible explanation offered by Franz Fanon ((1961) of the cultural hegemony of masculinity as the foundation of much of the violence. This classification is anchored on factors that characterised each conflict period within the broad timeframe, such as the protagonists involved in each conflict period, the manifestation and prevalence of political violence, and well-meant but unsuccessful intervention strategies. Whilst some of these factors transcended from one conflict epoch to the other, this chapter demonstrates the prominence of each factor in a particular conflict period. The aim of this chapter is to explore and understand the historical events that predicated what became intractable political conflicts in the Richmond area.

4.2 Unmasking the Genealogy of Violence in South Africa

Political violence is not, by any means, a novel phenomenon in the South African historical context (Ndlovu, 2017). South Africa has a long history of violence with its roots embedded in the periods predating the apartheid years. The overall trajectory of political violence in South Africa exhibits a number of striking features of violence situated within at least three thematic historical contexts, namely the pre-modern context characterised by frontier conflict, the modernising period exerted through centralised state-formation, and the post-1948 period which introduced apartheid and resistance to it.

The pre-modern and pre-industrial period of frontier wars date back to the beginning of confrontations between the *trekboers* and the Xhosa people on the Eastern Cape frontier in the 1780s. This includes the period of Khoisan resistance to colonial settlement during the 17th and 18th centuries and the suppression of the *Bambatha* rebellion in Natal in 1905 (Ndlovu, 2017). The origin of the political violence in South Africa was arguably the period of frontier wars. The second and middle period was the modernising period which started in 1910 with the formation of the Union of South Africa. The year 1910 also marked the inception of white minority rule which was exercised through a centralised state coupled to the modern sector of the economy of commercial agriculture and mining. The third and last period is the apartheid period from 1948 with Afrikaner nationalists taking command of the state and attempting to restructure society according to an explicit policy of segregation (Ndlovu, 2017). The enforcement of apartheid policies was met with volatile resistance by liberation movements in South Africa and included insurrections experienced in the 1970s and 1980s (Phosa, 2024). The coming into power of the apartheid government in 1948 and the forced implementation of apartheid ideology and policies through white domination led to sustained violent and racially charged conflicts (Ndlovu, 2017). It is discernible from a scholarly vantage point that political violence marred all these historical periods.

However, this discussion will focus on the latter period, namely the apartheid and post-apartheid years as the resistance to apartheid erupted in violence and introduced the armed struggle, insurrections, and a departure from non-violent politics to more

intentional violence. All these confounded a high intensity of violence across South Africa and even across its borders. Secondly, the international community entered the fray through the implementation of an array of sanctions against the apartheid government of South Africa, including the termination of South Africa's membership of the Common Wealth and the declaration of apartheid as a crime against humanity (Mbandlwa and Shezi, 2020). The advent of the armed struggle was followed by several incidents in which the apartheid government of South African launched attacks on liberation movements. A classic example is the peaceful march against the pass law on 21 March 1961 that erupted in the Sharpeville Massacre when the police opened fire at the protesters (Metz, 1987). Properties belonging to the ANC were destroyed and people were killed indiscriminately (van der Merwe, 2013). South Africa also experienced dramatic structural changes promulgated by the apartheid government post 1990 which, amongst others, included the unbanning of liberation movements, the release of political prisoners, and the return of exiles. However, in the time of strife, political animosity that was inextricably linked to several instances of violent political conflicts became endemic in the Richmond community.

In the first chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (1961) offers a plausible explanation for the entrenched nature of violence in countries that had once been colonised. In the case of South Africa, apartheid should be added into the matrix of factors that bred the culture of violence. For Fanon, the colonisation of the natives was exerted through persistent acts of various forms of violence by the colonisers. From this perspective, colonial rule was a mechanism that brought violence into the lives of those who were colonised.

The violence associated with resistance by the natives stemmed from a sense of entrapment and a commitment to change their circumstances. With reference to events leading to the formation of *uMkhonto weSizwe* (the armed wing of the ANC), Mandela later asserted that the "only language understood by apartheid government was violence" (Villet, 2018, p.147). Several communities in South Africa are, to this day, using the same 'logical' framework to justify their violent protests resulting in destruction and/or damage to public infrastructure (CSVR, 2011). However, Nelson Mandela and those who shared his sentiments proposed a number of non-violent

means to resolve the conflict, including but not limited to the 1961 peaceful march against the law requiring South Africans to carry their *dompas*. *Dompas* is an Afrikaans word for an official identity document that Black people had to carry with them to prove their identity. It differed from White ID documents in that it stated where the person carrying the pass could live and work during the apartheid period. Needless to say, these restrictions were quite severe. During the march referred to above, protesters formed a human chain and walked towards Sharpeville police station to surrender their *dompasses*. Marchers were intercepted outside the police station and shot at with live ammunition which resulted in the deaths of 69 unarmed people (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998).

To understand the circumstances that propelled Black South Africans to rise to action, Terreblanche (2014) notes that "the inhabitants of the periphery in the South African microcosm were fairly powerless and impoverished during the period of colonialism and apartheid". To lend support to this assertion, Ndlovu (2017) avers that most people living in townships on the remote edges of cities were in squalor and very poor in comparison with those (mostly Whites) living in sub-urban areas. These poverty-stricken areas were populated by natives who had flocked from their traditional rural areas to the cities and towns in search of a better life. Hence, inequality and the denial of opportunities for jobs and a better way of life were often followed by violent reactions, especially in townships and marginalised communities. Fanon's (1961) view on the prevalence of violence in these years is that it was the historical foundation of violence that erupted actors South Africa. However, using Fanon's thesis on the history and motives of violence to understand the basis of violence in South Africa should not wholly and in its entirety impute South Africa's culture of violence to slavery, colonisation, oppression, and apartheid.

For instance, Krelekrele (2018) recasts this formulation when he posits that South African ethnic groups have cultural practices that embody violence. Such practices include *Ikhaba* or *Iintonga,* which are customary stick-fighting games practised by Zulu people in KwaZulu-Natal. This fighting (which is a form of sparring) usually occurs during traditional ceremonies, and boys and young men gain status if they are good at this game. According to its rules, the more peer you defeat, the higher your rank

and power will become and the more you will be feared and respected in the community. Similarly, the Venda nation in the far north of the Limpopo Province in South Africa practice *musangwe*, which is a bare-knuckle fist-fighting game in which boys and young man gain status in the community if they beat their opponents (Tshukhudo, 2009). The more one wins, the more one is perceived as strong and masculine. In rural areas and villages where these violent games are practised, they have long been culturally ingrained and are used to exhibit masculinity. In all these sparring games, the fights persist until one surrenders. The violence that is exhibited and encouraged in these games has been embedded in culture and been normalised, accepted, and legitimised by numerous communities.

It should be noted that Fanon's ((1961) thesis on violence explored liberation movements in Africa, with particular emphasis on South Africa. Stevens (2019, p.226) rightly notes "that much recent scholarship on the 'armed struggle' in South Africa has emphasised the influence on the Congress leadership of external actors and models from the Soviet Union, China, Algeria, Palestine, Cuba and elsewhere". Notably, the Algerian revolution inspired South African liberationists like Mandela, who in his book *Long Walk to Freedom* compares Algeria's situation to that of apartheid South Africa (Villet, 2018). It is a key argument of this discussion that the violent history of colonialism and apartheid oppressed people of colour (particularly Black South Africans) as a means to sustain power and dominance. Moreover, the repulsive armed struggle by liberation movements fanned a violent political culture that became entrenched in South Africa's indigenous communities.

According to one violence monitor, the Richmond community experienced conflict between warring factions that saw families fighting over land, traditional leadership, and other scarce resources during the 1960s and into the 1970s (de Haas, 2013, 2016). In the 1980s, the apartheid government appointed Chief Majozi and conferred upon him certain administrative powers over some areas in Richmond (van Baalen and Höglund, 2019). According to Taylor (2002) this chief leaned towards the IFP for two reasons: the IFP was seen as the embodiment and custodian of the Zulu culture and its values and practices, while the ANC was driven by a multi-ethnic orientation in its political outlook and promoted co-existence and diversity in societies. Secondly,

the IFP's more supportive attitude towards the apartheid government seemed to have affirmed the interests of traditional leaders who received remuneration from the government. When the ANC was unbanned in 1990, traditional leaders fiercely refused ANC entry into communities to conduct membership recruitment and campaigns (Arde, 2020). This heightened tensions between the ANC and IFP traditional leaders. As will be demonstrated in the sections that follow, traditional leaders maintained their political posture and became protagonists in the intractable conflicts that became endemic in the Richmond community.

It is undeniable that the post-apartheid South African society inherited a culture of violence as a method to resolve conflict, and the Richmond community had been impacted by intractable violent political conflicts since those years, but particularly in the early 1990s when the broader political scene changed irrevocably with the unbanning of the apartheid government's political adversaries and the advent of a democratic South Africa (Taylor, 2002; de Haas, 2016). However, conflicts were still fuelled but varied in degree and intensity from mass killings and sporadic incidents to targeted political assassinations. The next section describes the features of each conflict period.

4.3 Periodization of Violent Political Conflicts in the Richmond Community

The Richmond community experienced several episodes of violent conflicts. This study only focused on political violence which occurred during the period 1990-2018. This period was selected for a number of reasons: the high intensity of violence, high number of fatalities, perpetration of violence against family members, centrality of politics in the conflicts, locally rooted patterns of violence, higher distrust and animosity amongst community members during the period than in any other period before or after, and limited usage of indigenous approaches to post-conflict relational justice (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998; Taylor, 2002; de Haas, 2016; GroundUp, 2018; van Baalen and Höglund, 2019). The basis of the violent conflicts experienced in the Richmond area fermented in the 1980s when the apartheid government appointed Black administrators to the area, some of whom were already traditional leaders indigenous to the area (Nebandla, 2005).

According to Taylor (2002) and van Baalen and Höglund (2019), the IFP was seen by traditional leaders as the party that could protect both their financial and political interests. Supporters of the ANC, on the other hand, saw the IFP as a leadership that had been installed by the apartheid government and, as a result, posed a barrier to the South African democratic process (Nebandla, 2005). These ideas exacerbated tensions between traditional and political rivals and erupted in intractable violent conflicts. These conflicts occurred over a period of 28 years (1990-2018) and can be classified in at least three periods. Tabulation of the multiple factors that characterised these periods is provided below in Table 4.1.

The table summarises the various factors that were at play in each conflict period, highlighting the leading organisations, the manifestations of political violence, the impact of the conflicts, and the intervention measure taken to quell the conflicts. While some factors spilled over to other periods, the discussion demonstrates the saturation of a particular factor during a specific period.

Table 4.1: Matrix of conflicts in the Richmond area

Conflict period	1990-1994	1995-2000	2001-2018
Protagonists	IFP ANC Traditional leaders	ANC UDM IFP SDU	ANC IFP EFF NFP
Manifestations of political violence	Transitional negotiations; Political dominance; Failure to demobilise paramilitary units; "Third force" involvement; Collapsed peace accords.	Intra-party struggles; Revenge attacks; "Third force" involvement; Preservation of patronage networks.	Factional battles; Revenge attacks; Political intolerance; Preservation of patronage networks; Weaponisation of state apparatus.
Consequences of conflict	Assassinations; Mass killings; Displacements; Balkanisation of villages ("us and them"); Creation of "no-go areas"	Assassinations; Sporadic killings; Political fragmentation.	Assassinations; Targeted killings.

Intervention Strategies	Peace accord; Deployment of security forces; Demobilisation of paramilitary groups.	Joint rallies; Truth and Reconciliation Commission; Deployment of security forces.	Commissions of inquiries; Task teams; Firearms amnesty; dialogues.

4.3.1 Transitional period: Battle for political dominance (1990-1994)

A fundamental political transition from minority rule and apartheid to a non-racial and democratic new South Africa began when South Africa's history reached a turning point in the 1990s (Du Toit and Slabbert, 1991). The transitional process diverged from prior trends and patterns of conflict in a number of ways, and it also acquired some paradoxical characteristics of its own, particularly in the context of political violence. For instance, there was a noticeable shift away from political violence and a paradoxical increase in political violence in some contexts during the transition period.

Taylor (2002) and de Haas (2013, 2016) note that political violence increased and spread during the transition period. The political violence that had been ongoing and got worse put the new politics of negotiation at risk. This was significant as the violence did not originate from the reactionary 'white right-wing', the racial juncture of the majority of poor and historically left-leaning Blacks, or the privileged minority of Whites. Instead, it manifested in widespread political violence in Black neighbourhoods.

It is highly debatable what exactly motivated this escalation of political violence and what the goals of the leading actors were. It is fiercely contested on all sides whether the rise in political violence should be attributed to 'ethnic conflicts' due the significant cultural and historical roots of the instigators; to a struggle for power and ideology among rival political parties; to the evil work of a 'third force' operating behind the scenes; to the results of poverty, social unrest, and a general lack of political authority; or to a combination of these factors (Mbandlwa and Shezi, 2020). This discussion does not try to resolve these disagreements but to demonstrate and elucidate the intricacies of the political violence of the time.

In the Richmond area, the period 1990-1994 was primarily characterised by political contestations for dominance between the IFP and ANC (Schuld, 2013; de Haas, 2016; van Baalen and Höglund, 2019). The banning decree against the ANC and other liberation movements was lifted in 1990 by the National Party government, which precipitated the former's suspension of its armed struggle and motioned negotiations. According to Nebandla (2005), the ANC embarked on a membership recruitment drive towards the 1994 election campaign that preceded the first actual democratic elections in South Africa. In the Richmond area, the IFP enjoyed support and grip in the rural areas of Mkhobeni and Patheni, but Magoda and Ndaleni, two semi-urban areas, were reportedly ANC strongholds. The Richmond community was torn between these two political opponents who vied for their vote. Furthermore, a great crack in the social fabric of the Richmond community was steered by traditional leaders who became partisan. This political polarisation heightened tensions in the community and inadvertently ignited violent conflicts over political dominance and control of the majority of the Richmond community.

Despite the fact that the IFP was able to maintain authority over the Patheni area, almost 60% of the locals chose to leave and sought refuge in the nearby areas of Hammarsdale and Port Shepstone (Taylor, 2002). This made it possible for the ANC to enrol more people into self-defence units (SDUs), which ultimately gave the ANC the upper hand (Taylor, 2002). However, all areas suffered greatly due to attacks and counter-attacks. Whilst there is consensus that the conflict that engulfed the Richmond community in the early 1990s resulted in many casualties, the exact quantum of the deaths has remained unknown to this day (Taylor, 2002; Nebandla, 2005; de Haas, 2016). However, Taylor (2002) reports that there were 140 fatalities; that about 20 000 people were forced to live in shelters, tents, and on the streets of Richmond in 1991; and that 60% of Patheni residents were believed to have evacuated their houses. The violent conflict in Richmond was at its peak in the period 1991-1994. Broadly speaking, the intensity and intractable violence across communities in South Africa, particularly in KZN, threatened the imminent first democratic national elections in 1994 (Krelekrele, 2018).

Taylor (2002) and de Haas (2016) observe that traditional leaders who were installed by the apartheid government in the 1980s entered the political arena and offered their support to the IFP while explicitly denying the ANC to carry out membership recruitment and campaigns in their respective communities in the lead-up to the 1994 elections. The link between traditional leaders and the IFP was strong during the early 1990s. On the other hand, traditional leaders were targeted by the ANC and other parties who believed that such a paternalistic and feudal institution had no place in a democratic South Africa. Traditional chiefs were also viewed as apartheid symbols and the foundation of the Bantustan form of governance. Their partisan stance introduced a complex net of political and traditional leadership power structures within body politic in the Richmond community. In 1991, the National Peace Accord (NPA)[1] was concluded with the aim of quelling the conflict in Richmond and elsewhere in South Africa. Part of the NPA included the disbandment and demobilisation of paramilitary groups and their absorption into the then newly established South African National Defence Force (SANDF).

The relatively smooth transition to democracy in South Africa was greatly aided by the NPA (Maphosa and Keasley, 2016). However, there were issues and limitations with its implementation. Bruce (2013) and Clarke (2018) point out that some stakeholders, such as traditional leaders who were prominent in rural areas, were not part of the drawing up process of the NPA and, as a result, they did not sign it. This made the implementation of the NPA difficult in rural areas. The peace agreement's lack of sanctions for violators was another important weakness. As it will be shown in subsequent sections in this chapter, the NPA failed to secure a lasting solution for the Richmond community.

Notwithstanding the NPA's efforts, paramilitary groups continued to operate covertly. This was a demonstration of a trust deficit between parties and a lack of commitment to the agreement, or both (Clarke, 2018). Taylor (2002) posits that self-defence units (SDUs) that sustained ANC support in communities during its banning had repositioned themselves in support of the ANC's military wing, *uMkhonto weSizwe*

[1] The National Peace Accord (NPA), signed in South Africa in September 1991, was a crucial step towards the end of apartheid and the establishment of a multi-party democracy. It aimed to resolve political violence and pave the way for constitutional negotiations.

(MK) in the early 1990s. Similarly, the IFP was supported by its para-military groups set up in years prior to the NPA. The high intensity of political conflicts in Richmond was made possible by the delivery of huge numbers of weapons and ammunition to the community and KZN at large during the 1990s by both the ANC and the IFP (TRC, 1998; Ntuli, 2016). A study conducted by the Centre of Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in Richmond (1999) revealed that both the IFP and ANC's paramilitary structures obtained a proliferation of weapons which they distributed in Richmond in the early 1990s. Clarke (2018) agrees, arguing that easy access to and the availability of arms and weapons in Richmond contributed to the intractable violent conflicts in the area. Furthermore, the Moerane Commission as well as a Global Initiative Report attributed the proliferation of guns and ammunition in KwaZulu-Natal Province to the spate of political killings and assassinations that occurred her in the period under discussion (Singh, 2018; and Global Initiative, 2021).

Richmond SDUs conducted lethal actions against the IFP, such as hit squad strikes in which SDU members donned camouflage uniforms of the South African Police Service (SAPS) or the South African Defence Force (SADF) (Taylor, 2002). However, allegations of a 'third force' assisting the ANC aligned with SDUs and impersonating the police and soldiers remain unproven. The ANC denied any assistance from the apartheid government in carrying out counter-attacks on its opponents, let alone supporting political contestations. According to Clarke (2018), in response to ANC-aligned SDU operations in the Richmond area, the IFP promoted and trained self-protection teams equipped with G3 rifles and enhanced proficiency in the use of mortars and bombs in an effort to increase its paramilitary capability in the area. Furthermore, with the alleged assistance of the police, the IFP trained over a thousand members of the Richmond community to accomplish their goal of territorial supremacy (Taylor, 2002). In its hearing on the violence in KZN, the TRC heard reports alleging that the SADF distributed large quantities of weapons in various township hostels known to be inhabited by IFP members and supporters. Many of these armaments we reportedly destined for KZN (TRC, 1998).

Some scholars (Bruce, 2013; Maphosa and Keasley, 2016; Clarke, 2018; and Onwuegbuchulam, 2021) attribute the failure of the NPA to its lack of insight into the

micro dynamics of conflict. A further assertion is that there was too much focus on national matters whilst local issues were ignored. The proponents of these arguments posit that the factors causing conflicts at local level often differed from those that led to conflicts at national level. Therefore, custom-made peace initiatives were required for both local and national levels. Lessons can therefore be drawn from violent conflicts confined to local communities, such as the 1993 Katlehong massacre that was fought along ethnic lines and the 1992 Boipatong massacre that erupted due to political intolerance. Moreover, the design and implementation of the NPA followed a widely criticised top-down approach which ignored local participation in the process. This approach usurped the agency and voice of local leaders who were denied ownership and support of the change in South Africa.

Ngwenya and Ndhlela (2004) and Nebandla (2005) state that the ANC and IFP were in an open war with each other during 1990-1994. This occurred despite their denial that they had formally engage in conflicts. Krämer (2020) avers that, despite some IFP leaders being involved in violent attacks, the ANC and IFP were concerned about portraying a public image of commitment to non-violence and peace. So, instead, the 'third force' phenomenon emerged and degraded the fight for freedom to acts of criminality. This 'third force' was made the scapegoat to escape accountability for the violence and the consequences thereof. Former President Nelson Mandela, for instance, said that there was a 'third hand' behind the Richmond killings comprising individuals who entered the state security apparatus with the intention of stifling the democratic revolution and instead turning the hands of time (Taylor, 2002).

4.3.2 Intra-party struggles and political conflict in Richmond (1995-1999)

Many people had hoped that the violent political battles in Richmond would come to an end with the establishment of the new democratic state. At this time, the community was lurching from the atrocities committed during the early 1990s. People who had previously fled the area because of the violence returned during the IFP and ANC's peace talks and marches in the middle of 1995 (Maphosa and Keasley, 2016). However, both sides' paramilitary units were still armed and continued to operate in complete disregard of the mutual decision to disband them (de Haas, 2013). It became

apparent that political violence in Richmond was far from over. However, this time around the faces of the protagonist changed as new conflicts ensued.

Taylor (2002) contends that, after losing their power struggle within the ANC, some former leaders and supporters joined the United Democratic Movement (UDM), a political organisation that had just been created as a result of an ANC split. The UDM was added into the mix and fought proxy wars in support of its new members and supporters. In the Richmond community, the continued struggle for political power meant yet another fragmentation. For instance, the Magoda area, which had been under the grip of the ANC, became the UDM's stronghold (Taylor, 2002).

The result of these ANC factional battles was the loss of more than 160 lives, the vast majority of whom had been ordinary members and supporters. Soon the deaths by assassination of prominent leaders followed, such as those of Mzwandile Mbongwa (an ANC youth leader in Richmond), Rodney van der Byl (the ANC Deputy Mayor of Richmond Municipality at the time of his death in July 1997), his successor, Percy Thompson (ANC Deputy Mayor of Richmond Municipality at the time of his death in July 1998), and Sifiso Nkabinde (expelled ANC leader at the time of his death in January 1999), to mention a few (Taylor, 2002; Nebandla, 2005; de Haas, 2016; Ntuli, 2016). According to Onwuegbuchulam (2021), a patronage phenomenon became apparent in this period in ANC politics in the Richmond community. The assassination of many ANC leaders in government lends support to the assertion. The Herald (Urgent action on KZN killings needed, 2018) notes this long-standing phenomenon when it claims that criminal elements and opportunists infiltrated the ANC in order to obtain contracts either legally or illegally, and that when someone was chosen for a leadership position, they believed they had 'a ticket to financial success'.

Some critics believe that the IFP was not an innocent on-looker to the intra-party power struggles which marred the ANC and, by extension, the UDM. Nebandla's (2005) analytical view is that both the IFP and UDM were to be blamed for having ignited the ANC's internal power battles as the former would stand to benefit from a divided and weakened ANC. Ntuli (2016) adds that the poor handling of crimes perpetrated during these period resulted in the police being accused of taking sides

in the conflict. This was attributed to the poor conviction rate in many of the political killings and assassinations of the time. However, Schuld (2013) refutes these claims by Ntuli (2016) as he asserts that the substandard intervention by police in conflict-stricken communities was a result of incompetence and lack of resources. In this context, Schuld cites examples of the 1998 incident in which about 30 murders were committed during an intra-IFP conflict in Lindelani (north of Durban) that involved paramilitary presence. Moreover, the incident of 70 individuals who were killed during an intra-ANC dormitory conflict in Umlazi involved ex-combatants. No arrests were made following both these incidents of mass murder. These events left victims and survivors in pain, rupture, and fear while the affected communities increasingly distrusted the police as killings and assassinations continued unabated. Mary de Haas (2013, 2016) aptly observes that the unabated episodes of violent political conflicts in the Richmond community bred animosity and fear among individuals and families.

Several interventions were undertaken during this period. The first was a tripartite peace agreement between the ANC, IFP and local police management which was concluded in 1996 (Nebandla, 2005; de Haas, 2013). The brokered deal saw police allowed entry into some areas which had previously been ‘no-go areas’ for police. Secondly, the then Minister of Safety and Security deployed a Special Investigative Task Unit which took over the running of the Richmond police station in 1998. This unit also established a dedicated Violence Investigation Unit to probe cases of political violence in the area. However, these initiatives were short-lived as violence continued regardless of the agreement and the presence of the police. The latter hopelessly failed to bring those responsible for the politically motivated crimes to justice, thereby worsening the situation. The police in turn attributed this poor handling of cases to lack of cooperation of witnesses and its inability to provide adequate witness protection. In counter-accusations, police were accused of bias and misconduct involving supplying arms and ammunition and tip-offs about planned raids to UDM-aligned protagonists (Taylor, 2002). Nebandla (2005) contends that events in the Richmond community and elsewhere demonstrate how the politicisation of the security forces and the criminal justice system, as well as the state's reduced ability to combat an environment of impunity, led to a cycle of political vengeance and retribution. However, it should be noted that these measures stemmed from the

conception that political violence was largely due to acts of criminality. Hence, there was little interest to inquire into the actual root causes of the violent conflicts and the predominance of police presence as an intervention measure.

Moreover, the TRC did not conduct investigations aimed at obtaining comprehensive understanding of the root causes of the violence in Richmond and elsewhere across South Africa. It was anticipated that the TRC would resolve such concerns in 1998-1999, but this did not occur as the TRC did not sufficiently delve into the root causes of political violence between the IFP and the ANC in KZN (Ntuli, 2016). Nebandla (2005) justifies the TRC's approach to the violence in Richmond, contending that the fragilities of the new democracy at the time did not favour a meticulous stance and that a lack of political will by some political organisations had a negative impact on the work of the TRC. Perhaps, this was one of the many compromises that the new democratic South Africa had to grapple with. It should be kept in mind that political parties, such as the Pan African Congress (PAC) and the IFP, poorly supported the work of the TRC; hence, many of their leaders did not appear before the Commission.

4.3.3 Political fragmentation: Intra-party and inter-party conflicts (2000-2018)

This is the widest classification period as it ranged over 17 years. A number of reasons account for this, such as the establishment of the local sphere of government, the proliferation of breakaway of members of political parties who formed their own, an increase in targeted killings, the implementation of community-directed interventions, the re-emergence of political intolerance during election periods, and a missed opportunity to calibrate indigenous approaches of post conflict intervention.

While the administration of the Government of National Unity, South Africa's first democratic administration, established a coalition government in 1994, the local government elections of 2000 highlighted the coalition phenomenon in the local government realm in hung municipalities, especially in KZN (Booysen, 2021). The year 2000 was the year in which local government elections were held to formally introduce the local sphere of government as envisaged in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). According to Kadima (2013), the introduction of local governments brought with it new challenges. It is in this period that political parties

saw the high emergence of splinter parties, while renewed factional battles and power struggles plagued the two major political parties in KZN, namely the ANC and IFP. Increased targeted killings and the entrenchment of patronage networks in municipalities necessitated the use of community-directed intervention strategies to quell conflicts and address post-conflict situations. The period presented a unique and complex political situation everywhere, but more so in the Richmond community which, since the early 1990s, had still been experiencing unrelenting violent political conflicts.

Cooper (2015) observes that the ANC experienced at least two major breakaways into other parties in this period, namely the Congress of the People (COPE) shortly after its elective conference in 2007 at Polokwane, and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in 2013 following expulsion of its then Youth League leader, Julius Malema and the suspension of others. The most recent addition to the above is the formation of the *uMkhonto weSizwe* Party (MKP) headed by former President Jacob Zuma. This party decimated the ANC's electoral support during the 2024 National and Provincial elections. Similarly, the IFP experienced its first ever recorded split in 2005 when Mr Ziba Jiyane left and formed the National Democratic Convention (NADECO). Following this split, the IFP's former Chairperson, Zanele kaMagwaza-Msibi, along with other former IFP members resigned and formed the National Freedom Party (NFP) in 2011. Whilst the UDM's support base growth may have been stunted during this period, the Democratic Alliance (DA) started making in-roads in many rural and township areas and successfully displaced the ANC in the Western Cape Provincial government and in Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Nelson Mandela Bay Metros (Kadima, 2013). As a result, the support previously enjoyed by the two major political rivals (the ANC and the IFP) was now split in these areas and shared amongst several other parties. For the Richmond community, these political developments meant further fragmentations in the community and the re-emergence of political tensions and intolerance. The spate of political killings continued and the police battled to bring to book those who had perpetrated these violent acts.

In 2004, election observers noted the continued existence of no-go areas in the Richmond area as political parties embarked on their election campaigns (de Haas,

2016). This strand of political intolerance again undermined the previously brokered peace in the community. The former mayor of the Richmond local municipality was quoted by an investigative media house, GroundUp (2018), as it expressed the concern that history still haunted the people of Richmond because anger and resentment remained visible amongst the victims and survivors of past atrocities while lack of reparation, forgiveness, and reconciliation compounded the persistent animosity among the people living in this area. On 13 May 2021, a Pietermaritzburg-based newspaper, *The Mercury*, published an article in which it reported the killing of four men in Richmond. In the same article it was reported that the killings had sparked fears of the resurfacing of the pattern of violence last seen in the late 1990s (Mboto, 2021). Clearly, the Richmond community was still subjected to fear which ostensibly jeopardised stability and durable peace. Arde (2020), in his book *War Party,* quotes Nhlanhla Ndabezitha of the Ndabezitha family who lost ten members in what was deemed a revenge attack following the murder of Sfiso Nkabinde in 1997. The Ndabezitha family was targeted as mourners gathered for the funeral of one of their relatives. This event highlighted the sense of angst that some community members still experienced due to the atrocities of the past.

During this period, a plethora of community-directed interventions were implemented to end intractable conflicts in the Richmond community (Taylor, 2002; de Haas, 2016; GroundUp, 2018). In January 2004, a group of some of the prisoners who were serving jail sentences for various crimes, including murders committed during the political violence in Richmond since it first broke out in early 1990s, requested the then member of the KZN provincial legislature, Mr Willies Mchunu, to facilitate their dialogue with victims of their crimes. Excluding the IFP and other interested parties such as NGOs and traditional leaders, two five-a-side teams comprising of members of the UDM and ANC met with the prisoners in March 2004. During the dialogues, the prisoners tendered their apologies and regrets for the crimes which had resulted in the deaths of people in the Richmond community (CSVR, 2011). This initiative was implemented in a manner similar to victim-offender dialogue prescribed by the Department of Correctional Services which is a requirement for parole placement (a prospect for the prisoners in question). However, a few limitations marred this initiative. First, it adopted a narrow approach; i.e., the conflicts in Richmond had also

involved and affected members and supporters of the IFP, yet they were excluded from the process. Similarly, traditional leaders who had been partisan of the violent conflicts did not form part of this initiative, and the composition of the ten delegates excluded many family representatives. Furthermore, the conception of who the victims of the past atrocities were was thin, as the discussion seemed to refer only to immediate family members of those who had been killed, thereby neglecting many survivors such as those who had lost properties and those who had to flee, amongst others. Secondly, the reach of the initiative was ostensibly limited. Van Baalen and Höglund (2019) estimate that at least 100 families lost a member between the years 1990-1999 in the Richmond area. It was therefore apparent that the intervention was too disproportionate to make any significant in-roads towards mending harmed relations in the community. This suggests that the capacity of the Western method in question to reach such a huge number was rather difficult, if not impossible, to achieve the intended goals of the meeting (Murambadoro, 2020). In Rammala's (2021) view, indigenous approaches such as *Lekgotla* would have been ideal as an appropriate community-based intervention approach. *Lekgotla* is a Pedi term that refers to a community assembly convened by a traditional authority council to adjudicate disputes amongst community members within the council's jurisdiction. It has the potential to bring together a large number of adversaries and facilitates social cohesion and healing of disrupted relations (Rammala, 2021).

In 2002, the Richmond community received assistance from the Independent Project Trust (IPT), which is a facilitation, training, and research NGO that works with both public and private organisations that are undergoing changes as a result of political, social, and economic upheavals (Meintjes and Nhlengetwa, 2002). It recruited and trained about 57 candidates on mediation. This cohort comprised victims, survivors, political organisation representatives, ward councillors, and traditional leaders. Whilst the training was preventative in focus, it neglected the need to atone the apparent harm and tensions that still existed and severely disrupted relations amongst the community members in Richmond. Moreover, this training involved manuals and written guidelines that inadvertently gave rise to a challenge for those participants who were illiterate. Although traditional leaders were included in the training, it is doubtful

if an opportunity was offered for them to infuse traditional approaches of mediation into the training programme .

4.4 Entrenched enmity and the permeation of the social fabric

Sharp divisions in Richmond permeated the relations among some families, clans, and neighbourliness. Some of the people who were involved and affected by intra-community conflicts were related to one another (TRC, 1999). This phenomenon was not peculiar to Richmond. For instance, Murambadoro (2020) observes that some people perpetrated against their extended families or relatives in communities that experienced the 2008 violent electoral conflicts in Zimbabwe. Similarly, Rwanda's *Gacaca* courts noted several cases in which victims knew their perpetrators. In Liberia, a *Palava Hut* incident occurred when a hawker recognised one of her customers as an ex-combatant who had walked into her home and murdered her husband during the conflict (Daso, 2017). Subsequently, the Liberian Truth Commission recommended the compulsory appearance of some 6 000 known perpetrators (Daso, 2017).

In 1999, the TRC (1999) heard how a local headman who was feared in the Richmond area had allegedly killed his own brother in front of community members because the deceased had belonged to a different political party and was therefore considered an enemy. In a different Richmond case, the TRC heard how Mr. Motsokolo Phillips, an ANC member, had been struck in the face with the butt of a gun by his cousin, an IFP member, as a result of tensions between the two parties (TRC, 1999). These families were scarred although tensions had become more subtle. Whilst Western legal methods may address the criminal nature of the acts or bring an end to conflicts, they tend to forsake damaged interpersonal relations.

Various reports and the TRC revealed that some victims knew the identity of the perpetrators who had violated them and/or their families. There were some segments in the post-conflict society who criticised post-conflict intervention strategies under the facade of 'let bygones be bygones' as a way of preserving vulnerable peace (Daso, 2017). However, this notion is incompatible with the desire to pursue durable relations and forgiveness in post-conflict communities. Garblah (2011) and the TRC (1998)

make this point most pertinently when they warn that ignoring animosity, anguish, and unresolved hurt in conflict-stricken communities poses the risk of a relapse into conflict. This is because the atrocities of the past linger and trigger revenge attacks that ultimately undermine the peace interventions.

Thamsanqa Malinga (2020) states in his book titled *Blame me on Apartheid* posits that the call to forget the past and move on finds huge resonance with the post-millennial generation and not with those who endure the suffering. He equates the call to a request urging Jews to forget about the Holocaust and to 'just move on'. Malinga does not provide an exposition of the reasons advanced by the post-millennial generation for to their call, although the differences between them and older generations could be simply attributed to experience: i.e., direct versus indirect involvement. However, the remnants of past conflicts are still visible to this day in South African communities where victims who were left disabled erected memorial walls in honour of those who had died for freedom and justice. For instance, the early 1990s ethno-political conflicts on the East Rand of Johannesburg have, to this day, torn through public amenities such as schools, health establishments, and ethnic languages. As a result, South Africa's future outlook is premised on its history and is exemplified in the preamble to the Constitution that commences: "*We, the people of South Africa, recognise the injustices of our past*..."

As referred to earlier, on 13 May 2021 *The Mercury* published an article in which it reported the killing of four men in Richmond. According to the article, the deaths raised concerns about the resurgence of a pattern of violence that had last been observed in the late 1990s. It was apparent from this newspaper article that the community's animosity should not be left unattended. Hence, this study was premised on the recognition of vulnerable relations and the need to restore harmony, build resilience, and ensure durable relations in post-conflict communities through the use of indigenous approaches. Communities emerging out of conflicts will remain mirrored in mistrust and dread if their damaged relationships are not addressed (Perry and Sayndee, 2015). Unresolved issues that underly conflicts breed generational animosity and remain a risk for the recurrence of conflicts. The cost of letting go of the

past is much higher than the cost of taking action to heal the scars. It is a need rather than a choice that conflict-stricken communities should never be forsaken.

4.5 Chapter summary

Relying on Franz Fanon's (1961) conception of violence, this chapter argued that the seeds of South Africa's violent nature entrenched during the years of colonisation, oppression, and apartheid, in fact germinated from the customs and games many indigenous communities equate with masculinity and power. The chapter exposed waves of violent conflicts that stained the Richmond community during the period 1990-2018. The demonstrations that were offered contained a full web of intricacies of violence and the spates of political conflicts that described the protagonists, conflict manifestations, consequences of conflicts, and post-conflict interventions that had been implemented, albeit unsuccessfully. In fact, from the discourse in this chapter it was evident that virtually all post-conflict initiatives that had been implemented in the Richmond community had failed to rebuild relations. The conception of political violence as acts of criminality obscured the (perhaps well-meant but poorly conceptualised) intervention strategies from delving into the root causes of the violent political conflicts that had shook the community. Pointedly, this chapter lay bare the persistent animosity, anxiety, mistrust, and generally poor relations among Richmond community members. Amid the failure of the predominantly Western methods to secure durable post-conflict restoration of relations in Richmond, this chapter justified the exploration for an alternative approach. With this in mind, the next chapter elicits lessons and experiences from selected studies on practices conducted elsewhere across the globe on the use of indigenous approaches to restore peace and build post-conflict relational justice.

CHAPTER 5
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

From 1990 until 2018, the Richmond community endured unresolvable violent political conflicts. The interpersonal relationships that had previously bound and preserved harmony in the society were shattered by the intractable conflicts. However, the relationship component received little to no attention from the intervention strategies used to resolve conflicts in the Richmond area. A significant portion of the current body of research on this topic focuses on national, regional, and continental solutions, ignoring the necessity of tailoring post-conflict interventions in indigenous communities. As may be preferred by residents in the Richmond community, indigenous methods of repairing and preserving relationships after violent political conflict are rarely used or recognized.

Predicated on the background elucidated above, the study aimed to answer the following primary and secondary questions;

Primary research question:

- What is the role of indigenous approaches towards rebuilding relations in post-conflict Richmond community?

Secondary questions:

- How and why are Western approaches applied by actors in post-conflict interventions in the Richmond community?
- What role can indigenous approaches play in achieving post-conflict relational justice in the Richmond community?
- Why are indigenous approaches and post-conflict interventions not utilised to achieve peace among the communities in the Richmond area?
- What overarching principles should guide the application of indigenous approaches in achieving modern-day post-conflict relational justice?

There are two theories that forms the foundation of the study, namely the conflict transformation theory and classical Marxism as the form of conflict theory. The classical Marxism theory enhanced understanding of the origin and manifestations of several episodes of political conflicts experienced in the Richmond community during the period 1990-2018, and it enabled the examination of political polarization that caused intractable conflicts in the Richmond area. Communities that emerge out of conflict require a sustainable conflict transformation strategy to transform the relations harmed by the conflict, and as the theory is predicated on the conflict transformation approach pioneered by Lederach (2003) in the late 1990s, it was highly suitable. Lederach (2003) shifted focus from just ending a conflict to paying more attention to deeper structural, cultural, and long-term relational aspects of conflict issues to go beyond the mere ending of violence.

This chapter's goals are to outline the research strategy, describe the empirical procedures used in the study to collect data that answers the research questions, and justify the choice of the qualitative research design. It also provides an explanation of the case study research methodology that served as the study's foundation. The data generation and analysis techniques that were employed are also highlighted. The chapter is concluded with an exposition of the parameters and constraints of the research design and a brief discussion of the ethical considerations that were adhered to during the study.

There are three sections in this chapter. The justification for the chosen research design is provided in the first part and the research strategy is covered in the following section. The discourse examines the methodology that was used in case study research. The third section discusses the research design, including the selection criteria, data sources, data gathering procedures, and data analysis technique. To conclude this chapter, the discourse discusses the ethical issues that the study adhered to and acknowledges the limitations that affected the research outcomes.

5.2 Research Methodology

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018), research methodology is a set of precise guidelines and practices that serve as the foundation for a project and a framework

for knowledge inquiry. Research methodology is defined by Fouché *et al*. (2019: p. 13) as “a methodical approach to problem-solving in research that is grounded in philosophy and science”. The two definitions denote an established practice accompanied by standards that guide the execution of a scientific research. A researcher's choice of the research design ultimately determines the research methodology, which is essentially composed of the instruments and procedures for conducting the research.

Research can be approached from two well-known and accepted perspectives: qualitative and quantitative. These two methodological approaches differ markedly from each other. Some authors add the mixed method approach as the third category (Fouché *et al.*, 2021). The addition signifies Yin’s (2003) prediction that the paradigm ‘war’ between qualitative and quantitative research is something of the past. The mixed methods approach, which has become quite popular in recent years, is a method built on the properties of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. and is therefore not distinct and separate from the first two. It is unclear why the mixed method should be categorised as the third category as it is not discrete and is constituted by characteristics already present in both qualitative and quantitative methods. Proponents of the mixed method approach argue that researchers are constantly dealing with questions that require multifaceted answers for which a mixed methods approach is an appropriate design.

The choice of which approach to follow cannot be made arbitrarily. Bless *et al.* (2015) posit that the selection of a suitable methodology is contingent upon several considerations that include, but are not limited to, the type of research questions to be answered, the aim of the research, and the nature of the data to be collected. Fouché *et al.* (2021) add that the decision depends on the way the researcher believes the research questions could be answered most truthfully and how assumptions about how reality should be viewed could best be addressed. Hence, ontological positioning determines the research methodology to be followed. The quantitative method relies heavily on a structured method of data collection such as questionnaires, indexes, and scales (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The current researcher found both the qualitative and mixed methods approaches inappropriate for addressing the aim and

objectives of the study, primarily as they would not allow semi-structured research questions aimed at gaining insight into the phenomenon under study. Conversely, the qualitative methodology that was employed utilised semi-structured data collection tools that were appropriate for the research questions that had been designed to generate data.

The study explored how indigenous approaches of conflict intervention may be used to achieve relational justice in the post-conflict Richmond community in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. To obtain information, the researcher asked questions intended to gather interview and focus group participants' views about their conception of indigenous approaches and how to address post-conflict relational justice challenges. For Leedy and Ormrod (2019), qualitative methodology is used to answer questions about the complex nature of challenges relating to a phenomenon with the purpose of describing and understanding this phenomenon from study participants' points of view. The qualitative research approach acknowledged the participants' voices in the study as it permitted them to share their knowledge and experiences of intractable political conflicts, while they were also able to discuss how their preferred indigenous approaches may be enacted to restore interpersonal relations harmed by conflicts.

This qualitative study employed as many as possible people from a variety of levels related to the study; hence, the sample included victims of past conflicts, politicians, traditional leaders, academics, an NGO practitioner, and ordinary community members. Because they participated actively in the study by verbally answering questions contained in a semi-structured interview schedule, the participants felt empowered by the research as their voices were given recognition. In addition, the face-to-face interviews and the focus group discussion allowed a rather informal relationship between the researcher and the participants and this enriched the data that were collected as the participants felt at ease and trusted the intentions of the researcher.

5.3 Case Study Research Design

Butler-Kisber (2018) defines case studies as a thematic inquiry applied to understand the meaning participants give to their life experiences. Yin (2011) understands case

study research as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon, a single individual, group or event within its real-life context to explore the causes of underlying principles. A distinctive feature of a case study is that it endeavours to attain a deep interpretation of the interactions and relations of participants in a given context. The ability to draw conclusions from a single unit of analysis is a case study's strategic value (Schwandt and Gates, 2018). This strength provides important contextual conditions that are pertinent to the phenomenon under the study. In this study, a case study approach was used as the research design.

This study was premised on the limited knowledge about how indigenous approaches preferred by Richmond community can play a role in post-conflict relational justice. The case study approach thus allowed an important contextual exploration of the phenomenon under the study. The case study was chosen as a guiding thematic inquiry area for the study and it enabled the researcher to capture a ‘slice of reality’; i.e., concrete, practical, and context-based knowledge within a bound system (Flyvbjerg, 2011).

5.4 The Richmond Community as the Research Site

The community was selected for this study owing to its unique circumstances related to intractable episodes of intra-community conflicts. Spanning over a period of 28 years of the emergence of conflict in the early 1990s, episodes of strife remained tenacious until 2018 (Krämer, 2020). Van Baalen and Höglund (2019: 1172) describe the intractable conflicts that ravaged the Richmond community as “small-scale civil wars”. According to Ndlovu (2017), such sustained violent political conflicts have been experienced nowhere else in post-apartheid South Africa.

Although other communities, such as *Shobashobane* in KZN and *Katlehong* in Gauteng Province, experienced heightened violence in the 1990s, none of these were engulfed by sustained violence comparable to that in the Richmond community. Most communities ridden by violence in the period leading up to the first democratic election in 1994 returned to some normality soon after the introduction of the Government of National Unity (GNU), but the same cannot be said about the Richmond community

which experienced further violent political conflicts beyond the miracle of political freedom.

What made the Richmond community an interesting site for this study is that, despite it being a homogenous community with its inhabitants sharing a common language, cultural history, heritage, customs, and values, almost all post-conflict intervention strategies were Western modelled and implemented by external actors. As a result, the Richmond communities remained at the receiving end of intervention strategies that had been quite successful in other contexts. This has removed agency from those at grassroots level and sustained top-down political and governance approaches. This case study thus provided an ample opportunity for the people of Richmond to express their views on how they would realise relational justice in their community.

Also, little was previously known about how indigenous pedagogies of the people in Richmond could be contribute to post-conflict relational justice. As case studies are rooted in context, the peculiarities of the Richmond community presented one such case that invited the exploration of indigenous conflict transformation approaches to achieve post-conflict relational justice. The Richmond community was selected as basis for an in-depth exploration of aspects of African indigenous conflict transformation approaches and post-conflict relational justice. This community was suitable as it is a single unit representing indigenous communities elsewhere and across the African continent; hence, it was possible to learn how indigenous approaches can be used to achieve post-conflict relational justice.

5.5. Sampling Technique

The study employed the purposive and snowball sampling techniques to identify and recruit participants. Purposeful sampling, which is a non-probability sampling strategy, was used to select study subjects who would offer specialised, technical, or private information that would have been difficult to obtain through other sampling methods (Maxwell, 2013). The research participants, who comprised members of the general public, ward councillors, academics, an NGO practitioner, and representatives of the traditional authority council were recruited and selected by means of purposeful sampling.

Study participants who are otherwise hard to reach were selected using a non-probability sampling approach called snowball sampling. When using the snowball sampling technique, the researcher started with a single case and asked the initial participant for help to locate the next possible participant until saturation was achieved. Using purposive and snowballing sampling, key informants were selected based on their knowledge and experience of several episodes of intra-community conflicts in Richmond, the impact they had on relations among members of the community, and the role and efficacy of indigenous conflict interventions in relation-building. To obtain the required information, 10 women and 23 men were selected and interviewed. Also, traditional leaders/members of traditional councils and local councillors were recruited based on their authority in the community and the role they played in conflict interventions.

Academics shape public debates and discourse and they attract an audience given their stature in society. Therefore, academics from UKZN were approached to obtain their views on current debates regarding indigenous approaches to post-conflict relational restoration. Finally, a Durban-based NGO, known as ACCORD, was approached given their work in peace-building in various post-conflict communities in Africa. Their involvement in peace and security enabled the researcher to evaluate the usage and preference of for indigenous post-conflict methods for peace-building in African communities.

5.6. Data Collection Techniques

Two data collection methods were used to collect data for the study, namely face-to-face interviews and a focus groups discussion.

5.6.1 Face-to-face interviews

A total of thirty-three (33) face-to-face interviews were conducted with knowledgeable people who had been recruited from the Traditional Authority in the Richmond community, local ward councillors within the Richmond Local Municipality, academics from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), and a practitioner working at the ACCORD NGO. Although the initial plan was to recruit three ACCORD interviewees,

only one practitioner was available. Similarly, the researcher aimed to interview three academics from UKZN, but only two were interviewed as the third became unavailable on the day of the scheduled interview and further attempts to secure another interviewee were unsuccessful. Although the proposed sample of 40 interviewees had not been attained, data saturation was achieved, thereby nullifying the need for further interviews.

A semi-structured interview schedule was the primary data collection tool (see Appendix A). This was an explorative case study and the semi-structured interview method enabled the gathering of rich data about indigenous approaches to relational justice in the Richmond community. In addition, it was possible to observe non-verbal communication and make notes during the face-to-face interviews. All the key informants were over the age of 60 and some community members were unable to write. However, using an audio recorder enabled the participants with literacy limitations to take part without hindrance. A list of semi-structured interview questions was contained in the interview schedule which helped steer and keep the interview flow within the intended parameters. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes.

5.6.2 Focus group discussion

Initially, there was no plan to conduct a focus group discussion for data collection, but this tool was circumstantially applied. During the field visits in the Richmond community, one interviewee referred to a community member who had been active in politics in the 1990s. This person was deemed a potential interviewee and, upon approaching this person, he referred eh interviewer to three other men who fitted the characteristics of the study sample. Fortunately, they were eager to participate in the study. The researcher explained the nature and purpose of the study and their consent was obtained to participate in a focus group discussion. This discussion lasted approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes. The objective was to gain a thorough grasp of their attitudes and perceptions of the nature and role of indigenous approaches towards rebuilding interpersonal relations following conflicts in the Richmond community. The group's small size (only four people) and homogeneity (all men) allowed successful control of the conversation's flow and ensured that it was insightful.

The interview schedule for the semi-structured interviews with the 33 key informants and the four focus group discussion members contained six questions and six sub-questions. However, due to the nature of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher was able to probe deeper if an answer was unclear or if it was of such interest that further data could be generated. These two data collection methods enabled the researcher to gather data that answered the study's research questions and achieved the objectives. A voice recorder was used with the participants' permission in each instance.

5.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis was preceded by data preparation stages. The first was the transcription of the data from the voice recorder into written text to present the participants' exact responses. This step was followed by a data immersion process during which the transcribed texts were read repeatedly and the audio recordings were listened to several times to verify the correctness of the transcriptions and to become more familiar with the responses. The next step was coding, which involved breaking the data down into fragments of similar features from the textual data. Finally, themes were identified from these codes and merged with others where the data suggested so. Codes were identified that were sufficiently supported by the data and those that the data lent minimal support were discarded. The above process enabled the researcher to ready the data for the purpose of analysis and interpretation.

A thematic approach to data analysis and interpretation was followed with the aim of acquiring understanding of the meanings the participants attached to their experiences. These meanings emerged from their narratives of their related experiences, their views, and their perceptions. The thematic analysis method also enabled the researcher to consider and compare the data obtained from the variety of sources, namely key informants, traditional leaders, local politicians, academics from UKZN, and an NGO practitioner to make meaning of the wealth of data that had been generated. It also enabled interpretative analysis of the context within which these participants made meanings and expressed their understandings of indigenous approaches to post-conflict relational justice.

The theory of conflict transformation enabled this researcher to analyse data on relations beyond cessation of physical violence

5.8 Ethical Procedures

Every study involving human participants must specify how and where consent will be obtained, as well as how ethical considerations will be upheld both before and after the study's execution (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Padgett, 2017; Maree, 2020). The ethical cornerstones of the study are explained next.

5.8.1 Permission to conduct research

Permission to recruit and interview the UKZN academics and the NGO practitioners from ACCORD was obtained from the Registrar of UKZN (Appendix B) and the Research Manager (Appendix C) of ACCORD, respectively. Permission had to be obtained to involve the academics and practitioners as they were interviewed in their capacity as employees of their respective organisations. However, such official permission was not required for the rest of the participants as they participated in their own personal capacities and/or their role in the community. The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the UKZN granted ethical authorisation to conduct the study (Appendix D).

5.8.2 Informed consent

During every interview, the aim of the study was clarified and potential participants were given the opportunity to peruse the consent form which was available in both English and IsiZulu. They were then asked to give their permission to take part in the study and for the interview to be recorded by signing the consent form (Appendices E and F). This occurred before all interviews could start. However, one participant, an elderly person, could not sign the consent form due to illiteracy so her permission was captured in an audio recording. A copy of the ethical clearance letter, which included the supervisor’s and the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee's contact information, was given to the participants to verify the authenticity of the research.

5.8.3 Anonymity, privacy, and voluntary participation

The participants were guaranteed that their privacy would be protected both during the interview and when the data would be shared. It was also explained to the participants that they were not required to provide their names. Prior to commencing the interview process, the participants were advised that they might end the interview at any time and that there would be no repercussions for doing so.

5.8.4 Data security

A password-protected computer holds all of the research study's audio recordings and transcripts. The manual field notes are kept in a locked filing cabinet. In terms of the University's rules, the audio recordings and transcripts, including the manually generated field notes, will be incinerated after five years, which will be on 31 March 2029.

5.9 Limitations of the Study

The data were collected soon after the announcement of the date for 2024 General National and Provincial Elections in South Africa, which occurred on 29 May 2024. Before this election date, the Richmond community was visited and approached by various persons who campaigned for their respective political parties, thereby making community members sceptical to meet any stranger. However, as the researcher I provided sufficient details to identify myself as a student at UKZN who conducted research as for my doctoral study. Meeting politicians proved rather difficult during the period prior to the elections as they were busy on their respective campaign trails. An interview with one local ward councillor was postponed twice in one day, and eventually took place at 18h30. The mood and atmosphere in the community were obviously affected by the proliferate political campaigning. Despite all this, the participants volunteered to take part in the study and willingly and frankly shared their opinions about the phenomenon under study.

Another limitation of the study was the failure to interview all three practitioners working for the ACCORD NGO. After interviewing the first participant, efforts were made to interview the other two but they were unavailable owing to work commitments outside South Africa. Similarly, although I had planned to interview three academics

from UKZN, only two were interviewed while the other could not be available despite confirming availability for an interview. As a result, data were only obtained from one NGO expert respondent working for ACCORD and two academics from UKZN.

Moreover, only 30% of the key participants addressed question 1.5 in the interview schedule: *How can indigenous approaches, which have been used successfully in other African rural communities, be used to address modern-day relational animosity in the Richmond community?* This suggested that the participants were not aware of indigenous mechanisms used by other African nations or in South Africa. However, the experts sufficiently attempted to answer this question.

Limitations also generally refer to the generalisability of the findings of a study. However, this study was located in the area that continued to be affected by political strife in South Africa beyond 1994, hence the findings are limited to this area. Moreover, only a relatively small sample participated in the study, yet it was significantly representative of groupings and experts, and the findings are thus a true reflection of the case under investigation.

5.10 Transferability of the Research Findings

Fouché *et al*. (2018: p.404) define transferability of research findings as "the degree to which the results of one study can be used to inform other research projects and situations. According to Tracy (2013), transferability is the ability to apply the study findings to different contexts by incorporating rigor, discipline, and reflexivity into the inquiry process. Both these definitions have the study's credibility in common, and if this is achieved, it increases the likelihood that future researchers will learn from the study as well as from its conclusions. Because of this, the benefits of transferability depend on a variety of factors, such as a suitable study design and data gathering methods as well as appropriate data analysis techniques.

In this study, the researcher used multiple interviewees, including ordinary community members, members of a local traditional authority, politicians, academics from the UKZN, and an NGO practitioner from ACCORD. Moreover, two data collection methods were used, namely individual face-to-face interviews and one focus group

discussion involving knowledgeable community members with practical and extended experience of the political dynamics within the study area. The data collection tool that was used enabled the generation of rich and thick data from participants with different levels of experience, thereby reducing the threat of inherent weaknesses associated with the use of single category participants and one data collection tool (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

5.11 Chapter Summary

The choice of research strategies such as the data collection and analysis techniques was justified in this chapter. A rationale supporting the utilisation of the qualitative case study methodology was also presented. There was a discussion of and justification for the use of the purposive sampling and snowball sampling strategies that were used to select the research participants. By utilising purposive and snowball sampling, the researcher was able to choose a sample that produced rich data while taking into account the impact of several episodes of conflicts in the Richmond community and the post-conflict measures that had been put in place. Data were gathered by using a focus group discussion and conducting one-on-one personal interviews. The content and thematic analysis methodologies were used to execute the analyses of the collected data. The chapter was concluded with an examination of the ethical issues that were adhered to and a description of the restrictions and boundaries that were noted throughout the investigation. A key aspect that was discussed was the study's transferability. In the next chapter the data are presented and analysed and the findings are discussed.

CHAPTER 6
RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, the scientific techniques and procedures that were followed to recruit the participants and to collect, analyse, and interpret the data were expounded. This chapter presents the data evaluation and the findings in relation to the study's central questions "what is the role of indigenous approaches towards rebuilding relations in post-conflict Richmond community? It was important to analyse data that addressed the research question as this would achieve the objectives of the study. These objectives were to:

- Examine the neglect of indigenous approaches to post-conflict interventions in the Richmond community;
- Assess the role of indigenous approaches towards rebuilding post-conflict relational justice in the Richmond community;
- Examine ways in which indigenous approaches can be applied to achieve post-conflict relational justice; and
- Identify and examine overarching principles that may guide the application of indigenous approaches to solving conflict in the Richmond community.

The data were elicited from semi-structured interviews and one focus group discussion comprised of four knowledgeable community members. The interviewees and the focus group participants were purposefully selected for participation in the study.

The participants included one NGO practitioner, two academics from UKZN, politicians from the Richmond local municipality, ordinary community members, and members of the traditional authority council in Richmond. There were 29 interviewees in total and four focus group participants, for a total of 33 participants. The sample comprised seven fewer than the envisioned 40 participants, but this reduced sample posed no challenges because data saturation was reached, thereby obviating any

further interviews as the responses were becoming similar to those previously provided.

This chapter presents the researcher’s analyses of the participants' understandings, experiences, views, and reflections on post-conflict challenges in the Richmond community. The manner in which the data are presented and discussed demonstrates that the data addressed the research questions. The data and results are presented according to key themes, and a summative reflection is presented at the end of each section. The themes are presented sequentially to provide answers to the main research questions. The analyses are also enriched by references to the theoretical and analytical frameworks adopted for the study, while the findings are again located in the pool of knowledge in the next chapter where they are aligned with those of earlier researchers.

According to Strauss and Corbin (2008), dada analysis involves the process of fracturing data into component parts with a view to identifying categories and their properties and dimensions before weaving them coherently back together in a relational whole. The purpose is to analyse themes that emerged from the collected data in order to answer the research questions. Consideration is also given to the relationship of the outcomes with the generated data and to determine if they are in line or in contradiction with results reported in the literature. This process is a critical component of the thematic analysis procedure which requires broad reading in order to successfully identify and analyse emerging themes from the collected data (Dawson, 2007). The findings of this study are therefore discussed in relation to the literature to affirm some earlier findings or to fill any gaps identified in the literature and in the theoretical framework. Moreover, consideration is given to any new themes that emerged from the generated data in an effort to provide comprehensive answers to the core research questions, thereby addressing the objectives of the study and achieving its ultimate aim.

A few key issues emerged from the data provided by the key informants, the NGO expert, and the focus group members. While most agreed on specific issues and gave examples to support their views, there were instances where there were differing

views. Most interviewees and focus group participants shared a sense of personal dissatisfaction with certain post-conflict issues and their impact on them or their family members, while others were vocal about the fact that the South African Constitution continues to subjugate indigenous ways of doing things just as it was during colonialism and apartheid. It was sensed that the level of honesty among the focus group participants was often even stronger than during the key informant interviews.

Before presenting the data, the codes that are used in this thesis to ensure the anonymity of the participants and the categories are summarised in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Codes and categories of the research participants

Code	Interpretation	Category
KI	Key Informants	Ordinary community members
FGD	Focus Group Discussion	Ordinary community members
MTA	Members of Traditional Authority	Traditional authority
EXP	Expert participants	Academics and the NGO practitioner
LWC	Local Ward Councillors	Politicians

The data are presented as themes and subthemes under relevant headings.

6.2 Theme 1: Harmed Relations in the Aftermath of Political Conflicts

In Chapter 2, the literature review demonstrated the devastating consequences of several episodes of violent political conflicts in the Richmond community. These traumatic experiences ranged from deaths, distrust, and tensions to deep-seated resentment. The participants identified a number of ramifications following the spate of conflicts in the Richmond community. This theme focuses on relational harms that occurred in during the period 1990-2018. The focus is important for a number of reasons: it shows the extent of relational harm, reflects on the current status of relations, reveals permeations of conflicts and their effects on families and clans as conflict tends not only to affect a person directly, but also to hurt everyone else within their immediate environment and even the broader community. As Mamdani (2009)

writes, most communities in Africa argue that the concept of victim and perpetrator cannot be narrowed down to single individuals because people are the sum of their environment.

Accordingly, KI-03 expressed the following:
"The killers of my brother's son are now working at the municipality office. They are rewarding them for killing people. But our children are unemployed although they possess certificates."

KI-11 had this to say:
"People are hungry despite having fought for a better life. Those in power have forgotten us and they are hiring people who know nothing about the past."

Although these responses may have had their foundation in the history of violent conflicts in the Richmond community, they were a reflection of people's current socio-economic status. This stemmed from the establishment of political powers that were perceived to be favouring certain individuals over others. The manifestation of these grievances seemed to be birthed by the political reconfiguration post 1994, which saw political powers taking leadership in the national and local government structures..

Similarly, KI-07 stated:
"My shop was burnt down because they were looking for my son. They knew he did not stay in the shop. I did not get anything from the government for my shop."

On the same note, KI-01 had the following to say:
"People who were staying in those houses [pointing at dilapidated rondavel dwellings with a conical thatched roofs] *next to his home fled after being attacked and their home [was] burnt. They never came back. … [surname) moved their children to another village during the violence. Those kids stayed with their relatives until they were grown-ups."*

The above data reflected the extent of the divisive and destructive impact of violent conflicts on individuals, families, and the community at large. Also, the lack of

reparation programmes for the victims of political conflicts was evident. Additionally, the exclusion of economic crimes from the mandate of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission deprived the victims of such atrocities of reparation. It is important to note that the data demonstrated the need for an alternative approach that should go beyond the human rights discourse to include the notion of relational harm (Girelli, 2017). In a study conducted on the impact of post-electoral violence in Zimbabwe, Murambadoro (2020) notes that community enacted approaches focused on interpersonal facets that transcended the human rights violation foci pursued by state-led mechanisms.

The views expressed by some of the participants referred explicitly to remnants of the violent conflicts experienced during 1990-2018. This period covered the last four years of apartheid and twenty-four years of democratic dispensation.

EXP-01 stated:
"*Some of the tensions, resentments, and disgruntlement may not necessarily be emanating from the conflict but [from] current political systems."*

The above participant's perception of nepotism within the local municipality was not attributed directly to the violent political conflict of the study period, but to the existence of patronage networks that were maintained through political chauvinism. However, the net effect of such despondency is that it may impede prospects for finding solutions to other problems experienced by the community in the post-conflict era.

6.3 Theme 2: The Pursuit of Relational Restoration: A Western Perspective

The experience of violent conflict is destructive, not only to property, but to human lives and relations. Therefore, the importance of post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction agendas should include relational restoration processes as an imperative for consolidating long-term peace. Intractable violent political conflicts across the globe have made an inescapable call for measures to rebuild torn and disrupted relations in affected communities. The data that are discussed under this theme unveiled several intervention strategies that were implemented in the Richmond community to quell conflicts and rebuild disrupted relationships.

The theme emerged in response to a research question to determine how and why Western approaches had been applied by actors in post-conflict interventions in the Richmond area. The question intended to investigate whether measures had ever been implemented to address post-conflict challenges. A number of key informants, traditional leaders, and politicians recalled almost the same interventions. As shown below, the majority of the participants typified particular interventions as political due to a number of reasons, such as the characteristics of the initiators and facilitators, the centrality of politics in the area, and the dominance of political actors. The findings revealed a range of intervention strategies, of which six were predominant. They are discussed in the following sub-sections.

6.3.1 The National Peace Accord as a means to quell nationwide conflicts

The majority of the participants remembered how their local political leaders had informed them of their attempts to broker a peace accord in Pretoria. In the early 1990s, many communities across South Africa (such as those living in Boipatong, Katlehong, Bambayi, Ndwedwe, and Richmond) were engulfed by violent political conflicts that resulted in the loss of many lives, the destruction of properties, and the displacement of thousands of people (Taylor, 2002). Subsequently, more than forty stakeholders, including political parties and government and NGO representatives, first negotiated and then entered into a peace accord on 14 September 1991 with a view to consolidating a cease fire that would result in peace across South Africa (Nebandla, 2005). In 1991, the National Peace Accord that had been concluded by leaders from across South Africa was cascaded down to communities through government structures. This was not a custom-made intervention, but a top-down initiative which, although well-meant as a starting point to lasting peace, did not consider the local dynamics that would continue to cause conflicts in local areas.

LWC-02 recalled the following:

“Our leader called us to a meeting and told us that the national leaders of our organisation had met with Mandela and de Klerk, and there was no conflict anymore. At the time, Richmond was on fire and people were fleeing their homes.”

EXP-02 did not feel that the National Accord was a suitable intervention:
"The inherent lack of the success of national initiatives of peace was that they did not involve local role players during planning and execution of the plans. For unexplained reasons, locals were expected to adhere to measures stipulated in the peace accord. South Africa had a National Peace Accord in the 1990s, but it was concluded with no plan in place to have it cascaded down to grassroots level. This approach created a discord and the ultimate collapse of the accord."

A disturbing finding was that the National Peace Accord ignored local contexts in favour of national projects in the negotiations for peace. The latter were concluded by major actors in these peace negotiations, such as political parties and NGOs (Genger, 2020). This means that a one-size-fits-all agreement was signed as a peace deal to be filtered down to local communities where conflicts were actually still raging. What is even more bizarre is the non-involvement of those affected by the conflicts in the negotiation and design processes of the National Peace Accord. This top-down approach was indicative of the Western idea of conflict intervention and resolution. Therefore, in the African context, this created an imbalance as nationally designed interventions did not show any regard for local contexts and dynamics. Newman (2011) argues that the hegemony of Western methods in peace-building tends to prioritise macro-level interventions that seek to strengthen Western institutions, infrastructures, and democratisation projects at the expense of localised conflict transformation approaches that should be pivotal in restoring broken relationships

The failure of the National Peace Accord was also highlighted by EXP-01, who expressed his views as follows:
"Communities continued to experience untold hardships, disruption, and loss of human lives in the years following the National Peace Accord."

The above comment implied the limited success of the National Peace Accord to bring an end to the political conflicts in the Richmond community. The Boipatong and Katlehong communities in the Gauteng Province were also engulfed by massacres in 1992 and 1993 respectively, while conflict in the Richmond area reached the level of a small-scale civil war during that period. Numerous atrocities occurred after the

National Peace Accord and threatened South Africa's political transition to democratic dispensation. The data averred that the Peace Accord never enjoyed local ownership and legitimacy in the Richmond area. The UN's resolve to 'turn local' stemmed from this neglect as it sought to entrench the values of local communities and endorse the dominance of local needs and realities. However, Paffenholz (2015) and Miall (2004) contend in disfavour of the binary conception as they argue that any intervention strategy should attend to both national and local level needs and interests. The proponents of the 'local turn' do not accept their view as they argue for less influenced and locally designed implementation approaches to conflict intervention. However, the AU's lexicon of 'African solutions to African problems' lends support for exclusively owned local ownership, participation, and self-determination (Genger, 2020).

6.3.2 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Freeman (2006) defines a truth commission as an independent and victim-oriented commission of inquiry established by a government for the purposes of: (1) discovering and proving full account of gross human rights abuses during a specific period as defined in the terms of reference; and (2) making recommendations to facilitate the healing of the wounds caused by past atrocities and establishing measures to prevent their recurrence. Hayner (1994) describes a truth commission as a quasi-judicial body in a post-conflict society with the responsibility to investigate past acts of human rights abuses perpetrated by the past regime. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) investigated various acts of gross human rights violations that had occurred between the periods 01 March 1960 and 10 May 1994. Hayner (1994) points out that such investigations normally deal with human rights violations that occurred in the past, while they do not consider current acts that ordinarily fall under the function of an Ombudsman or Human Rights Commission, as stated in Chapter 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

In this context, KI-16, stated:

"They told us people who [had] killed our children wanted to apologise, and we were invited to attend the TRC hearing in Durban. On the day of the hearing, they [called up] up one at a time [and I had] to explain what had happened on the fateful night

when my son was killed. They did say they were sorry for what had happened, but none told me who had ordered them to kill my son."

KI-19 corroborated the above response in the following comment:
"I remember seeing on television that … [surname], the mother of one of the boys who had been killed not far from our house, was talking to the perpetrators at the TRC meeting that was held in Durban."

Durban is located approximately 75 km north of the Richmond community. The TRC conducted hearings at the time when South Africa had just achieved democracy and when a vulnerable peace treaty had been signed. This may explain the use of a location for peace discussions outside the Richmond community. A further plausible explanation could be that the TRC chose a central location for hearing victim statements from various localities. However, the distances between the local areas and the venue where the TRC conducted its enquiries posed the issue of a lack of accessibility for local community members.

Moreover, LWC-01 expressed concern regarding the timeframe the TRC had allocated to hear locals' stories:
"*…it was accorded a short period and, as a result, left out many other people who could not reach it [the venue] within the timeframe.*"

According to the Terms of Reference (ToF), the TRC was scheduled to commence hearings on 15 April 1996 and complete its operations on 29 October 1998. In this period, it would cover incidences of gross human rights violations over a period of 35 years, spanning from 01 March 1960 to 10 May 1994 (TRC, vol. 1, 1998). However, given the extended work covered by its Amnesty Committee, the lifespan of the TRC was extended to April 2003 as many victims had missed an opportunity to appear before it and make statements to the TRC, not because it was inaccessible or its lifespan was short, but because their political parties discouraged them from doing so. The mandate of the TRC was clear: to gather information as far as possible which would paint a full picture of what the majority of South Africans had endured during the apartheid years. Once the TRC had concluded its work and issued its final report,

reparation programmes were approved by the new democratic government. However, the government's reparation programme came under strong criticism from those who had not been able to submit statements to the TRC as well as NGOs representing them.

6.3.3 Truce statements by political leaders

The majority of the participants agreed that, at the height of the political and armed conflict, public statements by political leaders either quelled or fuelled the violence. Several participants indicated that ANC and IFP political leaders, and later those representing the UDM, had made statements that had endeavoured to bring a cease fire and peace to the Richmond community. Krämer (2020) posits that both the ANC and IFP were concerned about exuding a peaceful public image.

LWC-03 had this to say about political leaders' public statements:
"In 1993, before we went to the elections, Nelson Mandela was driven around the Richmond community [and he] urged people to stop fighting and killing one another. It only got quiet for a short period before violent conflicts re-ignited soon afterwards."

EXP-01 shared rather a sceptical view about the truce statements political leaders made:
"The leaders of the ANC and IFP held joint rallies in several communities troubled by political conflicts, including Richmond and Shobashobane. During the joint rallies, leaders of both organisations denied responsibility for the violence and atrocities that had occurred. Instead, the phenomenon of a 'third force' emerged as both organisations denied responsibility for the atrocities."

According to some participants, the truce paraded by political leaders was a façade devoid of real meaning. Ngwenya and Ndhlela (2004) and Nebandla (2005) assert that the ANC and IFP declared war against each in the early 1990s, which persisted even years after 1994. The prominence of these parties as protagonists in the persistent conflicts lends support for the argument. The strife thus persisted despite the parties' public denial that they were formally at war. The visit to the Richmond area by former President Nelson Mandela affirmed that 'no-go areas' existed where entry

was denied to opposing community members and law enforcement agencies. As a result, the police were restricted in their ability to conduct their work freely within the Richmond area. Public statements urging warring factions to stop fighting and to promote peace demonstrated the concerted intention by some political leaders to end the conflict and restore disrupted relations.

6.3.4 The 'Five-Aside' initiative

Most participants mentioned the 'Five-Aside' initiative as an intervention strategy initiated by the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government to end the hostilities. It was spearheaded by an erstwhile Member of the Executive Council (MEC) responsible for community safety. The majority of the participants referred to this initiative as a multi-party initiative that aimed to provide mediation training and facilitate a victim-offender reintegration process. When asked how the committee came about, one participant indicated that it had been constituted by five members from three political formations, namely the ANC, IFP, and UDM. The primary role of the body that was formed was to facilitate meetings between prisoners who had committed atrocities in the conflict period in the Richmond area and the next of kin of those whose deaths they had caused.

KI-03 recollected how 'Five-Aside' had come about:

"We, the representatives of the local political parties in the Richmond community, who were [members of] the ANC, IFP, and the UDM, were taken to Port Edward for three weeks and offered training on mediation. On our return, we visited churches starting in Patheni followed by other sections of the community to teach them about peace."

The initiative featured protagonists involved in several episodes of violent political conflicts in the Richmond community. However, the narrowing of the definition of 'victim', which seemed to refer only to families who had lost loved ones, undeniably left many other survivors in anguish. Victims who had lost livestock and/or property did not stand a chance to be selected to participate in the 'Five Aside' initiative. Mamdani (2002) aptly captures this marginalisation when he argues that Western methods of conflict intervention neglected sufferings such as economic losses as well as loss of property, livestock, and other belongings. According to the conflict theory,

the disproportionate representation of various groups in peace negotiations and other peacebuilding structures results in further conflicts. A Rwandan scenario prior to the eruption of the 1994 genocide provides a classic case in point. In Rwanda, the disproportionate low representation of Hutus (the majority population) in a minority Tutsi-led government was seen as the main reason for the genocide that devastated Rwanda in 1994.

This resonated with LWC-03's memory as he shared the following:
"Willies Mchunu [then senior ANC leader in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal] convened several meetings with leaders of different political parties present in Richmond community following episodes of violent conflict."

Most of the participants agreed that attempts had been made at political level to quell violent conflicts in Richmond. According to respondent LWC-01, the 'Five Aside' initiative was one such intervention. According to the conflict transformation theory, continuous dialogue and peaceful co-existence during the period following any violent conflict are paramount (Miall, 2004).

Engaging in the dialogue, KI-03 shared the following:
"I was requested to serve in the 'Five Aside' committee which was tasked to facilitate community reintegration of prisoners who were serving custodial sentences for murders committed during the violent conflicts in the Richmond community. These sentences were nearing expiration and they were due to be released back into the community."

The 'Five Aside' scenario resonates with the belief expressed by Fisher *et al.* (2009) that conflict transformation aims to, amongst others, end disputes and improve relationships between or among the disputing parties. Moreover, parties need to establish protocols and structures that promote capacity building, unity, and social cohesion. In the Richmond area, building capacity through the 'Five Aside' initiative was a mediation technique and preventative approach given the history of intractable conflicts in this community.

6.3.5 Deployment of law enforcement agencies to quell violence

The view was widely held that the use of law enforcement agencies as a conflict intervention mechanism did not improve relations between the warring factions in the Richmond community. The majority of the participants were of the view that both the police and soldiers were partisan in dealing with violence in the Richmond area.

This view was expressed by MTA-03 who remembered the following:
"There were police and soldiers in armoured vehicles day and night patrolling around the Richmond community and forcing people into their homes immediately after sunset. And when we got into our houses we got attacked. Some people were allowed to walk around freely and terrorise the community."

KI-23 was of the view that the presence of law enforcement agencies in Richmond did not help as she related a devastating personal experience of an attack during a curfew:
"My husband was old, he could not run. They found him at home and stabbed him to death and no one was arrested but police vehicles were all over."

It emerged from these responses that the presence of law enforcement agencies in the community did not stop the violent attacks. It was also clear that the attacks were carried out by some community members against their fellow members. The perception that the police was inefficient in ushering in peace and bringing to book those responsible for crimes stemmed from the persistence of these conflicts. According to Taylor (2002), the inefficiency of the police to curb the violence bolstered accusations of a 'third-force' as the driver of the killings in Richmond, particularly as many perceived the failure of the police as deliberate. However, Schuld (2013) blames this inefficiency on a lack of skill, the shortage of resources, and the unwillingness of witnesses to testify in court proceedings.

The deployment of law enforcement contingents was an unavoidable intervention as the violence resulted in criminal acts. Even when the motive for killing a person is political, the killing remains a criminal act and attracts legal canons (Ntuli, 2016.) Deploying the military is a common intervention most states have used. According to

Articles 4(h) and 4(j) of the AU's Constitutive Act (African Union, 2000), the Peace and Security Council of Africa has the responsibility to deploy peace keeping missions as an intervention strategy during times of violence.

For KI-03, the presence of law enforcement contingents helped to some extent:
"Police and soldiers went into people's homes to search for and confiscate arms and ammunition. There were a lot of arms here; some were hidden in the bushes, but the police and soldiers took them."

Conversely, KI-28 stated:
"There are [still] a lot of guns in the Richmond community. Many people have guns, and these houses [waving his hand] are where guns are hidden."

In a conflict situation where human lives are wasted and injuries and displacements are wreaking havoc, a priority is to cease physical violence. In such instances, Western measures such as the arrest of suspects, raids, and the confiscation of arms are the precursor to measures aimed at the attainment of negative peace. At this point, relations are not necessarily ignored, but they are simply not the immediate priority. Notwithstanding, the weaknesses associated with the deployment of law enforcement agencies in the conflict situation under study showed that it was difficult, if not impossible, for local authorities to curb access to guns and disarm the antagonists involved in the conflict other than by the deployment of state security forces. Ironically, even these forces were not successful in preventing the use of arms to the detriment of the community in question.

6.3.6 The configuration of villages into wards

According to the participants, when the local sphere of government was introduced in 1998, some sections in the Richmond were consolidated and demarcated into one ward. In South Africa, social cohesion is a political agenda as mandated by the South African National Development Plan 2030, outcome 13. This section envisions that South Africans will be more aware of their similarities than their differences by 2030.

LWC-01 explained how earlier politically polarised sections of the community had been configured:

"The villages of Smozomeni, an area which was an ANC stronghold, and Patheni, which was an IFP strong base, now fall under one ward. While the area of Magoda where the ANC once enjoyed support but later got dethroned by its splinter party, UDM, is currently reconfigured with the ANC's erstwhile homes of its supporters in MaSwazini, Cuba, and Richmond town, which are now one ward. These villages did not see eye to eye during the conflicts. But they now share, for example, some health facilities and a community hall."

EXP-02, had this to say about the establishment of the local government structure:

"The establishment of different sections of the community into wards was meant to encourage peace; but, political contestations that came with the introduction of local government also re-ignited sporadic violent conflicts."

A similar view was expressed by KI-03:

"My family lost a member during a stalemate in the local municipality as he objected to a proposition for mass resignation of councillors to show solidarity with the then fired mayor."

The data cited above demonstrated the consequences of the introduction and existence of the local government sphere in the study area. Political parties vied for power in order to take government in the local municipality which would allow them access to the resources at the disposal of these municipalities. Even before then, such contests had been heightened within political parties as members had competed for leadership positions which would ultimately increase their chances of being appointed into government positions.

The conflict theory envisions such contestations to be a source of conflict as wealthy individuals who possess power will do everything in their power to retain it and keep the community in a never-ending conflict situation to sustain their wealth. In this regard, Marx argues that society is divided into two classes: the bourgeoisie, who dominate the state apparatus and are powerful, wealthy, and noble, while the

proletariat, who are impoverished, financially immature, and socially deflated. According to Marx, these two will remain in conflict until an equilibrium has been reached (Kebede, 2019). The data revealed that a number of Western methods had been implemented in the Richmond community in order to restore relations disrupted by intractable conflicts. The participants were also asked to reflect on the reasons that encouraged the use of Western methods in conflict resolution efforts in the study area.

6.4 Theme 3: The Persistent Hegemony of Western Interventions

This theme unpacks plausible reasons for the hegemony of Western methods and the limited utilisation of indigenous approaches to secure peace in the Richmond community. The majority of the participants agreed that the interventions had ignored indigenous approaches and they highlighted a number of factors that spoke of this oversight.

6.4.1 The marginalisation of indigenous approaches

Globalisation has various dimensions that sometimes affect tribal communities positively and sometimes negatively. Mignolo (2005) notes that colonialism perpetuated epistemic violence by imposing Western beliefs on colonised populations. This trend embodies what Shahjahan and Kezer (2013) refer to as the phenomenon of coloniality, or an imperial logic of domination that derives from colonial and imperial experiences. The majority of the participants agreed that, to sustain the dominance of Western methods, conflict interventions were designed to weaken and subjugate indigenous strategies by those in power and authority.

EXP-03 stated:

"*It's difficult to understand…people in an indigenous community with similar traditions, culture, and language are fighting, and leaders go out of the community to look for a solution."*

Connecting this historical dominance of Western methods to the present-day hegemony, Sharp (2009) states that, while formerly colonised nations might have accomplished political and economic decolonisation, psychological decolonisation has been more challenging. This suggests that colonialism permeates the psyche of

its subjects, which is a notion that justifies Fanon's (1961) assertion that power struggles are psychological as well as material. In the current study, some participants subscribed to the same African-centred worldview, arguing that they should have found within themselves the means to prevent the escalation of the conflicts that had paralysed life in the Richmond community.

However, such opportunities were rarely used, as MTA-03 stated:
"*No one got asked what can be done to resolve the ongoing violent conflicts in the Richmond community."*

This response suggested that the use of Western methods was imposed upon the community through top-down strategies. The measures that were employed disregarded the aspirations and agency of the local people in the Richmond area and disallowed them the courtesy to decide on strategies to resolve their own post-conflict relational challenges. A dilemma for many post-conflict societies and communities is always how to address their dark history of violence and injustice (Daso, 2017). The manner in which a society decides to deal with past violations of human rights determines the extent to which long-term stability and reconciliation may be achieved. When the participants were asked about the efficacy of the Western interventions applied in Richmond, various responses were offered, and these are discussed under the sub-themes below.

6.4.2 The centralisation of conflict resolution strategies

Centralisation means to place planning, decision-making, and/or administrative authority in the hands of one person or jurisdiction (Quible, 2000). The issue of centralisation versus decentralisation is a major source of difference of opinion within the management structures of many organisations. The challenge is not to decide which to prefer, but rather to analyse the situation to determine which functions may need centralising and which functions may need decentralising. Such an approach could be helpful in peace and conflict studies and practices. The study found that a number of strategies had been centralised to solve post-conflict relational challenges in the Richmond community.

KI-05, whose family had lost several members, including her son, soon after the 1991 National Peace Accord had this to say:
"*I was nominated to be part of the 'Five Aside' initiative as my family had lost seven members in two days during a violent conflict."*

KI-09 stated:
"*The then MEC of Community and Safety took us to [name of location] and provided us with training on mediation. We were expected to train others when we returned."*

It was apparent that a top-down approach had been adopted by those who had sought to intervene to restore post-conflict relations in the Richmond community. Ljungkvist and Jarstad (2021) identify the shortcomings of a top-down approach in designing and implementing post-conflict intervention strategies in communities recuperating from conflicts. In the current study, it was unclear how members of the 'Five Aside' initiative had been selected, but it did seem that they had been handpicked without any prior consultation with those affected. Nonetheless, the participants did not say whether any objections had been raised against the inclusion or exclusion of some as members of the initiative.

6.4.3 Use of state security apparatus as conflict intervention strategy

During conflicts, governments of the day find themselves under pressure from their home populations to intervene in cases of gross human rights violations. However, versatile measures should be used for conflict interventions. It was estimated that, at the height of the violent conflicts in Richmond between 1990-1994, 140 people had lost their lives (Taylor, 2002). Such an unacceptable rate of casualties was enough reason why the government of the time ought to have used law enforcement agencies to avert the escalation of the conflicts and prevent further loss of human lives. The following are what some participants shared:

KI-12:
"*We woke up to find police and soldiers patrolling the streets of the Richmond community without being given a prior notice."*

In support of this submission, KI- 15 said:
"When the soldiers were camping around here, I lost a lot of livestock because they wanted to feed themselves. And these were forcefully taken from my farm."

Given the nature and the extent of the atrocities that were committed in the Richmond area, it was inevitable that law enforcement agencies were deployed. However, this deployment was typical of the Western method of conflict resolution. Scholars of security studies critically argue that security forces try to survive and therefore construct security problems in a way that suits their interests. This claim does not seem to acutely reflect the action of the security forces in the Richmond area as the atrocities were indeed real and not a construct of the law enforcement agencies of the time.

6.4.4 Usurping local agency through the use of external actors

The study found that interventions by the *Sinani* NGO were introduced and led by persons from outside the Richmond community. However, to quell the conflicts, any intervention was desirable, but it was the manner in which and the leadership of these efforts that hamstrung their result due to a lack of legitimacy, support, and local ownership. According to Lederach (1995), power relations that are characterised by deep-seated injustices are a precursor for the development of post-conflict intervention strategies. Botes (2003) agrees, emphasising that the focus on empowerment and capacity building of powerless actors through measures such as training fosters more balanced interactions. Moreover, local capacity building initiatives promote the cultural diversity discourse concerning topics related to the root causes of conflicts. The middle-out conflict transformation strategy advocated by Lederach (1992) is one of the theoretical foundations for the idea that local actors must be given the necessary authority to initiate and implement effective peacebuilding. It therefore seems apparent that Sinani ought to have empowered the community as a starting point by allowing them to retain their agency.

In this context, KI-05 stated:
"If a cleansing ceremony is to be conducted in the Richmond community, it should be a decision by the people of Richmond and performed by priests, sangomas, and

traditional healers from Richmond. Even the goat or beast to be sacrificed should be from Richmond."

There was no indication in the data why indigenous approaches had not been used as post-conflict intervention strategies. However, a cogent explanation can be found in Ani's (2020) assertion that, since attaining independence in the 1950s and 1960s, many African states have done little to explore ways to re-empower the indigenous systems of conflict intervention that were systematically degraded during the colonial era. The disenfranchisement of indigenous approaches of conflict intervention stunted their development and, as a result, some post-conflict communities still prefer Western methods as opposed to indigenous approaches. With the exception of Rwanda (that used the *Gacaca* court system) and Liberia (that used the *Palava Hut* method), all other African countries failed to incorporate indigenous approaches to post-conflict intervention in their quest to build reconciliation and peace (Daso, 2017).

6.5 Theme 4: The Role of Indigenous Models in Mending Relationships

In order to gain a more in-depth perspective on the use of indigenous approaches, the participants were asked if, in their view, the people of Richmond preferred the use of indigenous models to restore relations harmed by the violent political conflicts. In addressing this question, local terminologies were used by the participants to unveil the various indigenous approaches to post-conflict relational restoration preferred by ordinary community members. An overwhelming majority of the participants declared a preference for indigenous approaches to restore relations, although they referred to different implementation strategies. It was observed that the majority of the key participants responded unanimously in the affirmative.

KI-02 had this to say:

"When a person dies during a conflict, we believe they do not rest with amadlozi abo (the ancestors) due to their unnatural death, and for them to be reunited with amadlozi, a ritual has to be performed at their gravesite to call upon their amadlozi to welcome them [in the afterlife]. If that does not happen, they become homeless and their spirit continues to wonder and cause problems for the living."

According to local belief, the spirit of a deceased person does not vanish into thin air, as death is a rite of passage into the realm of the living dead where one takes on a new role as a guardian of the family (Murambadoro, 2020). But when one's spirit is angered, it carries a bad aura that does not augur well for the tranquillity of the metaphysical realm; hence, such spirits are in a state of limbo. They are thus considered homeless because when one dies one's spirit is expected to rest among the *amadlozi akubo* (the gods).

The view expressed above was supported by KI-04:
"After a conflict has ended, we perform ukugezwa kwezikhali [a symbolic ritual performed to wash the weapons used during the conflict]. This is meant to restore ex-combatants to a state where they were before going into conflict, and it officially marks the end of conflict."

According to MTA-03, when a person is killed in a violent manner, *inhlambuluko,* a cleansing ceremony that is conducted at the spot where a death occurred, has to be conducted. A beast is slaughtered and its blood and offal are sprinkled on the spot where the person died. This is believed to cleanse the area of a bad omen caused by the murder. Embedded in the *inhlambuluko* practice is the belief that when a person dies, the cosmological community gets polluted by the spilled blood. Honwana (1997) describes this phenomenon as social pollution, a form of hovering and restless spiritual entity that disrupts the cosmic balance between entities in the physical and metaphysical reams.

A common thread in the responses was the strong belief in indigenous ways of rebuilding peace in communities emerging from conflict. The participants also referred to a persistent void that was harboured by the survivors of several episodes of violent conflicts in Richmond. This void stemmed from their unsatisfied desire for the facilitation of healing and peace using methods that would have resonated with the people's worldview. However, notwithstanding the need for such indigenous customs, the participants stated that such methods had hardly ever been used to honour the dead in the Richmond community. This might be attributed to the fear of retribution should the family expose themselves to the death site.

The data revealed that indigenous pedagogies in the study area served two primary objectives: (1) the reception of the spirit of the deceased by the ancestors, and (2) the avoidance of a bad omen caused by an unnatural death in the cosmos. Both these would have been achieved had rituals involving the survivors and, in some instances, the perpetrators, been performed. The participants averred that custom demanded the acknowledgement of the interrelatedness and interdependence of the living and the departed. Notwithstanding the unanimous support for such indigenous approaches, the Richmond community was reportedly not accorded opportunities to adhere to these customs.

Whilst agreeing that performing customary rituals would have been a way to facilitate and rebuild interpersonal relations in Richmond, LWC-03 urged for a more inclusive approach:
"Conducting of rituals should accommodate the religious affiliations of all the people in the Richmond community."

This participant thus cautioned against elevating a single theology in a community with multiple religious denominations, thereby excluding others in the process. This highlighted the importance of acknowledging the role of each grouping in this inter-faith community to ensure social harmony, particularly in the post-conflict context. This warning could be attributed to the hindsight gained by the TRC's involvement and the criticisms directed at its approaches. The TRC proceedings advanced the Christian theology to the exclusion of others as it commenced its sessions with prayer and urged those found responsible for the atrocities to beg for forgiveness (TRC, 1998). Moreover, Christianity was used as the state's theology to legitimatise apartheid (Van der Merwe *et al.,* 2010). It has been argued that the imposition of one religious practice onto others could be a potential spoiler of peace as the marginalised would also want to claim and assert their position in society. In the Richmond context, ignoring customary practices constituted a direct transgression of the community's basic fundamental right to cultural and religious practices, which is a right that is enshrined and protected by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. It is important in this discussion to note that, in any inter-faith community, all groupings must play a role in

restoring harmed relations when they emerge out of conflict (Van der Merwe *et al.,* 2010).

Remarkably, none of the participants condemned Western methods. Clearly, their endorsements of indigenous approaches was not a rejection of Western methods, but rather a call for a combination of the two.

6.6 Theme 5: Principles for the Implementation of Indigenous Approaches

The data showed the distinctive nature of indigenous approaches that are rooted in values, traditions, and cultural practices. Like the works of authors such as Boege (2006), Ani (2017), and Olowu (2017) who established guiding features that inform African indigenous conflict intervention strategies, the participants identified some common elements that they deemed pertinent to indigenous conflict intervention.

EXP-03 stated:

"*There are universal practices of post-conflict intervention which are expressed in the local practices of an indigenous community. But for a mechanism to have the 'indigenous' tag, it should contain identifiable features not found elsewhere other than within indigenous customs*."

EXP-01 lent support to this view by emphasising the following:

"*The coming together of indigenous people under a tree does not in itself make such a gathering indigenous even if it is facilitated by their traditional leader. But the coming together of indigenous people and concluding their conversation by slaughtering a bull and sprinkling offal on the ground to signify agreement and reconciliation can be deemed indigenous."*

These responses suggest that referring to an approach as indigenous, even by indigenous people themselves, is not sufficiently meaningful as it does not necessarily make the approach indigenous. In essence, the chosen approach should contain properties not found in other classifications such as Western methods. When the participants were asked to reflect on what constituted indigenous approaches to restore harmed interpersonal relations, they mentioned several features that would

identify and guide indigenous approaches in post-conflict communities. These are explored below.

6.6.1 Spirituality and the performance of rituals

The majority of the key informants agreed that spirituality informed the lived world and sense of belonging of many people in Richmond when dealing with violence. For them, violence affected the network of relations of entities in the entire cosmological community consisting of living beings in relationship with one another, nature, and the spiritual domain of the ancestors. It was clear that rituals played a significant role in shaping cultural identity and reinforcing social values inherent in their culture.

KI-01 expressed a need for rituals as follows:
"Indawo yase Richmond idinga ukugezwa [the whole of Richmond needs cleansing] because those who died during the violent conflicts are symbolically believed to have been buried with guns, spears, and shields in their hands and as such continue to fight. These fighting spirits fuel the in-fighting amongst the living in this community."

KI-07 offered the following argument:
"We need at least one member of a family of those who were killed during the conflict here in Richmond to go to their grave sites and speak to them and urge them to calm down and rest in peace."

Similarly, KI-05, whose son was killed soon after the Peace Accord, said:
"We had to rush the burial of my son because we were told […] were coming to attack us at the gravesite. Now, I can't even show you my son's grave. I don't know where it is."

These responses demonstrated that burial rites could not be observed owing to tensions in the community as well as outright threats of further harm. Rushed burials that prevented grieving families from observing their customary burial rites were a source of attrition for some survivors, but also highlighted the failure of Western methods to provide protection for grieving families. However, it was unclear if the burial rite custom referred to applied only to the unnatural death of a family member

during a political conflict, or if it was a practice following a death regardless of its cause.

KI-16 reiterated the need to perform a death ritual to appease the spirit of the deceased:
“People were attacked and some killed during a night vigil held at the school. We later heard from the school principal that kids had been fighting violently, stabbing one another, and some were aggressive towards teachers. This was the result of dead spirits hovering in that school.”

Nigosian (1994) argues that, in the world view of traditional communities, when an unnatural death has occurred it affects the network of relations of entities in the entire cosmological community, and this requires cosmos-specific rituals to be performed. For the participants, rituals played a significant role in transitioning from the realm of the living into the sphere of the dead. Also, they deemed rituals a demonstration of the interdependence between the living and the dead. Therefore, as rituals could not be performed, the one could not be extricated from the other, resulting in unappeased spirits.

For KI-08, the performance of a death ritual would have brought peace and acceptance:
“My brother’s son was abducted during the violent political conflict in 1993 because he belonged to the [a particular political organisation], and since then no one has seen him. They killed him and hid his body. Uma bengasikhombisa lapho bafihlakhona umzimba wakhe, singaya koshisa impepho ezokwazi ukulala namadlozi akhe ngokuthula. [If they can show us where they hid his body, we would go to the site and burn incense so he can be able to rest in peace with his ancestors].”

A common thread in the responses under this sub-theme was a strong connection between the living and the dead. This is consistent with Olupona’s (2022) view that a connection exists stemming from the understanding that humans are living, spiritual beings who belong to a cosmological community that resides in both the physical and metaphysical realms. Murambadoro (2020) notes that spiritual agency is central to the

justice process of indigenous people because it restores social harmony and repairs the harm done to relations among cosmic entities.

Although the majority of the participants presented their views on the spiritual world and the performance of rituals as a monolithic truth, LWC-01 expanded on this perspective by stating the following:
"We need the involvement of every role player in the community: religious leaders, traditional healers, and non-governmental organisations. No one should be left out because conflicts affect everyone."

Meintjes and Nhlengetwa (2002) argue that the call for inclusivity embraces various religious backgrounds and that an inter-faith approach to conflict resolution fosters healing and peaceful co-existence. In this context, KI-04 stated:
"Priests should move from one section of the community to the other and pray for those who are still hurt and for peace to reign."

The participants' comments affirmed the centrality of spirituality amongst the people in the Richmond community. De Coppet (2002) supports this view as he considers spirituality and rituals as sources that create, maintain, inform, and transform a society's cultural identity and social relations.

6.6.2 Interventions by *Sinani,* a non-governmental organisation

Most of the participants mentioned that the intervention of an NGO named Sinani (a Zulu word for "we are with you") was ineffective in achieving peace in the Richmond community as it fragmented rather than united the bereaved after the death of a loved one during the conflict period. More particularly, the majority of the participants expressed discontentment with the manner in which the NGO went about the arrangements for and the execution of the cleansing ceremony. The participants were of the view that there was a need for inclusivity during the cleansing ceremony, but stated that this did not occur.

In this regard, MTA-03 expressed the following:
"*Sinani recruited people residing in Magoda [one section of Richmond] to be involved in the cleansing ceremony. As a result, people from other sections were left out. Many believed that Sinani would visit their areas but were disappointed because the organisers did not involve other sections in the initiative."*

It is unclear why *Sinani* neglected other sections of the community that were similarly affected by the intractable conflicts. In a community torn by conflict, inclusivity is an indispensable and cohesive force that brings warring factions together. For instance, realising the role of ethnic polarisation which resulted in genocide, Rwanda addressed this ethnic undertone by removing the classification of citizens from all official documents (Daso, 2017). The conflict theory posits that conflicts originate from the paternalistic division of society which heightens tensions brought on by the enduring dominance of one group over others (Kimemia, 2021).

KI-22 echoed the dissatisfaction expressed by MTA-03:
"*Sinani did not ask us. They chose an open field to perform the cleansing ceremony. They were supposed to do this at the spot where people were killed because that is where blood was spilled.*"

These responses affirmed the failure of *Sinani* to navigate and broker peace among the various groups involved in the killings in the Richmond area. Insufficient consultation seemed to undermine what would otherwise have been an effective approach that would have fitted snugly in the worldview of many Richmond community members. As Clarke (2018) notes, a lack of local ownership, the prominence of external actors, the usurped agency of locals, and partial implementation were among the challenges that mitigated the effective use of indigenous post-conflict interventions in the Richmond community.

MTA-02 maintained that there was a rather trite weakness inherent in the *Sinani* initiative:
"Rituals were held at the end of negotiations, after the settlement had been reached. People ku le ndawo [in this place] should have had an opportunity to sit down and

speak about their past, and when they forgave each other, then they could have performed the cleansing ceremony."

Clearly, cleansing rituals were performed after the parties had agreed to a truce, but they were not a means to an end, but rather an 'end' that went no further. The way the initiative was implemented undermined the efficacy of indigenous approaches to resolving disputes. What exactly came before Sinani's purification rituals is unknown, but it is evident that the Richmond community lost out on this chance to thoroughly calibrate, adjust, and use its indigenous practices in order to usher in a new age of post-conflict intervention and achieve lasting peace.

6.6.3 A sense of communal belonging and solidarity

Boru (2016) asserts that conflicts are viewed by indigenous pedagogy as violations of community values, norms, and conventions rather than merely personal ones. Graham (1999) and Metz (2011) believe that the accomplishments and failures of a given community belong to each individual member of that community, which is a key component of communal solidarity. Lutz (2009) compares this concept to that of a team sport, arguing that performing well for oneself also means performing well for the team, and that if the team is successful, then each individual member of the team is successful as well. This view justifies the involvement of the community in the quest to restore relations and find peace following devastating and fatal conflicts.

In this regard, KI-05 stated:

"People suffered in this community. Some lost family members, others lost their businesses, while some fled from Richmond to seek refuge in neighbouring communities. We need all people to come out and get involved, but if others do not participate, there won't be complete peace."

This view is in line with Mamdani's (2009) assertion that communities in Africa show that the idea of victim and perpetrator cannot be narrowed down to a single individual because people are the sum total of their environment.

MTA-01 shared the following:
"*The conflicts fought here were over umbango [territorial protection]. So people of Patheni were fighting those residing in Magoda and later Patheni aligned with Mkhobeni while Ndaleni joined Patheni. These communities should now come together and build peace among themselves."*

The data revealed that one of the key causes of the violence in the Richmond area in the early 1990s was the struggle for territorial preservation in sections that had been segregated along political lines. Hence, scuffles and tensions among groupings in these sections of the community escalated into what became intractable violent conflicts. These conflicts divided the community sharply and upset the equilibrium. Karl Max's view on conflict is that those who benefit from it will do everything in their power to keep society in perpetual conflict (Kebede, 2019).

An FGD participant commented as follows:
"*The community should be mobilised and informed about the need to come together and support one another."*

According to Fisher *et al*. (2009), the facilitation of community interaction is one of the goals of conflict transformation as it helps to improve lasting relationships and curb hostilities among feuding parties. The grassroots peacebuilding approach is based on the argument that, because war involves and affects most of the masses, it is important that they are involved in peacebuilding efforts to improve human security (Conteh-Morgan, 2005). The need for community involvement in conflict resolution is explored in Lederach's (1995) conflict transformation theory which emphasises a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach.

The views cited above suggest that the rights and interests of the community and their relational interactions may be prioritised over those of individual members; hence, the individual becomes subordinate to the community. In the Richmond community, this could be attributed to the fact that it had once been a close-knit, homogeneous society whose members had shared a common sense of identity and kinship, language, religion, norms, and values. However, the participants placed strong emphasis on the

values of collectivism rather than individualism, which was evident in the strong and binding sense of community that was expressed by them. Chachine (2008: 72) aptly explains this when noting that a community in Africa is “a sphere of social existence [and] the locus of individual existence and self-identity where moral values, beliefs, and the very source for moral agency, including one’s understanding of justice and freedom, are formed and nurtured”.

6.6.4 Consensus oriented

The study found that consensus was the most desired end product of the indigenous approaches to post-conflict intervention the participants preferred. This was attributed to the fact that indigenous approaches to conflict resolution are about restorative justice as opposed to the need for retribution that is pursued by Western methods. According to the participants, should consensus be reached, everyone would work together to make it the best possible decision for all. In such a space, that averred that any concerns would be resolved, sometimes one by one, until all voices had been heard. Consensus is a process of non-violent conflict resolution. Olowu (2017), argues that allowing people to express their concerns and conflicting ideas is considered desirable and important. When a group creates an atmosphere that nurtures and supports disagreement without hostility and fear, it builds a foundation for stronger and more creative decisions. However, reaching consensus does not occur without challenges.

However, EXP-02 did not agree that consensus should be the first objective:
“Communities are becoming diverse and, as such, fragments [of] viewpoints, outlooks, and conceptions arise and indigenous approaches in their makeup do not have mechanisms to deal with diversity. For example, indigeneity down plays the role of women and youths in matters and problems facing the community because their roles are limited as they are perceived to lack [the necessary] skill, knowledge, and experience. [When this happens], then those [who are] marginalised will support decisions made without their involvement.”

This view is supported by Olowu (2017) who studied the Tswana people who reside in South Africa’s North-West Province. This nation does not allow women to preside

over proceedings and their roles are restricted to cooking and serving meals. According to Mutungi (2023), women are not actively involved in resolving disputes and promoting peace in some regions in Uganda, like Karimoja. Researchers have also found evidence of the younger generation's concern that they will be unfairly disciplined and excluded from society if they speak out or contradict their elders. Mitchell (2002) notes that actor transformation should occur. This means eliminating or substituting certain actors from conflict intervention initiatives so that new actors can pursue resolution and broker the proper kind of help.

As stated earlier, most participants regarded consensus as the cornerstone of the indigenous process of conflict resolution. This view is supported by Rammala's (2021) assertion that methods allow conflicting parties to reach mutually agreeable settlements on how to interpret the past and reach solutions. However, the endorsement of such settlements is entirely voluntary.

KI-22 shared the following:
"The perpetrators and families of the victims should come together so that the perpetrators can ask for forgiveness and the victims' families can forgive them and move on. People are currently passing each other on the streets without greeting one another."

Although the above response reflected the speaker's belief in the ability of indigenous approaches to unite warring factions, it also revealed the persistence of tensions that burdened interpersonal relations in the Richmond community. Othello Garblah (2011) and the TRC (1998) warn that ignoring animosity, anguish, and unresolved hurt in conflict-stricken communities poses the threat of a relapse into conflicts. This is because atrocities of the past linger and trigger revenge attacks and ultimately undermine the peace that needs to be achieved. What stood from the data, was that the majority of the participants suggested that reaching consensus would be an important contribution to the search for an effective, more unifying, and inclusive process of conflict resolution.

6.7 Theme 6: The Impact of Democratisation on Indigenous Conflict Resolution Approaches

6.7.1 Defining democratisation

Rakwa (2022) defines democratisation as a process of making a political system, organisation, or technologies more accessible, inclusive, and participatory for a wider range of people. At the heart of this definition is a process that involves increasing transparency, reducing barriers to entry, and empowering individuals or groups to engage in decision-making processes. For Matlosa (2017), democratisation is the process of spreading democratic principles and practices, such as political participation, equal rights, and freedom of expression throughout a society or institutions. The notion of participation presupposes political control by citizens over the people whom they govern on these people's behalf. This notion captures the idea of popular sovereignty which presumes the protection of the right to vote as well as the existence of universal suffrage (Landman, 2005). This is what is often referred to as 'procedural democracy' or 'electoral democracy' (Bratton *et al.*, 2005).

In order to understand the impact of democratisation on the implementation of indigenous approaches to conflict interventions, the participants were asked to reflect on how they thought the democratic dispensation influenced indigenous ways. According to the majority of the participants, the increased reliance on Western methods posed a threat to the very existentialism of indigenous approaches. Many emphasised that the advent of democracy was accompanied by changes that hinged on the identity and structure of indigenous approaches. The participants shared the following constitutional imperatives that they thought inadvertently affected the application of indigenous approaches in general, and indigenous approaches to conflict intervention in particular.

6.7.2 The supremacy of the South African Constitution

South Africa is a constitutional democracy with its Constitution standing as the supreme law of the country in terms of section 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996.

EXP-02 found the Constitution unacceptable as it obviates traditional procedures in electing the Zulu king:

"The appointment of the Zulu King is now handled by a civil and not a traditional court. This is after customary procedures were followed by the Royal Council to elect the rightful King to ascend to the throne."

In terms of section 9 of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, No. 23 of 2009 (as amended), the President of the RSA has the ultimate power to recognise the Zulu king or queen following the identification by the royal family of a person to ascend to this position. In the participant's view, this usurped the exclusive powers of the Traditional Authority Council to affirm the appointment of a new ruler. In this instance, the subjugation of the royal authority to government remains. As it stands, the President's role in the appointment of royal leaders perpetuates the colonial subjugation of indigenous approaches and the foreign imposition on communities that live by indigenous customs and order.

EXP-03 perceived legislation as follows:
"…it is an attempt to undermine ways of doing things in accordance with the values, customs, and traditions of a cultural group. Why do courts have a final say in what the traditional council has decided? That was a practice under colonisation and apartheid."

Most participants resented the fact that indigenous approaches were marginalised as they seemingly embody inequalities and exclusions that encroach on South Africa's constitutional imperatives. They argued that indigenous approaches were deep-rooted practices that advanced and preserved the patriarchal order. They also agreed that many of these practices were in stark contrast with constitutional and democratic values. Olowu (2017) observes that the Batswana nation in the North-West Province of South Africa limits the role of women in adjudication or mediation proceedings. In Liberia, Daso (2017) noted the exclusion of young people from discussions and decision-making processes during *Palava Hut* procedures. In the later instance, young people are urged to observe the proceedings and 'learn the ropes'. In the Richmond

context, EXP-02 warned that the Constitution imposed prohibition against such undesirable restrictions.

EXP-02 stated:
"Indigenous approaches maintain the role and authority of men, older men in particular. The Constitution now dictates that women and the youth may not be discriminated against, more so in matters that affect them. So, indigenous approaches will need to align to this constitutional requirement."

Patriarchy is entrenched in indigenous approaches that consequently negate the contribution of women and the youth in communal matters. However, the Constitution promotes gender inclusivity and generational mix. The above responses incisively urged the reconfiguration of indigenous approaches to embrace democratic values and processes.

However, another participant opposed this view:
"Our forbearers relied on our own [indigenous] ways to deal with all issues; from making food, treating diseases, producing food, solving disputes, to reconciling people's differences."

The response cited above refuted criticism against indigenous approaches as being discriminatory on the basis of gender and age. Nabudere (2005) argues that indigenous communities across the globe pride themselves in the systems they have established for resolving disagreements, encouraging reconciliation and peacebuilding, and repairing past wrongs, all with the goal of preserving social coherence and harmony.

6.8 Theme 7: Diversity in the Populace of the Richmond Community

Remarkably, the study found that the Richmond community was no longer homogeneous, particularly in terms of population composition and religious affiliations.

KI-01 stated:
"…despite the conflicts we fought, our children are not getting jobs here and people who work in health care centres and some [local] municipality officials are not from this community."

LWC-01 offered the following comment:
"The Richmond community needs to heal from the wounds of its past, but if we do a cleansing ceremony, we should involve a priest, a sangoma, and traditional healers so we can accommodate everyone."

KI-15, who was a farmer in the Richmond area, stated:
"Some workers are not from this area. While some are residents in the community, others stay in the compound on this farm."

It was deduced from the above responses that the Richmond community was experiencing in-migration of people who also called this area their home. This influx brought diversity as people from different backgrounds now formed part of the community. Hooghe *et al.* (2016) argue that, in highly diversified communities, each member seeks to assert and sustain their cultural identity and practices. Thus, local governments should help to remove all barriers to enable the co-existence of diverse people and offer them opportunities to thrive. However, this diversity makes consensus in communal decisions relatively difficult as considerations may differ significantly. The situation is fortified by the Constitution which guarantees everyone's rights as enshrined in the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2) regardless of their background and preferences.

EXP-02 amplified the admission that the Richmond community had become diversified:
"*There is a shift in the use of indigenous approaches as communities are slowly abandoning indigenous ways of handling matters. The current dispute over the position of the Zulu King is adjudicated in a civil court and not a traditional court. Neighbours hardly talk about their misunderstandings as they resort to police intervention.*"

The adjudication of the matter relating to the dispute over who should become King of the Zulu nation does not necessarily displace the role of the traditional court. The challenge is that traditional leaders are also the presiding officers in traditional courts and may not oversee proceedings about personal matters. Even if the matter is processed in a traditional court, when a litigant is aggrieved it may at some point mean that a potential King will have to appear before another court, resulting in a quagmire.

Be that as it may, the data provided a lucid exposition of the reality of diversity in the Richmond community, affirming that not everyone prefers the use of indigenous approaches, and those who might prefer to use them, could have different pedagogies for implementing such practices. Some may prefer to use them for particular matters, and others may prefer to revert to civil methods. These differences pose the challenge that, although the indigenous community of Richmond may continue to be largely inhabited by locals, it is also home to people from outside, many of whom are migrant workers such as teachers and nurses who work in local schools, health care facilities, or on farms in the area. Moreover, some married locals and now live in the area. This breeds diversity but does not directly undermine the capacity of indigenous approaches to resolve conflicts.

6.8 Theme 8: Consolidating Western and Indigenous Approaches

In light of the challenges posed by democratisation in the design and implementation of indigenous approaches, the expert participants were asked to reflect on the prospects for and ways in which Western methods may co-exist along indigenous approaches. The study found that Western and indigenous approaches were not deemed exclusive to each other as the participants pointedly demonstrated the areas of co-existence between the two. According to Deinla (2015), there is increased interest in examining how Western and indigenous techniques may complement one another, and recognising the benefits and drawbacks of both Western and indigenous approaches motivates the idea of a hybrid approach to conflict resolution. The majority of the participants agreed that there were areas in which Western and indigenous approaches complemented each other.

EXP-02 stated:

"Civil courts can share responsibilities with traditional courts in adjudicating conflict crimes. So, if the civil court convicts a person, then allow the traditional court to impose a sentence that will enable reconciliation. This is because in the indigenous context crimes against individuals are also deemed to be against the community as a whole."

The challenge with co-existence as argued by EXP-02 above is found in the philosophical orientation of indigenous approaches vis-a-viz Western methods as the former are inquisitorial whilst the later accusatorial. Also, indigenous approaches are concerned with establishing responsibility while Western methods seek to find guilt for the wrongful act. In the end, indigenous approaches are about restoration while Western methods are about punishment. There are a number of foreseeable incompatibilities between the two approaches that will certainly breed disputes. So, when there is a dispute between the two, which approach should be used to adjudicate the conflict? However, the proponents of indigenous approaches (Zondi, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Shokane and Masoga, 2018; Colpani, *et al.*, 2022) warn against this co-existence as they argue that conflict intervention strategies that are designed and implemented locally will lose their independence if what is considered local is infused with more modern or conventional methods.

However, MTA-04 expressed confidence in the ability of indigenous approaches to resolve conflict:

"Our forebearers relied on our own [indigenous] ways, from cooking, treating diseases, producing food, solving disputes to reconciling people. It is still possible to use our ways during this modern time."

The response cited above seemed exaggerative of the capability of indigenous approaches as it portrayed the approach as a panacea. It may very well be that before indigenous communities were hegemonised through colonisation, they relied entirely on their indigenous ways to address disputes and resolve issues. However, it seems impractical to have a similar reliance in the 21st century. But, as far as conflict intervention is concerned in the context of the Richmond community, the expression may hold true amid the failure of Western methods. However, the response seems an

expression of self-sufficiency that refutes the need to blend indigenous approaches with Western methods. Although there is a basis for this strong view, the reality is that what is considered indigenous has been experiencing modernisation to some extent. Rigby (1996), Olowu (2017), and Rammala (2021) argue that the modernisation and infusion of outside forces of conventional practices into indigenous approaches can endanger the survival of these techniques. However, it is crucial to consider the hybrid nature of many current violent conflicts in the Global South when it comes to conflict prevention, conflict transformation, and post-conflict peacebuilding (Wallis *et al*., 2018). Therefore, due to the permutations that are involved, a blended approach could be the appropriate intervention strategy in some instances.

6.9 Theme 9: The Current State of Interpersonal Relations

The majority of the participants reflected on what Galtung (1996) refers to as 'negative peace'; i.e., the absence of direct, structural and cultural violence. However, the participants' views and perspectives clearly indicated that the Richmond community continued to experience wobbly relations emanating from intractable violent conflicts spanning the period 1990-2018. This theme reflects remnants of conflicts in the community that continued to permeate families. A few participants also noted that inner peace was necessary for achieving communal peace. The FGD participants added that relations could be restored and maintained through mutual respect for the opinions of others, consensus, continuous dialogue, and peaceful co-existence. Additionally, some participants were of the view that relations in the Richmond community had normalised to some extent.

However, KI-09 bluntly shared her experiences of community rejection:

"I was told I could not stand for election for a leading role in my church because my deceased husband had been behind the killings in the Richmond community. Yes, he was arrested but he was never convicted for killing anyone. Recently, my son was told he could not contest [the position] for branch chairperson [a political organisation] because they did not want to see bloodshed again. My family is hated in this community."

This participant's narrative demonstrated the extent of the continued resentment amongst community members in the Richmond area. She continued to experience hurt and frustration that stemmed from the intractable conflicts. Churches play a crucial role as a social institution as they, amongst other things, facilitate the healing of those who hurt while they may also reconcile warring factions. The failure of the criminal justice system to bring to book those responsible for politically-related killings seemed to undermine the prospect for post-conflict peace and left both perpetrators' families and victims in a state of despondency and hurt. Upon reflection, there seemed to be a generational aspect to the hurt and resentment. Descendants of the victims harboured anguish against the families of those accused of the killings during the conflict, while the families of the accused suffered resentment due to the allegations against their loved ones.

KI-12, who had been a participant in the 'Five Aside' initiative, had this to say:
"My family lost five members in one day in 1998. As the surviving elder, I got nominated to serve in the 'Five Aside'. When those prisoners got released on parole, my own family turned [against me] and blamed me for releasing the killers of our family members. My sisters-in-law have since stopped talking to me and my eldest grandson is angry with me for freeing the killers of his father."

Murambadoro (2020) observes that, in the case of Zimbabwe, following the 2008 post-election conflicts intruders ravaged families and their homes. These incidences and K-12's experience suggest that political conflicts disrupt interpersonal relations within families and, by extension, their cosmological community. The source of attrition due to this participant's experience seemed to be her lack of knowledge of how the parole system works in South Africa. It is a requirement for parole applicants to engage with their victims (directly or indirectly) in an arrangement referred to as Victim Offender Mediation (VOM). It appeared that, in the case of the Richmond community, the Department of Correctional Services had adopted a group approach given the nature of the crimes the perpetrators had committed. But the narrative can also be considered an indication of the hurt people still experienced due to the loss of their loved ones. Furthermore, it may be seen as a reflection of the absence of a mechanism for victims to off-load their baggage. A similar observation was made by South Africa's Truth and

Reconciliation Commission when it asserted that this Commission would provide the masses with an opportunity to dispose of the hurt, which transcended several years, and that healing would occur (TRC, 1998). However, in contrast, despite the atrocities the Richmond community had experienced, no psychosocial measures such as victim support centres and counselling were offered.

KI-28 commented on an observation rather than an experience:
"There are a lot of guns in the Richmond community and many people have guns. And these houses [waving his hand] are hiding guns."

This response reflected the anxiety and distrust of the negative peace that prevailed in Richmond before and even at the time of the study. The need to arm ANC and IFP paramilitary groups in the early 1990s resulted in huge deposits of arms in the Richmond area (Tayler, 2002). The first opportunity to hand in these arms to the state during the firearm amnesty period was ostensibly not heeded. This may be a reflection of the sense of insecurity and uncertainty the people still experienced at the end of the conflicts that had once engulfed the community. KI-17 supported the notion of high levels of distrust in the following comment:
"*We hear that those perpetrators who killed people here are out of prisons but stay with their relatives elsewhere outside Richmond. We do not see them here.*"

This comment was interpreted in two ways. First, it showed that the community feared the return of ex-convicts who might engage in revenge attacks. Secondly, it demonstrated a preoccupation with the potential threats posed by ex-convicts. While reintegration involves political and criminal imperatives (Torjesen, 2013), it is quintessentially a social or relational process. Given the magnitude of atrocities often committed by or attributed to ex-convicts, in the case of Richmond, it seemed unlikely that they would be accorded a positive reception or be welcomed by the survivors. Thus, the neglect of the justice and integrative aims of reintegration was a major drawback in the Richmond community.

In direct contrast to the above views, an FGD respondent had this to say:

"*Some of the killers are back from prison and working in the [local] municipality [offices]. They are being rewarded for killing people here."*

Upon reflection, it seemed viable that some community members' resentment of the special treatment received by ex-convicts might complicate the processes of reconciliation, reintegration, and sustainable peacebuilding. In other words, the tendency of privileging the employment/income-related concerns of ex-convicts over past injustices might prove counterproductive not only because it has the potential to undermine the basis for reintegration, but also because it can contribute to the creation of conditions that may cause the conflict to flare up again. This was evident in many post-conflict countries, including Liberia (Amnesty International, 2007; Solomon and Ginifer, 2008; Republic of Liberia, 2009). The potential harm that the preferential treatment accorded to ex-combatants can cause is also stressed by the United Nations (UN) (2006) in its Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS). In this document, the UN states that "offering special treatment to ex-convicts may cause resentment among other groups who may view special or unique benefits to ex-combatants as an unjustified reward to the perpetrators of conflict" and the atrocities they committed (United Nations, 2006: 87).

However, KI-30 painted a different picture of the value of reintegration:
"People of different sections of the community are now mixing with no problem, like it used to be the case before the conflicts. Even local public transport ferry passengers who go to these different sections in one transport [vehicle]."

LWC-03 agreed with this view:
"People here are now living together with peace among them. Some sections which used to be divided along political affiliation are now falling into one ward."

The two responses above suggested the absence of visible physical violence in the Richmond area. Although some sections were reconfigured into one ward with the introduction of the local government dispensation in 1998, each section still retains its social infrastructure such as schools. At the time of the study, the Richmond community still reflected the 1990s as it was divided into segregated settlements. For

FGD, the absence of visible violence was a positive achievement for the community but was not a guarantee of restored relations. The community experienced negative peace during the various spates of conflict in the 1990s, but conflict soon resumed again.

6.10 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the data that had been generated by means of one-on-one interviews and a focus group discussion were presented and discussed. The participants were purposefully selected either because of their expertise in conflict resolution or their actual experiences of the conflicts in the Richmond community. The interviews elicited data that responded to the research questions stemming from noted gaps in extant literature. The data revealed that a range of politicised Western methods had been implemented in the Richmond community to quell the violent conflicts and rebuild relations. In relation to the hegemony of Western methods of post-conflict intervention, the study established that four factors drove the failure of these methods, namely: (a) the Western system's ignorance of indigenous customs; (b) focus on the national agenda; (c) the underdevelopment and marginalisation of indigenous approaches; and (d) a lack of local ownership of initiatives to resolve the ongoing conflicts. The chapter also presented the preferences of the participants regarding the approaches for facilitating post-conflict relational justice. In this regard, the data revealed that a spiritual inclination, a sense of communal belonging, and consensus-driven solutions were the cornerstones of the indigenous approaches the participants preferred. The research found that the advent of the democratic dispensation in the country posed challenges, such as the fact that constitutional imperatives demand compliance. A disconcerting findings was that the state of interpersonal relations amongst members of the Richmond community remained characterised by animosity. However, the participants expressed a desire for healing and peace through the facilitation of indigenous approaches. In the next chapter, the key research findings are discussed in more detail.

CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION OF THE KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research findings that met the objectives of the study. The main aim of the study was to examine the indigenous approaches the people in Richmond used to resolve political and associated conflicts and to determine if such methods could be used to achieve post-conflict relational justice in similar current or future conflicts. The objectives were to:

- Examine the neglect of indigenous approaches to post-conflict interventions in the Richmond community;
- Assess the role of indigenous approaches towards rebuilding post-conflict relational justice in the Richmond community;
- Examine ways in which indigenous approaches can be applied to achieve post-conflict relational justice; and
- Identify and examine overarching principles that may guide the application of indigenous approaches in the quest to resolve conflict in the Richmond community.

In this chapter, the research findings are examined in more depth to provide insight into the degree to which the research objectives were met. The use of the conflict transformation theory was discussed in Chapter 4 where it was elucidated that this theory had been used in contexts other than the African continent such as Sri Lanka (Saravanamuttu, 2008) and Israel/Palestine (Mikhelidze and Pirozzi, 2008). The current study sought to address the dearth of literature on the use and relevance of this theory in African societies, in particular in those that emerged out of conflicts, are deemed homogenous, and are immersed in their indigenous ways of doing things. It was evident that the conflict transformation theory as well as the conflict theory were appropriate for this study as they not only guided the focus on the need to limit direct violence, but they were also valuable in elucidating and understanding approaches to rebuilding relationships harmed by several epochs of violent conflicts.

The findings were categorised into nine major themes and numerous sub-themes as presented and discussed in Chapter 6. The findings that emerged strongly in relation to these nine major themes and their sub-themes are discussed in more detail in this chapter. The discussion thus consolidates the findings under six key summative headings. Moreover, the fact that the study's findings are supported by evidence and were contributed by people who had personally witnessed and experienced the effects of the violence in the Richmond area lends credibility to study.

7.2 The Dynamics of Western Post-Conflict Relational Restoration Strategies

The domination of Western and externally driven efforts to end violent conflicts was evident in the finding that Western methods were used by actors other than the local community in the Richmond area. This finding cogently reveals several intervention strategies that were used to end the intractable violent conflicts in the torn and politically fragmented Richmond community. These included Western measures that were initiated and facilitated by political actors, while the conflict intervention strategies were entrenched in Western resolution methods. Conversely, the findings also revealed an abundance of potentially effective indigenous approaches to conflict resolution that, to this day, are still preferred by the Richmond community. According to a large majority of the participants, such methods have the potential to facilitate the restoration of relations harmed by conflicts in the area. However, it clearly emerged from the findings that this rich repository of indigenous approaches had not been utilised due to their continued marginalisation in favour of Western methods by the various actors who attempted to broker peace and reconciliation.

This was finding was not surprising as conflicts in the Richmond community were sustained as a consequence of political polarisation. However, these politically inclined interventions were aimed at achieving political reconciliation and not the restoration of harmed interpersonal relations. If the latter had been the preoccupation of those actors who tried to intervene, the affected people would have been accorded front row opportunities to find ways to heal their hurt and restore relations among them. However, severely affected people were at the receiving end of strategies developed and implemented by actors other than themselves, thereby relegating

these affected people to the position of spectators while others purported to resolve their pain. These political interventions were the following:

7.2.1 The 'Five Aside' intervention

According to the participants, 'Five Aside' was a team of ten members constituted by five members from ANC and five from the IFP who were victims or survivors of violent political conflicts in the Richmond community. It was apparent that political actors handpicked persons to be members of the 'Five Aside' group that was mandated to facilitate conflict mediation in the Richmond community. Prior to commencing this task, the members were trained in conflict mediation and their responsibilities included training others. This was an appropriate approach as a first step towards addressing and reducing disputes, tensions, and disagreements that often ignited conflict and violence. However, the approach was marred by several weaknesses such as a narrow conception of victimhood, a lack of clear criteria for recruitment and inclusion in the team, a top-down approach, and limited focus.

It is apparent that only family members who had lost a loved one during the conflict were included. But, because many families had lost relatives during the conflicts, only those whose cases caught public and media attention were nominated to serve as members of the team. Furthermore, families that had fallen victim but had not suffered loss of human life were excluded. This decision excluded victims who had suffered other forms of atrocities such as physical injuries, damaged properties, displacement, and missing relatives. The participants suggested that this exclusion impugned intervention and exacerbated injustice that deepened divisions in the community and delayed restoration of interpersonal relations.

The 'Five Aside' initiative had the hallmark of external and political intervention from design to implementation. The approach exuded a top-down inclination, which is an inherent feature of the Western approach that has been criticised for its history of usurping local agency and ignoring local context. Political actors decided and designed the strategy with little or no involvement of the community except at the end when community members were invited to be part of the implementation phase. This made the community mere recipients of the interventions that were imposed on them.

7.2.2 South Africa's 1993 National Peace Accord

The National Peace Accord was signed after several communities across South Africa had been engulfed by violent political conflicts of varying proportions. Areas where these conflicts erupted include the Boipatong and Katlehong massacres in Gauteng Province, killings in Shobashobane and Bambayi, and the small-scale civil war in Richmond in KZN, to mention a few. It made sense then to seek consensus through a framework that was intended to guide conflict intervention in all the affected communities across the country in the early 1990s. The national intervention strategy that followed was informed by the fact that the antagonists in these communities were generally the same actors, namely the ANC and IFP who fought for political dominance. In some instances, state security was fingered as a 'third force' that fanned the violent conflicts and was partisan in bringing an end to the strife. In the Richmond community, traditional leaders also entered the political space when they became partisan. However, they lacked the resources to fan the conflicts. Be that as it may, the national framework ought to have been cascaded down to affected communities with a view to securing a lasting cease fire and dealing with the aftermath of the conflict, with particular emphasis on restoring harmed relations. This would have been realistic as conflicts were not fought at national but at local level in communities. It therefore follows that the community should have been be at the centre of the conflict resolution initiatives.

The findings also revealed that national leaders only informed communities of the National Peace Accord after the conflict had come to an end. It was evident that community representatives had not made any contribution to the National Peace Accord, and nor were they inducted about its contents and application at grassroots level. This approach had at least two shortcoming: (1) It entirely usurped the agency of local communities to act on their own and also denied them the right to self-determination. (2) As a consequence of denying communities access to the design and implementation of intervention strategies, the actors disregarded the peculiarities embedded in local contexts.

7.2.3 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The participants revealed that a limited number of persons had had the opportunity to participated in the TRC process. Like many other societies emerging out of conflict, South Africa established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 1995 by an Act of Parliament (Act no. 34 of 1995). The TRC was mandated to act as a transitional justice mechanism tasked with the responsibility to investigate and record acts of gross human rights violations which took place in South Africa during the period 01 March 1960 to 10 May 1994 as a result of political circumstances. The newly achieved democratic dispensation repositioned itself to ensure that no such atrocities would be repeated in the future. Whilst the research findings revealed that only very few people of the Richmond community participated in the TRC process, the TRC determined that more than 360 persons in this area had suffered gross human rights violations due to the political violence in the 1990s.

There were at least three ways in which the a person who had committed an atrocity could be brought before the TRC. (1) A victim could physically make a testimony at one of the hearings or through the TRC's field statement takers. (2) A family member/friend/fellow comrade could make a statement on behalf of someone either in person during a hearing or through TRC field statement takers. This happened in instances where the victim had died/was a minor/had gone missing. (3) An issue could be raised in an amnesty application.

It appeared that the impression of 'fewer' participants in the TRC process emanated from limited televised TRC hearings. This resulted in unawareness of the work of the TRC's field statement takers whose facilitation allowed a significant number of victims to access the TRC process in other areas. Moreover, some victims were identified through an amnesty process of which the research participants were unaware. Notwithstanding these avenues through which the TRC could have been reached, its work did not escape criticism, as the findings showed.

This study criticises the TRC for having operated remotely from the Richmond community. It was apparent that the TRC held hearings in Durban, which is approximately 75 km north of the Richmond area. This came out sharply from those

who asserted that many people ought to have been part of the TRC reparation programme. They lamented the fact that many people had not participated because they had not been identified as victims through the TRC process. In terms of the reparation policy, only those who were identified through the TRC process were eligible for reparations offered by the government. They participants strongly argued that the TRC had been inaccessible as it had held hearings far from Richmond.

Conversely, some people had made the decision not to participate in the TRC process. For instance, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) informed the TRC that it would only participate as an organisation by making collective statements as opposed to individual statements by its members and supporters (TRC, 1998). It also discouraged its members and supporters from appearing at the hearings. Additionally, the IFP initially discouraged its supporters and members from participating in the TRC process, but later changed its position (TRC, 1998). Furthermore, during the TRC hearings, the concept of reparations was not a primary focus. In other words, reparations were not paraded as a low hanging fruit to be grabbed by those who participated as this would have compromised the credibility of the process. When reparations were considered and made available to those who were eligible, some who did not participate in the TRC process claimed that it was inaccessible. However, a number of reasons caused some people to be left out of the TRC process.

The critical remarks about the inaccessibility of the TRC are not necessarily a critique against the TRC itself, but against the reparation regime adopted by the government. It is probable that the Richmond community had more victims than the ones identified by the TRC. However, the TRC could not identify a person without hearing their version of the atrocities they had endured. The TRC itself aired its view on the finite list of victims it identified and the significance thereof. Chiefly, the TRC was wary of submitting non-exhaustive list, thus coercing the government to provide reparations to an undetermined quantum of victims (TRC, 1998). As reparations were disbursed in the form of a monetary value, it might have seemed unattainable for the government to accept an unknown size of victims. Hence, a closed list was contained in the TRC report of 1998 (see volume 7). The problem with this reasoning was that it disbursed available funds for reparation but failed to recognise those who had suffered injustices

but could not appear before the TRC. Monetary reparation is one of many possible forms of reparation for transitional governments. However, the acknowledgement and recognition of those who had suffered acts of gross human rights violations would have contributed to the restoration of relations and the achievement of social cohesion in the Richmond community.

7.3 The Hegemony of Western Methods in an Indigenous Community

The findings demonstrated the entrenchment of Western methods in conflict and peace studies and practices. These methods, often institutionalised and legitimised by authorities, played a dominant role in how the conflicts were perceived and addressed. The hegemony of Western conflict methods was a pervasive influence on any approaches to conflict resolution and often overshadowed informal, grassroots, or indigenous approaches, which is a finding that Ljungkvist and Jarstad (2021) corroborate. Institutions such as the courts, arbitration panels, and international organisations like the United Nations provide structured environments where conflicts can be addressed systematically. These institutions derive their authority from legal frameworks, political power and, in many cases, broad societal acceptance. But as the literature has shown, the call for ‘local turn’ stemmed from the failure of these Western methods (Ani, 2017).

The Western methods of conflict intervention implemented in the Richmond community were sustained through a number of mechanisms, such as the continued marginalisation of indigenous approaches, the centralisation of the design and implementation of conflict interventions, and the criminalisation of conflict.

7.3.1 The subjugation of indigenous approaches

The findings showed that the hegemony of Western methods of conflict intervention was maintained during the period 1990-2018 by various actors in the Richmond community. Therefore, as indigenous approaches were marginalised, their prospect for development and recalibration were almost non-existent.

According to the findings, customary laws and procedures were subjected to the command of civil legislations, in particular the Constitution of the Republic of South

Africa of 1996. For instance, the procedures for appointing and inaugurating a king or queen in the Zulu tradition were marginalised. As already pointed out, the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act No. 23 of 2009 empowers the President to make the final decision about who ascends the throne in traditional communities in South Africa. Similarly, the premiers of the provinces hold the power to determine who becomes a chief (traditional leader) in their respective provinces. A consequence of this legal framework is that the veto power is confirmed on political executives to approve or annul a decision of the traditional council as to who may become the king/queen/chief.

A call for constitutional amendment is predicated on, amongst others, this constitutional malaise. The call seeks to move away from Eurocentric modes of thought in the hope of developing truly African approaches. Ironically, subjecting indigenous approaches to legislative directives negates the constitutional recognition of indigenous approaches as sufficient, autonomous, and an equal source of law. This is because common laws are not subjected to similar constraints. In the latter case, the Constitution does nothing to upset the primacy and content of Roman-Dutch law as the common law. In fact, the Constitution leaves vast swatches of common law, especially private law, untouched, thereby perpetuating colonialism. As the research findings showed, adhering to customary law as experienced by the indigenous people of Richmond may be preferable to submitting to common law which is state-sanctioned and does not reflect the customary law experiences of the communities to whom it applies. Furthermore, customary law was not recognised or developed in the years under slavery, colonisation, and apartheid in South Africa due to the pervasion of common law.

It is important to determine if the democratic Constitution deserves this criticism. The Nigerian-born US-based philosopher, Olufemi Taiwo (Tieko, 2021), avers that the constitutions of many former colonisers are anti-indigenous for a very specific reason, arguing that democratic constitutions like those of South Africa and Namibia are not actually colonial inheritances, but products of the turn of humanity towards modernity. To this end, he outlines the philosophical underpinnings of modernity, namely: subjectivity, reasoning, and human progress sentiment. He further argues that

societies around the world are now organised through observing these principles. However, proponents of indigeneity argue that colonialism pre-empted African's transition from indigenous approaches of conflict intervention and living to modernity.

The appointment of traditional leaders is not the only aspect of indigenous customs that has suffered under constitutional tutelage. For instance, section 211(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) provides that "the courts, including traditional courts, must apply customary law when that law is applicable [but such application is] subject to the Constitution and any legislation that specifically deal with customary law". A further constraint is found in section 2 of schedule 6, which directs that all laws that were in force when the Constitution took effect must continue to be in force [but these laws are] subject to amendment, repeal, and consistency with the Constitution. The Constitution goes further by providing that the courts may not simply apply customary law, but that they may do so in cases where such a law is applicable in the context of constitutional provisions.

Although the research findings overwhelmingly supported the idea of indigenous approaches to navigate troubled interpersonal relations in the Richmond community, this proposal dis not lament Western methods. If we accept the binary represented in Western versus African models and insist that any element of the Western in the African taints the latter, it is easy to see how such a model obscures us from dynamic evolution of social phenomena in any given context. However, the indigenous standpoint, on a broader level, typifies the general trend in critical scholarship of abandoning universalism as a just species of Eurocentrism.

According to the research findings, another practical subjugation of indigenous approaches was evident in the Sinani intervention. The responses vehemently demonstrated how the quasi-indigenous approach this NGO followed was a missed opportunity for the Richmond community to recalibrate their own way of doing things. Although the intervention had indigenous features, the community was not involved in planning and implementation processes but were invited to attend an externally devised ceremony, thus relegating them to the status of guests in what was supposed to have been their event. In this community that had been engulfed by intractable

conflicts among residents who had been visibly divided along political and territorial lines, reasonable and participatory consultation was an imperative. However, this did not occur. The *Sinani* intervention ought to have created ample opportunities for the community to determine how they wished to reconcile through the performance of rituals; but, they were deprived of such a healing process as external actors usurped their local agency and decided on the nature, content, and outcomes of the resolution process. The findings clearly revealed that the people of Richmond yearned for an approach embedded in their traditions, customs, and practices and that would have guided them to reconcile their pain.

7.3.2 Centralisation of the design and facilitation of conflict intervention

According to the research findings, the power for designing and implementing post-conflict interventions in the Richmond community was consistently kept at a level higher than the community stratum. For instance, resolutions were designed and brokered at national level by the National Peace Accord and the TRC, at provincial level by the 'Five Aside' initiative, and at district level by the *Sinani* intervention. All these actors usurped the local agency and self-determination of the community as they inadvertently or deliberately ignored the local context.

One major drawback of this form of centralisation was the loss of flexibility. These centralised systems were bureaucratic and were slow to respond to the locally embedded problems in the political conflicts in the Richmond area. Murambadoro (2020), argue/s that, when decision-making is concentrated at the top, it may not adequately address the unique needs or preferences of local populations, which was the case in the Richmond area. Indeed, centralisation stifled initiative and creativity among the affected populace in the study area. Historical examples of autocratic regimes have similarly demonstrated how centralisation resulted in authoritarian practices, suppression of dissent, and the erosion of democratic principles, thus ultimately igniting conflicts (Genger, 2020).

Conversely, despite some weaknesses associated with the centralisation of decision-making, it can result in the provision of clear lines of authority and responsibility. When decision-making is streamlined through a single central leadership, it can enhance

strategic direction and policy formulation. In times of crisis or when rapid responses are required, a centralised authority can act decisively without the delays often associated with consultative or consensus-based processes. The discourse in Chapter 2 showed how the National Commissioner of Police deployed task teams at the height of the violent conflicts to the Richmond area to great effect. Thus, a centralised system can facilitate effective coordination among different departments or in specific regions. A central authority can align goals, resources, and strategies to ensure that various parts of an organisation or the government work towards common objectives. Such coordination can help in managing complex tasks or in responding to crises with a unified approach, as was demonstrated by the national intervention initiative in the Richmond area.

7.3.3 Political polarisation: A façade in the Richmond community

The findings exposed the impact of politicised interventions that aimed to achieve political goals and not necessarily peace and co-existence. The latter objective was rather veiled in the planning and execution of peace strategies. In fact, the findings indicated that balkanisation in the Richmond community ignited and sustained several epochs of conflict. While rezoning historically warring sections of the community into one ward might have seemed a plausible step towards peacebuilding, this attempt was unsuccessful in achieving resolution and healing. The findings showed that the villages of Smozomeni, an ANC stronghold, and Patheni, and IFP stronghold were rezoned to fall under one ward. Moreover, Magoda, a former ANC area that later got dethroned by its splinter party, UDM, is currently reconfigured with the ANC's erstwhile supporters in MaSwazini, Cuba, and Richmond town under one ward. They now share the same health care facility and community hall. The reconfiguration has actually maintained the division of the community into smaller pockets, called wards.

To this day, the reasons for this decision have remained relatively obscure. The findings revealed that a homogenous community with common traditions, linguistic proficiency, and customs endured balkanisation due to its restructuring into new wards. The fact remains that, despite the fragmentation of the Richmond community into smaller pockets, the community is still governed by one municipality, which makes the reasoning behind the reallocation even more obscure. It is therefore logical to

presume that peace in the Richmond community is a fragile commodity that may shatter at any time. The number of conflicts that occurred after the establishment of the local government and wards is a case in point. It is this researcher's contention that peace may never be assumed but should be intentionally built and curated through continuous actions based on resolution and reconciliation goals.

Creating residential wards within the boundaries of a municipality is a statutory decision; thus, on its own, the ward system does not facilitate social cohesion unless there are programmes implemented specifically for that purpose. If the latter do not occur, they remain a symbolic feature purporting to exude 'togetherness'. There were no indications in the findings of efforts to employ measures to improve interpersonal relations and foster peaceful co-existence.

According to the conflict theory, wards are political cleavages that tend to entrench political polarisation in communities. Max Webber (1991) elucidates the factors that cause conflicts, arguing that these factors go beyond the economic and include the political and cultural dimensions. As the research findings evinced, the Richmond community experienced political polarisation as the community was divided along the lines of such cleavages (Kimemia, 2021). For the antagonists, this was an important political infringement that shaped the party system and influenced electoral strategies and outcomes that were characterised by contentious political environments and subsequent violent conflicts.

Although geographical considerations such as the size of the population determine the demarcation of wards by the relevant authority, balkanisation sustains, to an extent, political polarisation (Sedek, 2018). According to Sedek (2018), political parties align themselves with specific cleavages to attract voters and secure electoral victories. When they win elections, their dominance is reflected in their policy-making that creates competing demands and interests. It is this dominance that Antonio Gramsci (as cited in Simon, 1991) speaks about in his view of hegemony of one social group over others through cultural and ideological means as a cause of conflict in society, especially when some groups feel marginalised or excluded.

7.3.4 The deployment of law enforcement agencies

Researchers, experts, and political practitioners agree that resolving violent conflicts is difficult and complex. The challenge is compounded by the net effects of conflicts such as deaths, destruction of properties, and the use of weapons which is a trend that encroaches on civil law, and particularly criminal law. The participants suggested that law enforcement agencies were partisan. This was not a surprising finding as the literature argues that antagonists blamed security forces for fanning violent conflicts and lending support to their opponents in various conflicts across the African continent. The reality is that many consequences of violent political conflicts, such as killings and the destruction of property, necessitate police action, which is commonly followed by the institution of prosecutorial proceedings and judicial intervention. At this point, the situation can no longer be a space that can be preserved for political and traditional leaders' intervention.

This study in no way justifies any criticism of law enforcement agencies' intervention in incidences of atrocities or violent conflicts as such acts are an indicator of the criminalisation of political conflict. In fact, a state that does not respond to killings and other forms of criminality that emanate from political conflict must be accused of complacency and the promotion of impunity.

7.4 Quest for the Utilisation of Indigenous Approaches to Restore Relations

7.4.1 The need to acknowledge customs and traditions

The participants suggested that indigenous approaches could help mend disrupted and strained relations among community members in the Richmond area. The use of customary ceremonies and rituals was strongly advocated by many participants as the most preferred way of rebuilding and maintaining interpersonal relations. Their plea aligns with the African Union's mantra of 'African solutions to African problems' as a panacea for the apparent failure of Western intervention strategies to bring about peace in communities wracked by conflicts (Genger, 2020). In this context, the literature aptly elucidates the United Nation's call for the 'local turn' in search of durable peace in conflict-ravaged societies, thereby marking a departure from Western and externally driven intervention strategies. In conflict resolution, focusing

on the needs of local communities is important because human loss, suffering, and metaphysical disruptions are experienced most intensely by locals and not by government officials or the state's security apparatus.

The call for an alternative approach to conflict intervention emerged strongly as Western methods ostensibly neglected the interpersonal aspect of conflict resolution. This view resonates with the conflict transformation theory that offers guidelines for building and restoring good relationships between two conflicting parties or for building such a relationship if it was not there before the conflict (Fischer *et al*., 2003). In support of this proposition, Lederach (1995) argues that political conflict is started by two parties engaged in a relationship; hence, the transformation of the conflict requires changing and transforming the mind-set of both parties involved in the conflict. In a similar vein, Best (2006) argues that conflict transformation goes beyond conflict resolution because it builds lasting relationships and it takes conflict away from violence towards development.

This study thus proposes that maintaining good relationships needs understanding and the acknowledgement of the customs, traditions, and heritage of the people of Richmond. It is imperative to mention that many participants mentioned the relevance and value of good relationships among the living and between the living and the dead. In the view of the participants, to atone for atrocities and heal relationships require rituals as a pivotal imperative. As Genger (2020) puts it, the use of rituals is a distinctive feature of indigenous approaches to healing that is not found in Western methods.

7.4.2 The need for rituals to foster new interpersonal relationships

The findings affirmed the view expressed in the literature that rituals in traditional communities are sacrosanct as they provide a holistic remedy for any harms incurred and restore harmony among cosmic beings. What emerged strongly as a research findings was that rituals should be used during mediation processes and mark a truce between or among warring factions. For instance, *inhlambuluko* should be used to cleanse an entire community from the bad omen caused by spilled human blood. At this stage, no one is held accountable or tried for any killings but the ritual is used to

prevent further killings. The ritual of *ukugezwa kwe ziyandla (*washing of hands*)* is performed following the conclusion of a mediation/negotiation process to symbolise the truce reached between the families of the victim and the perpetrator who wash their hands in one big bowl of warm water sprinkled with incense. As demonstrated in the literature, rituals are a pivotal component of indigenous approaches. In Uganda, the *Mato Oput* ritual involves consuming a bitter tea prepared from oput tree leaves as a means of fostering reconciliation and forgiveness. Similarly, in Zimbabwe *nhopi* (a boiled beer mixture) is poured on the grave to send a message to the ancestors of the deceased that another member of the family has joined them in the metaphysical realm (Murambadoro, 2020). In the latter case, when such a burial rite is performed, it is believed the spirit of the deceased begins a new journey into the metaphysical realm. However, this burial rite is not used exclusively for those who died in a conflict, but it is preferred for unnatural deaths.

As was noted in Chapter 3 where some stories of the performance of rituals in African communities were reviewed, rituals are an indispensable part of indigenous ceremonial practices. Success stories of such practices in Rwanda and Liberia speak to the usefulness of rituals in facilitating reconciliation and the restoration of relationship following conflicts. The current study therefore argues that rituals are imperative in any indigenous approach as, without them, a strategy cannot fully meet the goals of indigeneity that are entrenched in the lives of the vast majority of African people. In the view of many participants, rituals have the potential to bring justice to both the living and the deceased as such practices create a balance in the physical and metaphysical realms.

African rituals encompass a diverse array of cultural practices and each is deeply embedded in the African continent's rich and varied traditions. These rituals often serve as significant markers of identity, community cohesion, and spiritual expression. However, they also present challenges and controversies in contemporary society. Many African rituals emphasise community over individualism as such ceremonies often involve entire communities, thus promoting solidarity and collective responsibility. For example, communal dances, festivals, and harvest celebrations encourage social bonding and mutual support.

Rituals also enhance spiritual nourishment and psychological comfort. They offer a framework for understanding life events, coping with loss, and seeking guidance. Traditional healing practices, which often incorporate ritual elements, are still widely respected for their holistic approach to health and well-being. However, some rituals involve practices that are considered harmful or unethical by contemporary standards. Female genital mutilation (FGM), certain initiation rites, and ritualistic violence are examples where tradition clashes with human rights and health standards. These practices can lead to severe physical and psychological trauma. The deeply ingrained nature of rituals can make communities resistant to change, even when certain practices are harmful or outdated. Efforts to reform or abolish detrimental rituals often face strong opposition, complicating efforts to promote human rights and health improvement. Practices that were once culturally acceptable may now be seen as regressive or incompatible with contemporary values, leading to tension between traditionalists and reformists.

However, African rituals are a vital component of the continent's cultural fabric as they offer numerous benefits in terms of cultural preservation, community cohesion, and spiritual well-being. But it remains crucial to address the negative aspects attached to them, particularly those that are in conflict with modern human rights and health standards. A balanced approach that respects cultural heritage while promoting ethical and humane practices is essential for the positive evolution of these traditions in a rapidly changing world. In this context, Murambadoro (2020) refers to a classical instance of an unethical and inhumane practice when a girl child was offered to the family of the deceased as a gesture of reparation. Amnesty international intercepted the transaction which it termed human sacrifice (Murambadoro, 2020).

The findings also revealed the need for an inter-faith approach to the performance of rituals. A pertinent criticism was that apartheid was sustained through the state’s theology that elevated Christianity over all other religious denominations in South Africa. I will return to this point in a while. What is important is the consciousness of the participants to resist temptation for redemption or the prioritisation of African

religion at the exclusion of others. Simply put, the participants acknowledged the existence of religious plurality in the Richmond community.

7.4.3 Inclusivity of religious plurality in the performance of rituals

A key finding was the tolerance of the mutual existence of religious plurality in efforts to find solutions to harmed interpersonal relations among the people in the Richmond area. This finding resonates with Murambadoro (2020) assertion that spirituality provides indigenous communities with lenses to make sense of their worldview. Walton and Mahadev (2019) write that religious plurality refers to the coexistence of multiple religious traditions as a central belief system. It embodies the notion that different religions can cohabit harmoniously and offer diverse perspectives on spirituality, morality, and existence. In an increasingly globalised world, religious plurality is not just a concept but a reality that presents both opportunities and challenges.

Historically, societies often grappled with religious diversity. Some embraced it, creating rich tapestries of cultural and religious interweaving, while others resisted it, leading to conflicts and divisions. The modern world that is characterised by advanced communication technologies and increased mobility has brought people of different faiths into closer contact than ever before, amplifying the significance of religious plurality. When embraced, religious plurality contributes to cultural diversity, enriching societies with various traditions, festivals, rituals, and philosophies. This diversity enhances the cultural fabric of a society, making it more vibrant and dynamic. Moreover, exposure to different religious beliefs fosters tolerance and understanding and encourages individuals to appreciate and respect the beliefs of others, even if they differ from their own. This can lead to a more peaceful coexistence and reduce the likelihood of religious conflicts. Engaging with diverse religious perspectives can stimulate intellectual growth and critical thinking. It challenges individuals to reflect on their own beliefs and consider alternative viewpoints, leading to a deeper understanding of their own faith and those of others. Against this backdrop, the findings of this research suggest that interfaith dialogues and collaborative efforts among different religious denominations can address common social issues and contribute to the overall spiritual well-being of the Richmond community.

Despite the advantages of religious plurality, ensuring religious freedom while maintaining social harmony requires a delicate balancing act. Encouraging interfaith dialogue can bridge the gaps among different religious communities, and dialogue can provide a platform for sharing beliefs, addressing misconceptions, and finding common ground. Moreover, efforts to promote religious plurality can be highly effective at grassroots level. Community events, interfaith services, and collaborative social projects can bring people of different faiths together, fostering a sense of shared purpose and community. But during the apartheid years in South Africa, for instance, police and military events and government ceremonies were presided over by chaplains whose exclusive participation entrenched Christianity as the state theology.

7.4.4 Equality among religious practices: A departure from state theology

A remarkable finding was the participants' suggestion to embrace the role of interfaith practices for the restoration of peace and harmony in interpersonal relations in the Richmond community. This proposal called for the displacement of state theology as a universally accepted religious practice. Walton and Mahadev (2019) define state theology as a religious doctrine and its associated practices that are endorsed and promoted by the government to legitimise its authority and policies. It often intertwines religious beliefs with political agendas, using faith as a tool to consolidate power and justify state actions. Throughout history, state theology has manifested in various forms across different cultures and eras, shaping societies in profound ways. State theology has also often served as a mechanism for social control. By aligning religious doctrines with state policies, governments can manipulate religious sentiments to maintain order and suppress opposition. In many cases, dissent against the state is framed as hearsay or blasphemy, which carries severe consequences in deeply religious societies. For instance, during apartheid in South Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church developed a theological justification for racial segregation, claiming it was God's will. This state theology provided a moral veneer for the oppressive regime, making it more palatable to the public and stifling resistance.

State theology is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has played a significant role in shaping societies throughout history. This study argues that, while

state theology can promote unity and provide moral justification for its governance practices, it also poses significant ethical challenges. The intertwining of religion and state can lead to the manipulation of faith for political ends, the suppression of dissent, and the perpetuation of injustices. As societies continue to evolve, the relationship between religion and state remains a critical area of examination, raising important questions about the balance between faith, power, and the common good.

7.5 The Pillars of Indigenous Approaches to Conflict Intervention

The participants unveiled indigenous practices that were characterised by the holistic worldview that all aspects of life are interconnected. In support of this submission, Olowu (2017) argues that indigenous practices represent the rich tapestry of knowledge, traditions, and cultural values developed by native communities worldwide over millennia. He avers that these practices are deeply intertwined with the environment, spirituality, and community life. Indigenous approaches encompass the traditional knowledge, cultural practices, and philosophical principles that indigenous peoples around the world have developed over millennia. These practices are rooted in a deep connection to the land, community, and spiritual beliefs. They offer valuable insights into sustained connections between the dead and the living while forging community resilience. Understanding and appreciating these principles are crucial in fostering a more inclusive and sustainable future for indigenous communities.

7.5.1 Community and collective responsibility

According to the findings, community and collective responsibility is central to indigenous approaches that seek to redress pain and harm. In the fabric of human societies, the concepts of community and responsibility are fundamental threads that weave together the social, ethical, and moral dimensions of our lives. A community is not merely a collection of individuals but it is a network of relationships bound by shared values, goals, and mutual support. Responsibility, on the other hand, refers to the duties and obligations that individuals have towards one another and the collective well-being of the community. Olowu (2017) concurs with this view by stating that, when using indigenous approaches, decisions are often made through consensus that reflects the collective will and wisdom of the community. This approach fosters social cohesion and ensures that everyone has a voice in matters that affect their

community. Furthermore, the elders play a crucial role in guiding the community with their wisdom and experience (Rammala, 2021). They are respected as the custodians of knowledge and cultural heritage and their insights are invaluable in decision-making processes. Respect for the elders and their contributions is a key aspect of the indigenous social structure.

Responsibility in a community context involves recognising and fulfilling one's obligations towards others. This includes a wide range of actions, from everyday courtesies and mutual assistance to more Western commitments such as civic duties and ethical behaviour. Responsibility is not merely about adhering to rules but about actively contributing to the common good.

The research findings affirmed that each individual should play a role in maintaining the health and harmony of the community. Personal responsibility includes behaviours such as helping one's neighbours, respecting communal spaces, and being considerate of others' needs. For example, participation in local community events demonstrates a commitment to the collective well-being. Several participants indicated that measures to heal past divisions and restore interpersonal relations in the Richmond community were the responsibility of everyone. Boru (2016) fortifies this suggestion as he posits that conflicts are a violation of the social order, therefore it is the responsibility of the entire community to work together to restore disrupted relations.

Beyond individual actions, there is a collective responsibility that emerges from the community's shared goals and values. This involves working together to address common issues and challenges. For instance, in times of crises such as conflicts or natural disasters, communities often come together to provide support and resources to those in need. This collective effort helps to mitigate the impact of the crisis and fosters a sense of solidarity.

7.5.2 Spirituality and cultural continuity

Spiritual inclination featured strongly in the findings as a sacrosanct aspect of indigenous approaches to post-conflict resolution. The responses suggested that

spiritual beliefs and cultural practices are pivotal components of an indigenous way of life. It must be noted that spirituality is not confined to religious rituals but permeates all aspects of the daily lives of community members. Many indigenous cultures have creation stories, cosmologies, and mythologies that explain their place in the world and their relationship with other living beings. Cultural continuity is also maintained through rituals, ceremonies, and the passing down of traditions and stories from one generation to the other. These practices reinforce a sense of identity, belonging, and purpose and they also serve as a means of transmitting values, ethics, and knowledge across generations.

Cultural continuity often hinges on the preservation and adaptation of spiritual traditions. Spiritual practices and rituals are passed down through generations, serving as a link between the past and the present. This continuity is crucial for maintaining cultural identity as it provides a sense of belonging and a framework for understanding one's place within a larger historical and cosmic context. Spirituality can also play a significant role in cultural resilience as it infuses communities with a sense of purpose and strength in the face of adversity. During periods of social upheaval, conflict, or colonisation, spiritual beliefs and practices often served as sources of resistance and empowerment as they offered a means of preserving cultural identity and asserting autonomy in challenging circumstances.

The relationship between spirituality and cultural continuity is a testament to the profound ways in which human beings seek to understand and express their place in the world. Spirituality provides the foundational beliefs and practices that shape cultural traditions, while cultural continuity ensures the transmission and adoption of these spiritual practices across generations. Together, they create a dynamic interplay that supports the preservation and evolution of human cultures.

7.6 The Co-Existence of Western and Indigenous Strategies amid Diversity

According to Forsyth *et al.* (2020), Western methods of conflict intervention can coexist with informal and alternative approaches, which is a measure that offers valuable perspectives and solutions. This approach was also affirmed by some of the participants. In such mediation processes, the emphasises on collaborative problem-

solving and mutual understanding often leads to sustainable and satisfactory outcomes. Hameiri and Jones (2018) write that traditional conflict resolution practices that are rooted in cultural norms and community involvement play a crucial role in conflict resolution, particularly in non-Western societies.

The growing interest in restorative justice has reflected a broad recognition of the limitations of Western methods. Restorative justice focuses on repairing harm and restoring relationships rather than on merely punishing offenders. This approach has gained traction in criminal justice systems worldwide, demonstrating the potential for integrating Western and indigenous strategies. However, the hegemony of Western conflict methods underscores their significant influence in shaping how conflicts are addressed and resolved. While these methods offer structure, authority, and enforceability, they also face criticisms related to accessibility and rigidity. However, balancing Western methods with informal and alternative methods can create more inclusive and effective conflict resolution processes, ultimately fostering a more just and harmonious society. As we navigate an increasingly complex and interconnected world, recognising the value of diverse conflict resolution strategies will be essential in addressing the myriad challenges we face in addressing the resolution of ongoing conflicts.

The research findings revealed that the Richmond community was experiencing the influx of people who hailed from different backgrounds. As a result, people with different orientations now view the Richmond community as their home. A point of convergence for many participants was that peace and stability will only be achieved when the interests of everyone and of all religious groups are protected and treated equally. This is easier said than done, as people of varying orientations are not on an equal footing, particularly where this diversity is based on religion. The findings showed that the following considerations are important in negotiating consensus in such a diverse community:

- Listen to the specific demands of all groups rather than specific associations.
- Bring the population together and engage with all of them on what the common priorities and needs are in their areas and how solutions can be reached.
- Identify needs based on community demands.

7.7 The Fragile State of Interpersonal Relations

It was found that the Richmond community still reeled from the effects of several violent political conflicts. The participants highlighted the immediacy of the need for interventions to restore disrupted interpersonal relations regardless of political divisions. The findings also demonstrated that restoring interpersonal relations in this post-conflict community would be complex and multifaceted, reflecting the intricate web of emotions, experiences, and historical contexts that had shaped interactions in the Richmond community. This was evident in the finding that showed permeations of conflict that affected bonds between families and among clans. The aftermath of the conflicts left the community grappling with perennial problems associated with trauma, distrust, and fractured relationships. However, it was evident that the community also possessed a remarkable capacity for resilience, forgiveness, reconciliation, and rebuilding.

Chapter 2 detailed the history of several conflicts in the Richmond area that evinced seeds of distrust and suspicion among community members and unravelled the social fabric of this society. Former enemies and rival groups thus struggled to coexist peacefully as they were affected by lingering animosities and unresolved grievances, as the narrative of a mother whose son was denied a leadership role testified. According to Daso (2017), the breakdown of trust is particularly pronounced in communities where religious or political divisions fuel conflict, which was the case in the Richmond community. Rebuilding trust requires addressing these underlying issues and fostering a sense of shared identity and mutual respect. The participants urged that the community should embrace one another's political and religious backgrounds in order to find a lasting solution to poor interpersonal relations.

Conflict disrupts the social fabric of communities, leading to the loss of traditional structures and support networks. The research findings affirmed that this was the case in the Richmond area as families were still torn apart by resentment and a lack of forgiveness, as was averred by some participants. The literature also urges that community leaders or institutions that once played a crucial role in maintaining social order may be weakened or destroyed by the hegemony of Western methods that

elevated external political leaders and subjugated marginalised traditional authority councils. This loss of social cohesion can exacerbate feelings of isolation and alienation, making it difficult for individuals to reconnect and rebuild their lives.

Community-based peacebuilding initiatives play a crucial role in restoring interpersonal relations in post-conflict communities. Grassroots organisations, local leaders, and civil society groups can facilitate dialogue and cooperation among community members. Projects that promote joint economic activities, cultural exchanges, and collaborative problem-solving can help bridge the divides and build trust. When individuals work together towards common goals, they develop a sense of shared purpose, interdependence, and stronger social bonds.

For instance, the Rwandan genocide of 1994 left the country deeply scarred, with interpersonal relations severely restrained. However, through a combination of government-led reconciliation efforts and community initiatives, Rwanda has made significant strides in rebuilding social cohesion. The establishment of *Gacaca* courts, where community members participated in the justice process, helped address the pain the atrocities that had been committed fuelled, and they promoted reconciliation. Grassroots organisations also played a crucial role in fostering dialogue between survivors and perpetrators and they facilitated healing.

Going further abroad, the conflict in Northern Ireland, often referred to as ‘The Troubles’, saw deep-seated divisions between Protestant and Catholic communities. The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 marked a turning point and led to a peace process that included efforts to rebuild interpersonal relations. Cross-community initiatives, such as integrated schools and joint community projects, have since bridged the sectarian divide to some extent and promoted mutual understanding. While challenges remain, these efforts have contributed to a more peaceful and cohesive society.

The current study revealed the failure of several Western interventions to bring to an end intractable violent conflicts and the restoration of disrupted relations in the Richmond community. As a consequence, relations remained the most affected

aspect of the community's human ecosystem. The participants suggested that the Richmond community still suffered due to an unforgiving demeanour for the loss of lives, displacements, fragmentation, the splitting of clans and families, and poor personal relations stemming from the sustained violent conflicts. However, a glimmer of hope was offered by the suggestion of a combination of a Western and indigenous approaches to post-conflict resolution.

7.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter evaluated six key findings that emerged from the themes that were discussed in Chapter 6. These findings were: the dynamics of Western methods of post-conflict intervention, the persistence of the hegemony of Western methods in the indigenous community, the quest for the utilisation of indigenous approaches to restore relations, the pillars of indigenous approaches to conflict intervention pedagogies, the co-existence of Western and indigenous strategies in the post-conflict Richmond community, and the state of interpersonal relations in the post-conflict Richmond community. The chapter also iterated the contribution of the study to conflict and peace studies as well as conflict resolution practices. In the discussion of each key finding and its associated findings, the point of departure was the views of the participants. These findings addressed the research objectives as outlined in Chapter 1. Several key insights and implications were highlighted in the discourse and pertinent conclusions were drawn. The findings illuminated a nuanced understanding of the impact of conflicts on interpersonal relations in the indigenous community under study and offered valuable contributions to both theoretical knowledge and practical applications. The findings underscored the role of indigenous approaches in restoring interpersonal relations and revealed various pillars that may underpin conflict restoration processes. The insights that emerged were aligned with the views of various scholars, such as Murambadoro (2020), who posit that Western post-conflict measures have failed in the African context and that indigenous approaches should be used as an alternative approach to post-conflict resolution. The findings affirmed the validity of the conflict transformation theory while they challenged the hegemony of Western methods in the African context. With reference to the major research findings, the next chapter provides overall concluding comments and

recommendations for further studies, practice, and policy implications where applicable.

CHAPTER 8
RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

8.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the ways in which the study addressed the research questions and met its objectives. The chapter also presents recommendations and suggestions for further research and actions and provides the state with crucial guidelines for taking action when implementing peace-building projects in conflict-torn communities. These recommendations also outline the conditions that must be satisfied to ensure that conflict resolution institutions are appropriately orientated, policies are successfully executed, and new programs are devised as needed. This chapter reiterates the main conclusions, offers recommendations, and concludes with a summary of the key contributions of the study to the body of knowledge to enrich understanding of the studied phenomenon among scholars and practitioners alike.

8.2 Addressing the Objectives of the Study

The first objective of the study was to examine **the reasons for the non-utilisation of indigenous approaches to post-conflict resolution in the Richmond community**. The study concludes that the hegemony of Western methods for conflict resolution contributed significantly to **the marginalisation of indigenous approaches** as conflict intervention strategies in the area under study.

Examining **the effectiveness of Western approaches to the resolution of post-conflict interventions in the Richmond** was the second objective. It was found that the such approaches did not contribute to post conflict resolution, and the study thus concludes that the several Western approaches that were implemented to achieve post-conflict peace among members of the Richmond community **failed to restore relational justice.**

The study also examined **the role of indigenous approaches in rebuilding post-conflict relational justice** in the Richmond community. Based on the findings, the study concludes that **indigenous approaches need to play a pivotal role** in rebuilding post-conflict relational justice in the Richmond community.

In terms of **the ways in which indigenous methods can be applied to achieve post-conflict relational justice** in the study area, which was the fourth objective of the study. The study concludes that **indigenous approaches can be applied effectively to achieve post-conflict relational justice**. The findings highlighted several indigenous approaches that can be used to rebuild interpersonal relations in a post-conflict situation. A key requirement is the **acknowledgement of indigenous communities' spirituality,** with specific emphasis on utilising spiritual rituals and ceremonies as niche areas of indigenous approaches to conflict resolution after and even during periods of strife. The study concludes that there **are a variety of ways** in which indigenous approaches can be applied to achieve post-conflict relational justice. As an extension of this finding, the study also proposes that a combination of Western and traditional conflict resolution strategies should be explored to resolve strife and achieve restitution.

The final objective was to **identify and examine the overarching principles that guide the application of indigenous approaches to post-conflict resolution** in the study area. In this regard, the study concludes that indigenous approaches to post-conflict interventions are constructed **on the pillars that are deeply entrenched** in traditional communities' way of life. These pillars are **the environment, spirituality, and the customs** that shape the lives of the members of such communities, whether they have adopted a more modern lifestyle and/or political orientation or not.

8.3 Recommendations

This study offers the following recommendations related to community enrichment:

8.3.1 Psycho-social support programmes

- Accord indigenous people an opportunity to play a leading role in the design and implementation of programmes aimed at bringing about peace and promoting diversity in the areas where they reside.
- Empower traditional authority councils to facilitate and foster dispute resolution and healing in their communities.
- Establish community-based trauma counselling centres and train and deploy personnel to render victim support services on a continuous basis.

- The government (both national and local) should release funds for raising awareness and promoting education on the impact of violent conflicts through outreach programme in schools and churches and at political gatherings and sports events.
- Develop and distribute user-friendly reading materials that promote tolerance and non-violent ways of resolving disputes.

8.3.2 Recommendations for the political arena

- Establish a National Healing Commission and locate it within the Presidency for it to prioritise national healing and reconciliation to address social cohesion needs of communities in the aftermath of violence and conflict.
- Capacitate the National Healing Commission with personnel skilled in conflict transformation, resolution, and peacebuilding.
- Acknowledge the victims of gross human rights violations in the past and facilitate healing for all.
- Encourage communities to hold inclusive social cohesion dialogues to promote the peaceful co-existence of persons from different political and religious backgrounds.
- Introduce legislations that incorporate social cohesion into primary and secondary school curricula to thwart the risk of generational violence.
- Enact and enforce laws that protect religious freedom and plurality to prevent discrimination based on religion, with particular emphasis on the beliefs and customs of traditional communities.
- Register all affected victims of past atrocities in a formal register and offer them opportunities to make statements to enable them access to reparation.
- Make it compulsory for political office bearers to attend training programmes on diversity, tolerance, and social cohesion.

8.4 General Summary of the Study

Chapter 1 situated the study both geographically and historically by providing pertinent background information. The particular terms that have been used in the discourse were clarified and the problem statement, the aim and objectives of the study, and the research questions were elucidated. A brief overview of the research

methodology was provided and the researcher justified the choice of the research topic and the data collection and analysis processes. Finally, a synopsis of the structure of the research project was provided.

Chapter 2 mapped out and reviewed relevant literature by focusing on the historical dynamics of the series of violent political conflicts that erupted in and fragmented the Richmond community between 1990-2018. The study was thus situated in a defined historical period. The chapter examined critical conflict issues identified by various authors that ignited and sustained violence and conflict in the Richmond area. The chapter characterised the antagonists who had played a key role during the epochs of conflict that had occurred sporadically over the study period. Moreover, the chapter explored several conflict interventions, arguing that they were Western oriented, focused on conflict management and resolution, but ignored interpersonal relations. These interventions intended to address the effects of the sporadic violence, conflicts, and political and social divisions on individuals, families, and the community, but it was clear that they had been ineffective in achieving relational justice and peace. The study established that animosity, tensions, and poor interpersonal relations remained source of attrition for the people of the Richmond community.

Chapter 3 reviewed the available literature on Western conflict intervention methods and explored the success or failure of these initiatives in post-conflict communities other than South Africa. The segment argues that Western methods fail to bring about durable peace in indigenous African communities. The literature also showed how conflict-stricken African communities experienced the resurgence of conflicts following the application of Western strategies of conflict intervention. Furthermore, examples of African communities that had experienced intractable conflicts amid the failure of Western methods fortified the conclusion that Western methods alone are unsuitable for post-conflict relational justice in indigenous African communities. A gap that was identified in the literature was that scholarly analyses generally focused on only one aspect of Western methods of conflict intervention, such as the cessation of the physical violence, thereby neglecting the relational aspect. The available literature did present views that aided in attaining a more informed understanding of the application of Western methods of conflict intervention; however, a general weakness was also

noted, which was the failure of some scholars to provide an exposition of the capacity of various Western methods to rebuild and sustain positive relations in post-conflict communities. Consequently, the chapter illuminated the calls for alternative post-conflict intervention strategies such as the 'local turn' approach proposed by the UN and the 'African solutions to African problems' propagated by the AU. Chapter 3 surveyed several African indigenous approaches of conflict intervention and their propensity to achieve the restoration of relations in post-conflict situations. The discourse exposed several indigenous approaches and their potential to contribute significantly to post-conflict reconstruction. As such, the chapter explored the gaps in the literature as a preamble to providing validation for the conflict transformation approach elucidated in this research study.

Chapter 4 presented a historical overview of the evolution of related theories utilised by conflict and peace studies and exposed the deficiencies of the previously preferred theories of conflict management and conflict resolution. The discourse also demonstrated the uniqueness of the conflict transformation theory against the two previously dominant theories of conflict management and conflict resolution. This discussion established the building blocks for the conflict transformation theory. It was posited that the conflict transformation theory is not a panacea for conflict resolution, but a much desirable analytical tool for conflict analysis and intervention.

In the second part of Chapter 4, the discourse revealed the praxis of the conflict theory and demonstrated how the unequal distribution of resources and imbalances in power relations in society lead to conflict. The discussion provided an exposition of the key features of the theoretical lenses through which this study was conducted, and it was argued that a holistic interconnected analysis process was important for a study of this nature as it provided a pre-requisite towards a shift to a multi-pronged conflict transformation strategy. Subsequently, the chapter posited that conflict should be understood as a multi-dimensional phenomenon that treats causal factors as interrelated and connected, thus impacting the personal, structural, relational, and cultural aspects of any conflict. The chapter also advocated for a greater emphasis on the less obvious structural and cultural elements of a conflict. Chapter 2 also discussed Lederach's (2003) model of conflict transformation that guided the

researcher's investigation of indigenous approaches towards restoring relations in post-conflict situations. Evidence showed the need to understand the specific context and nature of a conflict situation.

Chapter 5 discussed the various features of the research methodology that the study employed. The chapter commenced with a justification for the use of the qualitative research design and its related methodologies for data generation and analysis. It was explained that the purposive and snowball sampling methodologies had been utilised to select and recruit participants for this study. The chapter also highlighted the purpose and nature of the personal interviews and focus group discussion that had been used to generate data. The content and thematic analysis processes that had been used to analyse the data were discussed and, in conclusion, the ethical issues and study limitations were acknowledged.

Chapter 6 presented the results and analysed the participants' understandings, perceptions, interpretations, and thoughts on post-conflict relational justice in the Richmond community. The findings were presented thematically in headed and sub-headed sections as the discourse attempted to answer the main research questions. The discussion also integrated the literature and theoretical underpinning of the findings as they emerged from the data set to answer the research questions. As the findings were discussed in light of the literature review, gaps were identified in the literature and theoretical framework which this study successfully addressed.

Chapter 7 presented a discussion on the key findings that emerged from the thematic analyses presented in Chapter 6. The discourse juxtaposed the research findings with the literature review presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, and the outcomes offer valuable contributions to both theoretical knowledge and practical applications. Chapter 7 also assessed the applicability of the conflict and conflict transformation theories as theoretical tools to better understand and bring about post-conflict relational justice in communities emerging out of conflicts. The discourse explained how the findings may impact policy formulation and conflict resolution practices in the future.

8.5 Conclusion: Contribution of the Study to the Conflict Resolution Debate

The study offers a unique point of reference for relationship reconstruction in the context of indigenous approaches following conflicts. This study argues that African indigenous approaches are a viable intervention mechanism for conflict resolution in more traditional communities. It is posited that the outcomes contribute significantly to the body of knowledge on the restoration of relationships in post-conflict situations. The study advances the conflict resolution debate by presenting a paradigm for applying the conflict transformation theory to the context of indigenous African communities. It also fills the gaps left by studies that focused primarily on the application of the conflict transformation theory as a catalyst for Western methods of conflict intervention. In relation to interventions, the study argues that Western post-conflict intervention strategies must understand and integrate local peculiarities and involve local people with experiences and knowledge of the physical and metaphysical realms that indigenous people respect and acknowledge.

The study sought the make a significant contribution to the discourse on the use of indigenous approaches towards post-conflict relational justice. The findings clearly highlighted the significance of indigenous approaches to conflict resolution, and the study thus argues that such initiatives broaden ways to restore relations in communities emerging out of conflicts. Whilst some researchers have revealed the efficacy of indigenous approaches to conflict intervention strategies, evidence is scant regarding their role in achieving post-conflict relational justice. This study thus filled this critical knowledge gap that emanated from a dearth of literature on indigenous approaches in the restoration of relations harmed by conflicts. The study validates the conflict transformation theory which explains that transforming relations harmed by conflicts predicates lasting solutions and restores co-existence and harmony (Miall, 2004). The study offers findings and recommendations that may be utilised in achieving outcome 13 of South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP), which envisions national unity by 2030. This may be achieved by learning and applying how indigenous pedagogies can be used to transcend a relational stalemate in indigenous communities. Moreover, the study contributes to the debate on the AU's mantra of 'African solutions to African problems' as it shares scholarly findings that will enrich the course and aim of this call.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Aall, P. and Crocker, C.A. (Eds.). 2017. *The fabric of peace in Africa: Looking beyond the state*. McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP.

Alcorta, L., Smits, J. and Swedlund, H.J. 2018. Inequality and ethnic conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Social Forces*, 97(2): 769-792**.**

Allen, S.H. 2022. *Interactive peace-making: A people-centred approach* (p. 176). Taylor and Francis.

Arde, G. 2020. War party: How the ANC's political killings are breaking South Africa. Media24 Books. Cape Town, South Africa.

Balcells, L. 2015. Political violence: An institutional approach. In J. Gandhi and R. Ruiz (pp. 377–388), *Routledge handbook of political institutions*. London: Routledge.

Berhane, T. and Macdonald, R. 2018. *Traditional African conflict resolution: The case of South Africa and Ethiopia* (Vol. 12 No. 2). Location: Publisher.

Bless, C., Higson-Smith, C. and Sithole, S. L. 2015. *Fundamentals of social research methods: An African perspective* (5th ed.). Cape Town: Juta and Company.

Booysen, S. (Ed.). 2021. *Marriage of inconvenience: The politics of coalitions in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection.

Bornkamm, P.C. 2012. *Rwanda's Gacaca courts: between retribution and reparation*. City/Location: Oxford University Press.

Bratton, M., Mattes, R. and Gyimah-Boadi, E. 2005. *Public opinion, democracy, and market reform in Africa.* City/location: Cambridge University Press*.*

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 3(2): 77-101.

Casanovas, P. and Poblet, M. 2008. Concepts and fields of relational justice. *Computational Models of Law* (LNAI 4884, pp. 323-339). Springer.

Creswell, J.W. and Poth, C.N. 2018. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Daly, K. 1999. Revisiting the relationship between retributive and restorative justice. In: H. Strang and J. Braithwaite (Eds.), *Restorative justice: Philosophy to practice* (pp. 33-35). London: Ash Gate.

Dawson, C. 2007. *A practical guide to research methods: A user-friendly manual for mastering research techniques and projects* (3rd ed.). Oxfordshire: How to Books.

De Oliveira, R. S. and Verhoeven, H. 2023. Taming intervention: Sovereignty, statehood and political order in Africa. In *Survival 60*(2): 7-32. Routledge.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. 2018. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Ero, C. 1999. *Comprehending and mastering African conflicts: The search for sustainable peace and good governance.* In Adebayo Adedeji (Ed.), London: Zed Books.

Fanon, F. 1961. *The wretched of the earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press.

Flyvbjerg, B. 2011. *Case study*. The SAGE handbook of qualitative research (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks. SAGE Publications.

Forsyth, M., Kent, L., Dinnen, S., Wallis, J. and Bose, S. 2020. Hybridity in peacebuilding and development: A critical approach. In *Hybridity in Peacebuilding and Development* (pp. 1-15). Routledge.

Fortna, V. P. 2022. *Does peacekeeping work?*. City: Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Fouché, C. B., Strydom, H. and Roestenburg, W. J. B. 2021. *Research at grass roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Service Professions* (5th ed.). Pretoria: J.L Van Schaik.

Galtung, J. 1996. Peace by peaceful means: Peace and conflict, development and civilization. SAGE Publications.

Garfield, R. and Loretti, A. 2002. *Collective violence*. In E. Krug *et al.* (Eds.), *World report on violence and health* (p. 240). Geneva: WHO.

Gasanabo, J. D. 2019. Peace in Rwanda: Balancing the ICTR and 'Gacaca' court in post genocide peacebuilding. *The Palgrave handbook of global approaches to peace* (pp.173-191).

Gegout, C. 2024. Explaining European military intervention in Africa: A neoclassical realist perspective. In *Neoclassical realism in European politics* (pp. 138-160). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Genger, P. 2020. Re-empowering African indigenous peace-making approaches: Identifying the enabling possibilities from decolonization and indigenization discourses. In *Indigenous knowledge systems and development in Africa* (pp. 131-157). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Girelli, G. 2017. *Understanding transitional justice: A struggle for peace, reconciliation, and rebuilding*. Location: Springer.

Greg, A. 2020. *War party: How the ANC's political killings are breaking South Africa*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

Hay, M. 1998. *Ukubuyisana: Reconciliation in South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

Hewitt, R. R. and Chammah J. K. (Eds.). 2018. Who is an African? Race, identity, and destiny in post-apartheid South Africa. Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic.

Jok, J. M. 2018. South Sudan's elusive peace: Between local drivers of violence and the actions of external actors. In *South Sudan* (pp. 74-91). Routledge.

Kiyala, J. C. K. 2024. Using traditional African approaches in contemporary peacebuilding. In *The Elgar companion to war, conflict and peacebuilding in Africa* (pp. 44-79). Location: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Kumar, R. 2019. *Research methodology: Step-by-step guide for beginners* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Lederach, J. P. 1997. Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies. City/location: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Lederach, J. P. 2003a. Conflict transformation in protracted internal conflicts: The case for comprehensive networks. In K. Rupesinghe (Ed.), *Conflict transformation* (pp. 201-222). New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Lederach, J. P. 2003b. *The little book of conflict transformation*. Location: Good Books.

Leedy, P. D. and Ormrod, J. E. 2019. *Practical research: Planning and design* (12th ed.). New York: Pearson.

Mac Ginty, R., and Richmond, O.P. "The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for Peace." Third World Quarterly 34, no. 5 (2013): 763–783.

Manganyi, N. C. and du Toit, A. 1990. The time of the Comrades: Reflections on political commitment and professional discourse in a context of political violence. In *Political violence and the struggle in South Africa* (pp. 1-28). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Maphosa, S. B. and Keasley, A. 2016. *Peace Education for violence prevention in fragile African societies: What's going to make a difference?* Pretoria: HSRC.
Maree, K. 2020. *First steps in research* (3rd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Maree, K. 2020. *First steps in research* (3rd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Marx, K. and Engels, F. 1973. *Karl Marx on society and social change: With selections by Friedrich Engels*. Location: University of Chicago Press.

Maxwell, J. A. 2013. Qualitative research design: An interactive approach (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

McGarry, J. and O'Leary, B. 2004. The politics of ethnic conflict regulation: Case studies of protracted ethnic conflicts. Location: Routledge.

McGarry, J. and O'Leary, B. 2019. The politics of reconciliation in Northern Ireland: Lessons and challenges. London: Oxford University Press.

Miall, H. 2004. Conflict transformation: A multi-dimensional task. In A. Austin, M. Fischer and N. Ropers (Eds.), *Transforming ethno political conflict: The Berghof handbook.* Berlin: VS Verlag fur Sozialwissenschaften.

Miall, H., Ramsbotham, O. and Woodhouse, T. 1999. Resolving conflict: A handbook of practical strategies. Location: Routledge.

Msimang, T. C. 1975. *Kusadliwa ngoludala*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter.

Murambadoro, R. 2020. Transitional justice in Africa: The case of Zimbabwe. Switzerland**:** Palgrave Macmillan, Springer Nature.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. 2018. Epistemic freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and decolonization. New York: Taylor and Francis, Routledge.

Ngubane, H. (1977). *Body and mind in Zulu medicine: An ethnography of health and disease in Nyuswa-Zulu thought and practice*. London: Academic Press.

Ngwena, C. 2018. *What is Africanness? Contesting nativism in race, culture and sexualities.* Pretoria: University Law Press.

Nyawo, S. 2023. Indigenous spirituality, peacebuilding, and development in ESwatini. In *The Palgrave handbook of religion, peacebuilding, and development in Africa* (pp. 287-303). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Olupona, J. K. 2022. The nature and essence of secrecy in Yorùbá religious traditions: Conversations with IFÁ diviners 1. In *The Routledge handbook of religion and secrecy* (pp. 199-210). Location: Routledge.

Padgett, D. K 2017. Qualitative methods in social work research (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Phosa, M. 2024. *Witness to power*. Cape Town, South Africa: Penguin Books.

Raddatz, R. 2012. Tempering great expectations: Peacebuilding and transitional justice in Liberia. In *Transitional Justice and Peacebuilding on the Ground* (pp. 178-199). Location: Routledge.

Randazzo, E. 2019. Post-conflict reconstruction: The local and the indigenous. In *Handbook on intervention and state building* (pp. 30-40). Location: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Republic of South Africa. 2023. *National Development Plan*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Rix, E. F., Wilson, S., Sheehan, N. and Tujague, N. 2019. Indigenist and decolonizing research methodology. In P. Liamputtong (Ed.), *Handbook of research methods in health social sciences* (pp. 243-267). Singapore: Spinger.

Schirch, L. (2004). *The little book of strategic peacebuilding*. Good Books.

Schwandt, T. A. and Gates, E. F. 2018. Case study methodology. In *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks. CA: SAGE Publications.

Sharp, P. 2009. *Diplomatic theory of international relations* (Vol. 111). Location: Cambridge University Press.

Simon, Roger 1991. Gramsci's Political Thought. London: Laurence and Wishart.

Spangler, B. (2003). Settlement, Resolution, Management, and Transformation: An Explanation of Terms. Beyond Intractability.

South Africa. Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). 1999, June. *Report* (Volumes 3, Chap 3). Cape Town: Juta.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. 1998. *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Terreblanche, S. 2014. *Western empires: Christianity and the inequalities between the West and the rest*. South Africa: Penguin Books.

Tieku, T. K., Coffie, A., Setrana, M. B. and Taiwo, A. 2021. Conclusion: Ideas, actors, institutions, and future research direction. In *The Politics of Peacebuilding in Africa* (pp. 233-242). Location: Routledge.

Tutu, D. 1999. *No future without forgiveness*. Location: Image Books.

United Nations. Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. 2010a. UN releases DR Congo report listing 10 years of atrocities, identifying justice options. New York: United Nations.

Villa-Vicencio, C., Nantulya, P. and Savage, T. 2005. Building nations: Transitional justice in the African Great Lakes Region. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation.

Von Billerbeck, S. (2016). *Whose peace? Local ownership and United Nations peacekeeping*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, M. 2024. *Civil-military relations and peacekeeping*. Location: Taylor and Francis.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. London: The Guilford Press.

Zehr, H. (2015). *The little book of restorative justice*. Location: Good Books.

Journal Articles

Adebayo, E. F., Uthman, O. A., Wiysonge, C. S., Stern, E. A., Lamont, K. T. and

Africa, S. 2020. Challenges of peacebuilding in Africa. *Conflict Trends*, *2020*(3): 2-9.

Akinbote, O. (2022). Traditional governance and conflict resolution in West Africa: The role of the *Palava Hut*. *Journal of African Studies, 19*(2), 45-62.

Alabi, D. T. 2002. Emerging trends and dimensions of the Rwanda crisis. *Afr. J. Int'l Aff. and Dev.*, *7*: 40.

Alabi, D.T? and Jiboku, O. 2023. Hybrid models of justice: Integrating Palava Hut practices with modern legal systems in Nigeria. *Nigerian Law Review, 28*(1): 56-72.

Amoah, M. and Mensah, I. 2021. Traditional conflict resolution systems among the Akan of Ghana: A study of the Palaver Hut system. *African Journal of Conflict Resolution, 21*(2), 89-105.

Ani, N. C. 2017. Re-empowering indigenous principles for conflict resolution in Africa: Implications for the African Union. *Journal of Pan African Studies, 10*(9): 15-36.

Ani, N. C. 2019. Three schools of thought on 'African Solutions to African Problems'. *Journal of Black Studies, 50*(2): 135-155.

Arai, T. 2019. Conflict intervention training as strategic convening: Lessons from Syria. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, *14*(3): 288-303.

Aremu, J. O. 2010. Conflicts in Africa: Meaning, causes, impact and solution. *African Research Review*, *4*(4).

Ataguba, J. E. 2015. A systematic review of factors that affect uptake of community-based health insurance in low-income and middle-income countries. *BMC Health Services Research*, *15*: 1-13.

Baker, A. and Ntiokam, C. (2023). Elders as mediators: Traditional conflict resolution practices in African Societies. *Journal of African Studies, 31*(1): 57-73.

Bello, P. O. and Olutola, A. 2016. Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms in Africa: Lessons drawn for Nigeria. *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, *13*(2).

Bercovitch, J. and Jackson, R. 2020. Mediation and conflict resolution in the 21st Century. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, *31*(2): 123-145.

Blair, R. A., Blattman, C. and Hartman, A. 2017. Predicting local violence: Evidence from a panel survey in Liberia. *Journal of Peace Research*, *54*(2): 298-312.

Boesten, J. 2024. Victim participation in the Gacaca courts: A case study of Rwanda. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development, 19*(1): 34-49.

Boru, G. 2016. Gondooroo as an indigenous method of conflict resolution and justice administration. *Journal of Culture, Society and Development* Available from: www.iiste.orgISSN,pp.2422-8400.

Botes, J. 2003. Conflict transformation: A debate over semantics or a crucial shift in the theory and practice of peace and conflict studies*? International Journal of Peace Studies, 8*(2): 1-27. Available from: <http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol8_2/botes.htm> (Accessed April 20 2022).

Bove, V., Rivera, M. and Ruffa, C. 2020. Beyond coups: Terrorism and military involvement in politics. *European Journal of International Relations*, *26*(1): 263-288.

Bukari, N. 2013. Exploring indigenous approaches to conflict resolution: The case of the Bawku conflict in Ghana. *Journal of Sociological Research, 4*(2): 86-104.

Bullen, C., and Williams, A. (2021). Peacebuilding in South Sudan: Evaluating Western-supported initiatives. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development, 16*(2): 154-172.

Button, K., Moore, E. and Himonga, C. 2016. South Africa's system of dispute resolution forums: The role of the family and the state in customary marriage dissolution. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *42*(2): 299-316.

Carter, L. J. 2021. Community identity and local nostalgia: A case study of regional festivals. *Journal of Cultural Studies, 12*(4): 45-67.

Chaggu, B. 2023. Comparison of the Western and traditional African methods of conflict resolution on the example of International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda (ICTR) and Gacaca method in the context of the 1994 Rwanda genocide. *Historia i Polityka*, *51*(44): 73-85.

Chivasa, N. 2019. Kuripa Ngozi as a conflict resolution model in Shona communities of Zimbabwe: A conceptual analysis. *Critical African Studies*, *11*(2): 159-175.

Chubb, L. A., Fouché, C. B. and Sadeh Kengah, K. 2022. Baraza as method: Adapting a traditional conversational space for data collection and pathways for change. *Qualitative Social Work*, *21*(5): 914-931.

Cilliers, J. and Sidiropoulos, E. (2016). Community engagement and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa: Achievements and Challenges. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *42*(4): 615-632.

Clark, R. and Mitchell, J. 2024. Integrating spiritual practices with modern legal systems: Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of Indigenous Law, 17*(1): 32-49.

Conteh-Morgan, E. 2005. Peacebuilding and human security: A constructivist perspective. *International Journal of Peace Studies*, *vol*(issue): 69-86.

Costanza, J. N. 2015. Indigenous peoples' right to prior consultation: Transforming human rights from the grassroots in Guatemala. *Journal of Human Rights*, *14*(2): 260-285.

Coy, M. J. 2019. Research methodologies: Increasing understanding of the world. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, *9*(1): 71-77.

De Haas, M. 2016. The killing fields of KZN local government elections: Violence and democracy in 2016. South Africa Crime Quarterly, 57(43): 53.

D'Souza, N. and Shapland, J. 2023. The exclusion of serious and organised offenders and their victims from the offer of restorative justice: Should this be so and what happens when the offer is put on the table?. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, *23*(1): 60-77.

Davis, K. and Robertson, L. 2022. The risks of exploitation in spiritual conflict interventions. *Indigenous Studies Review, 19*(2): 114-130.

Davis, R. H. 2022. Nostalgia and historical memory: The impact of local turn on nostalgia on historical narratives. *History and Memory, 19*(2): 89-104.

Deutsch, M. 2001. Subjective features of conflict resolution: Psychological, social and cultural influences. *New Directions in Conflict Theory*, vol(issue): 26-56.

Dhizaala, J. T. 2018. Transitional justice in Liberia: The interface between civil society organisations and the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In *Advocating Transitional Justice in Africa: The Role of Civil Society* (pp. 43-63). Location: Publisher.

Dlamini, L. 2022. Challenges in implementing traditional conflict resolution mechanisms: The case of Lekgotla. *South African Journal of Conflict Resolution, 17*(1): 23-39.

Dlamini, L. and Moyo, S. 2023. Integrating traditional and formal legal systems: The case of Zulu conflict resolution practices. *South African Journal of Law and Society, 29*(1): 55-70.

Donaubauer, J., Herzer, D. and Nunnenkamp, P. 2019. The effectiveness of aid under post-conflict conditions: A sector-specific analysis. *The Journal of Development Studies*, *55*(4): 720-736.

Ferguson, H. 2023. Gender and social inequality in traditional conflict resolution: A critique of Mato Oput. *Gender and Development, 31*(4): 67-83.

Finnström, S. 2020. Brokers and breakers of war stories in Acholi land, Northern Uganda. *Anthropology and Humanism*, *45*(1): 43-58.

Fortna, V. P. and Howard, L. M. 2021. Peacekeeping and stabilization in the Central African Republic: Progress and challenges. *International Peacekeeping, 28*(2): 234-249.

Gade, C. B. N. 2021. The concept of Ubuntu and its implications for African conflict resolution. *African Studies Review, 64*(2): 203-220.

Gagnon, C. M. and Lamont, M. F. 2021. Development aid and community conflict in South Sudan: An assessment. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 16(2): 112-128.

Gardachew, B. D. 2020. Obstacles to the African solutions approach. *Journal of African Union Studies*, *9*(3): 71-86.

Gibbs, T. 2021. Anatomy of the ANC in power: Insights from Port Elizabeth, 1990–2019 by Mcebisi Ndletyana. *African Studies Review, 64*(2): 51-53.

Gibson, C. 2022. *Challenges in implementing traditional justice systems: The case of* Mato Oput. *Conflict Studies Quarterly, 19*(2): 23-39.

Gumede, W. 2023. Traditional conflict resolution and social cohesion: Insights from Zulu practices. *Journal of African Studies, 22*(2): 98-113.

Hameiri, S. and Jones, L. 2018. Against hybridity in the study of peacebuilding and state building. In *Hybridity on the ground in peacebuilding and development: Critical conversations* (pp. 99-112).

Hinton, A. 2023. Cultural relevance and community acceptance: The success of Mato Oput. *Journal of Traditional African Practices, 15*(1): 89-102.

Honwana, A.M. 1997. Healing for peace: Traditional healers and post-war reconstruction in Southern Mozambique. *Peace and Conflict*, *3*(3): 293-305.

Hsu, A. L. 2022. Western peacebuilding efforts in Myanmar's Rakhine State: Challenges and opportunities. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Conflict Resolution, 18*(4): 210-225.

Hur, Y. S. and Han, B. 2024. Aid modality and growth under post-conflict conditions. *Review of World Economics*, *160*(2): 657-674.

Hutchinson, S. 2022. Mato Oput: Traditional justice and reconciliation in Northern Uganda. *African Legal Studies, 30*(1): 56-72.

Igboin, B. O. 2011. Colonialism and African cultural values. *African Journal of History and Culture*, *3*(6): 96–103.

Johnson, R. B. and Rogers, L. A. 2021. Community engagement programs in Kenya: Evaluating impact and sustainability. *African Journal of Conflict Resolution, 23*(3): 45-61.

Kabwete, C. M. 2018. Towards justice and reconciliation in post-conflict countries: Meaningful concepts and possible realities. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, *18*(1): 65-91.

Kadima, D. 2013. An introduction to the politics of party alliance and coalitions in socially divided Africa. *Journal of African Elections*, *13*(1): 1-24.

Kamau, R. 2023. Gender dynamics and traditional conflict resolution in Kenya: An analysis of power imbalances. *Journal of African Gender Studies, 8*(1): 45-60.

Karanja, J. 2023*. Bias and inequality in traditional conflict resolution: A study of the Baraza technique. East African Journal of Social Sciences, 12*(3): 45-62.

Karanja, N. and Mutuku, B. (2023). Community engagement programs in Kenya: Successes and Challenges*. East African Journal of Peace Studies*, 18(1): 98-112.

Kebede L. B. 2019. Conflict theories. *Global Journal of Religions, 1*(4): 76-91.

Kimemia, D. 2021. The impacts of political conflicts in Africa. *Journal of African Conflicts and Peace Studies*, *4*(2): 4.

Khuzwayo, J., Meintjes, B. and Merk, U. 2011. Integrating African meaning systems and systemic thinking: The Sinani approach of working with conflict communities. In *The non-linearity of peace processes: Theory and practice of systemic conflict transformation* (pp. 247-264).

Khadiagala, G. M. 2021. The African Union in peacebuilding in Africa. *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa: Lessons Learned for Policymakers and Practitioners* (pp. 197-213).

Khumalo, N. 2023. Community-based approaches to conflict resolution: Enhancing traditional methods in South Africa. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development, 18*(2): 45-60.

Konneh, A. 2020. Human rights implications for peace and development: The case of Liberia. *Liberian Studies Journal*, *45*.

Krämer, M. 2020. Violence, autochthony, and identity politics in KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa): A processual perspective on local political dynamics. *African Studies Review, 63*(3): 540-559.

Kritz, N. J. 2023. *Transitional justice and the Gacaca courts: The Rwandan experience*. *Transitional Justice Review, 8*(1): 76-93.

Landman, T. 2005. The political science of human rights. *British Journal of Political Science*, *35*(3): 549-572.

Lawson, E. S. and Flomo, V. K. 2020. Motherwork and gender justice in Peace Huts: a feminist view from Liberia. *Third World Quarterly*, *41*(11): 1863-1880.

Ljungkvist, K. and Jarstad, A. 2021. Revisiting the local turn in peacebuilding through the emerging urban approach. *Third World Quarterly*, *42*(10): 2209-2226.

Lundy, B. D., Collette, T. L. and Downs, J. T. 2022. The effectiveness of indigenous conflict management strategies in localized contexts. *Cross-Cultural Research*, *56*(1): 3-28.

Mabaso, M. 2023. The role of the indaba in traditional Zulu conflict resolution. *Journal of Traditional African Practices, 16*(2): 67-82.

Mabud, A. 2022. *The Palava Hut as a cultural institution: Historical perspectives and contemporary practices*. *African Culture Review, 15*(1): 34-50.

Majavu, M. 2020. The 'African gangs' narrative: Associating blackness with criminality and other anti-Black racist tropes in Australia. *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal, 13*(1): 27-39.

Makonye, F. 2021. Conflict transformation theory as a tool for non-violence: The case of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations in Zimbabwe. *African Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, *10*(2): 31-49.

Maluleke, T. 2023. Social cohesion and conflict resolution: The impact of Lekgotla in South Africa. *Journal of African Studies, 22*(3): 45-60.

Mamdani, M. 2002. Amnesty or impunity? A preliminary critique of the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa. *Diacritics*, *32*(3/4): 33-59.

Mamdani, M. 2023. Political dimensions of the Gacaca courts: Reconciliation or political expediency? *Journal of African History, 64*(2): 145-162.

Marsh, T. N., Marsh, D. C., Ozawagosh, J. and Ozawagosh, F. 2018. The sweat lodge ceremony. *International Indigenous Policy Journal*, *9*(2): 1-22.

Martin, T. and Delaney, S. 2023. Navigating diversity in spiritual practices within indigenous conflict resolution. *Cultural Studies Journal, 22*(2): 67-83.

Martinez, E. F. 2023. The inclusivity challenge: navigating local nostalgia in diverse communities. *Sociology of Local Cultures, 8*(1): 112-130.

Matlosa, K. 2017. The state of democratization in Southern Africa: Blocked transitions, reversals, stagnation, progress and prospects. *Politikon,* 44(1): 5-26.

Mbandlwa, Z. and Shezi, L. 2020. Ethnicity as the cause of political instability in South Africa. *Journal of Critical Reviews*.

Mbeki, T. 2005. “I am an African”. *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, *18*: 17-18.

Mboh, L. 2021. An investigation into the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution: The case of communities in the Mahikeng Local Municipality, North-West Province, South Africa. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, *21*(2): 33-57.

McCarthy, J. 2022. Myanmar's military coup: The international response and its limits. *Asia Pacific Journal*, *20*(4): 301-318.

McCormick, M. C. (2021). International mediation and community tensions in Northern Ireland. *European Journal of International Relations, 27*(2): 75-92.

McGregor, D. 2022. Empowering indigenous communities through traditional knowledge. *Indigenous Rights Review, 16*(3): 135-150.

Mengstie, M. M. 2022. Exploring indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms between the Awi and Gumuz ethnic communities in Zigem Woreda, Ethiopia. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, *14*(3): 244-258.

Metz, S. 1987. Pretoria's ‘total strategy’ and low-intensity warfare in Southern Africa. *Comparative Strategy*, *6*(4): 437-469.

Metz, T. 2011. Ubuntu as a moral theory and human rights in South Africa. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, *11*(2): 532-559.

Mignolo, W. D. 2005. On subalterns and other agencies. *Postcolonial Studies*, *8*(4): 381-407.

Mitchell, C. (2002). Beyond resolution: What does conflict transformation actually transform? Peace and Conflict Studies, 9(1): 1-23.

Moeta, M., Musie, M. R., Seretlo, R. J., Ledimo, M., Rasweswe, M. M., Makhavhu, E. and Mulaudzi, F. M. 2023. Traditional health practitioners' training needs on biomedical knowledge and skills in a South African township. *African Journal of Primary Health Care and Family Medicine*, *15*(1): 1-9.

Mofokeng, N. R., Nojiyeza, I. S. and Nxumalo, S. I. 2023. Are we citizens or subjects? Service delivery at the intersection of modern and traditional leadership in Emaqeleni. *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development*, *16*(12): p51-60.

Mohamed, S. and Hassan, A. 2022. Community engagement in Somalia: Enhancing clan relations and stability. *Horn of Africa Journal, 14*(3): 144-159.

Mokgosi, T. 2022a. The influence of elders in the Lekgotla process: Mediation and facilitation in South Africa. *African Journal of Traditional, Complementary, and Alternative Medicines, 19*(4): 112-127.

Mokgosi, T. 2022b. Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms among the Zulu: Elders and mediation. *African Journal of Conflict Resolution, 17*(2): 89-104.

Mokoena, J. and Makgoba, M. 2023. The role of community participation in Lekgotla: Insights from South Africa. *Journal of East African Studies, 20*(2): 78-95.

Moyo, C. (2022). Traditional reconciliation and structural injustice: Case studies from Zimbabwe. *African Conflict Resolution Journal, 24*(4): 77-93.

Moyo, S. and Dlamini, L. 2024. The integration of traditional practices into modern legal systems in South Africa. *Journal of South African Legal Studies, 28*(1): 56-74.

Moyo, S. and Yeros, P. 2018. Sanctions and economic decline in Zimbabwe: A review. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *44*(2): 219-236.

Mtukwa, T. 2015. Informal peacebuilding initiatives in Africa: Removing the table. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, *15*(1): 85-106.

Mubangizi, J. C. 2022. Challenges in indigenous conflict resolution: A review of contemporary issues. *Journal of African Law, 66*(1): 47-64.

Muriuki, C. and Karanja, N. 2021. Community engagement programs in Kenya: Effectiveness and challenges. *East African Journal of Peacebuilding*, 15(1): 58-73.

Mutungi, J. (2023). Limitations of Mato Oput in addressing complex crimes. *Journal of African Criminology, 10*(2): 78-95.

Nalin, E. 2018. Transitional justice in Africa: Between the fight against impunity and peace maintenance. *Peace Maintenance in Africa: Open Legal Issues* (pp. 135-168)

Namusobya, R. 2023. The Mato Oput process: Traditional conflict resolution and its modern adaptations. *Journal of East African Studies, 21*(3): 34-50.

Nderitu, B. and Kamau, R. 2023. Negotiation practices in Maasai conflict resolution: An analysis of community-based mediation. *East African Journal of Peace and Development, 11*(1): 34-49.

Ndiaye, B. 2022. Bias and fairness in the Gacaca courts: An analytical review. *African Legal Studies, 31*(4): 84-101.

Ndlovu, M. 2017. Manufacturing black-on-black violence in Africa: A decolonial perspective on Mfecane and Afrophobia/xenophobia in South Africa. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies: Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity*, *12*(2): 97-109.

Ndlovu, S. 2023a. Cultural relevance and effectiveness of Lekgotla in South African communities. *African Studies Review, 25*(2): 90-108.

Ndlovu, S. 2023b. Spiritual and moral dimensions of conflict resolution: The practice of *ukukhonza* among the Zulu. *Journal of African Religion and Culture, 19*(3): 72-88.

Newman, E. 2011. A human security peacebuilding agenda. *Third World Quarterly*, *32*(10): 1737–1756.

Nkrumah, E. (2024). Adapting traditional practices for modern conflict resolution: The Palava Hut in Ghana. *Ghanaian Journal of Social Sciences, 21*(4): 89-104.

Nowotny, J. 2020. The limits of post-genocide justice in Rwanda: Assessing Gacaca from the perspective of survivors. *Contemporary Justice Review*, *23*(4): 401-429.

Nwozor, A., Okidu, O. and Adedire, S. 2021. Agenda 2063 and the feasibility of sustainable development in Africa: Any silver bullet? *Journal of Black Studies, 52*(7): 688-715.

Nyakundi, D. 2024. Social cohesion and conflict resolution: Evaluating the impact of the Baraza technique. *Journal of African Peace Studies, 22*(1): 45-60

Nyseth B. H. (2023). The truth-telling aspect of the Gacaca courts: Insights and outcomes. *International Journal of Transitional Justice, 17*(1): 89-106.

Nyseth B. H. and Golden, S. 2017. Centering survivors in local transitional justice. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, *13*(1): 101-121.

Nyseth B. H., Uggen, C. and Gasanabo, J. D. 2014. Genocide, justice, and Rwanda's Gacaca courts. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, *30*(3): 333-352.

Obamamoye, B. F. 2023. Beyond neo-imperialist intentionality: Explaining African agency in liberal peace interventions. *Third World Quarterly*, *44*(7): 1380-1397.

Omolo, E. 2024. The role of elders in the Baraza technique: Mediation and facilitation in East Africa. *Journal of African Mediation, 13*(2): 89-105.

Oosterom, M., Namuggala, V. F. and Szyp, C. 2022. Family dynamics and implications for young people's 'struggles' in rural areas of post-conflict northern Uganda. *Disasters*, *46*(2): 567-586.

Osei, I. and Appiah, M. 2022. Bias and effectiveness in traditional conflict mediation: Insights from the Palava Hut. *Journal of Conflict Mediation, 26*(3): 45-60.

Oyeniyi, A. 2017. Conflict resolution in the extractives: A consideration of traditional conflict resolution paradigms in post-colonial Africa. *Willamette Journal of International Law and Dispute Resolution*, *25*(1): 56-77.

Phakathi, M. 2019. Rethinking political violence in post-apartheid KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Ubuntu: Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation, 8*(1): 99-119.

Phiri, E. 2023. Bias and exclusion in traditional conflict resolution: A study of Lekgotla. *Journal of African Conflict Resolution, 18*(3): 112-130.

Piccolino, G. 2023. The resolution of civil wars: Changing international norms of peace-making and the academic consensus. *Civil Wars*, *25*(2-3): 290-316.

Pottier, J. 2022. Trauma and reconciliation in the context of the Gacaca courts. *Journal of Trauma Studies, 10*(2): 57-72.
Ramadhani, L. 2017. The utility of mediators in the Burundi peace process. *The African Review*, *34*(1 & 2): 100-112.

Rammala, M. N. R. 2021. Lekgotla and idiomatic expressions in traditional dispute resolution: The case of Makapanstad, North-West Province, South Africa. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, *16*(1): 220-241.

Rammala, M. N. R., Matlala, M. M. and Ghebretekle, T. B. 2023. Traditional dispute resolution through Lekgotla: The approach of the Bakgatla Ba Mosetlha in the North-West Province of South Africa. *Journal of Law, Society and Development*, *10*(1): 1-19.

Reicheneder, L. and Neureiter, M. 2024. On the effectiveness of democracy aid in post-civil war recipient countries. Democratization, 31(2): 411-433.

Richard, J. (Ed.). 1999. State, conflict and democracy in Africa *Millennium*, *28*(3): 735-737.

Sabala, G. M. 2019. Principles, effectiveness and challenges of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms: A review of cases from Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan and Uganda. *Journal of Living Together*, *6*(1): 162-172.

Sarkin, J. 2015. The interrelationship and interconnectness of transitional justice and the rule of law in Uganda: Pursuing justice, truth, guarantees of non-repetition, reconciliation and reparations for past crimes and human rights violations. *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law*, *7*: 111-139.

Schirch, C. E. 2020. Community mediation and peacebuilding in Colombia: An analysis. *Latin American Conflict Journal, 14*(3): 45-59.

Schmitt, C. B. and Mukungu, J. 2019. How to achieve effective participation of communities in the monitoring of REDD+ projects: A case study in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Forests, 10(9): 794.

Schuld, M. 2013. The prevalence of violence in post-conflict societies: A case study of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, *8*(1): 60-73.

Shahjahan, R. A. and Kezar, A. J. 2013. Beyond the ‘national container’: Addressing methodological nationalism in higher education research. *Educational Researcher*, *42*(1): 20-29.

Shirambere, T. 2018. Transitional justice and peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution, 15*(1): 59-83.

Shokane, A. L and Masoga, M. A. 2018. African indigenous knowledge and social work practice: Towards an Afro-centred perspective. *Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development, 30*(1): 1-18.

Shoko, E. 2022. Indigenous conflict management and contemporary water resource governance in rural Zimbabwe. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, *17*(2): 225-238.

Smith, K. M. and Brown, J. L. 2022. Authenticity and connection: The rise of local turn nostalgia. *Cultural Studies Review, 16*(3): 23-39.

Smith, L. 2023. Understanding cultural contexts: Avoiding pitfalls in indigenous conflict intervention. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 12*(2): 143-159.

Ssewankambo, J. and Mwebaze, G. 2020. Development programs and community relations in Northern Uganda: An analysis. *Journal of African Development Studies, 18*(2): 67-82.

Stevens, S. 2019. “The Turn to Sabotage by the Congress Movement in South Africa.” Past & Present 245 (1): 221–255.

Steinberg, J. 2010. Liberia’s experiment with transitional justice. *African Affairs*, *109*(434): 135-144.

Straus, S. and Waldorf, L. 2023. Reconciliation and justice in Rwanda: The impact of the Gacaca courts. *Journal of African Studies, 22*(4): 102-120.

Swenson, G. and Kniess, J. 2021. International assistance after conflict: Health, transitional justice and opportunity costs. *Third World Quarterly*, *42*(8): 1696-1714.

Tabane, R & Human-Vogel, S. (2010). Sense of belonging and social cohesion in a desegregated former House of Delegates School. *South African Journal of Education.* Volume 30. Issue No. 4. P 491 - 504.

Tadesse, B. 2022. Development aid and conflict reduction in Kenya’s Rift Valley: A review. *East African Journal of Peacebuilding, 14*(2): 97-113.

Taringana, T. and Zevure, A. 2024. The role of traditional healers in conflict resolution in Zimbabwe, 1890-1980. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, *24*(1): 71-94.

Taylor, R. 2002. Justice denied: Political violence in Kwazulu-Natal After 1994. African Affairs, 101(405): 473–508.

Thomas, C. and Lambert, M. 2023. Consensus and decision-making in the Iroquois Confederacy: Lessons for contemporary conflict resolution. *Journal of Indigenous Studies, 17*(2): 78-94.

Thompson, G. 2023. Exploitation of the Gacaca courts: Confessions and the pursuit of justice. *Journal of Human Rights, 15*(2): 45-60.

Thompson, J., Adams, R. and Lee, K. 2022. Scalability and adaptability of context-specific conflict interventions. *Global Conflict Studies, 11*(1): 55-71.

Torjesen, S. 2013. Towards a theory of ex-combatant reintegration. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, *2*(3): 63-63.

Traoré, M. and Diallo, F. 2021. Development programs and community stability in the Sahel: An evaluation. *West African Review, 19*(2), 80-96.

Tshabalala, N. 2024. Proactive conflict resolution: The role of Lekgotla in preventing disputes. *Journal of Traditional African Practices, 16*(1): 45-60.

Tshimba, D. N. 2015. Beyond the Mato Oput tradition: Embedded contestations in transitional justice for post-massacre Pajong, Northern Uganda. *Journal of African Conflicts and Peace Studies*, *2*(2): 62-85.

Turner, M. and Van Dyke, R. 2021. Preventive measures in indigenous conflict management: The impact of spiritual rituals. *Journal of Indigenous Studies, 14*(2): 55-72.

Tutu, A. 2021. The significance of the *Palava Hut* in West African societies. *Journal of Traditional Studies, 18*(2): 22-37.

Uduma, D. 2014. The question of the 'African philosophy': In search of a criterion for the Africanness of a philosophy. *Filosofia Theoretical: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions 3*: 127-46.

Uysal, H.T., Aydemir, S. and Genc, E., 2017. Maslow's hierarchy of needs in 21st century: The examination of vocational differences. Researches on science and art in 21st century Turkey, 1, pp.211-227.

Uvin, P. and Mironko, B. 2023. The Gacaca courts: Innovations and limitations in post-genocide justice. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 29*(3): 112-130.

Van Baalen, S. and Höglund, K. 2019. So, the killings continued: Wartime mobilization and post-war violence in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Terrorism and Political Violence, 31(6), 1168-1186. DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2017.1318126 (Accessed on 22 March 2022).

Van der Merwe, H. 2013. Violence as a form of communication: Making sense of violence in South Africa. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, *13*(3): 65-84.

Vargas, R. and Vargas, J. 2020. International support and the Colombian peace process: A critical evaluation. *Journal of Latin American Studies, 52*(3): 445-463.

Walton, J. F. and Mahadev, N. 2019. Introduction: Religious plurality, interreligious pluralism, and spatialities of religious difference. *Religion and Society*, *10*(1): 81-91.

Wanjiru, M. (2023). Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and their role in community harmony: The case of Baraza. *Journal of African Studies, 26*(4): 112-129.

Wanjohi, S. 2022. Reconciliation and community healing: Traditional methods among the Gikuyu of Kenya. *East African Journal of Peace and Development, 10*(2): 65-82.

Williams, S. A. 2022. Humanitarian intervention and the responsibility to protect: A critical assessment. *International Human Rights Review, 14*(4): 112-129.

Wilson, P. and Young, B. 2024. Community cohesion through rituals: Strengthening social bonds in conflict interventions. *Journal of Social Harmony, 11*(1): 89-104.

Wood, W. R. and Suzuki, M. 2016. Four challenges in the future of restorative justice. *Victims and Offenders*, *11*(1): 149-172.

Wright, A. and Hinnebusch, R. 2023. Diplomatic mediation in the Tigray conflict: Western efforts and outcomes. *Horn of Africa Review, 10*(2): 120-137.

Zartman, I. W. and Touval, S. 2022. The Oslo accords: A case study in mediation. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *66*(4): 789-808.

Zondi, P. 2022. Ukukhonza and the role of ancestral guidance in conflict resolution. *Journal of African Spirituality, 13*(4): 89-104.

Zondi, S. 2017. African Union approaches to peacebuilding: Efforts at shifting the continent towards decolonial peace. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, *17*(1): 105-131.

Zulu, J. and Ndlovu, S. 2022. The role of elders in Zulu conflict resolution: A study of traditional reconciliation practices. *South African Journal of Anthropology, 22*(3): 112-130.

Electronic/Internet Sources

African National Congress (ANC). 2019. African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) timeline 1944–2011. *South African History Online* (SAHO). Retrieved from: https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/african-national-congress-youth-league-ancyltimeline-1944–2011

Aubyn, F. K. 2020. An overview of recent trends in African scholarly writing on peacebuilding 1. *Researching Peacebuilding in Africa* (pp.15-37).

Clarke, C. 2018a. Part two of a series on political violence and the frustrated search for justice in KwaZulu-Natal. Available at: https://www.groundup.org.za/article/inside-ancs-kzn-war/ (Accessed March 25 2022).

Clarke, C. 2018b. Political violence in the province of KwaZulu-Natal reveals a bloody history still haunting the country's democracy. Available at https://www.guernicamag.com/ballots-and-bloodshed-the-militarization-of-local-politics-in-south-africa/ (Accessed March 29 2022).

Coll, S. 2022. The US withdrawal from Afghanistan: Lessons and consequences. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from: www.washingtonpost.com (Accessed April 10 2023)

Cyuzuzo, S. and Mayeni Jones. 2024. DR Congo violence: Panic in Gom as M23 rebels advance. *BBC News,* November 24. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-68255614

Deinla, I and Taylor. V. 2015. Towards peace: Rethinking justice and legal pluralism in the Bangsamoro. RegNet Working Paper 63. Canberra: Regulatory Institutions Network, The Australian National University.

Dube, P. 2017. South Africa's crisis of political killings is eroding our democracy. Available at: https://www.huffingtonspost.co.za/phephelaphi-dube/south-africas-crisis-of-political-killings. (Accessed 11 July 2018).

Gebregeorgis, M. Y. 2015. Discursive depiction of customary conflict management principles in selected African proverbs. *Folklore* 62: 225-46. https://doi.org/10.7592/fejf2015.62.gebregeorgis.

Global Coalition for Africa. 2004. *African Social and Economic Trends, 2003/2004*, Washington, DC: GCA.

International Crisis Group. 2019. The African Union mission in Somalia: A review. Crisis Group Report. Retrieved from: www.crisisgroup.org.

Jarstad, A. K. and Höglund, K. (2015). Local violence and politics in KwaZulu-Natal: Perceptions of agency in a post-conflict society. *Third World Quarterly, 36*(5): 967-984. doi:10.1080/01436597.2015.1030385

Mavuso, S. 2021. Julius Malema slams ANC conduct in KZN, says he will report blocking incidents to IEC. Available at: https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/look-julius-malema-slams-anc-conduct-in-kzn-says-he-will-report-blocking-incidents-to-iec-1897323a-8a4c-44e8-9566-8fc0d8122d5c (Accessed 30 March 2022).

Mboto, S. 2021 May 13. Killings fuel fears of violence resurfacing in Richmond area. *Mercury.* Available at: *https://www.iol.co.za/mercury/news/killings fuel fears of violence resurfacing in Richmond area* (Accessed on 20 July 2022).

Meintjes, B. and Nhlengetwa, Z. 2002. Guns and music: Umbumbulu peace-building case study. Sinani Programme for Survivors of Violence Working Paper (p. 1). https://www. medico. De/download/report26/ps_meintjes_en. Pdf

Mthethwa, B. 2018. KZN political violence takes its toll on election costs. Available at: https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2018–02–26–kzn-politicalviolence-takes-it-toll-onelection-costs/

Mukoni, A. 2024, February 9. Aid groups sound alarm over escalating DR Congo violence. *Al Jazeera*. Available at:

https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2024/2/9/photos-aid-groups-sound-alarm-over-escalating-dr-congo-violence.

Ntuli, H.S. 2016. Probing the roots of political violence in KwaZulu-Natal since 1979. *Gender and Behaviour*. Available at: http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0sid=cd6163f2-cfaa-44ed-98e0-db5b9a909556%40sessionmgr4009 (Accessed 09 May 2023).

Onwuegbuchulam, S. P. C. 2021. Anatomy of political violence in South Africa: Interventions. doi:10.1080/1369801X.2021.1892506 (Accessed on 22 March 2022).

Singh, K. 2018. KZN premier releases Moerane Commission Report into political killings. Available at: https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/kzn-premier-releases-moerane-commission-report-into-political-killings-20180920 (Accessed 22 February 2019).

Statistics South Africa. 2011. Census report 2011. Retrieved from: https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1089/richmond-local-municipality. (Accessed on 20 May 2022).

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia. 2008. *Towards national reconciliation and dialogues: The Palava Hut or peace forums* (Report 3 XII). Retrieved from: http://trcofliberia.org/resources/reports/final/volume-three-12_layout-1.pdf (Accessed on 29 May 2022).

Tsegai, B.G and Rammala, M.M. 2018. Traditional African conflict resolution: The case of South Africa and Ethiopia.

United Nations. 1992. *An agenda for peace: Preventive diplomacy, peace-making and peace-keeping. A/47/277*. New York, NY: United Nations.

United Nations. Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. 2010b. Report of the mapping exercise documenting the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between March 1993 and June 2003. New York: United Nations.

Väyrynen, R. 1991. New directions in conflict theory: Conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

Villet, C. 2018. What Mandela and Fanon learned from Algeria's revolution in the 1950s. Retrieved from: https://www.theconversation.com/what-mandela-and-fanon-learned-from-algerias revolution-in-the-1950s-107736 (Accessed on 24 April 2023.

Unpublished Sources

Andre, W. M. 2018. Can alternative justice mechanisms satisfy the aims of international criminal justice? The cases of Mato Oput and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sussex).

Bayor, I. 2021. How can local transitional justice mechanisms work towards measures of non-recurrence? (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Western Ontario, Canada).

Bruce, D. 2013. A provincial concern? Political killings in South Africa. *SA Crime Quarterly*, *45*.

Bruce, D. 2014. Political killings in South Africa: The ultimate intimidation. *Policy Brief*, *64*.

Chachine, I. E. 2008. Community, justice, and freedom: Liberalism, communitarianism, and African contributions to political ethics. (Doctoral dissertation).

Cilliers, J. 2018. Violence in Africa: Trends, drivers and prospects to 2023. Institute for Security Studies Africa Report 12, August 2018: 1-40.

Cooper, I. 2015. Zuma, Malema and the provinces: Factional conflict within the African National Congress. *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa*, *87*(1): 151-174.

Daso, K. 2016. Mending broken relations after civil war: The *Palava Hut* and the prospects for lasting peace in Liberia.

Daso, K., 2017. Rebuilding Relationships after Civil War: Relational Justice and Ex-Combatant Reintegration in Liberia. (PhD dissertation, University).

Douglas, T. and Alanamu, T. 2019. African religions: Beliefs and practices through history. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.

Du Toit, A. 1993. Understanding South African political violence: A new problematic?

Du Toit, A and Slabbert F.V.Z. South Africa and Transition from Authoritarian Rule, IDASA Occasional Paper No. 32, Cape Town, 1991.

Genger, P. 2020. Mainstreaming TiVo indigenous peace-making approaches (TIPA): Identifying the enhancing processes, steps, and actors. (PhD dissertation).

Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS). 2017. The many faces of political violence: Volatility and friction in the age of disintermediation.

Harris, D. 2021. The state of peacebuilding in Africa: Lessons learned for policymakers and practitioners. Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crimes.

Holtslag, E. 2010. Negotiating peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Unpicking challenges, opportunities, and the role of regional and international actors.

Jehn, K. A. and Mannix, E. A. 2007. The effect of trust on conflict and performance in groups split by demographic fault lines. In *IACM 2007 Meetings Paper*.

Krelekrele, T. 2018. Political Violence in KwaZulu-Natal.

KwaZulu-Natal Province. 2022. Integrated Development Plan: Richmond Local Municipality. Pietermaritzburg: KZN Province.

Moumakwa, P. C. 2011. The Botswana Kgotla system: A mechanism for traditional conflict resolution in modern Botswana: Case study of the Kanye Kgotla. (Master's thesis, Universitetet i Tromsø).

Nabudere, D. W. 2005, September. Human rights and cultural diversity in Africa. Paper delivered at the Association of Law Reform Agencies of Eastern and Southern Africa (ALARESA). Conference on the Fusion of Legal Systems and Concepts in Africa.

Nebandla, I. 2005. Confronting the legacy of weapons in Richmond, KwaZulu-Natal. Braamfontein, South Africa: Violence and Transition Project, CSVR.

Ngwenya, T. and Ndhlela, N. 2004. Political parties and political identities: How relations between the ANC and IFP play themselves in KwaZulu-Natal.

Nigosian, S. A. and Nigosian, S. A. 1994. American Indian traditions. *World Faiths*, (pp. 53-73).

Olowu, O. J. 2017. Indigenous approaches to conflict resolution in Africa: A study of the Barolong people of the North-West Province, South Africa.

Oyekenu, O. K. 2023. Exploring the potential impact of women's empowerment on aid effectiveness in Nigeria. (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University).

Phungula, N. P. 2020. An assessment of the SADC conflict transformation capacity in the context of the recurring conflict in Lesotho 1998-2018: Towards a conflict transformation model. (PhD dissertation)

Rautenbach, C. 2024. State intervention in the customary law of succession in South Africa: What remains of customary norms in the "Rainbow Nation"? *Reimagining Legal Pluralism in Africa: Balancing Indigenous, State, and Religious Laws*, *80*: 21.

Spaumer, A. 2017. Conflict management in Black African marriages in an urban context: An exploratory study (Master's thesis, University of Pretoria).

Tofa, M. 2018. An analysis of state-led reconciliation processes: The case of Zimbabwe. (PhD dissertation, University).

Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 1998. Case study: Richmond SDU, KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. Internal TRC report.

Tschannen-Moran, M. 2001. The effects of a state-wide conflict management initiative in schools. *American Secondary Education* (pp. 2-32).

Tushini, N. 2011. An exploration of the therapeutic value of *Ihlambo*: Community members' perspectives. (MA dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal).

Urgent action on KZN killings needed . 2018, May 22. *The Herald*, p. 12.

Vilanculo, A., 2023. From liberal peace to Ubuntu: The turn needed for effective conflict transformation in Mozambique.

Wallensteen, P. 2002. Reassessing recent conflicts: Direct vs. structural prevention. From reaction to conflict prevention: Opportunities for the UN system, pp.213-228.

ACTS

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,1996

Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, 1996 (Act No.34 of 1995)

Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, 20029 (Act No. 23 of 2009

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Interview Schedule

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEW

Date of Interview_____

Respondent's code_____

Key Respondent / Expert Respondent **(***delete whichever is not applicable***)**

General Guiding Questions

1. **Interviews with Key participants (Community Members, Local Councillors and members of the Traditional Authority)**

1.1. What Western models of post-conflict intervention were applied in Richmond community?

1.2. In your own view, why were they utilised?
1.3. Would you say, they were effective?

1.2. How would you describe the impact of the conflicts experienced in Richmond Community since early 1990s on interpersonal relations between neighbours and school children?

1.2.1 In your experience and view, how would you describe the current state of interpersonal relations between individuals in Richmond community?

1.3 Are there any initiatives in place by the community to improve interpersonal relations in Richmond?

1.3.1 Have they been successful in mending relations between individuals? Please share your observations and examples if possible

1.4. Would the community prefer indigenous models?

1.4.1 What would these look like?
1.4.2 Who / How would these be implemented?

1.5. How can indigenous methods which have been used successfully in other African rural communities, be used to address modern day relational animosity in Richmond community?

1.6. Are there any issues, in your opinion, that cannot be addressed through indigenous conflict approaches process? If so, what are those issues and how can such issues be dealt with?

2. **Interviews with expert participants (Academics and NGO)**

2.1. In your experience and view, what role do indigenous approaches of conflict intervention play in addressing and restoring broken relationships caused by conflicts?

2.2. What are the ideas that guide the implementation of indigenous approaches of rebuilding relations harmed by conflicts?

2.2.1. In what ways are these ideas used to restore disrupted relations between individuals in a community?

2.3. Can you please share with me what you think can be done to make indigenous approaches more effective in terms of promoting post-conflict relational justice?

2.4. What challenges are likely to be encountered when applying indigenous approaches of rebuilding relations affected by conflicts in a community?

2.4.1. How can these challenges be addressed? Please elaborate and provide examples if possible.

2.5. Do you think South Africa's democratisation processes influenced indigenous ways preferred by people in communities to rebuild relations damaged by conflicts? Please elaborate and give examples if possible.

2.6. In your opinion, how can modern conflict intervention process and indigenous system complement and reinforce one another?

2.7. How can indigenous approaches, which has been used successfully in rural communities, be used for resolving post-conflict issue in communities like Richmond?

2.8. Are there any issues, in your opinion, that cannot be addressed through indigenous conflict approaches process? If so, what are those issues and how can such issues be dealt with?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR VALUABLE TIME, ATTENTION AND YOUR RESPONSES

APPENDIX B: Permission to conduct the research

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

3 November 2022

Mr Ngwako Ramphadi (SN 222067313)
School of Social Science
College of Humanities
Pietermaritzburg Campus UKZN
Email: 222067313@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Dear Mr Ramphadi

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), towards your postgraduate degree, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"African Indigenous Conflict Transformation approaches in Post-Conflict Relation Justice: A case study of Richmond Community in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa."

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews with academics from the Cluster: International and Public Affairs (Zoom, Skype or telephone interviews recommended) at UKZN.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using the 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Dr KE CLELAND: REGISTRAR

APPENDIX C: NGO's permission to conduct the research

08 November 2022

Mr Ngwako Ramphadi (Student Number: 222067313)
School of Social Science
College of Humanities
Pietermaritzburg Campus UKZN
Email: 222067313@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Dear Mr Ramphadi

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECT AT ACCORD

A permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) by interviewing its staff members – who will be identified by ACCORD and at a mutually agreed time in 2023 - towards your postgraduate degree.

We note the title of your research project is:

"African Indigenous Conflict Transformation approaches in Post-Conflict Relation Justice: A case study of Richmond Community in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa."

Please ensure that the following are in place:

- Ethical clearance is obtained from your academic institution to conduct your envisaged research project;
- Make available full names, tittle and contact details your supervisor for this research project;
- Availability of consent form to be signed by each staff member before the interviews are conducted; and
- ACCORDS will expect you to collect data in a manner that have high regard to confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Mr Senzo Ngubane
General Manager: Research

ACCORD
THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

ACCORD House • 2 Golf Course Drive • Mount Edgecombe 4300 • South Africa
Private Bag X018 • Umhlanga Rocks 4320 • South Africa • Tel +27 (0)31 502 3908
Fax +27 (0)31 502 4160 • e-mail: info@accord.org.za • Website http://www.accord.org.za

30 YEARS 1992-2022

APPENDIX D: Approval of Research Protocol

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

07 September 2023

Ngwako Elly Ramphadi (222067313)
School Of Social Sciences
Howard College Campus

Dear NE Ramphadi,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00006036/2023
Project title: African indigenous conflict transformation approaches in post-conflict relational justice: A case study of Richmond community in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa (1990-2018)
Degree: PhD

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 16 August 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 07 September 2024.
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

APPENDIX E: Informed consent: English

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT IN ENGLISH

Dear Participant,

My name is Ngwako Ramphadi, with number student: 222067313, a PhD student at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. I am undertaking a research project as part of my PhD studies. The title of my research is: **African indigenous conflict transformation approaches in post-conflict relational justice: A case study of Richmond community in KwaZulu Natal province, South Africa (1990-2018).** The study aims to examine how indigenous approaches to conflict transformation of the local people in Richmond community can be used to realize post-conflict relational justice. The study also seeks to understand challenges that are likely to be encountered when applying indigenous conflict transformation strategies in post-conflict relational justice and how they can be addressed.

I kindly request your participation in this study so as to share your experiences and viewpoints on the subject matter being studied. Please take note of the following:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only;
- Although your response is of the utmost importance, your participation is entirely voluntary;
- You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research without enduring any consequences for such a decision;
- The information you provide remains confidential and will be reported in summary format only;
- The interview will take about 40 minutes;
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file and kept safe in a lockable file cabinet accessible only to myself and my supervisor. And shall be disposed after the expiry of the five years as prescribed by the rules of the university;

- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration appearing on the next page.

Should you have any further queries or comments, you are welcome to contact me telephonically at: +27 (0)[redacted] or e-mail me at:[redacted]. Should you wish to contact my supervisor, Dr. Dorcas Ettang, you can do so by calling: +27 (031) 260 5283 or by e-mail to: Ettang@ukzn.ac.za. Dr. Ettang is based at the School of Social Sciences, Pietermaritzburg Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Please note ethical clearance has been obtained for this study. The University of KwaZulu Natal's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows; Telephone number: 031 260 3587/4557/8350 and email address: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za.

Declaration

I,…..... *(full names of participant*) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participate in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I consent / do not consent (*delete whichever is not applicable*) to have this interview recorded.

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX F: Informed consent: IsiZulu

ISIKOLE SESAYENSI YEZABANTU

INCWADI YOKUNIKEZA IMVUME

Sawubona Mbambiqhaza,

Igama lami nginguNgwako Ramphadi, inombolo yomfundi: 222067313, umfundi weziqu zobuDokotela eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu Natali, eKhempasini yaseMgungundlovu. Ngenza iphrojekthi yocwaningo njengengxenye yezifundo zami zobuDokotela. Isihloko socwaningo lwami sithi:**Izindlela Zokuguqulwa Kwezingxabano Zomdabu zase-Afrika esikhathini Sobulungiswa Bokuvumelana sezingaseko izingxabano: Ucwaningonto lomphakathi wase-Richmond esifundazweni saKwaZulu-Natali, eNingizimu Afrika.**Lolu cwaningo luhlose ukuhlola ukuthi izindlela zomdabu zokuguqula izingxabano zabantu bomphakathi wase-Richmond zingasetshenziswa kanjani ukuze kuzuzwe ubulungiswa bokuvumelana sezingasekho izingxabano. Ucwaningo luphinde luhlose ukuqonda izinselelo okungenzeka kuhlangatshezwane nazo uma kusetshenziswa amasu omdabu okuguqula izingxabano esikhathinisobulungiswa bokuvumelana sezingaseko izingxabano nokuthi zingaxazululwa kanjani.

Ngicela imvume yakho yokuba ubambe iqhaza kulolu cwaningo, usicobelele ngolwazi lwakho nemibono ngesihloko esidingidwayo. Sicela uqaphele okulandelayo:

- Ulwazi olunikezayo luzosetshenziselwa ucwaningo lwezemfundo kuphela;
- Nakuba impendulo yakho ibaluleke kakhulu, ukubamba kwakho iqhaza kungokokuzithandela;
- Unelungelo lokubamba iqhaza, elokungalibambi iqhaza noma elokuyeka ukubamba iqhaza ocwaningweni ngaphandle kokubhekana nemiphumela emibi ngesinqumo sakho;
- Ulwazi olunikezayo luhlala luyimfihlo futhi luzobikwa ngendlela efingqayo kuphela;
- Ingxoxo izothatha cishe imizuzu engama-40;

- Ingxoxo eqoshiwe kanye nezinye izinto ezihlobene nengxoxo zizogcinwa efayeleni elivikelwe ngephasiwedi futhi zigcinwe ziphephile ekhabetheni lamafayela elikhiywayo, okuyimina nomeluleki wami kuphela abakwazi ukufinyelela kulo. Futhi ziyochithwa ngemva kokuphela kweminyaka emihlanu njengoba kunqunyiwe yimithetho yenyuvesi;
- Uma uvuma ukubamba iqhaza sicela usayine isifungo esitholakala ekhasini elilandelayo.

Uma kwenzeka uba neminye imibuzo okanye ufisa ukuphawula ngokuthile, wamukelekile ukungishayela ucingo kule nombolo: +27 (0) [redacted] okanye uthumele imeyili kuleli kheli: [redacted]. Kanjalo futhi uma unesifiso sokuxhumana nomeluleki wami, uDkt. Dorcas Ettang, ungakwenza lokho ngokumushayela ucingo kule nombolo: +27 (031) 260 5283 noma uthumele imeyili kuleli kheli: Ettang@ukzn.ac.za. uDkt Ettang uzinze esikoleni sesayensi yezabantu, ekhempasini yaseMgungundlovu yeNyuvesi yakwaZulu-Natal.

Sicela uqaphele lolu cwaningo luyinikeziwe imvume yenqubonhle. Imininingwane yokuxhumana ne-*Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee*imi kanje:
i-Imeyili: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za, Inombolo Yocingo: +27 (031) 260 3587/4557/8350

Isifungo

Mina,……..... *(amagama aphelele ombambiqhaza*) ngalokhu ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ngiyakuqonda okuqukethwe yilo mbhalo kanye nohlobo lweprojekthi yocwaningo, futhi ngiyavuma ukubamba iqhaza kule phrojekthi yocwaningo. Ngiyaqonda ukuthi nginelungelo lokuhoxa noma kunini kule projekthi, uma ngifisa kanjalo. Ngiyayiqonda inhloso yocwaningo. Ngiyavuma / angivumi (*susa noma yikuphi okungasebenzi*) ukuthi lengxoxo iqoshwe.

Isiginesha:

Usuku:

APPENDIX G: Declaration of proof reading

Linda Coertze

Proof Reading Services

3 Entombeni Drive
33 Walnut Grove
Amanzimtoti
4126

[redacted]
lindac@skytec.co.za

DATE: 28 May 2025

DECLARATION OF PROOF-READNG

TO:

The Research Ethics Committee
Research Office
Private Bag X 54001
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Durban
4000

Sir/Madam

I, Nicolina D. Coertze (Linda), declare that I meticulously perused the PhD manuscript referred to below for language editing and proof-reading purposes. I identified and corrected linguistic and stylistic inaccuracies to the best of my knowledge and ability. Using the *Word* Tracking system, I kept track of the changes I made during the editing process. I also offered additional annotations for consideration by the author should he deem it necessary to address areas that I considered might need attention. I declare that I adhered to the general principles that guide the work of a language editor and that I remained within my brief as had been agreed with the author of the manuscript.

TITLE: **African indigenous conflict transformation approaches in post-conflict relational justice: A case study of the Richmond community in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa (1990-2018)**

NAME OF CANDIDATE: Ngwako Ramphadi
STUDENT NUMBER: 222067313
PROPOSED QUALIFICATION: PhD
DEPARTMENT: Conflict and Peace Studies, Cluster of International and Public Affairs, School of Social Sciences, College of Humanities.
SUPERVISOR: Prof. Dorcas Ettang; CO-SUPERVISOR: Prof. Khondlo Mtshali
TERTIARY INSTITUTION: University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

(MRS) N.D. COERTZE
LANGUAGE EDITOR

Disclaimer: The Editor was not responsible for the final formatting and presentati