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Indigenising psycho-social support: An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of the Shona community's indigenous health practices

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Dedication

To Muzotenda and Muriwangu, my son and my daughter: Embrace the anointing in your giftedness to script your existence impactfully!

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Abstract

The Korekore community in Fumhe village, a rural enclave tucked in Northern Zimbabwe's district of Mbire, is a coterie of culturally rich members whose indigenous practices play out in ethnic music as a culturally-codified mode of performative production. As a native of this community, Oliver Mtukudzi composed and performed songs that denote the cosmology and cosmogony of a people whose lives tap into the resourcefulness of culture as a pervasive element in social, political and religious spheres of existence. Whilst previous studies have placed huge attention on the didactic and aesthetic functions of Mtukudzi's music, this study sought to explore the artist's music with particular focus on its merits as a reflector and enabler of the Shona community's indigenous health practices in the domain of psycho-social support for the bereaved.

The qualitative study conducted seven in-depth interviews with a view to understanding African indigenous approaches to psycho-social health in the context of death, bereavement, grief and loss. Also, through a *lekgotla* (African indigenous colloquium) and a woman-only focus group discussion (both conducted in Fumhe village in June 2023), the qualitative study enlisted the participation of community members as key stakeholders in the creation, deployment and optimisation of knowledge systems as they play out in the population under study**.** Riding on interpretive phenomenology, the study deployed analytical tenets from a framework of concepts that combined Postcolonial Indigenous theory, Culture-Centered Approach and African Cultural Studies to explore Shona healing practices. The framework facilitated an indigenous oriented entry into the African healing paradigm, debunking the narrow confines of Eurocentric certitudes that for years used 'biomedicalisation' to frame healthcare systems. Instead, decolonial studies champion the 'sociology of health' amongst communities of the African Global South whose scholarship locates health, wellness and healing within a cultural context. To understand the indigenous healing interventions of a community, one needs to phenomenologically appreciate the community's conceptualisation of health within its cultural-situatedness. It is against this backdrop that this study appropriates the lenses of ethnography, folklore and cultural anthropology to explore indigenous knowledge systems as encapsulated in the corpus of African music and the discourses it generates.

Among its key findings, this study found that for the Shona community, music is a part of everyday life that connects the dead with the living, hence it obtains within a cultural cosmology that ensures closure. Also, the concept of 'community bereavement' denotes the merits of social cohesion. Acknowledging the scope of music in psycho-social support, the study contributes to knowledge by establishing that in the Shona community, healing for the bereaved occurs at multiple levels, with self, others, and the environment being interconnected factors that cannot be disaggregated from the quadrant of a community galvanised by the relational ethos of holism. The study also unearths a 'social equality group' dimension to support in bereavement, foregrounding women's critical role as carers, nurturers and restorers who champion the healing cause. Interestingly, 'maternal valorisation' ignites potent contestations for healing discourses in a community whose exclusionary patterns of relations denote patriarchy as a domineering socio-cultural operating system.

Key words: Cosmology, healing, music, Oliver Mtukudzi, psycho-social, Shona

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Acronyms

PCI	**Postcolonial Indigenous Theory**
PCT	**Post-colonial Theory**
CCA	**Culture Centred Approach**
FGD	**Focus Group Discussion**
ACS	**African Cultural Studies**
CIQR	**Critical Indigenous Qualitative Research**
ICAM	**Integrative, Complementary and Alternative Medicine**

Chapter One

Music and the ethnography of cultural expression

1.0 Introduction

To study music is to embrace the cultural canvas against which performative production can be meaningfully decoded. Music generates patterns of meaning if it is produced, consumed and interrogated through the cultural prism of the community that spawns it (Bruenger, 2019). As such, healing in the context of music is best understood within the music and society nexus. Making a case around the effect of music upon the psychosomatic unity of a suffering being, Akombo (2006) argues that the meeting point for music and healing denotes a humanistic synthesis combining the art and science of therapy with the polyphonic disciplines of life such as philosophy, history and religion, presupposing that healing exists within the margins of a given cultural frame and the philosophical ramifications that come with it.

With particular focus on the music of Oliver Mtukudzi, this study explores indigenous healing practices of the Shona community, enquiring into the merits and affordances of ethnic music as a projector and enabler of healing in the provision of psycho-social support for the bereaved. The study departs from an acknowledgement of the vogue of scholarly output increasingly highlighting the social determinants of health and healthcare in Africa. Feierman (1985) broadens this subject by noting that in Africa, the domain of health, healing and wellness foregrounds the shared relevance of multiple authorities: physicians, medical assistants, sorcerers, dreamers, religious healers and many others. The implicit convergence of efforts defies any monolithic decision on the cause or cure of illness, hence treatment, healing and restoration in such a context hinge strongly on coordination (Rasweswe et al, 2021).

The scope and space of music within the ethnographic context of healing and wellness in Africa cannot be disaggregated from the wider frame of traditional therapeutic intervention that entails divination, dance and percussive rhythm (Janzen, 2000). However, understanding such a sociology requires a phenomenological appreciation of African cultural practices and how these find legitimation in the ecosystem of global multicultural co-presences. Notably, Western understandings of indigenous healing practices in developing countries has been limited. Across generations, research in the philosophy and history of science literature indicate a shifting scientific paradigm, with movement away from the hegemony of scientific methods

and Cartesian logic as the only valid dictum of knowledge (Kuhn, 1970; Longino, 1990). This study commences from an acknowledgement of music's potency as a generator of culturally codified forms of signification and being. Barton (2018) notes that music is inextricably linked with the context in which it is produced, consumed and taught, hence differences across contexts are reflected in the ways music can be altered, manipulated or constructed to serve particular purposes.

1.1 Study Background

This section accounts for the man, Oliver Mtukudzi (and may his soul rest in peace) - a musician, entrepreneur, cultural activist, health ambassador and social influencer - whose music career transcended boundaries of entertainment to participate in development-related agenda that includes education, public health, cultural literacy and peace-building. In the context of the taxonomy of human-factor-related aspects generated by his music, the section also provides a justification for the researcher's decision to make Mtukudzi's music a judiciously selected subject upon which to base the study's broader questions on the role of ethnic music in psycho-social support, particularly in bereavement

While music is generally interpreted for entertainment purposes, this study's emphasis examines music's significance during death, with psycho-social interventions in grief being framed within cultural factors (Krout, 2003). Whilst grief counselling has mainly been theorised against Elisabeth Kubler Ross's (2014) five-stage grief cycle, research on cultural resources available for communities of the African Global South in matters of support for the bereaved remain relatively thin. The study sought to engage the nexus between health and culture as projected and facilitated by the music of Oliver Mtukudzi, with particular focus on the interface between psycho-social health and indigenous healing practices. The study thus explored the role of ethnic music in both depicting and facilitating support in the context of death, loss and bereavement. With relatively scanty literature engaging these issues, the study departed from an acknowledgement of music's capacity to construct meaningful experiences among the grieving, thereby impacting their physical wellbeing (Parkinson, 2009).

There are compelling reasons that motivated the researcher to make Oliver Mtukudzi's music the anchor for this study's ontological and epistemological arguments. Oliver Mtukudzi (1952 – 2019) was a trailblazing artist whose 66 years of life yielded 67 music albums over an illustrious music career of four decades. He rose to prominence in the 1970s as a result of his

most outstanding voice against British colonialism under the then Rhodesia - now independent Zimbabwe. His musical lyrics often largely drew inspiration from social messages particularly HIV/AIDS, community values, governance, cultural literacy, self-image psychology, as well as some cleverly self-censored political commentary. At the peak of Robert Mugabe's controversial presidency, Mtukudzi penned and produced a song, *Wasakara* (translated "You Are Too Old") in 2001, and it was banned from airplay because of its ridicule against Mugabe's autocratic rule. His last album, *Hanyn'a* (Concern), was infused with clearly visible painful emotions arguably directed against Zimbabwean authorities' autocratic rule.

Mtukudzi is fondly remembered and celebrated beyond Zimbabwe as a result of his distinctive, soothing, persuasive, educational and entertaining Afro-jazz lyrical sounds and text that over the years grew to be referred to by the affectionate signature, 'Tuku Music'. His unique musical flair, definitively steeped in the cultural sensibilities of the African 'ubuntu' philosophy, coupled with the husky 'Tuku' voice and acoustic tone that came to constitute the hallmark of originality in his music, saw him increasingly trend-setting and trailblazing as Zimbabwe's godfather of ethnic music. Although not much is publicly known about his formal education, Mtukudzi was regarded as a symbol of fatherhood, grandfather, friend and an uncle to many. He left behind children both from his first and second marriages – with Daisy being his last love whom he stayed with at the time of his sad demise.

There is still a considerably thin base of scholarship that critically engages Oliver Mtukudzi's artistic exploits, and much of the lean scholarly output available places tremendous predilection on ethnomusicology's role in fostering value systems, social norms, moral rectitude, indigenous didactics, political satire and cultural literacy in general terms (Kyker 2011, 2012, 2013, 2016; Chikowero 2006; Chirere & Mukandatsama 2008; Sibanda 2004; Dutiro 2019; Maguraushe 2020). With his prolific output of 67 music albums over his 45-year music career, Oliver Mtukudzi was a recipient of numerous global awards, amongst which were the UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador accolade in 2012, as well as his appointment as the Zimbabwe Network for Health (ZimHealth) Ambassador in Geneva, Switzerland (2016). Whilst it is apparent that Mtukudzi's music spanned across a variety of topical cultural, political and social themes and subjects, one observes his significant contribution to matters pertaining to health as evidenced by some of his songs that include: Neria, *Rufu Ndimadzongonyedze* (Death is a destroyer), *Todii* (What Shall We Do), *Akoromoka Awa* (He has Fallen), *Menzva Kudzimba* (You are all in Pain) and *Sarawoga* (Left Alone). In one of his songs, *MupfumiNdiyani* (Who is richer?), Mtukudzi uses his lyrics to expressly hoist health matters above all of life's treasures:

"Although you may have a granary spilling over with wealth, and a cattle pen bursting with livestock, without health you are a poor person". It is quite surprising that despite the artist's nuanced articulation of health matters in imagistic terms that valorise Africa's cultural resourcefulness, limited scholarly energy has been directed towards exploring the health promotion concepts, the public health domain or the community health dynamics foregrounded, accentuated or mediated by Mtukudzi's musical art. Mtukudzi's music career that saw him gracing live shows across different continents, collaborating with several artistes locally and abroad, whilst also embracing his call as a coach to young mentees under his Pakare Paye Cultural Arts Centre in his home town, Norton (40 kilometers outside Zimbabwe's capital, Harare). His music is a rich reservoir of cultural values that tackles a variety of assignments ranging from moral, didactic, sociological and developmental agendas (Emoff, 2009).

In Mtukudzi's music, health is only but one of the complex and interlocking themes tackled by the iconic musician. For the proposed study at hand, the decided focus on indigenous alternatives to psycho-social support is an outgrowth of scholarship's noticeable convergence on the inadequacies of Western health services in satisfying the needs of indigenous peoples (Lurie, 2002; Ellison-Loschmann & Pearce, 2006; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2014). In their studies on the cultural embeddedness of health, illness and healing, Sodi and Bojuwoye (2011) tellingly posit that culture influences conceptualizations about illness, health and healthcare, arguing that Western-oriented healthcare models have limited success when applied to health conditions of people of non-Western cultures. In this research, healing is regarded as the ability to use art and science combined to maintain a state of optimal well-being in a mentally ill person.

1.2 Study location

In terms of the indigenous data collection method (community engagement), the location for this study was the Fumhe village of Mahuwe, a rural community in Zimbabwe's north-eastern district of Mbire (Mashonaland Central Province). Harare and Bulawayo are also locations for the study because these were the two cities where the key informant interviewees are based. Fumhe village consists of between one hundred to one hundred and fifty community members. For the purposes of this study, the researcher recruited old and middle-aged participants who have become neighbours to the Mtukudzi family. Therefore, close to fifty homesteads were potential sites of participant recruitment. They are also native Shona speakers although due to

changes in demographic patterns and attendant dynamics of cultural contact, some members of the community no longer firmly believe in traditional systems and values.

Academically, the study draws its motivations from a cultural studies tradition originally developed in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Birmingham University) that was founded in 1964 by Stuart Hall and Richard Hoggart. It was influenced by numerous theoretical factors such as Marxism, constructivism, poststructuralism, feminism, and critical race theory, with an attempt to explore and theorise issues such as identity and subject formation. According to Hall (1992) the cultural practices linked with these processes include interrogation of the politics of representation and power dynamics.

It is common to see the terms 'decolonisation' and 'indigenisation' used interchangeably, and this study too will refer to both. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) locates 25 indigeneity projects within the wider discourse of decolonising research. These include remembering, storytelling, testimonies, representing, reframing, restoring, protecting and democratising. The researcher prefers grounding the study's arguments within 'indigenous' knowledge systems to differentiate between those who are 'native' and their 'others' in specific communities - a term for a geocultural category, presupposing a world collectivity of "indigenous peoples" in contrast to their various "others" (Merlan, 2009:1). The intention was to acknowledge obstacles to agency because they are not always exogenous as they may be inclusive of community gatekeepers, gender norms, and traditional practices that deny the broader community the agency to speak for themselves and identify solutions (see Gumede et al. 2023). Such internal contexts deny the democratic culture that Carpentier et al. (2019: 23) argue is imperative for an 'inherently ethical' form of participation. However, this study primarily subscribes to the idea of indigeneity. This decision is guided by Dyll's (2019: 4) explanation:

> With the tendency for the idea of decolonisation to slip into essentialisms and to be used as a political slogan (Jansen 2019b), perhaps it is more useful to speak of "indigenisation" if graduate research is to be transformative. Many African scholars reinforce the value of inclusivity and relationality that Tuhiwai-Smith associates with the indigenising project (Bekele 2007; Tedla 1995; Shizha 2006; Yishak and Gumbo 2015). Yishak and Gumbo support the idea that blending indigenous knowledge with Western science "seems to be a realistic and practical process in the decolonization agenda" (Oyedemi 2018, 7).

Essentialisms can engender a "diminishment of the complexity through which we might otherwise understand the world" (Chetty 2023:386). Therefore, while reference to decoloniality and 'the decolonial project' is important to locate the study in wider discourses, preference is given to the idea and practice of indigeneity, which should not be understood as a signifier of the past, but rather a conceptualisation of how indigenous and local knowledge engages the processes and frameworks of modernity and postmodernity (see Manyozo, 2018; 2023).

1.3 Research problem and significance

This section outlines the research problem within its broad sociological context. The research problem is discussed in light of the academic gap that facilitates3provides the research problem in terms of contextualising the broader sociological problem as well the connected precise academic issue. Included in the section is an explanation of the study's significance as it seeks to address the highlighted problem, what we need to know and why it matters.

1.4 Shifting paradigms from the biomedicalisation of healthcare to the sociology of wellness

Healthcare systems in several communities in the African Global South have for years overtly and subtly reinforced the politics of exclusion and erasure by creating an environment where an imperial culture dominates and rejects indigenous cultures (Gracey & King, 2009). This has spawned (albeit in the empiricist orientation of the global health delivery standards) a disproportionately tilted perspective aptly characterised by Foucault (2003) as 'biological reductionism.' As the Foucauldian perspective does not necessarily create an expedience for essentialising Afrocentric thought, it is paramount to acknowledge the vogue of immense scholarship highlighting the acceptance and adaptation of the sociology of health and medicine (conceived initially as a Western, European and North American product) in all continents and many countries including the United States, eastern and western Europe, Australia, Britain, Japan, China, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico (Collyer & Scambler, 2015).

The demerits of confining matters pertaining to health, healing and illness to the monolithic domain of chemical and biological sciences (Weiss & Lonnquist, 2015) have come under rigorous scholarly spotlight, with an emerging sociological paradigm where healthcare is

conceptualised within the context of its institutionalisation in society (Ruderman, 1981:927). In foregrounding sociological paradigms that interrogate the 'biomedicalisation' and 'remedicalisation' of health, Kippax and Stephenson (2016) argue that strategies informed by and connected with the social realities of people's lives are essential in addressing major challenges for HIV prevention. Despite their specific focus on the context of HIV/AIDS, these scholars notably echo the clarion call to re-think the biomedical trajectory when broaching pragmatic approaches and solutions to health and wellness. Increasingly, health and illness are inextricably being viewed in relation to social and cultural factors (Ghaemi, 2016; Govender, 2025). The current study acknowledges the said paradigm transition as the discursive backdrop against which the research at hand proposes to study the socio-cultural factors attendant to health, healing and illness. Psycho-social support is to be studied via the lenses of culturally-codified African performative production, particularly exploring the affordances of ethnic music as an index to the cultural essence of the community that produces it (Pfukwa, 2019:86).

1.5 Zimbabwean Legislation and Practice in Mental Heath

In terms of mental health legislation in Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, 2009), when the Mental Health Act of 1976 was repealed, it gave way to the country's currently operational Mental Health Act 1996 (No. 15). Whilst it purports to safeguard the right of a patient, the legislation is very narrow in focus as it seems to summarily append mental health services to the National HIV/AIDS programme, simply emphasising institutionalisation of those who are mentally ill (Mangezi & Chibanda, 2010). For instance, the Act is commonly applied to legal cases relating to accused persons facing criminal allegations ranging from sexual offences, robbery and others. This present study argues that the Act – as reflected in this reasoning, seems to conceptualise mental health strictly from a pure medical framework. The absence of a fully autonomous, professionally established and legislatively supported framework for psycho-social support in Zimbabwe necessitates essential interrogation of the mainstream health system in the country, considering the potency of emergent scholarly submissions that indigenous cultural values, customs and beliefs are indeed central and should underpin interventions in health systems of any community (Harfield et al, 2018).

Scholarship abounds with contemporary approaches to counselling and psycho-social support. However, in the case of Zimbabwe, most counselling practitioners are either counselling psychologists or educational psychologists with integrated counselling (Richards, Zivave, Govere, Mphande & Dupwa, 2012). Whereas other specialised health care practices like

clinical psychology are registered with the Health Professions Council, counselling as a discipline and practice in Zimbabwe is domiciled within counselling psychology. In this context, there is a glaring absence of an institutionalised framework for indigenous knowledge systems-driven support.

Tharakan (2017) defines Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) as the understandings, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interactions with their natural surroundings, independent of, and prior to, the advent of the modern scientific knowledge systems (MSKS). As such, the researcher seeks to explore the role of ethnic music in both depicting and facilitating support in the context of death, loss and bereavement. The study pays due cognizance to the socio-cultural dynamic that death is culturally situated (Radzilani, 2010) and that bereavement and grief are culture-specific (Gire, 2002). Acknowledging the place of music at the core of life's activities in society (from birth to death), Njoora (2015) submits that in Africa music plays a significant supporting role at funerals due to its aesthetic, didactic, therapeutic, symbolic and other qualities. To embark on a study of healing in the African context is to seek phenomenological access into the cultural universe explaining African people's concepts of equilibrium, interconnectedness and social balance (Phillips, 1990). When these religio-cultural bearings are appropriately mapped, it is possible to appreciate the scope of providing support for the bereaved from an informed IKS perspective.

1.6 Utilitarian and symbolic role of ethnic music

Whilst the African continent is vast and abounding in multiple cultural variants, it is notable that across several African communities, the utilitarian value of music is demonstrated in vital aspects of life such as a child's naming ceremony, initiation rites, agricultural activities, national ceremonies, war times, religious ceremonies and ceremonies for the dead (Onyeji, 2004). It is in the broader context of indigenous knowledge systems that scholarship locates the intertwined relationship of music, culture and society, with music (as a common element to all cultures) being the point of contact in determining the cultural and social foundations of any given society (Nettl, 1975:71). Noticeably, music serves in various forms and at various levels as an index to a people's culture and civilization (Lomax, 1976; Merriam, 1964; Spearritt, 1980). Whilst foregrounding the reciprocal relationship between music and culture, Howard (2012) bemoans the fact that music's preservation as society's intangible cultural heritage has only been belatedly recognized as fully integral to local and global cultural landscapes, a project coming under consideration much later in human history.

Of note is that challenges posed by threatened 'musics' have a history in ethnomusicology, extending from 'salvage ethnography' to the earliest academic work in musicology and applied ethnomusicology (Seeger 1939; 1944), all the way to more recent ethnomusicology studies (Keil 1982; Simon 1988).

As a culturally-codified mode of performative production, ethnic music is both a carrier of a society's collective sensibilities as well as a communicative medium with great cultural signification. Local cultural values, customs and beliefs occupy the centre of and underpin all aspects of care in indigenous health service delivery (Harfield et al,2018). This understanding is consistent with the growing literature on culture and health, which foregrounds the importance of culture and its effect on health and wellbeing (Gracey & King 2009; Anderson & Olson 2013; Morrissey et al 2007; National Advisory Committee on Health and Disability 1998). In focusing on Oliver Mtukudzi's music, the researcher admits that attention to indigenous musical expression is essential in a dispensation where multicultural emphasis on musical varieties is becoming more intense. As such, cultural preservation and identity conservation are crucial in the ecosystem of global multicultural co-presences. One of the strategies for exploring the centrality of culture in shaping human livelihoods is an in-depth analysis of the role played by music in ethnic healing contexts.

Fachner (2007) outlines the various aspects catered for by music in healing encounters - sound, trance, dance, sensory perception and rituals – implying that the way in which concepts from ethnic traditions are informed by experience and introduction plays out in musical performance. However, the researcher forthrightly submits that the study at hand does not subscribe to the idea of an essentialist cultural preservation where culture is viewed as fixed and unchanging. Instead, the concepts of identity conservation and cultural valorisation are explored within the context of acknowledging the fluidity of cultural formations, hence the need to also explore contemporary articulations of culture and its complex configurations as a ubiquitous force. The study will engage Mtukudzi's music against the understanding that ethnic music provides the theoretical and practical frame of reference for existing indigenous knowledge and the semiotics that it generates through performative production.

Taking into consideration Hood's (1969) conceptualisation of ethnomusicology as a holistic investigation of music in its cultural context, the study acknowledges that since antiquity, ethnic music (notwithstanding culture-specific variations) has discharged its ubiquitous role in mediating a broad spectrum of functions including ritual activity, social organisation, care giving and group cohesion (Trehub, Becker & Morley, 2015). For the study at hand, 'ethnic

music' is understood to be "orally transmitted music which is generally performed within a relatively traditional cultural context" (Roberts, 1984). Such music entails acknowledging the 'oral' text passed through the generations of a given community.

However, whilst music is both an emotive and communicative medium that facilitates expression of complex social messages and social norms that elicit responses from people, it also depicts aspects relating to the sustenance of cultures in the wake of culturally predatory tendencies that play out in multicultural encounters (Belcher, 2010). In this regard, integrating indigenous values into Zimbabwe's formal health system is part of the essential toolkit in the reversal of the colonialism-entrenched systematic marginalization of traditional and indigenous ways of producing knowledge (Hountondji, 2002; Abdi, 2003). There is an increasing call for the merits of epistemological diversity (De Sousa Santos, 2007), hence the study anticipates that the Zimbabwean Shona community's indigenous knowledge systems should be afforded space in the ecosystem of contributors to the global knowledge economy.

1.7 Agenda 2063: "The Africa we Want"

A critical facet in conceptualising this study's engagement at policy level is the set of submissions encapsulated in the African Union's 'Agenda 2063.' In its decided focus on the continent's aspirations, challenges and opportunities (DeGhetto et al., 2016), the agenda finds its apt summary in the re-affirmation of Africa's commitment to "a shared strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable Development and a global strategy to optimise the use of Africa's resources for the benefit of all Africans" (AU, 2015). The policy framework arguably reflects the contestations surrounding operationalising tenets of indigeneity in the wake of global currents that are ever mutating. This resonates with the argument advanced by Mbembe (2016) that postcolonial societies should strive to reincarnate a process of decolonising knowledge creation for a shared common consensus. However, from the perspective of healthcare, the study focuses on the agenda with the view to ascertain the scope for indigenising pyscho-social support. At the core of this study was the endeavour to explore Shona healing practices and principles reflected in Oliver Mtukudzi's music, specifically examining the ways by which the artist's music facilitates healing for the bereaved in the context of the Shona community's indigenous knowledge system.

Agenda 2063 was developed through an extensive consultative process of various African sta

keholders, including Youth, Women, Civil Society Organisations, the Diaspora, African Think Tanks, Research Institutions, Government Planners, Private Sector, the Media, inter-faith leaders, the Forum for Former African Heads of State and Government, African Island States and others. In addition, ideas captured from continent-wide sector ministerial meetings and meetings with the Regional Economic Communities are included. Outcomes of these consultations form the basis for 'Aspirations of the African People,' with Agenda 2063 being the driver for Pan-African goals which historically played out in the struggles of African people against the ruthlessness and the disruptiveness of colonialism and its attendant history of racial discrimination (AU 2015). This study thus appropriates the decolonial thrust of Agenda 2063 in acknowledgement of its counter-discursive character in creating scope for indigenous epistemologies in the economy of global knowledge systems.

The agenda also spells out a way forward from international developmental experiences, such as the important advances by key countries of the Global South to eradicate poverty, economic and social transformation, as well as institutionalised approaches to humanity's most pressing concerns including hunger, disease, and reduction in vulnerability to climate change risks (Sparks, 2016). Most importantly, the agenda calls for people-centred development and gender equality, which places the African people at the centre of all continental efforts, to ensure broad-based participation in the transformation of the continent, and the building of caring and inclusive societies and communities. It recognises that empowering and removing all obstacles to women's full participation in all areas and levels of human endeavour, is pivotal for any society reaching its full potential. Further, an enabling environment for its children and young people to flourish and reach their full potential is a pre-requisite to sustained innovation. In this regard, this study's focus on indigenous health practices of the Shona community also deploys data collection methods that integrate women's voices as a critical facet of social equality groups' contribution to Agenda 2063's home-grown solutions to Africa's existential challenges. This resonates with the agenda's predilection on Africa's demographics as part of the agency in addressing Africa's pertinent needs like healthcare (Royo et al., 2022).

1.8 Research Objectives and Questions

The purpose of this study is to contribute knowledge, through rich qualitative data, on the value of indigenous approaches to psycho-social health. The study seeks to engage the nexus between health and culture as projected and facilitated by the music of Oliver Mtukudzi, with particular focus on the interface between psycho-social health and indigenous healing practices. The

study particularly explores the role of ethnic music in both depicting and facilitating support in the context of death, loss and bereavement. With scholarship increasingly foregrounding the benefits of epistemological diversity (Manyozo, 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Tufte, 2024), the study engages with the theoretical and practical potency of music, both as a communicative medium about healing, as well as a healing force in the context of self, others and society. As such, the study espouses an aspirational forecast in its exploration of the affordances and agency of ethnic music in the domain of healing and wellness**.**

The study pursues the following objectives:

1. To explore Shona healing practices and principles reflected in Oliver Mtukudzi's music.

2. To examine the ways by which Oliver Mtukudzi's music facilitates healing for the bereaved in the context of the Shona community's indigenous knowledge systems.

3. To elucidate strategies that can be deployed to integrate Shona community health ideas and practices into Zimbabwe's psycho-social support framework, given the Agenda 2063 decolonial blueprint for Africa's development

The study is driven by the endeavour to address the following research questions:

1. How does Oliver Mtukudzi's music reflect Shona healing principles and practices?

    (i) What Shona community psycho-social support concepts are articulated by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?
    (ii) What public health principles are foregrounded by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?

2. In what ways does Mtukudzi's music facilitate healing in the context of loss, bereavement and grief?

3. What strategies can be deployed to integrate Shona community health ideas and practices into Zimbabwe's psycho-social support framework, given the Agenda 2063 decolonial blueprint for Africa's development?

1.9 Identifying the research gap

The study's research gap is herewith identified against the backdrop of the African Union's Agenda 2063. The agenda sets a centre stage for Africa's endeavour to attain key socio-economic and people-centred developments with the aim of alleviating poverty. To the best knowledge of the researcher, there appears to be some methodological misgivings arising from on-going conversations on decolonisation of cultural and societal studies research (Moyo 2020). While this present study acknowledges that it is not the first ever to present decolonial narratives, those that are focused on psycho-social support are yet to be established. This should necessitate the quest for comprehensive methodological approaches that are applicable to indigenous people in terms of application and nomenclature. This study is thus an attempt to contribute to not only a decolonisation of cultural and societal studies with a view to locate indigenous knowledge systems' role with regards to health, but a rethinking of cultural studies as means to support the significance of emancipation and participation of community-based development and social change settings (see Dyll and Tomaselli, 2024). This pragmatic form of cultural studies does not negate theory as Dyll and Tomaselli (2024) insist on their agreement with Stuart Hall (1992: 296) that "theory is worth fighting for". Therefore, addressing contradictory evidence on decolonisation of psycho-social support among Shona people within this context presents a fertile ground in the endeavour to acknowledge key transformations defining African Union's Agenda 2063. Indeed, Russian philosopher and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtini argued that ideas and meanings do not rest upon any individual person but instead are co-constructed through dialogue and interaction. It is within this context that this study acknowledges 'going on theorising' rather than being 'interested in Theory' for theory's sake (Grossberg 1996: 150). Clarity in this regard is demonstrated in Chapter Two. In sum, therefore, the research gap (see Miles, 2017) that this study seeks to address is both a knowledge gap in that there is a knowledge void within studies of psycho-social support, and applying an indigenised and cultural studies perspective will likely result in new interpretations. Connected to this is that the study also addresses a methodological gap by engaging directly with community members in the *lekgotla* and especially women, as women are often sidelined in traditional structures with the research 'gatekeeping' usually upheld by men.

1.10 Structure of the study

This study is made up of seven chapters, each one addressing a particular aspect in the broader scheme of the research. This section also serves to acquaint the reader with a brief explanation of the study's conceptual and methodological approaches.

The present chapter (Chapter One) introduces the study, particularly unpacking the intersection of music, culture and healing against the backdrop of Shona community health practices and how they play out in the provision of support in grief. The chapter outlines the research problem and study significance considering the ecology of health and wellness, contextualising the sociological factors shaping indigenous knowledge systems as a revolutionary paradigm in the healthcare domain of the communities of the African Global South. It presents the associated study objectives and research questions.

Chapter Two presents a review of literature, engaging the scholarly submissions that foreground the contestations surrounding the 'biomedicalisation' of health vis-à-vis the sociology of wellness. The chapter sets the context within which the study locates music as a performative mode of cultural signification, hence the study's endeavour to explore music in relation to the indigenous approaches to psychosocial support in bereavement. This context rests on ethnic music's functions within Shona cosmology, with the spectrum of rites of passage demonstrating the Shona community's acknowledgement of music as integral to the cultural operating system defining systems of knowing and praxis. The literature assists in configuring the phenomenological lenses for exploring the indigenous health practices of the Fumhe village.

Chapter Three outlines the framework of concepts guiding the study, foregrounding the interlocking tenets of the Postcolonial Indigenous Theory (PCI), African Cultural Studies (ACS) and Culture-Centred Approach (CCA). The chapter explains why the study does not apply a single theory to the understanding of the phenomenon of psycho-social support in death and grief as explored via the affordances of music in its cultural situatedness, opting rather to explore a system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that inform and support the study. The chapter mobilises the mutually-inclusive and interlocking tenets of the Postcolonial Indigenous Theory (as theorized by Bagele Chilisa, 2012), African Cultural Studies (as conceptualized by Keyan Tomaselli, 2019), as well as the Culture-Centred Approach (as propounded by Mohan Dutta, 2011).The framework of concepts (albeit in their interrelatedness) is enlisted in the quest to answer the research questions of this study as it

explores the interface between psycho-social health and indigenous healing practices. Providing guidance to this endeavour are the objectives driving the research, with focus directed towards the ways by which Oliver Mtukudzi's music facilitates healing for the bereaved in the context of the Shona community's indigenous knowledge systems.

Chapter Four presents the study's research methodology. It begins by defining the Critical Indigenous Qualitative Research (CIQR) paradigm of the study, subsequently unpacking the case study research design and the qualitative research approach. This study deployed a qualitative research approach because of its suitability to the process of examining the social and cultural experiences of a group of people within their natural environment, the Shona (Korekore dialect) community of the Fumhe village located in the Northern Zimbabwean district of Mbire. Riding on the paradigm of Critical Indigenous Qualitative Research (CIQR), the study used a Case Study research design, with research data collected via the following methods: semi-structured in-depth interviews, *lekgotla* (indigenous African colloquium) and the women-only Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The methodological stance adopted in this research obtains from the ethnography of exploring a community's ways of knowing and how these are shaped by their own history, heritage and sociology. An outline of the three data collection methods is provided to account for the study's three main data sets: semi-structured in-depth interviews with Daisy Mtukudzi, Norman Mtukudzi, Samantha Mtukudzi, Albert Nyathi, Mono Mukundu, Pathisa Nyathi and Nyamasvisva. The study made use of Braun and Clarke (2019, 2020) reflexive thematic analysis to generate data. The methods deployed are explored considering the study's conceptual framework and how it highlights the merits of cultural sensitivity when enlisting participatory community engagement pathways in co-constructed enquiry techniques.

Chapter Five presents and analyses data from the first data set: semi-structured in-depth interviews with purposively selected participants. Thematic analysis is deployed and the chapter is presented in light of the specific endeavour to address research questions one and two as guided by the study's objectives one and two.

Chapter Six is written pursuant to the analysis in Chapter Five, presenting and analysing the findings from the study's second and third data sets: the *lekgotla* (indigenous African colloquium) and the women-only FGD. With a perceptive follow-up on the study's research questions one and two as guided by research objectives one and two, the chapter subjects the data to reflexive thematic analysis, presenting the patterns and ideas yielded by the two data sets thematically.

Chapter Seven concludes the study, summarising the research considering the study's broad, comprehensive and pervasive research question three as guided by the study's aspirational objective three. Specifically, the study mobilises African Union's Agenda 2063 to navigate the complexities of Shona cultural practices that arguably find scope within the culture and heritage anchor of the continental blueprint for development. Because the said objective runs through the entire study like a golden thread, the conclusion chapter draws decided attention to it in the process of highlighting the study's key findings, premises and recommendations in the scope of contributing to knowledge. The gap addressed by the research is thus discussed within the broader purview of scholarship's evolving and emergent trends in knowledge production.

Chapter Two:

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

The literature that contextualises this study is explored thematically. The study's principal departure point is an acknowledgement of the seminal and emerging scholarship around the intersecting domains of music, psycho-social support, healing, culture, death, grief and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). Africans characteristically use music as a demonstrative and expressive tool for heritage preservation as well as for the maintenance of social cohesion and collective ethos (Agordoh, 2005; Boulton, 1957: 3). As a presentational and representational art form, music occupies the centre of intangible cultural heritage that communities, groups and individuals recognise as part of their existence, providing them with a sense of identity and continuity (UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention, 2003). As such, music dispenses with its utilitarian role as a cultural preservative and an identity reinforcer.

Music's pervasive nature is demonstrated by the indispensable roles it executes across the social, physical, psychological, economic, religious and cultural spheres of society (Flynn 2018; Agawu 2003; Nzwei 2003). Right from its production, distribution, consumption and performances to other traditional channels of dissemination, music is an integral part of society's cultural products, tools and accessories (Monzoncillo & Calvi, 2015). Muyambo (2022) acknowledges music's role in preserving, memorialising and representing the heritage of the communities that produce it. In this regard, music potentially serves as a transcript of a community's historical trajectory, as much as it diarises a people's collective dreams, hopes, aspirations and ideals.

Because the study at hand engages with indigenising psycho-social support, it is expedient to define Indigenous knowledge and to motivate for its relevance in shaping a community's ways of knowing and being, particularly in the specific context of psycho-social support in grief. Sillitoe (2000) cites Warren et al. (1995) in accounting for indigenous knowledge as the local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society, particularly in contrast to international knowledge system that configures generic forms of knowing within the wider global space.

The study thus considers music in the context of the Shona cultural expression, and how this music plays out in healing encounters that reflect a community in sync with its own culturally-sanctioned restorative merits (Chiwome, 1992; Friedson, 1996, 2017; Mahohoma, 2020) Whilst this study acknowledges the contestations surrounding the forms of knowledge in the global space, with 'Indigenous' invariably positioned in default contradistinction against 'scientific,' the perspective shaping the research at hand is that within the flux of the knowledge continuum where knowledge is ever-changing, specific communities spawn their own systems of knowing and these shape their own essence of indigeneity (Dixon et al. 2000; Arizpe, 1998; Grenier, 1998).

Characterising music as a cultural phenomenon with manifold implications, Chitando (2002) resonates with the submission that African cultural production is best consumed, judged and analysed in terms of its 'Africanness'[1] (Palmberg, 2001). With particular focus on Zimbabwe, it is observable that despite the creative appropriation of various musical styles across genres, there is a sense in which elements of traditional continuity chronicle a self-contained cultural universe whose civilisations and ontological ramifications negotiate a stake in the scheme of global multicultural co-presences. Integral to any indigenous community is its own conceptualisation of and approaches to matters pertaining to health, healing, wellness and wellbeing. There is an increasing body of robust scholarship on the interlocking discourses on healing, culture, performance arts and indigenous knowledge systems (Gouk 2017; McClellan 2000; Akombo 2006; Nzewi 2007; Lambert 2015; Bajaj and Vohra 2015; Jennings 1998). There is, however, still quite lean research on Oliver Mtukudzi's music, especially with regards to health and wellness. Hence this study's forthright endeavour to enquire into the musician's exploits, guided by scholarship's submission on the primacy of music in ethnic healing contexts (Fachner 2007; Moreno 1988; Walker 2003; Mastnak 1993; Akombo 2006).

As an exploratory enquiry that seeks phenomenological entry into the Shona community's approaches to psycho-social support via the affordances of ethnic music as a projector and enabler of healing in the context of grief, the study at hand dialogues with scholarship in the areas of; the cultural-situatedness of music, the music-healing interface, the nexus of cultural experience and music production, the mediatory role of performing arts, music and community

[1] In the essay, 'A continent without Culture?' (p. 197-208) Palmberg highlights the dangers of ethnocentrism or the tendency to see one's own community as the centre of the world, with Africa on the receiving end of Euro-Western cultural imperialism. The use of 'Africanness' in Palmberg's discourse thus denotes aesthetic criteria that appreciate African cultural production from an Africa-centred frame of understanding. (Baaz, M.E. & Palmberg, M. (2001) *Same and other: Negotiating African identity in cultural production,* Stockholm: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet)

health awareness, the healing domain in African cosmology, as well as the cultural moorings of bereavement and grief.

2.1 The cultural situatedness of music

The phenomena of subjectivity and meaning making in musical experience rest on the paradoxical pattern of seemingly irreconcilable yet reciprocally deterministic dichotomies: introspective yet communal, traditional yet innovative, disciplined yet liberating, individual yet collective (Hebert, 2009). A useful disclaimer that debunks a simplistic romanticisation of African ethnic music is Scherzinger's (2004) scholarly confession that reconstructing African music in the interconnected global ethnoscape of the postmodern dispensation is a great challenge because the aesthetics of music are increasingly bearing the mark of hybridity and cultural crossover. Although the concepts of cultural authenticity and artistic originality are affected by transnational cultural exchanges that generate richly intersecting musical forms and varieties, the greatest impediment to musical interpretation is the absence of a creative milieu against which the music can be meaningfully appreciated, contextualised and deciphered (Van Deusen, 2011). This is the backdrop against which researchers have significantly converged around Mtukudzi's discernible African philosophy and cultural agenda-setting in his reconstructionist articulation of identity issues in the wake of a globalising society (Chitando et al, 2022). Musical composition, performance and consumption overtly or covertly feed on cultural essence.

Baaz and Palmberg (2001) posit that music across cultures arguably remains central in identity construction. As such, musicians do not compose or perform their music in a cultural vacuum as their artistic products turn out to reflect the cultural influences behind them. Ugandan anthropologist and author, Okot p'Bitek (1986) is of the understanding that artists occupy a pivotal space in society because of the role they perform in championing proper socio-cultural alignment. In their powerful, imaginative and sensitive minds, artists dispense with their duties as thought leaders and generators of society's thought systems. In his rich and nuanced musical career, Mtukudzi's music, immortalised through the affectionate descriptor 'Tuku Music,' deals with social, political and economic issues spanning the long trajectory from colonial to postcolonial Zimbabwe (Chitando, 2016). In his forthright efforts to preserve indigenous norms and values, Mtukudzi embraces the crusade of a cultural nationalist whose music chastises those who, through self-denial, long for foreign values. As such, Mtukudzi's music exudes the ethos enunciated in *Artist the Ruler*, where Okot p'Bitek (1986: 39) underlines the multiple

functions of the artist as a legislator, counsellor, ideas broker and instructor who educates society about the need to preserve cultural values anchored in the African environment and experience.

Discourses generated by Mtukudzi's music characteristically carry the uniqueness of cultural embeddedness. The lyrical composition of Mtukudzi's *Tsika Dzedu* (translated as 'Our cultural traditions'[2]) music album resonates with the framework of 'analytic Afrocentricity' as conceptualised by Asante (2007:41). This thought finds critical follow-up in the discourse of Maganga, Tembo and Chikara (2022), who posit that the artist's musical corpus espouses the mandate to advance Africanity in a multicultural context. Emerging from this argument is a characterisation of Mtukudzi's musical career as a cultural activism of sorts, with the reconstructive agenda that permeates the musician's lyrical renditions cutting out a portrait of Mtukudzi as an embodiment of Shona and/or African culture. Travelling across the globe in his lifetime as a musician, Mtukudzi made a nuanced point of his African identity, African aesthetics and African essence as he addressed ecstatic crowds in different continents. The artist's career had the peculiarity of showcasing a man who passionately embraced his ambassadorial responsibility as Africa's cultural champion. Discourses on Mtukudzi's music have invariably probed the intersections between music and cultural activism. The music increasingly espoused a cultural preservation agenda in the wake of the critical and multicultural consciousness generated by global co-presences.

Woven throughout Mtukudzi's songs, from the narrative text of his lyrics to the dialogic nature of his musical arrangements, is the overarching motif of *hunhu* (moral personhood). Kyker (2016: 17) engages with the anthropological trappings of this ubiquitous term, *hunhu*, situating it within the Shona cultural space as a philosophy that sets a premium on human relations. The multiple definitions of *hunhu*, in many ways synonymous with *ubuntu*, encompass concepts of self-discipline, moral compass, self-restraint as well as manners, etiquette and good behaviour acceptable within the Shona culture. In the absence of a monolithic explanation of *hunhu*, the various definitions share the common understanding that our human selves are constituted only through our interactions with others, a belief succinctly captured in the Shona aphorism *Munhu munhu nevanhu*, meaning 'a person can only be a person through others' (Mugumbate and Nyanguru, 2013). It is arguable that Mtukudzi's music has a didactic and moralising nature. It opens dialogue on the ontological and epistemological pillars that shape collective sensibilities

[2] All translations from Shona to English will be provided in subsequent brackets.

of the African indigenes. Using Mtukudzi's music as a case study in his exploration of the debate on cultural uprootedness, Makuvaza (2008) argues that education for hunhu/ubuntu is the way forward in attempts to de-root the African who for years was a victim of cultural uprooting as a result of the colonial education system. Mtukudzi's music resonates with cultural didactics that can chat the pathway to sustainable growth. It is in this broader scheme of cultural dynamics that indigenous healthcare approaches can be explored meaningfully.

One of the most heatedly contested terrains in African cultural discourses is the debate on the status of women. Chitando (2016: 50) discusses the potentially antithetical historical and contemporary schools of thought in this regard, pitting the radical feminist perspective in contradistinction against the Africana Womanist interpretation of female-male relations in Africa (Ntiri, 2001; Phillips, 2006; Muwati & Gambahaya, 2011; Mangena, 2013). Radical feminists hold the argument that the African society is thoroughly patriarchal, with women relegated to the space of victims under the yoke of multiple relations of negation (McFadden, 1992). Contrary to this position, the Africana Womanist school of thought champions an African-centred paradigm on gender relations by arguing that despite being replete with visible patriarchal attitudes, African culture is configured in such a way that it largely promotes and advocates complementary relationships between men and women (Muwati et al, 2012). Africana Womanists view discourses that focus on women's oppression as being monolithic and too narrow to perceptively appreciate the complexity of African culture and its unique relational patterns. An interesting case in which Mtukudzi's musical lyrics speak to these relational dynamics is the song *Wagona Fani* (You have done so well), a 2004 track released in the Album *Tsivo* (Revenge) whose discursive gist generates a lyrical sociology that acclaims the scope for amicable female-male relations and the collective merits of gender compatibility in the Zimbabwean community.

Botstein (2001: 531) foregrounds music's capacity to enable an understanding of the culture, mores, norms and value systems of civilisations in the past. Music thus serves as part and parcel of sociological building blocks that construct historical narratives and their concomitant crucible of cultural negotiations. Scholarly discussions in the field of music analysis and cultural history engage with music's scope as an enabler of historical understanding and sociological interpretations. In reviewing the sociology and aesthetics of music, Gilbert (2005) explores the intersection between social history and musicology, characterising musical lyrics as oral texts situated within group frameworks, hence their capacity to enrich and illuminate music's consumers' understanding of particular historical contexts. In his song *Tsika Dzedu*

(Our Traditional Customs) which is one of the tracks on his 2018 album *Hany'ga* (Concern), Mtukudzi lyrically poses pertinent questions bemoaning cultural erosion. He asks, *"Tsika dzedu dziya dzakaendepi? Munyevhe wedu uya wakaendepi?"* (What has become of our cultural values? What happened to our routine of enjoying the healthy and deliciously prepared pot of our organic wild vegetables?). The song's moral indictment comes out more forcefully: "*Kusvikira riini, tichitiza mimvuri yedu?*" (For how long shall we keep trying to run away from our own shadows), figuratively foregrounding the futility and counterproductive nature of cultural denigration reflected in self-hate, self-denial and longing for foreign values. The cultural crusade in Mtukudzi's music comes across in decided efforts towards historical reconstruction, with Mtukudzi's professed and lived role as a cultural nationalist being to champion, revitalise and uphold African cultural values. The musical and extra-musical texts of Mtukudzi's music are a rich cultural repository that facilitates historical reconstruction and cultural re-alignment.

A cardinal dimension that makes Mtukudzi's music an ethnographic window into the Shona community is the artist's persistent articulation of the relational sociology of kinship ties as a signifier of one's existence in the scheme of collective relevance. Highlighting the primacy of 'matrix analysis' in ethnomusicology, Nketia (1981) posits that music reception invariably entails an informed search for relations that music has with other aspects of the total culture to which it belongs. Mtukudzi's epoch-making album, *Tuku Music* (1998), heralded a transition of sorts; the artist's return to and reconnection with his 'roots.' One of the tracks on this 1998 album is *Ndafunga Dande* (Return to Dande), a song that registers the pathos and emotive sensibilities of a mother missing her last-born child as reflected in the lyrics, "*Huya zvako gotwe ranguwe dzoka, zamu rakamirira iwe dzoka uyamwe*" (My dearly beloved last born baby, return and be suckled. The nourishing mother's breast still irks for your much-awaited return). Significantly, Mtukudzi uses this album to depict his origins as a *Korekore* (one of the Shona language dialects) member of Dande's royal lineage of the *Nzou Samanyanga* (Elephant, keeper of tusks) totem. Invoking his origins in Northern Zimbabwe area of Dande, Mtukudzi positions himself as a *mwana wevhu* (son of the soil), a descriptor often invoked in Zimbabwean language as a claim to indigenous identity. Kyker (2016: 28) reads a pattern of symbolic meanings in Mtukudzi's pilgrimage via music to his roots (origins), establishing a poignant social commentary on questions of kinship, place and belonging against the backdrop of a changing world. Songs play a big role in the recollection of human history. Community histories function as an important map of human geography. Ethnic music derives spirito-

cultural significance from nuanced narratives that invariably trace the evolvement of particular social groups in society (Turino, 1992). In focusing on Mtukudzi's music, this study finds guidance from ethnomusicologists' convergence around the need to locate music within the socio-cultural margins that generate it. Part of the music's relevance obtains from its function as a symbolic expression of social structure in relational terms (Feld, 1996). Understanding the scope of healing as some form of integration at various levels necessitates studying the interface between music and healing in the cultural context.

2.2 The music-healing interface

Scientific approaches to ethnomusicology and anthropology abound with scholarship's interest in classical civilisations that foregrounded the mechanics of the relationship between music, healing and the cosmos. Significant literature shows profiles of music usage in healing among traditional societies, with musing used in healing encounters illuminating the significance of ritual, trance and other performative forms (Friedson, 1996; Larco, 1997; Bolton, 2000; Bignante, 2015). For much of the history of mankind at the cultural level, music and healing have been universal experiences (Friedman, 1998: 273). Considering the use of music for healing as a phenomenon that has been going on for millennia, Benenzon (1997: 257) observes that the practice may be almost as old as music itself. This is similarly in keeping with the idea that the practice of using music to treat injury or disease is as old as civilisation (Darrow & Molloy, 1998: 18).

Scholarship on ancient societal dynamics has revealed music's potency in the comprehensive matrix of how sound, drum and dance movements function to promote coherence in human physiology, thereby invoking and appropriating certain healing qualities of nature (Akombo, 2006: xii). This decidedly spiritual nature and character of music resonates with the liturgical religious mythologies which attribute a report of music therapy to David who played his harp to Saul for curative purposes (Gibbons and Heller, 1985). Echoing this understanding is the account by Hanning et al (1998) who recount from Greek mythology the story of Pythagoras being able to calm an agitated youth bent on violence by having the piper switching from one mode of musical sound to another. Emerging from various myths and legends of ancient civilisations is the thought that music has for years been regarded as a special force over thought, emotion and physical health. Moreno (1985: 385) comments on the connection between the culture-centred process of music making and super-human forces in the cosmos, positing that music (as part of culture) can transform the mental state and infusing a

supernatural healing in a patient within a given cultural context. This presupposes that music fosters supernatural healing by way of communication between the spirit and the patient (albeit in the instance of a diagnosed psycho-physiological context) within the ritual performance of ethno-music therapy.

Scholarship reflects that across many cultures, healers have over the years leveraged on the positive effects of music. As in ancient beliefs, contemporary usages of music attest to music's functionality in interventions of a therapeutic nature. Whilst attempting to account for the use of music when comforting, consoling and healing, recent research shows music's capacity to lower a patient's blood pressure, basal metabolism and respiratory rates, whilst also producing endorphins that reduce pain (Campbell, 2001; Juslin and Sloboda, 2001). In ancient cultures, healing remained the domain of specialists endowed with supernatural and spiritual powers, rendering it an area of esoteric knowledge. This explains the multiple schools of thought on the cultural notion of the etiology of diseases, with endless debate on whether it is based on myth or empirical evidence[3]. The metaphysical effect of music in healing also interrogates the notions of scientists who hold that the uses of music in therapy precipitate into epistemological issues of the 'placebo' effect, which holds the understanding that healing is a result of one's mindset due to the mysterious self-healing forces generated by the mind-body connection (Mullings, 1984).

Insights can be obtained from case studies carried out amongst indigenous communities in South Asia, where sound is generally believed to invoke or represent symbolically the unseen power of the universe. In this regard, Roche (2000) observes that ritual music (as the encoded, organised sound for religious ceremonies) is a widespread means by which South Asians access or initiate deep levels of spiritual communication, with spirit possession, trance or some sort of ecstatic frenzy serving as a manifestation of successful connection to some 'macrocosmic' reality. Whilst pointing to music as the most fundamental phenomenon in ritual healing, Eliade (1962) also acknowledges how anthropological studies in indigenous communities (Asia and elsewhere included) highlight the primacy of a high level of belief on the part of a patient since belief and trust in the powers of the supernatural are catalysed with music. The implicit link

[3] Belief systems about diseases in different cultural set-ups are conceptualised as being myth-like in terms of explaining the etiology of and cure for many human diseases, with many indigenous communities having a heritage of cultural folk wisdom about illness, wellness, and cures. There is invariable reference to myths, quackery, home remedies, or alternative medical practices, depending on perspective. Different schools of thought in research indicate that health belief systems are organised in three orthogonal factors: salves for maladies, sorcery-based explanations of illness, and scientific explanations of disease. Against this background, ethnicity, gender, and other socio-demographic variables are key factors in attempts to explain the cause of diseases, as well as parameters for interventions aimed at curing ailments, and/or simply treating illness as some sort of spiritual intervention (Burgoon, M. & Hall, J.R. (1994) Myths as Health Belief Systems: The Language of Salves, Sorcery, and Science, *Health Communication*, 6(2): 97-115).

between levels of belief and physiological change significantly indicates that music and belief must be present prior to healing. Interestingly, efficacy in the healing practices of some indigenous cultural groups may not be disaggregated from the systems of belief in the same communities. African indigenous healing is deeply rooted in the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of being, and it is also inextricably linked to religion or systems of belief (Edwards, 2009).

Establishing the scope for music in the context of bereavement support via expressive arts, Rogers (2007) notes that grief, art and storytelling are an innate part of the human experience. Through an ethnographic study of health care systems characterised by dancing prophets, singing patients and drummed spirits, Friedson (1996) explores the musical experience in the healing practices of the Tumbuka ethnic group of Malawi, noting that in Tumbuka indigenous medical praxis, the healing arts are not necessarily separated into mutually exclusive categories of medical care and aesthetic experience, considering that healing is an art form in Northern Malawi. Ethnographic studies necessitate an appreciation of the culturally distinct worldviews. For example,in the Western concept of healing musical experience can be considered as abstract, distanced and superficial to conventional modes of medical and surgical intervention (Trauger-Querry & Haghighi, 1999). However, the encounter between a Tumbuka healer and his patient can turn out to be a characteristically intricate and complex musical transaction entailing divination, singing, drumming as well as the internal experience of spirit possession where music gives form to a sacred clinical reality (Friedson, 1996: xi). Since music and other orally-based art forms provide opportunities for moving back and forth in the exploration of feelings related to loss, music can function in the broader framework of creative and expressive processes that foster introspection as a pathway to closure and reconstructing a new relationship with the deceased (Worden, 2018). Whilst there has been a vogue of traceable scholarship on healing amongst indigenous communities, the contribution this study endeavours to make is an exploration of the Shona people as a particular group that has yet to be included studies of this nature. In this regard, Mtukudzi's music generates a uniquely contemporary context as opposed to the necessarily ritual and traditional set-up in indigenous communities foregrounded by studies in this domain. This is the nuanced context that drives the study at hand and its eagerness to spotlight healing within Shona cultural practices.

According to Smith and Wobst (2004), a key dilemma which some African societies find themselves in is that Western approaches to healing ordinarily assume that all cultural groups are homogenous. Highlighting difference and peculiarities, Kandemiri and Smit (2016) note

that African cultural groups, like any other cultural groups around the world, have their own approaches to diagnosis and curing of diseases. Super-imposing healing systems upon these culturally contained social groups turns out to be an unacceptable and culturally deleterious experience which African communities and scholarship are not amenable to. Mbiti (1989) unpacks the nuanced dynamics of African cultural existence, drawing on the sensibilities and philosophies of the Shona community in Zimbabwe, and he stresses the fact that the spirit world of the African people is densely populated with spirit beings, spirits and the living dead or the spirits of the ancestors that interact with the living people in the natural world. It is not easy to try and separate the phenomenal reality of music, trance and healing in Africa into distinct categories of aesthetics, religion and medicine as in the worldview of Western epistemological thought. In the experiences of most communities in Africa, people experience sickness and healing through rituals of consciousness-transformation that find their experiential core in music. Katz (1982) demonstrates this thought in studies that focus on unique forms of music and healing in Africa, where the Kung Bushmen dance and sing whilst boiling natural healing remedies, a music-accompanied ritual considered to be a source of spiritual energy to facilitate healing at both individual and group levels.

Whilst most discursive texts on healing explore it from the restorative dimension of bodily therapeutic intervention, Kamuti (2022) interestingly explores healing in Mtukudzi's music from the unique but nuanced perspective of reconstructively 'healing the land.' Arguably, this takes a figurative assessment of music's function in disseminating strategies for harmony and remedying social malaise, economic meltdown, political tensions and cultural attrition. Celebrating the artist as an iconic moral touchstone and paragon of virtue, Kamuti (2022: 121) says "...his musical work is not only meaningful through mere words (as expressed in lyrics of his songs), but also through how he lived his life by putting words into action to promote peace, human rights, and care for the environment." As a recipient of ambassadorial accolades and portfolios, Mtukudzi's music career was punctuated with initiatives that did not only promote public health ideals, but also many exploits in the cause of harmony and peacebuilding to heal the land in the wake of a myriad of challenges. This perspective of healing, though figurative in a sense, reflects Gunner's (2015) location of music in the continuum of expressive forms of performance that shape social meaning and praxis. The understanding is that, through the prism of performance, music opens up ways of perceiving and interrogating the knotty questions around culture, politics and existential dynamics amidst intersecting multicultural currents spawned by shifting cultural archives and the lifelong enterprise of human imaginative

projection (Mhlambi, 2009). As can be observed in different unique experiences across many African and Asian communities, music remains invariably central in curative rites and rituals as it mediates the diagnosis and prognosis of the complex and broad-based healing experience. Notably, there is an extent to which music production is informed by a people's cultural experience and this nexus is a subject worthy of attention in attempts to locate healing within the cultural context of a given indigenous community.

2.3 Music and community health awareness

'Health' has been viewed by the World Health Organization (WHO) as not merely the absence of disease but a holistic, energised and vital global state of physical, mental and social well-being as aptly conveyed in the Nguni/Zulu/Xhosa term *impilo* (Doke and Vilajazi, 1972). This submission forms a backdrop informing this study's endeavour to explore Mtukudzi's music, not just for purposes of ascertaining ethnic music's affordances as a projector and enabler of healing in indigenous practices, but to seek legitimate space for the integration of indigenous health knowledge and 'African holistics' (Afrika, 1998) into the ecosystem of conventional health care models providing mental health support for the bereaved. Music can be meaningfully studied in the context of ecological awareness, acknowledging how music fits into the comprehensive context of spirituality, balance, wellness and community health.

An interesting and relatively recent phenomenon within the broader field of music and therapy is the subject of community music therapy (Stige and Aaaro, 2011). The key concerns and merits of this phenomenon are seen in its emphasis on human connectedness, health promotion and social change. Stige et al. (2017) have carried out studies related to how people can use music in ways that are helpful to them, especially in relation to a sense of wellbeing, belonging and participation. The vogue of such studies notably hinges on the premise that obtaining therapy and healing from music is much more than a decontextualised effect that music produces. Instead, music's utilitarian value obtains from its intricate connections with culture and society, considering that music is characteristically studied in the broader context of its relatedness to other concomitant domains like sociology, ethnomusicology, community psychology and health promotion. Because music creates meaningful pathways for people to voice and connect collectively, it is paramount to closely study how music affords connection amongst people as well as the bond between people and their environment.

Kyker's (2016) *Oliver Mtukudzi: Living Tuku Music in Zimbabwe* provides a historiography of the musician's art over the years, exploring the transition from the colonial order to the post-

independence dispensation. Kyker locates Mtukudzi's music in the popular discourses on HIV/AIDS and health communication initiatives in Zimbabwe. As such, the exploratory narrative (couched in a quasi-biographical genre) affirms the artist's contribution to the developmental concerns (with a public health focus) of a nascent third-world economy that boasts of a rich cultural heritage. Thematically, the subject builds up on Kyker's (2012) ideas on Mtukudzi's musical approach to HIV/AIDS, focusing on the merits of the edutainment genre and the contributions of the arts industry to key developmental discourses. A little earlier, Kyker's (2011) doctoral dissertation had explored morality and postcolonial politics in Mtukudzi's music, drawing on the 'ubuntu' (personhood) philosophy as a guiding tradition in Africa's collective ethos. Kyker's (2013) subsequent writing on diasporic audience reception of Oliver Mtukudzi's music was thus a logical build-up on the cultural moorings drawn earlier. The researcher considers Kyker as a seminal contributor to key discourses on Mtukudzi, and it is in appreciating the historiography of Mtukudzi's music (both as text and in other artistic regards) that the study seeks to perceptively explore the artist's work in the context of indigenous approaches to healing and culture-centred modes of intervention in providing support for the bereaved and grieved.

Barz and Cohen (2011) collated critical essays by various scholars in a volume that engages HIV/AIDS in Africa, focusing on healing through music and the arts. This collection of chapters is a telling project that locates music and other varieties of performative production in the scheme of healing, wellness and restoration. McNeill (2011) writes about AIDS, politics and music in South Africa, locating music and other popular culture genres into the context of health and development themes of the twenty-first century. Similarly, Walker, Reid and Cornell (2004) explore the sociology of HIV/AIDS in South Africa as portrayed by popular music and other edutainment performative productions. However, the thrust in the text is urban youths and popular culture, but the key subjects remain a mimetic reflection of life as lived by the everyday person. Music's utility value can thus be appreciated within a broad range of contexts (individuals, groups and communities), and all the various contexts demonstrate exposure to challenges by illness, disability, social and cultural disadvantage, as well as injustice. It is against this background that music equips communities with the capacity to find their voice (both literally and metaphorically), to seek acceptance, to be together in different and better ways, to generate and project alternative messages about themselves or their community whilst connecting with others within and beyond their immediate environment. The direction of scholarship on music, culture and healing ordinarily presents ethnographically informed case

studies around different geographical areas across the globe, with each case providing a portal into the ways of life of a given people.

The current research endeavours to contribute to this growing body of scholarship by focusing on the Shona people's approaches to psycho-social support, particularly the support rendered to the bereaved, thereby drawing on the merits of cultural dynamics of the community under focus in the context of health and wellness. Being a native of the Shona community, the researcher is aware of multicultural co-presences due to globalisation, hence the need to establish the space of Shona healing practices in the wake of multiple cultural forces.

There is a notable shift in scholarship when considering the use of music in conventional healthcare establishments. Traditionally, the whole concept of 'music therapy' was viewed in light of the therapist-client relationship as dictated by the routines of an institution's music therapy room under a biomedical model of illness that did not allow therapists to consider or challenge social and material conditions, social networks or cultural contexts when therapeutic measures were taken (Ruud, 2004). However, music therapists have shifted towards appreciating that ill health and handicaps must be explored within the context of totality; as part of social systems and embedded in material processes (Ansdell et al, 2004). As such, it can be noted that people become ill not only because of physical processes, but also because they become disempowered by ignorance and lack of social understanding. In this regard, music therapists have evolved into understanding that their key tool, music, may be unique in involving other persons who, through ill-health, have lost access to the symbols and expressive means central in every culture. Practitioners in this mould are gravitating towards the use of music to bridge the gap between individuals and communities, thereby utilising music in the creation of a space for common sharing of cultural, artistic and human values.

A key dimension worth considering is that in most African communities, grieving in the broader context of psychological, sociological and cultural perspectives is not an individualised process but rather a characteristically communal experience. Nwoye (2005:148) defines grief as conceptualised in African worldview as 'the patterned ways invented in traditional communities for the successful healing of the psychological wounds and pain of bereaved persons'. As noted by Martin et al (2013), mourning collectively and having night vigils to spend the night in the 'company of the deceased' are all rituals which are very paramount for people in various communities as they assist with their broad-based and nuanced processes of grieving. This is the understanding that could rewardingly help any ethnographic enquiries (the current study included) into various interrelated aspects of death and grief as viewed from an

African perspective, where the constant interactions between the physically present mourners and the deceased's body and soul are all part of the metaphysical-spiritual realm that encompasses deceased elders, significant clan figures as well as familial guardians.

The research at hand directs focus particularly towards the traditions and indigenous culture of the Shona community as projected by Mtukudzi's music, with the view to situate the discourse of health within the indigenous cultural framework of the African community. Whilst Mtukudzi's music has drawn appeal across the generational divide, it is rooted in the traditions, value-systems and cultural imperatives of the African community. Hence what is projected goes beyond just the immediate Shona-speaking Zimbabwean locality to encompass the collective ethos of the broader African community. It retains its distinctively ethnic texture that differentiates it from other genres of the urban youths who tend to invariably mimic time-bound and trending styles like popular street lingo. As such, the researcher finds the work of the various scholars essential in contextualising the current study and its exploration of healing and mental wellness in the context of ethnic music and indigenous practices of the African community. In a study of this nature, it is imperative to establish the cosmology (the science and origins of the universe as understood from the perspective of a given cultural community) of the African people in general, and the Shona community in particular to situate healing and wellness within the context of the community's collective knowledge regarding the essence of 'being' and 'becoming'.

2.4 The nexus of cultural experience and music production

As a mode and form of cultural activity, music production is an experience that demonstrates how people inhabit niches of musical styles reflective of specific cultural backgrounds and orientation (Brown, 2021). Theories on music production engage philosophies of personal and collective creative effort, locating these in cognitive and ethnographic studies around what has been referred to as 'distributed activity' (Sawyer and DeZutter, 2009). Humanity has for years leveraged on music production to create knowledge, entertain, educate, warn and celebrate many aspects of life, with musical enterprise heavily influenced and shaped by many cultural factors. Linking music production and performance to bespoke experiences, Frith (1996) foregrounds contextual and cultural background as key to understanding the interface between music and identity. Even in contemporary experiences where the digital economy has transformed the music production landscape courtesy of the affordances of mediated and computationally generated art creation, the nexus of cultural, ideological, individual,

technological and entrepreneurial factors still denote the cultural politics of music production and performance.

Berliner (1990) contributes to the ethnic music discourse in Zimbabwe by exploring *mbira*[4] and other indigenous instruments in relation to the traditions of the Shona people. In the context of Zimbabwe's historical evolvement from the pre-colonial to the postcolonial era, the music industry arguably depicts the material (tangible) culture as well as the symbolic (intangible) culture of a people who manipulate the environment artistically to seek adaptive ways of cultural expression that couch collective sensibilities. The symbiotic relationship between the 'symbolic' and 'material' aspects of culture finds articulation in the explanation by Deacon et al. (2004:27), as they argue that physical heritage only attains its true significance when it sheds light on its underlying values, with intangible heritage being made incarnate in tangible manifestations and visible signs. This submission is quite telling in the context of the researcher's readiness for fieldwork, bearing in mind the nuanced connection between music and dance, trance, instrumentation, incantations, and a wide array of ritualistic performances observable in various African communities.

The study is eager to decipher music's denotative and connotative meanings as a culturally-codified variety of performative production. In this regard, it is important to note that instrumentation in the traditional music heritage of the Shona community has deep roots in traditional Shona religious life, where it is associated with ancestor veneration and spirit possession. According to Berliner (2019: 20), "...mbira in the hands of skilled players, has the capacity to summon the spirits of the departed who then manifest through men or women mediums (*svikiro*, pl. *masvikiro*), under a Shona cosmology where family spirits (*vadzimu*) deal with matters of misfortune, illness, and death affecting individuals within their lineage, whilst at a higher order are territorial spirits or royal ancestors (*mhondoro* [lions]) who are the spirits of the deceased chiefs." It is through an appreciation of how music and instrumentation are used in critical rituals at the centre of Shona cultural practices that one can begin to understand Shona sensibilities and existential dynamics like rain-making rituals in times of drought, exorcism rituals and dealing with avenging spirits wreaking havoc in the lives of certain family lines. Music thus lies at the centre of communities' cultural essence. Conducting the current study amongst the Shona, the researcher finds valuable instruction from Morris'

[4] *Mbira* is an instrument from the African continent, mostly found in Zimbabwe. It's sometimes called the "thumb piano" because it's played with the thumbs and one finger. The instrument is made of 22 to 28 metal keys attached to a hardwood soundboard called the *gwariva*, usually placed inside a large gourd to amplify the sound. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the mbira is usually played during important Shona ceremonies because of the cultural essence it evokes.

(2006:44) submission that although people's practices are significantly conditioned and constrained by the world in which they dwell, it is essential to acknowledge that communities have always been made up of knowledgeable makers of their own histories and not sheer vectors of received structures or cultures.

In submitting the thesis that music serves as an index to the culture of the community that produces it, Pfukwa (2019) explores the cultural experience of music production, celebrating the innovative strength reflected by instruments developed from the environment to support the rhythms created by the bare voice and kinetic movements of the human limbs. Exploring cultural consciousness in the global context, Chaiklin and Wengrower (2009) focus on the art and science of dance, the projection of life through dance, as well as the science of dance and movement therapy, arguing that dance routines are culturally codified; hence culture is integral in any effectual healing encounter. Against this backdrop, the study at hand endeavours to explore ethnic music in Zimbabwe and its place in conjuring cultural imperatives in the Shona healing domain.

Like all artists, musicians are products of society and, therefore, their music should resonate with the socio-political and cultural milieu of their societies (Makombe, 2021). Music affirms the cultural values of society in the wake of changes, ills and foibles impinging on the society because music functions in moralising and aligning society's value-systems. As such, music is also a potent force for ideological agenda-setting, with society unable to ignore its impact on the lives of the people. Ngugi wa Thiongo (1981) argues that a musician, like a writer, is a product of history, space and time, hence his/her music should resonate with the needs, sensibilities, hopes, aspirations and collective values of the people. Music texts, singers' voices, instruments and performances all function as commentaries on the lives, livelihoods and values of a people, sometimes chastising wrongdoing through strong satirical statements on prevailing political status quo (Palmberg, 2004). Like other forms of performative production, music turns out to be a hidden 'transcript' or a culturally-encrypted mechanism for commenting on social realities, hence the need tom approach it via the merits of cultural literacy (Scott, 1990).

The power of music in society lies in the way it can be used to navigate between the discourses of human existential dynamics and the spaces it creates for small personal pleasure and enjoyment (Allen, 2004: 6). By borrowing from the German Playwright Berthold Brecht's idiom that art is not only a mirror held up to reality but also a hammer with which to shape it, Schumann (2008) intimates that by virtue of its cultural-rootedness, music production is not only meant to depict society but to also construct it. In that regard, music serves in direct and

hidden ways as a route to the core of the cultural and other essence of the society that produces it. Narrowing the focus from the global perspective, music production in African communities is often an exercise which is characteristically purpose-driven, didactic, moralising, as much as it is evidently aesthetic (Banfield, 2010).

2.5 Mediatory roles of performing arts

Whilst this study's focus is on ethnic music specifically, acknowledgement must be made of the growing body of scholarly works that deal with performing, visual, presentational and representational arts in the context of healing and wellness. Lambert (2015) explores systemic approaches to healthcare using strategies proffered via creating, designing, managing and evaluating arts in healthcare programmes and initiatives. Central to scholarship in this domain is the understanding that the relationship between arts and medicine is acknowledged and expressed in multiple ways. While some initiatives focus upon applying arts-based methodologies and skills to medical practice, other initiatives focus upon heightening the social and emotional awareness of medical and health professionals through exposure to the arts, and still others aim to place trained artists in healthcare environments to support a patient's overall healthcare experience. Bajaj and Vohra (2015) similarly argue for the merits of performing arts in the context of therapeutic encounters, submitting that theatre is a medium that enhances empathy in processes of healing for oneself and for others. This explains the novelty in medical trends where art therapy programmes where trained therapists utilise arts-based experiences to attain specific therapeutic goals. Arguably, the 21st century healthcare paradigm is shifting away from a medical model driven by the protocols of disease to focus on multiple factors surrounding cure. As Serlin (2007) explains, it is now becoming a system based on the caring for the whole person to sustain high quality of life throughout treatments and to better manage ongoing care.

When considered through spirito-cultural lenses, healing entails entry into a domain, space, and dimensions that touch on the holy and sacred space of one's spiritual inscape. Healing is thus conceived of as a rediscovery of the light and dark parts of one's being in the transitioning experience towards becoming whole, holy and healed (Samuels and Lane, 2013). By tapping into their experiences as global champions of revolutionary medical arts programmes, Samuels and Lane (2013: xii) have developed programmes that teach people to be their own artists through expressing the artistry of shared humanity and uncovering the human spirit, the source of creativity. As such, art is reconsidered to be anything that brings creativity, beauty, love and

light into human life. Art can thus be appropriated to enable restorative experiences for frailties and disorders of various kinds. This argument finds extension in the work of Lee, Morris and Nicosia (2020) who position performing arts within the context of medical practice. This frame of understanding, encompassing various modes and tropes of art, considers poetic, visual and lyrical approaches to life's processes as enablers of self-healing in many regards, celebrating the human innate capacity to transcend old patterns, find one's inner essence, whilst journeying forwards to fulfil life's work, purpose and destiny.

Some of the key questions with which scholarly research has had to grapple include: How do people use music to heal themselves and others? Are the healing powers of music universal or culturally specific? Larco (1997: 35) contextualises this further by noting that illness is a cultural construct, hence it is in the context of a culture's prevailing norms that perceptions for diagnosis and cure find their efficacy. Chopra (1989) observes that in certain indigenous cultures, "...when musicians invite spirits to effect healing upon patients, the music elements are rendered in different ways that reflect the various lifestyles of those in both the physical and non-physical realms." Despite the predilection towards the professional and conventional modes of therapy in the present global-cultural milieu, an increasing number of citizens are choosing integrative, complementary, and alternative medicine (ICAM) approaches to medicine, with indigenous populations acknowledging that their local worldview and physical landscape allow for the intersection of musical, religious, spiritual and scientific domains of knowledge to remain connected for the sake of effecting healing (Markham, 2011). Generally speaking, African worldviews does not separate science, religion, spirituality, music and the arts into diametrically opposed boxes, but instead sees all these as inseparable and complementary aspects that constitute a broad and potent healing paradigm (Paris, 1995; Olupona, 2014).

Against the general background of Africa's oral tradition heritage as a basis for the construction of narratives (heterogeneous characteristics from community to community notwithstanding), scholarship significantly foregrounds the role of storytelling as an effective medium to embrace the positive power, benefit and effect that stories have in the healing cycle (Ellington, 2018). Stories ordinarily appear to be simplistic, yet they are purposeful enablers of meaning-making in the human experience. From the perspective of healing, storytelling fosters pathways to empowerment in the human quest to reclaim, appropriate and sustain life. Whilst admitting that the use of storytelling in healing encounters changes according to context, Wielenga (2013) posits that human beings are by nature storytellers that tell stories to bring coherence to life,

making sense of the layers of events that occur through interactions with others and with the environment. Stories are thus generated through constant dialogue with events and people. However, a story should not be a mere tool or a mere means to provide information and teach a skill, considering that a story has a certain level of integrity which serves as a stimulus for a discussion that engages the listener as well as the teller of the story (Sager, 2012). It is notable that when summoned to mediate the healing process, stories can contribute to wellness by integrating relationships at several levels, between a human being and others, as well as between people and their environment.

According to McNeill and Cervantes (2008), the essential balance and harmony in human reality and existence necessitate multidimensional conceptualisations of issues in a holistic approach that takes cognisance of multiple levels of human reality (body, mind, soul and spirit). This is the reason why healing entails paying attention to multiple dimensions of existence (terrestrial, natural, supernatural etc) due to the interplay of both internal and external factors shaping human wellness. McNeill and Cervantes (2008: 292) make a follow up on this thought by noting the profound overlap and interrelation between internal subjective constructions (cognitions, emotions, beliefs, perceptions, values, attitudes, orientations, epistemologies, consciousness levels, expectations and personhood) as well as external constructions of reality (artefacts, roles, institutions, social; structures and lifestyles). In the context of the current research, such scholarship speaks to 'holism' as a central motif to the African healing paradigm, necessitating an exploration of healing amongst the Shona in the context of the community's patterns of connectedness at multiple levels. As such, there is need to situate healing within the broader system of values projected via collective consciousness and community awareness.

2.6 Healing within African cosmology

Health is characteristically a culturally shaped reaction to socially created reality, with every culture creating its own responses to health and disease (Illich, 1976). Healing can thus be fully understood in the context of cultural order because of the manner in which it reveals the dialectical relationship between culture and experience, with the role of the said dialectic playing out in the wider processes of continuity and change. Comaroff (2019) explores the phenomenological implications of ritual and cosmology, submitting that indigenous perceptions of order and disorder in African communities depict affliction as a structurally configured dislocation of the self and its social and cosmic context. Healing, change, Africa,

cosmology, self and society are thus potent and multilayered categories that entail experiences at multiple levels in the process of reintegrating the physical, conceptual and social universe within the broader frame of community. Edwards (2014), explicating the foundations of 'holism' as a paradigm in African conceptualisation of healing, unpacks the core pillars and practices of a system anchored on spiritual and wisdom traditions, with combating illness being a process of spiritual, cultural and community-anchored ecological intervention that enables restoration at personal, social and ecological levels.

Although traditional African healing has been in existence for many centuries, not many people understand its relationship to spirituality, with a lot of misconceptions, misreadings and mistaken interpretations around the types of traditional healers, training of traditional healers and the role of traditional healers in their communities (Gunda, 2004; Monteiro and Wall, 2011). According to Mokgobi (2014), the services of traditional healers go far beyond the uses of herbs for physical illnesses, with traditional healers serving many roles which include but are not limited to custodians of the traditional African religious values and customs, counsellors, psychologists, social workers and educators about culture. In theorising the development and variants of cultural studies in the African Global South, Tomaselli (2019: 168) zooms his analytical lens on the realm of the "unknown – beyond the material," arguing for what he configures as the "hidden transcripts of cosmologies." Tomaselli's work provides an instructive frame within which to appreciate the spiritual and metaphysical realm of African cosmology. Ordinarily, Euro-Western scholarship creates descriptors like 'superstition, sorcery, magic' or what Kant (1998) describes as the 'noumenal' in signifying cultural thresholds beyond a distanced-observer's gaze, necessitating proper ethnographic entry into the African sciences and indigenous systems of knowledge creation and knowledge deployment.

Makgahlela et al. (2019: 1) understand bereavement rituals to be a set of culturally patterned behaviours or activities in which the bereaved engages for the purpose of symbolically expressing certain feelings and thoughts during mourning. In this regard, healing ought to be understood not as a once-off simplistic event, but rather a multidimensional experience that occurs at various levels. These various dimensions and levels find expression in Nwoye's (2000: 60) analysis of structures/processes which ought to be followed as part of the grieving process: The biological level (where attention is directed at the physical health or the wellbeing of the bereaved) is ideally tailored to foster the recovery of the bereaved in the physical sense as they emerge from the experience of loss and its blow. The other dimension is the emotional

aspect (where healing is achieved via the solidarity of the community as expressed through crying and commiseration processes). The intended message put across at this level is that the bereaved are not alone in their loss.

At the social level, healing is ordinarily delivered through the provision of both emotional and instrumental social support meant to reassure those undergoing bereavement, with the endeavour to support them from the severity of the impact emanating from loss. In all these processes, the African culture expressed through common humanity, communal spirit and collective existence as pillars of African guiding ethos comes across saliently. For many African people, the process of grieving and mourning the death of a loved one is also perceived as an experience of connection, closure and continuity wherein there is an insistence on acknowledging the life, memory and dignity of the departed (Canham, 2020). In the context of the current research, there is need to explore how healing fosters connection at multiple levels, especially considering the individual-community interface in the configuration of the Shona community's ecology of relationships.

Healing and wellness can thus be situated within African cosmology in order to understand phenomenologically the continent's cultural imperatives at play in human existential dynamics. Edwards (2010) explores salient aspects of Southern African indigenous healing, whose features notably include ancestral, familial and communal spirituality, healers and specializations, illness prevention and health promotion, the role of rhythm, music, dance, song and various forms of empathy which can be explained from the point of view of African cosmology. Whereas the Western bio-medical view of the body as a 'mechanical' system is seen as a reflection of the mechanistic and scientific worldview that underpins modernity (with its distinction between mind and body, and between 'my' body and that of others around me), it is worth noting that the traditional African understanding of illness is that it has to do with the spiritual as well as the physical, with one's illness going beyond one's individual self to encompass one's entire social sphere (Swartz, 1998).

Despite overt and covert variations across many indigenous communities of the African Global South, healing is ordinarily done by persons who (like music therapists, doctors and traditional healers) undergo apprenticeships or trainings that are generally directed by experienced and socially sanctioned traditional healer (Maiello 1999). The process of becoming a 'healing practitioner' usually begins with a 'call' that comes through a dream or an inner vocational conviction that one wants to enter the sacred space of healing, with the end of training usually

culminating in a social celebration, whether a graduation ceremony or a party that heralds one's entry into the practice of healing (Fachner and Aldridge, 2002). This celebratory phase involves mediation by the local village accepting one's initiation into the core of their lores and mores. In this context, the role or function of music in the domain of healing is enunciated by the work of ethnomusicologists who foreground music's centrality in sustaining life, as well as in creating, affirming, sustaining and depicting social relationships at multiple levels of existence (Blacking, 1992). Ethnomusicologists affirm that due to the metaphysical, superhuman and spiritual parameters that it engenders, music turns out to be characteristically a 'gift' that one is born with, becomes alive to – an understanding attested to even in empirically oriented Euro-Western regions of the globe (Davidson et al 1994)

According to Ojelade et al (2014), when it comes to health and wellness, all cultural groups have their own unique nosology (illness classification system), etiology (beliefs concerning the cause of the illness), diagnosis (identification and labelling) and prognosis (expected out-come). Notably, the traditional and cultural practices of any given community are reflective of the values and beliefs that have over time come to be the norm for that community as they shape the community's way of conduct amongst themselves, their environment and the supernatural world (Maluleke, 2012). It is important to observe how all societies are peculiar in their age-old ways of valorising certain cultural ideologies that define their home-made margins for distinguishing the norms from the taboos, the normal from the abnormal, good from evil, as well as the wrong from right. Traditional African culture, as reflected in varying shades across different specific communities, has ways of identifying illnesses as well as solutions for dealing with such illnesses, which are known as indigenous healing. It is rewarding, in this understanding, to reflect on Constantine et al's (2004: 111) definition of indigenous healing as a mode of culturally rooted intervention that leverages on helping beliefs and strategies that originate within a culture or society and that are tailored and customised for treating members within a given cultural group.

Loubser (2004) tackles the subject of healing in the indigenous sense, highlighting its connection to the spiritual realm where ancestral reverence perpetuates generational relationships that provide protection, health and balancing of individual, family and cultural dynamics. Quite significantly, research has come to support the psychotherapeutic effectiveness of healers in the African tradition. Scholarship has noted verifiable components of psychotherapy shared by both traditional healers and modern psychologists (Frank, 1972; Torrey, 1972; Cheetham and Griffiths, 1982). Whilst exploring scholarship's efforts to debunk

dualistic thinking to focus on relational dynamics that foster complementarity and co-existence, the researcher endeavours to build this holism ethic into the study's data collection questions (both for interviews and for the community focus group discussions). The relational thinking, when considered in perspective, could assist the researcher in interpreting data with insights from respondents' and participants' reflections and refractions.

Observable in ethnographic scholarship is an attestation to the comprehensive uniqueness of African cultural dynamics and the variants that they carry across regional localities. The inability and failure of nations foreign to Africa to understand and access these unique and varied African ways of life, including the operations involving the metaphysical world, may be some of the reasons why African ways of healing are rendered unscientific. By ignoring the complex cultural contexts and belief systems of African people in various indigenous communities, Euro-Western epistemologies have peddled stereotypes where the metaphysical domain in African ontological thought and praxis is rendered an "anti-science world-view that breeds and cultivates uncritical, unquestioning, irrational, un-adventuring, fetish and other attendant cultural traits that hinder the development of scientific knowledge" (Inokoba et al, 2010). In subverting the notions and assumptions around African cultural practices, scholarship anchored on an Africa-centred consciousness provides the discursive energy with which the current research endeavours to negotiate space for indigenous healing practices within the conventional health practice, given the fact that multicultural co-presences in the global space should not cause cultural erasure for communities of the African Global South which have a nuanced history of rich cultural heritage. The study's entry into the Shona community's cultural space will remain alert to culture's role and influence as the anchor to healing dynamics in the context of grief.

2.7 The cultural moorings of bereavement and grief

In endeavouring to focus on indigenous practices in the context of bereavement and grief, this study explores African cosmological thought with regards to death, being and existence. The opening remark of John Mbiti's *African religions and philosophy* – "The African is notoriously religious" (Mbiti 1969: 1) sheds light on the understanding of the religious nature of most African cultures. These subjects are further developed in a nuanced corpus of Mbiti's (1970; 1991) other publications that explore the African community's (in its variegated and regional specificities) concepts of God, divinities, spirits, ancestors, death, incarnation and the realm of the living-dead. Mbiti's research is quite critical and significantly seminal in its exploration of

Shona ancestral cosmology. The research at hand rides on the merits of such explorations to establish healing practices of the Shona in light of the community's nuanced belief system. The efficacy of the community's healing interventions could be meaningfully established considering the people's beliefs and convictions.

Within the discipline of psychology and conventional studies around human and behavioural sciences, theories of bereavement, grief and mourning have for a long time promoted a decidedly Euro-Western worldview (Kubler-Ross 1969; Kubler-Ross & Kessler 2005; eds. Stroebe, Stroebe & Hansson 1993; eds. Sutcliffe, Tufnell & Cornish 1998). This direction of scholarship has thrived at the expense of African-centred epistemologies and their ontological anchor in African cultural value systems. Walter (2007) observes a phenomenal trend where practitioners of psychology and psychiatry have a default predisposition to conceptualise grief as an experience that affects an individual, resultantly directing focus towards configuring bereavement as an experience of 'individual grief' instead of seeing and acknowledging grief as a social experience situated within the broader context of people's cultures. However, it is notable that a fast-growing body of scholarly researchers has reversed the monolithic limitations of the Euro-Western scholarship, with significant scholarly output in the past few decades foregrounding the subject of grief and bereavement from an African perspective (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata 2014; Canham 2020; Makgahlela et al. 2019; Nwoye 2000, 2005; Nwoye & Nwoye 2012). These authors interestingly generate engaging critiques on the limitations and problematic nature of Euro-Western approaches to grief. With these ethnographic studies that draw on various African contexts, including studies in Nigeria (West Africa), Kenya (East Africa) and South Africa, scholars exploring the lives of African indigenous communities theorise about how varied communities respond to grief considering cultural variables that shape the sensibilities and values of self-contained indigenous peoples populating the African Global South. As the current study focuses on Zimbabwe (Southern Africa) in particular, the researcher is keen to establish possible convergences and divergences (if any) in the way these other regional communities conceptualise psycho-social support when compared to Zimbabwe. The heterogeneous nature of the communities depicted in the cited ethnographic studies underscore this study's particular focus on the Shona people in a bid to ascertain the group's peculiarities as reflected by their culture-based healing practices. Thin scholarship on psycho-social support amongst the Shona leaves a gap necessitating decided scholarly attention in this regard.

Canisius Mwandayi's (2011) *Death and After-life Rituals in the eyes of the Shona* as well as Berry Muchemwa's (2002) *Death and Burial among the Shona: The Christian Celebration of Death and Burial in the Context of Inculturation in Shona Culture* provide incisive and instructional dialogues with the Shona community, the same community under the researcher's focus. The aim of the research at hand is to explore the Shona community's healing practices as reflected in and aided by ethnic music, paying particular attention to healing in the context of providing psycho-social support for the bereaved. Guided by this aim, the study engages with literature that unpacks salient and subtle cultural dynamics of the Shona because these enable a perceptive reading of the community's healing practices. Arguably, it is through an understanding of the African people's cosmology that one can fully situate the place of healing, health and mental wellness. The guiding frame of thought is that death is culturally situated (Radzilani, 2010) and that bereavement and grief are culture-specific (Gire, 2002). In the submissions of Asante (2013), an Africa-centred consciousness can be re-vitalised by African indigenes actively recovering and reclaiming themselves as a people, a process of cultural re-assertion that rewardingly involves the ways in which Africans engage with and respond to the uniqueness of their life experiences. As this cultural regeneration process involves a re-alignment of value systems according to African home-grown terms, it significantly informs how Africans become who they are and how they operate in the world. This would include Africans' relationship with death, their grieving processes and how they mourn. During the time of colonial oppression and subjugation, many Africans relied on their spiritual selves/beliefs to survive. Spirituality has served as a critical instrument in assisting African people to survive the atrocities that they faced at the hands of their colonisers. In establishing the connection between 'Afrocentricity' and 'spirituality,' Mazama (2002) champions the need to consider spirituality as a paramount factor in accounting for how Africans make meaning of their world and how they connect with the departed (ancestors), as well as those who are yet to arrive (the unborn). Notably, Africans make meaning within their cosmology, where the past, present and future are believed to be intertwined and forming the lived reality of many African people.

In his publication, *Death and ideology: political thanatology and the 'femme fatale' syndrome,* Simpson (1985) submits a nuanced analysis of the nexus between death and culture, drawing attention to the dynamics of death and cultural trauma, whilst also reflecting on the applicability of the five stages of coping with bereavement: "denial, anger, bargaining, self-grief and acceptance" as conceptualized in the seminal work by Ross (1969). Simpson (1985) further

engages with the sociology of funerals as a site of struggle, creating the larger backdrop against which battles with the self and others play out in the context of cultural imperatives and psychological dynamics within individuals. Emerging from this discourse is an understanding of multiple levels of engagement with the symbolic and material culture of death and loss, necessitating culture-specific explorations of how these dynamics and more unfold in the lives of specific African communities. The researcher finds these scholars' works essential in providing a nuanced discursive backdrop to the Shona community under focus in this study. The researcher thus enquires into the generalisable sociological factors in the context of death, bereavement and healing whilst also endeavouring to establish the culture-specific dynamics that play out in the Zimbabwean Shona community under focus with regards to psycho-social support and healing for the bereaved?

The dominance of Euro-American approaches in the professional study of psychology in Africa has resulted in a situation where views on conceptions of death in psychology are framed by traditional Euro-American epistemological paradigms (Nwoye, 2013). Because the majority of psychological theories from the West have for years been configured and portrayed as somewhat universal, theories of death in mainstream psychology turn out to parrot this dominant thinking which is based on grossly generalised assumptions and realities about a person and the social world in which they exist (Matoane, 2012). It is through a decided review of literature in mainstream psychology that scholarship has begun to unearth the assumption-strengthened ignorance and absence of valid and relevant historical and cultural material on the cultural and philosophical knowledge about African people and their ways of life (Parham, 2002). In speaking to the arrogance and hegemonic intent which have for years caused the blind application of particular experiences of humanity as if they were valid global models, Nobles (2013) argues that there is no normative population or behaviour in the world except for a given particular context. Arguably, the misunderstanding and conflict characteristic of multicultural contexts arises from the different conceptions of experiences such as death, its cultural implications as well as the meanings of rituals performed during and after death.

A safe entry point to discourses around death and life is a fundamental understanding that there is no such thing as a value-free cultural system, in that all systems of knowledge have philosophical underpinnings, are context-specific and culture-based, hence their explainable subjectivities (Baloyi, 2014). With this guiding framework of understanding, one gets to understand perceptively the African philosophy as the understanding, attitude of mind, logic, and perceptions behind the way African people think, act, or speak in different situations of

life (Mbiti, 1990). Arguably, in the African context the self is defined and understood in relation to the others, gaining meaning from its relational connectedness to other cosmic life forces, hence the meaning attributed to the self is based on the meaningful contribution the self makes to the wellbeing of others and the environment. (Mkhize, 2004) submits that from the indigenous African worldview, selfhood does not exist as autonomous, independent and isolated principle due to the cultural ecosystem pivoted on interdependence, interrelatedness and co-existence, hence the concept of 'the collective' or the 'interdependent self.' This is the backdrop against which one can understand the indigenous African ontological basis for the continuous and unbreakable communication and connectedness between the living and the living dead, since life experiences and developmental phases (death included) are not viewed as separate from each other, outside of their encompassing context. King (2013) notes that in Africa, upon death, the departed transcend to the spirit world to be in the company of the living dead or ancestors, with the latter being the guardians protecting and providing guidance to those in the material realm and therefore are highly respected, venerated and very important to the community of the living. Attempting to understand healing, closure and meaning in African communities outside the context of their philosophy and ways of life would thus be frustratingly futile.

2.8 Conclusion

Indigenous and ethnic musical traditions have been vehicles for cultural preservation and continuation in African communities for a long time. As a critical pillar of cultural reinforcement, music has dispensed with its role of imparting ethnic knowledge, skill-sets and cultural value systems across generations. However, as Abrokwaa (1999) observes, Africa is not a cultural monolith as its richness is seen in societies broadly composed of ethnic groups that are further broken down into tribal units as well as intra-tribal divisions. Abrokwaa (1999: 192) gives the example of the Akan ethnic group of Ghana which, despite belonging to the same ethnic group sharing the same language (Twi), is composed of the Ashanti, Fanti and Akwapim tribal sub-groups whose age-old competitive fights for tribal superiority have seen each sub group defending their pride for the sake of perpetuating the honour, name, values and unique cultural practices of their particular group for posterity. Africa is thus not a homogenous community. Zimbabwe has several languages that in turn have their dialects and region-specific variants in a diglossic (multiple language) set up. For example, the majority indigenous Shona language of Zimbabwe is divided into *Karanga, Ndau, Manyika, Zezuru* and *Korekore* dialects.

Against the background of Africa's rich, broad, varied and complex cultural traditions and their varied symbolic manifestations across the continent, the study at hand engages with Oliver Mtukudzi's music, focusing on indigenous approaches to healing and support for the bereaved as practised by the Shona community, particularly the Korekore (Shona dialect) community of Zimbabwe's North-Eastern district of Mbire.

Indigenous communities in Africa have over the years preserved and sustained unique musical traditions, with a huge corpus of songs that dispense with didactic, aesthetic and technical functions. Nketia (1986) notes that these songs generate 'text' for both drum and voice, reflecting personal and social experiences, hence their themes tend to centre around matters of common interest, traditions, beliefs, customs and environmental issues pertaining to a community or the social groups within it. According to Janzen (1992), the *ngoma* (drum) is a key feature in the rhythmic-song-dance tradition of African cultural expression across the continent's communities because drumming is the voice or influence of the ancestral shades or other spirits visiting the sufferer to offer healing. Arguably, seeking entry into the space of Africa's spiritual, religious and healing expressions necessitates a perceptive appreciation of the continent's cultural traditions and peculiar heritage as enshrined in Africa's indigenous knowledge systems. Scholarship models that attempt to interpret a people's civilisation from 'without' risk being superficial and frustratingly misinformed in their account or representation of indigenous people's ways of life.

It is noticeable that there is an increasing body of literature addressing the interlocking subjects on African music, healing, death as well as indigenous communities and their culture-specific support mechanisms in the context of grief and bereavement. Mental health (as reflected in religious practices, performing arts and the everyday sociology of the African community) is an essential area worth exploring, considering that health is both a pillar of the human development index as well as an enabler of identity preservation and cultural conservation. The study envisages a pathway towards co-existence between African indigenous health practices and conventional healthcare systems. Tapping into the resourcefulness of existing literature by researchers across different cultures, the research makes an enquiry into the Shona community of Zimbabwe, whose ethnic music and cultural mores are part of a potent paradigm for indigenous healing practices. Whilst this study departs from an acknowledgement of scholarship in the area of healing and wellness, it draws particular focus on Shona healing practices, where the nexus of ethnic music and healing is this study's established gap in need

of keen scholarly energies. In the next chapter, the researcher unpacks the framework of concepts whose tenets are mobilised in the endeavour to address the study's research questions.

Chapter Three

Conceptual Framework

3.0 Introduction

The reason for the chapter's description as a 'conceptual framework' instead of a 'theoretical framework' is that it does not apply a single theory to the understanding of the phenomenon of psycho-social support in death and grief as explored via the affordances of music in its cultural situatedness. Instead, it explores "…a system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that inform and support a study" (Maxwell, 2008:222). As such, study unpacks the subject by going beyond the monolithic margins of a single theory, opting instead to dialogue with the merits of the three main knowledge bodies constituting the system of concepts framing the enquiry at hand. The study rides on a conceptual framework that mobilises the interlocking tenets of the Postcolonial Indigenous Theory (as theorised by Bagele Chilisa, 2012), African Cultural Studies (as conceptualised by Keyan Tomaselli, 2019, see also Tomaselli and Wright, 2008; Wright and Xiao, 2020), as well as the Culture-Centred Approach (as propounded by Mohan Dutta, 2011). The framework of concepts (albeit in their interrelatedness) is enlisted in the quest to answer the research questions of this study as it explores the interface between psycho-social health and indigenous healing practices. Providing guidance to this endeavour are the objectives driving the research, with focus directed towards the ways by which Oliver Mtukudzi's music facilitates healing for the bereaved in the context of the Shona community's indigenous knowledge systems. Figure 3.1 below schematically illustrates Postcolonial Indigenous Theory as the primary theory, but that it is influenced by the interlocking ideas and concepts concomitant to both African Cultural Studies and the Culture-Centred Approach.

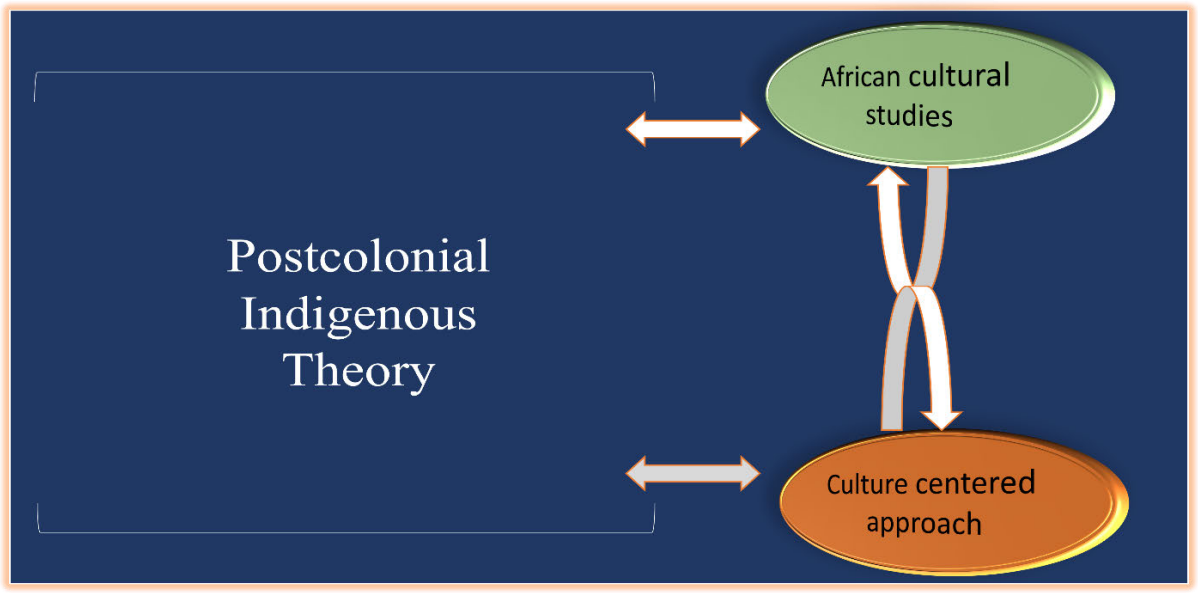


Figure 3.1 A diagram showing the study's unique conceptual framework

Scholarship has lately taken heed to the 'post-modern' concern with multi-vocality, paving the way for multiple narratives of heritage (Smith, 2009: 37). The novelty of such innovative approaches to enquiry, especially when working within culturally-contained indigenous communities of the African Global South, creates room for knowledge creation models that afford communities the space and voice to construct and relate their cultural phenomena according to their own terms. Conceptualising healing, death and bereavement within the context of peculiar cultural ramifications entails deploying alternative methodologies that transcend the limitations of the traditional positivist approach to appreciate the broader ecological perspective of the particular geographical, sociocultural and historical settings shaping a people's lives (Banyard and Miller, 1998).

Obtaining from the ecological model of investigation is a key position that human lives and livelihoods can be meaningfully understood when viewed in context, that is, when the various ecological determinants of being, becoming and behavior are taken into consideration (Trickett, Kelly & Vincent, 1985). With this understanding, the current study is framed within the context where Shona community rites of passage are best explored and understood from the perspective of their community or social embeddedness. Chinyowa (2001) contends that to meaningfully unearth the full import of a ritual, it is necessary to relate it to the specific social, political, economic and cultural milieu within which it is performed, considering that the very act of

locating a ritual or 'cultural text' in its appropriate context goes beyond seeking its historical background to provide nuanced interpretation.

Swadener and Mutua (2008) argue that culturally framed genres of research and methodology ought to characteristically reflect indigenous epistemologies, languages and expressive forms that legitimise communities' role in addressing their needs and sensibilities. Psycho-social support is a broad area that encompasses three main domains which are human capacity, social ecology and material environment (Galappatti & Richardson, 2016). These domains are aptly framed and experienced in terms of the cultural constructs and value systems of a given community or social group. With culture serving as the major operating system within which the key parameters of wellbeing and wellness are explored, a phenomenological appreciation of the Shona community's culture becomes an essential gateway to understanding the same community's healing practices and principles in the area of psychosocial support in bereavement. The process entails tapping into the indigenous knowledge of the Shona people, with indigenous knowledge implying the commonsense ideas and cultural knowledge of a people which characterise their everyday realities of living (Moraga & Anzaldua, 2022).

There is need to acknowledge that decolonising knowledge is central to the cause of health as a key pillar of development in former colonial territories of Africa. This explains why approaches to emotional well-being interventions are increasingly questioning, with political and economic agency being part of emotional resilience. In this regard, Horn (2020) questions the presumption that orthodox Western psychology offers appropriate frameworks for understanding and designing mental health interventions amongst the African populace. Research and practice would do well to create space for the home-grown thinking and practices developed by Africans for their indigenous communities, as such practices find anchor in history, kinship, relational dynamics and cultural imperatives that all constitute the broader ecology of healing.

Mambanga (2020) observes that what has significantly sustained the healing culture and practices of the Korekore people of Northern Zimbabwe (the community under focus in this study) is the way in which traditional healers have demonstrated their efficacy over the years, remaining a powerful establishment in society due to their easy access to the ancestral spirits. The cosmology of the Shona community thus contains a rich cultural corpus of indigenous knowledge that accounts for the ways by which practitioners of traditional health (amongst which are diviners, herbalists and traditional birth attendants) offer healing through their extensive knowledge of herbal and animal-based medicines, as well as therapeutic actions such

as rituals, ceremonies and cultural norms and a variety of other health promotive practices (Mabvurira & Makhubele, 2018). In the context of the Shona community, it is observable that culture is central in traditional forms of healing interventions that entail the entire spectrum of diagnosis, interpretation, treatment and prevention of mental illness (Taruvinga, 2016). Arguably, the healing rituals of traditional health practitioners are more responsive to the psychosocial context of illness. This is the backdrop against which this study explores the role of ethnic music in the healing traditions and practices of the Shona community in the Northern Zimbabwean district of Mbire.

Considering contesting biomedical models of healthcare in general and psycho-social support in particular, a culture-centred approach hinges on the merits of dialogue and direct engagement with a given cultural community in a bid to co-construct meanings other than super-imposing analytical paradigms upon self-contained cultural communities (Nehya & Dutta, 2010). Culture significantly frames conceptualisations of health and wellness in indigenous communities, hence in exploring the healing practices of the Shona community (particularly the Korekore sub-group of the Mbire district in Northern Zimbabwe), the research at hand acknowledges Airhihenbuwa's (1995) submission that indigenous methodologies necessitate transcending the limitations of Western paradigms in order to appreciate the symbiotic relationship between health and culture in many developing countries. This is the epistemic pivot that sustains the study's exploration of ethnic music's role in projecting and/or enabling psycho-social support in bereavement for among the Korekore ethnic group of Zimbabwe's broad and diglossic Shona community.

3.1 Postcolonial Indigenous Theory

The study taps into the resourcefulness of Postcolonial Indigenous Theory as conceptualised by Chilisa (2012: 45), a post-structuralist framework that critiques the conventional 'Postcolonial theory' and its default strategy to perpetuate Western scholarship's influence over research related to indigenous people and the colonised other in general. The disconcerting drawback of postcolonial theory (albeit in its naturalised conventional cast) is that it tends to ignore the colonised's ways of knowing. The merits of postcolonial studies play out in the golden thread observable in the submissions of Ngugi wa Thiongo's *Moving the centre*, Spivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak?* and Achille Mbembe's *On the Postcolony* amongst other advocates of postcolonial scholarship.. When historicised, therefore, *postcolonial indigenous*

theory is a frame of enquiry born out of the aspirational projection to remedy the epistemological fixities about the colonised 'other' through a counter-discursive onslaught against the residual effects of colonial hegemony and the ideological baggage that for years conditioned ways of knowing, being and becoming (Brown, 1997). The theory is constitutive of what Walker (1998: iv) characterises as scholarship grounded in the cultural image and historical experiences of African people, paying attention to their aesthetic and philosophical traditions.

An essential backdrop to decolonial epistemology is an understanding of the 500 years long history that entrenched the "Colonial Matrix of Power" as the operating systems for multiple relations of negation in global zones that experienced cultural contact (Mignolo, 2021). This explains the vogue of scholarship advancing the cause of epistemic reconstitution, with the view to demythologise Western cultural superiority which has been historically exported to many parts of the world, the African Global South included (Chetty, 2023). For this enquiry, the researcher focuses on the Shona community as the study population, against the background where Zimbabwe's colonial encounter did not spare the indigenes the asymmetry of Eurocentrism, the humiliation of racism and the unilateral subjugation of knowledge systems. Due to the conflictual nature of the colonial experience, decolonial epistemologies arguably assume a definitively polemic restorative tone, valorising indigenous values whilst also countering the demerits of historically superimposed foreign cultural operating systems.

Departing from an expressed objective to promote the recovering, valuing and internationalising of postcolonial indigenous epistemologies, methodologies and methods, Chilisa (2012) registers the increasing discomfort by non-Western researchers from the third world and from marginalised indigenous communities hitherto relegated to the fringes of global knowledge creation, who express criticism about what is viewed as colonizing epistemologies, establishing the need to bring indigenous methodologies into the research arena as a means of addressing upward social mobility, enhanced human rights and social justice. Scholarship's progress in the direction of diverse methodologies has witnessed the loud concerns expressed by indigenous communities in the sub-set of social equality groups that have for years been excluded from dominant epistemologies. Postcolonial Indigenous Theory (PIT) thus comes across as a forthright polemic against Euro-Western constructs of the global knowledge economy, seeking emancipation from generations of silence that have resulted in seeing the world in one colour (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This debate is more perceptively understandable within the broader contention among various research paradigms for legitimacy as well as

intellectual and paradigmatic hegemony, with substantial changes in the landscape of social science enquiry disrupting the conventions and certitudes of positivism as a frame of enquiry undergirding Euro-Western certitudes for years (Eaton, 2016).

Engaging with the Shona community to establish the indigenous community's approaches to psycho-social support in grief (albeit via the affordances of ethnic music) is an endeavour that resonates with the crusade to allow space for alternative epistemologies that involve culturally-anchored parameters like spirituality in research, as well as respecting communal forms of living that are not necessarily Western (Ross, 2010). This facilitates negotiation of space for enquiries based on relational realities and forms of knowing constructed by 'Other' communities. Research of this nature questions Euro-Western epistemologies that disconnect the researcher from the multiple relations at which they connect with one's community, the living and the non-living.

It is vital to appreciate the importance of connectedness and relationships in understanding the positionality of some indigenous scholars whose contributions to the knowledge economy cannot be extricated from the multiple connections they share with those around them (Wilson, 2008). As such, their social history partially informs how they see the world and how they relate with the researched. African scholarship theorising the psychology of indigenous healing contends that essential structures and practices characterising modern scientific, academic and professional forms of psycho-social interventions reveal an original psychological theme in Southern African indigenous healing involving recognition of 'spirit' as source of self that extends into 'transpersonal' realms (Edwards, 2011). This is the broader scope within which researchers need to appreciate the phenomenology of healing in African communities that have nuanced cultural practices and relational values encompassing ancestral consciousness, familial and communal spirituality, healers, illness prevention, health promotion and various forms of empathy.

It is essential to draw an example of the antithetical positions of the two theories (Postcolonial and Postcolonial Indigenous) in terms of their ontological locations. Postcolonial theory, for instance, comes across as an accessory of Critical Theory born of a Western tradition that emphasises individuality, secularisation and mind-body duality (Grande, 2000). Characteristically, the African worldview rejects the instrumentalism embedded in the separation between subject and object, seeking instead a harmonious balance between people and nature. The notion of individuality and dualism espoused by Western epistemologies stands in opposition to African cosmology and indigenous systems of thought whose philosophy

posits a complementary perspective of the universe as an interconnected whole of diverse entities (Agada, 2020). Studying the value-system of the African colonised 'other' and how it espouses concepts of family, spirituality, humility and sovereignty, Botha (2010: 34) observes fundamental contradictions between the local and spiritual nature of indigenous knowledge creation, on one hand, and the global and material tendencies of modern Western knowledge production, on the other. Indigenous knowledge, as such, dismantles long-held assumptions by presenting some substantive challenges to concepts of knowing and being, knowledge creation, knowledge work and the making of meaning. In approaching African communities, scholarship would do well to acknowledge that indigenous knowledge informs identities, ways of knowing and being.

In the context of the African Renaissance and the way it champions a change-driven paradigm emphasising complimentarity and interconnectedness rather than duality, Hoppers (2002) figuratively submits that a culture based on dualisms, on opposites and confrontation, breeds violence and confrontation, whereas one that generates respect will breed respect. Postcolonial indigenous theory, as a frame of reference, affords African scholarship the agency to detoxify their narratives in the wake of colonially and historically entrenched Eurocentric epistemologies.

Instead of reading Postcolonial Theory (PCT) and Postcolonial Indigenous Theory (PCI) as antithetical frames operating in contradistinction, this study considers the two as essential coordinates that assist in mapping the historiography of thought systems in a traceable continuum within which indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) can be understood and appreciated. As such, it is needful to read the two theories perceptively to understand the scope of alternative ways of knowing emerging under synthesis-driven scholarship that foregrounds the merits of epistemological co-determination (Odora Hoppers, 2009). An epistemic drive of this nature creates discursive spaces within which diversity, variety and richness of indigenous systems of knowledge can be phenomenologically appreciated, respected and acknowledged. The Postcolonial Indigenous discourse, therefore, does not emerge from a vacuum. It is an outgrowth of the politics of dominance and control and integrative attempts that, nonetheless, do not ignore salient divergences and incompatibilities between worldviews.

Pfukwa (2019) notes that Western scholarship has often seen the music of other cultures through a Western lens and in some cases relegated it as some lesser art. African music has been theorised, conceptualised, documented and taught using Western theoretical perspectives (Berliner, 1993; Paterson, 1996), a historical reality that exposes a gap where African

scholarship itself remains culpably guilty of not clearly defining the scope of the problem at hand. Consequently, this has created default contentment with the use of Western theory as a reference point for African work. Due to the colonial encounter, cultural contact has spawned global currents of thought shaping the theory of musical instruction internationally. Reflecting on how the colonial discourse framed and fixed the African as a *tabular rasa* (blank page) that needed to be filled, Ntuli (2009) celebrates how indigenous knowledge systems function as a counter-hegemonic discourse in the context of the African Renaissance, contesting sustained disdain for African indigenous knowledge. Some of the analytical tools dictated by Eurocentric templates of musical instruction do not fit into the cultural framework of the African communities. This has necessitated new movements that interrogate these Western-driven perspectives (Njoora2000; Cabral 2007; Matiure 2011, 2014; Maganga, Tembo & Dewah, 2015). These scholars champion Africa-centred approaches that have transformed the course of African discourses and scholarship in the twenty-first century.

African art is reflective of African experiences. Tirivangana (2011) observes the efforts on the part of Africa-centred scholarship to rethink and reshape African epistemology in every possible sphere of scholarly enquiry. African communities have, out of their own creative genius, spawned musical creations and performances that reflect their unique cultural experiences. Further to their bare vocals, Africans have manipulated nature and the environment to develop instruments that accompany their vocals, rhythms and kinetic movements of the human body (Akanesa & Jeannin, 2008). In the context of African culture and practice, there is need to perceptively situate art (in its variety of forms) within the framework of emotional, mental and psychic healing.

In the current study's focus on ethnic music in the healing domain of the Shona community, it is quite interesting to note scholarship's submissions on art's principal role of healing at societal, community and individual levels. This is the backdrop against which one could make ethnographic research into the significance of traditional music in rituals, spirit possession and initiation ceremonies. Arguing that, just as a priest or healer, an artist is called into 'being,' Ntuli (2009) paints a picture of the broad strokes of the healing practice across African communities, foregrounding the interconnectedness of the individual and community in the healing space as demonstrated in the harmonious combination of rational intelligence (IQ) as well as emotional and spiritual intelligence (EQ and SQ) within the broader healing paradigm. Notably, music is a vital expression in African people's lives, often characterising their specific

cultural background. In understanding indigenous approaches to psycho-social support, music avails a culturally-rich portal into the essence of a given group of people.

Locating Mtukudzi within the same generation of musicians as Simon Chimbetu, Thomas Mapfumo, John Chibadura and James Chimombe, Pfukwa (2019) celebrates this trend-setting generation of Zimbabwean artistes for successfully breaking away from colonial traditions of playing copycat music, but instead becoming innovative, adaptive, creative and drawing authentic rhythms from Zimbabwean *jiti*, *mbira* and other traditional rhythms. The study at hand thus seeks to explore music that fits into the cultural frames of its communities, focusing on how the music functions in either projecting indigenous healing concepts orin facilitating the healing itself. From all the culturally-situated aspects of any given community, the study settles specifically on health (mental health and support in the context of grief and bereavement), considering health's role as a signifier and key pillar of the human development index (Biggeri and Mauro, 2018). The cultural context of healing requires phenomenological respect for indigenous cultures and their peculiar set of social and historical circumstances. Sirridge and Martin (2006) argue that art, healing, society and spirituality are factors essential in understanding the cultural perspectives of sickness and health. In a study that explores the systems of classification in pre-modern medical cultures, Steinert (2020) puts historical disease concepts in cross-cultural perspective, investigating perceptions, constructions and experiences of health and illness since antiquity. Emerging from the ethnographic study is an understanding of how anthropologists, historians and classicists, among other researchers, have attempted a cultural conceptualization of illness, as shown in the multiplicity of disease concepts and medical traditions within specific societies.

In the process of mobilising the principles, submissions and key constructs of the Postcolonial Indigenous Theory with the view to explore African indigenous approaches to mental health as reflected by music in its cultural situatedness (ethnic music), the study remains alert to the fact that culture is dynamic, hence its expressed characterisation in the network of other global cultural formations (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2004). Power (and dynamics of its negotiation) is notably a cardinal 'concept' speaking to postcolonial indigenous theory as a key arm of the broader conceptual framework guiding this study. Pickett and Fatnowna (2002) postulate that the scholarly quest for the recognition, privileging, positioning, decolonising, protection and involvement of indigenous knowledge and practice in a bid to resist and reverse the pervasive determination of indigenous matters by 'others' should not only lead to the re-centering of restorative and creative determinations in indigenous hands, but instead should be done within

the broader context of the cultural dialectic where flux and dynamism drive the varied worldviews and ethics of humankind. As such, this study adopts the position that instead of being explored in contradistinction to each other, Postcolonial and Postcolonial Indigenous theories ought to be understood as facets within the trajectory of an evolving body of thought that is historically driven and sociologically negotiated.

3.2. African Cultural Studies

The research also draws its conceptual anchor from the purview of African Cultural Studies, a critical domain whose historiography and developmental trajectory finds perceptive conceptualisation in the ground-breaking work of Keyan Tomaselli, who debunks totalising constructs of the Global North and the tendency to superimpose Euro-Western epistemological templates that stifle Africa's phenomenological existence in the knowledge creation space (Tomaselli, 2019: 257; see also Tomaselli and Shepperson, 2020; Tomaselli, 2012; Tomaselli, 2016; Tomaselli, 2000). Much credit has to be accorded as well to Handel Kashope Wright (2001), who maps the conceptual coordinates of cultural studies as a potent domain in flux, one that has to be perceptively decrypted within context across the discursive sites in the United Kingdom, Australia, United States, South Africa, Taiwan, Morocco and other various regions of the globe to which it has migrated and mutated at various stages in the history of its scholarship (see also Wright and Xiao, 2020). Wright and Maton (2004) unpack interesting nuggets by exploring the historiography of cultural studies, especially in the context of education, tracing it from its Birmingham origins to a much more decidedly 'glocal' presence. This study taps into the works of these scholars in seeking to configure a utilitarian conceptual framework for the research at hand. Whilst not necessarily indulging discrete categorisations of the variegated and multi-layered nature of cultural studies – a discipline that has travelled from the Birmingham School (Hall, 1981) and found adaptive deployment globally via different strands and variants - the study at hand is primarily guided by the African Global South's variant that Tomaselli frames as the realm of "the immaterial, the scientifically unexplainable and unthinkable, the spiritual, the paranormal, the hidden transcripts of cosmologies" (Tomaselli, 2019: 261) which Western thought finds unintelligible and summarily dismisses as 'superstitions' of 'barbaric' and 'uncivilized' African communities.

In making reference to the Birmingham School, the researcher admits that the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Communication, Media and Society has customised an approach to media and cultural studies that enlists the participatory involvement of study populations in

the enquiry process, attesting to the telling construct of the "preferential option for the poor" as argued by the Liberation Theology godfather, Gustavo Gutierrez (1971). Having been mentored under CCMS, the researcher acknowledges the obvious intersecting influences of the Birmingham School, the liberation politics in South Africa, the influence of Freire and liberation theology as well as African indigenous knowledge. Dyll and Tomaselli (2024) reflect this approach to intellectual enquiry when they frame their exploration of South African communities within the participatory development communication model, valorising community concerns as they engage phenomena by heeding the sensibilities of the communities they study. Against this background, this research makes phenomenological forays into the space of Africa's ethnic music and its place in the existential matrix of African communities, where musical art is at the centre of cultural experiences, mediating key processes and evoking a spiritual framework (Matiure, 2013:10).

Notably, Mbaegbu (2015) explores ethnographic and phenomenological studies that foreground the role of music as an indispensable handmaid of Africa's soul and being. The variant of cultural studies under focus resonates with the submission by a growing body of scholarship that contemporary science's inability to account for certain phenomena beyond the material should not negate indigenous knowledge's framing of phenomenological dimensions such as the immaterial, the uncanny, the marvelous and the fantastic (Mbiti, 1969). Positing that cultural studies exhibits multiple derivations from different historical 'conjunctures' and places, Tomaselli (2019) examines the direction of cultural studies in Africa in relation to the field in the North Atlantic, submitting that what the 'Southern' lens offers to the North are different ways of making sense, yielding a 'transnational' framework that facilitates conversations across worldviews. In enlisting the tenets and conceptual nuggets by Tomaselli and Wright's scholarly exploits in the domain of African cultural studies, the current research acknowledges that the history of cultural studies is marked by continual shifts of method. This, arguably, is a normal and healthy part of any developing field of enquiry, particularly one which has exploded geographically and institutionally in the way that cultural studies has in the last few years.

As a discourse in transit, cultural studies can be traced to its roots in the seminal scholarship of the Jamaican-British sociologist, Stuart Hall, who championed the intellectual framework of the British cultural studies, particularly the works of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Grossberg, 1986: 61). In recounting the history of the Birmingham Centre, Stuart Hall himself stressed the pivotal importance of 'the break into a

complex marxism' as one of the decisive landmarks which defined the ever-dynamic and mutating enigma of cultural studies in Britain (Hall, 1980:25). Wright and Xiao (2020) characterise cultural studies as a potent domain in flux, to be decrypted within context across the discursive sites in the United Kingdom, Australia, United States, South Africa, Taiwan, Morocco and other various regions of the globe. It has migrated and mutated at various stages in the history of its scholarship, growing towards a more 'glocal' presence, hence this study's forthright decision to specify the variant whose tenets are mobilized in framing the research at hand. In its growth and development on the African continent against the backdrop of colonial history and its hegemonic ramifications, cultural studies has aided agency on the part of African scholarship and its endeavour to face head-on the Euro-Western distanced and subjective gaze towards indigenous communities. In the process, African Cultural Studies has sought legitimate space for indigenous communities to bring alternative ways of knowing to the ecosystem of global knowledge economies.

The variant of African Cultural Studies championed by Keyan Tomaselli, partially modelled after the conceptual template of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, gave birth to the Contemporary Cultural Studies Unit (CCSU) founded at the University of Natal in Durban, South Africa, in January 1985 (NeSmith, 1988). In its interventionist complexion, the discourse was oriented towards South African social movements and political dynamics. NeSmith notes that the unit, interdisciplinary in its approach to research, draws upon faculty resources across the university and its publications include *Critical Arts*, the *SAFITA* (South African Film and Television Technicians Association) *Journal*, as well as seminar papers and monographs. Recounting this history is quite interesting as the researcher is also studying under the same unit, which turns out to have grown into its current form as the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS). In his appraisal of African scholarship around the discourse of cultural studies, Tomaselli (1999: 43) explains "the African renaissance is an idea, an objective, a rallying point. It is a discursive strategy being used to confront the problems of Africa and to mobilise intellectual and material responses to its condition".

African cultural studies, arguably, cannot be read outside the context of the socio-historical odds that scholarship legitimately endeavours to remedy. The African intellectual, having negotiated space for indigenous knowledge system, exercises vigilance by maintaining a constant state of critical dialogue with all sections of society. There is a decidedly combative sense of revisionism in the crusade to bring indigenous communities to the ecology of global

knowledge systems, with African cultural studies fitting into the qualitative frame of the 1990s and the productively disruptive tone of this decade aptly captured as, "…the decade of the 'post': post-structuralism, post-modernism, post-Cold War, post-apartheid, post-nationalism, and post-colonialism (Murphy, 1998).

Ngugi waThiong'o's (1993a: 3) seminal contribution to African Cultural Studies considers subtle manifestations of Eurocentric hegemony over scholarship, culture and ways of life in Africa as a 'cultural bomb' set to annihilate indigenous people's belief in themselves. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) further elaborates on this idea:

> Decoloniality is not only a long-standing political and epistemological movement aimed at liberation of (ex-) colonized peoples from global coloniality but also a way of thinking, knowing, and doing. It is part of marginalized but persistent movements that merged from struggles against the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neo-colonialism, and underdevelopment as constitutive negative elements of Euro-North American-centric modernity. As an epistemological movement, it has always been overshadowed by hegemonic Euro-North American-centric intellectual thought and social theories. As a political movement, it has consistently been subjected to surveillance of global imperial designs and colonial matrices of power.

Zimbabwe has had multiple attempts at legislating and setting up a mixture of preservation and promotion strategies to counter the loss of indigenous musical and other cultural forms of performative production. Although the signing of the various conventions appears to be a positive step in the direction of cultural heritage management, Ndoro (2001) highlights that heritage management systems operational in Southern Africa still sadly assume that local authorities are irrelevant to a 'scientific' approach of managing their own heritage. In embarking on a study that foregrounds music and other performative productions in the context of culture and heritage, the researcher probes international guidelines and protocols framing culture and heritage management at the expense of local community interests as well as the voices, needs and sensibilities of the indigenous communities of Africa.

Driven by an aspirational forecast, this study considers a perceptive exploration of African indigenous art forms as ethnographic portals allowing access into a people's worldview and philosophy to be a feasible entry point to a cultural preservation crusade. Notably, praxis is a

major ‘concept’ speaking directly to African Cultural Studies as one of the key arms of the conceptual framework guiding the study at hand (Dyll and Tomaselli, 2024). It is essential to emphasise that in borrowing Tomaselli and Wright’s customisation of African Cultural Studies, this study acknowledges that there are many trajectories of cultural studies in Africa. Some of these are to be found in different disciplines including the grounded anthropological work of Karen Barber (2009) as well as the post-colonial/post-structural strand that seems to have lost touch with the empirical world. Admittedly, the latter cannot admit the ‘spiritual’ dimension encapsulated in the cultural studies variant deployed in this study.

3.3 Culture-Centred Approach (CCA)

The politics of erasure and exclusion problematised earlier as the backdrop against which communities of the African Global South are championing an epistemic drive towards indigenous knowledge generation finds perceptive articulation in Mohan Dutta’s conceptual configuration of the Culture-Centred Approach (Dutta, 2011). Tracing its location to the foundations of postcolonial and subaltern studies theories, the culture-centred approach is an enabling force for transformation that equips marginalised communities with a voice against global hegemonic structures, heralding resistance to the neo-liberal policies that perpetuate inequalities and the marginalization of the poor (Beverley, 1999). Interestingly, the approach developed by Dutta resonates with the discourses unpacking the subaltern’s quest for voicing (NgugiwaThiong’o, 1993b) as well as the agency on the part of the postcolonial communities pushing the transformative agenda to re-configure the epistemic space by foregrounding indigenous essence (Tomaselli, 2019).

In its configuration, the Culture-Centred Approach comes across as a characteristically counter-discursive frame that endeavours to foreground context-specific factors shaping people’s experiences. In the process of ‘revisiting communication infrastructure for subaltern communities,’ scholarship has championed this restorative framework by locating culture at the centre of the crusade to address health disparities, inverting hegemonic narratives to create space and discursive attention to knowledge systems rooted in the lived experiences of communities at the global margins (Dutta, 2008, 2011). The approach thus queries the communicative disequilibrium and inequalities that have pushed community voices to the periphery in matters to do with health policy formulation, optimisation and utilisation. Dutta’s conceptualisation of culture’s centrality to health matters finds scholarly echoes in the expressed endeavour to work with disempowered communities to help them gain greater

control over the resources and institutions that affect their lives (Levine & Perkins, 1997). From a paradigmatic perspective, a qualitative research design augurs well with the conceptual framework deployed herewith, considering how instruments such as case studies, focus groups, life histories, in-depth interviews, observations, and analysis of a variety of texts become knowledge-creation enablers consistent with, and reflective of, a social constructivist position in which reality is best understood by studying the ways by which people perceive, experience, and make sense of, the events in their lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Framing research within culture and traditions has opened ways for phenomenological studies to re-define the trajectory of scholarship by adaptively customising novel qualitative instrumentation. The deployment of qualitative methods such as focus groups, individual interviews, and ethnographic observation whilst conducting research in some indigenous communities has availed opportunities for researchers to identify contextually salient variables, factors, peculiarities and dynamics, thereby avoiding the imposition of inappropriate norms and constructs derived from different worldviews and cultural orientations. As Maton (1993) notes, the language of cultural anthropology has afforded qualitative methods the latitude to facilitate an emic (insider perspective) understanding of specific cultural settings, which in turn significantly enhances the development of culturally anchored knowledge, observations, measures and methods of appropriating the knowledge acquired. There is a great deal of cultural sensitivity essential in broaching interventions of a psycho-social nature. Reyes and Jacobs (2006) posit that whilst different sections of the globe are at different stages in terms of operationalising mental health frameworks in their respective economies, there is need for knowledge-sharing amongst mental health practitioners who ought to adopt culturally appropriate and sustainable forms of intervention that are not culturally deleterious. The current research forthrightly acknowledges the premise that for indigenous communities, any attempts to reduce mental and social suffering should not be done at the expense of the norms and values of the community that any interventions may purport to be assisting. Psychosocial support should not feed on cultural harm, but it should be culturally congruent and matrixed on sensitivity to the sensibilities of the people.

The Culture-Centred Approach shares curious conceptual cleavages with the domain of African Cultural Studies in the way it champions an epistemic direction that facilitates empowerment on the part of subaltern communities of the African Global South. In locating communication at the intersection of culture, structure and agency, Pal and Dutta (2012) assert that communities are sites of contestation and meaning making, hence the need for knowledge-

creation models that empower members of indigenous communities with the space and voices to tap into their shared values, practices and meanings as they negotiate knowledge best suited to address their health needs. Agency as applied in this study relates to the ability of people to locate their world and to construct, produce, and live according to one's meaning systems (Giddens 1984). It is the power to effectively define oneself as opposed to being defined by others (Voth 2001, p. 852). The exertion of agency requires engagement with determining structures, discourses, and prevailing conditions (Dutta 2011) in both symbolic and material terms. As already noted, agency does not only refer to exogenous but may include community gatekeepers, gender norms, and traditional practices that obfuscate inclusive society the agency to speak for themselves and identify solutions (see Gumede et al. 2023). These internal contexts deny the democratic culture that Carpentier et al. (2019: 23) argue is imperative for an 'inherently ethical' ways of participation. Similarly, Dyll and Tomaselli (2024: 5) discuss "how cultural studies, as rearticulated in the South African context, joined with Critical Indigenous Qualitative Methods, can inscribe the concerns and voices of community partners and address the complexity of the development encounter into both operationalizing development and writing/theorizing about it, where agency is afforded to and enacted by multiple stakeholders".

Emerging from this premise is a presupposition that culture is both static and dynamic because it passes on values within a community, and at the same time co-creates opportunities for transforming these values over time. In interfacing with the Korekore-speaking Shona community of Fumhe in Mahuhwe, this study acknowledges the centrality of the members of the community in any endeavour to come up with any culturally-anchored forms of intervention in the context of psycho-social support for the bereaved. As such, the study notes the culturally-sensitive nature of qualitative approaches to studies that are quasi-ethnographic. In conducting studies that bring research participants to the centre of knowledge-negotiation, optimization and validation, the Culture-Centred Approach transcends the reductionistic nature of traditional positivistic methodologies and their reification of quantifiable data (Trickett, 1984). Instead, creating room for the legitimate subjectivities obtaining from communities' daily refractions of life's experiences, the approach adopted in the current study debunk myths of the colonial baggage that the Shona community is saddled with in order to celebrate ethnography's merits as a form of empowerment and appropriation of the 'other' (Opie, 1992).

Seminal scholarship in the areas of healing and psychosocial support across classical civilisations underscores the use of tradition to assert cultural identity as the bedrock of wellness, wellbeing and connection to self, others and one's environment. Demystifying the superficial rift between traditional and contemporary approaches to mental health, Pearson and Yazdanmehr (2014) reinforce the understanding that despite coming across as contemporary, clinical disciplines of psychology, psychiatry, psycho-social practice and other mental health professions are only but recent traditions that consist of not only accumulated scientific knowledge or technical skills, but also systems of cultural values and practices. In his famous essay, 'The effectiveness of symbols,' Claude Lévi-Strauss (1967) used the example of the Kuna healers of Panama to outline a structural theory of healing. The sick person's condition configured symbolically as a narrative, mythic story or landscape. Movement along the symbolic landscape becomes a process of mapping the notable changes in the individual's condition, on the traceable trajectory from sickness to health. For Lévi-Strauss, it is the structural congruence between the mythical journey and the individual's illness that accounts for the effectiveness of the ritual. Although the myth leaves unclear the actual processes of transformation and its full import on material terms, Levi Strauss helps reinforce the primacy of belief, tradition and culture as essential and integral to the healing process. Levi Strauss' account resonates with James Dow's (1986) submission that personal experiences of suffering are attached to "affect-laden" cultural symbols. Implicitly, the transformation or change achieved through ritual or narrative is a process observable through modification in an individual's emotional state. From the perspective of psycho-social support, it is essential to note how emotional transformation in healing has got direct or covert connections to changes in the way the person thinks about and/or experiences body, self and others (Jackson, 2004). Figure 3.2 below is a diagrammatic representation of how culture and values pervasively intersect with the key parameters/domains in the ecology of healing:

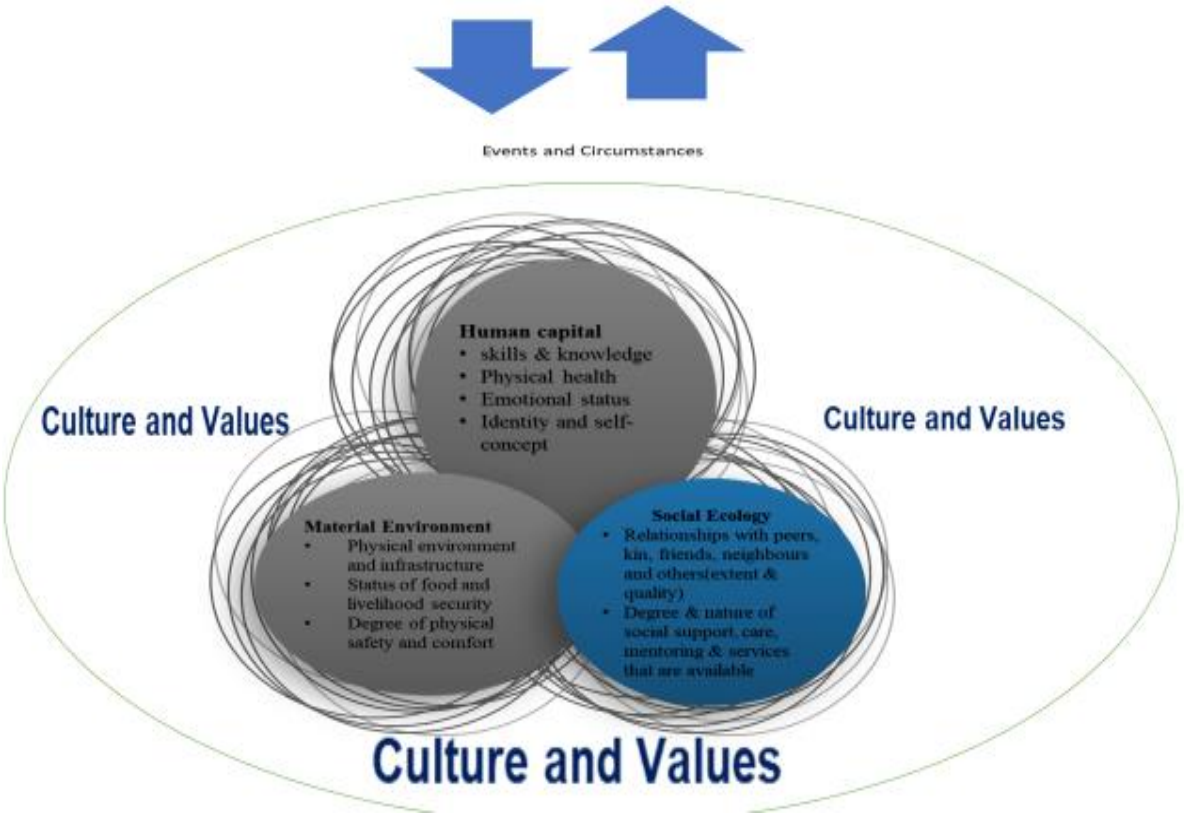


Figure 3.2 Adapted by the author from Galappatti's (2003) wellbeing conceptual framework

The cultural frame within which healing is conceptualised across various classical civilisations creates a vantage point from which to zero in on the culture-specific ramifications of healing in Africa generally, as well as healing dynamics in the Zimbabwean Shona community in particular. Scholarship in indigenous knowledge, defined as local people's knowledge that is applied for survival in local contexts (Gumbo, 2017), has broadened the debate on the competing tensions between the local and the global in the realm of interpretations of health meanings. In the context of this study, this debate links the intersecting concerns of the Postcolonial Indigenous Theory and the Culture-Centred Approach as a framework of enquiry. In an ethnographic study that explores the sociology of spirit mediums as mediators in the *Korekore* (Shona ethnic group under focus in this research) society, Garbett (1969) identifies the Korekore as a Shona ethnic community inhabiting the Zambezi valley amongst whom spirit possession and spirit mediumship is a common phenomenon. In this community, as Garbett further explains, the spirit mediums are organized along ethnic lineages into spirit provinces (*nyika yemhondoro*) which in turn are articulated into a single system (a spirit realm) responsible for mediating relations between the living and the dead, as well as for pronouncing curses, blessings or wellness upon the living depending on the context. A phenomenological

approach is essential in any attempts to study the indigenous approaches to psycho-social support in this community, considering that cultural constructions of health in religious and spiritual contexts broaden conceptualisations of wellness to make space for alternative cosmologies of health, illness, healing and curing (Yehya & Dutta, 2015).

Ngugi confesses his history-bequeathed crusade to "move the centre from its assumed location in the West to a multiplicity of spheres in all the cultures of the world. This will contribute to the freeing of world cultures from the restrictive walls" (NgugiwaThiong'o, 1993a). The concept of agency and innate transformative capacity generated in this discourse does not, however, negate the complexity, flux and dynamism of culture as determined by the ecosystem of engaged cultural participants in a given sphere. This accounts for the subjective phenomenological configuration of indigenous cultures as articulated in the context of the local, considering how the cultural members of the community construct meanings of their lives within the local context. This is the backdrop against which Arditi (1994) defines culture as the communicative process by which shared meanings, beliefs and practices get produced. This definition rests on the argument that 'culture' must be seen as "the webs of meaning" within which people live, meaning encoded in symbolic forms (language, etiquette, artifacts, rituals, calendars, and so on) that must be understood through acts of interpretation (Geertz, 1973). It is interesting to note that Clifford Geertz stands out as one of the foremost figures in the reconfiguration of the boundary between the social sciences and the humanities for the second half of the twentieth centuries. This set in motion a vogue of scholarly work that revived and transformed the anthropological concept of culture in such a way as to foreground its relevance to a broad range of humanistic disciplines.

Dutta (2011: 11) submits that culture is the strongest framework for providing the context of life that shapes knowledge creation, perceptions, sharing of meaning and behaviour changes. Forthright efforts are needed to understand and incorporate complexities of culture beyond surface level cultural codes such as race and ethnicity in designing, implementing, and evaluating health intervention strategies when dealing with indigenous communities. Bringing the culture-health relationship closer to the African context, it is quite remarkable that even though the change in Africa from traditional societies to modern ones is evident in many institutions throughout the continent, one institution that seems to have changed little over the years is the healing establishment. Vontress (1991) develops a broad argument centred on the role the family plays in health maintenance in African indigenous communities, the nature of the healing relationship, the variety of diagnostic techniques used, the specific

healing methods used, the agency of music as a therapeutic accompaniment, as well as the cultural protocol for the selection, mentorship and preparation of healers. This helps in understanding perceptively the implications of traditional healing especially in interventions of psycho-social support from a cultural perspective. Culture is a group's way of life. It is visible and invisible, cognitive and affective, conscious and unconscious, and much more. Exploring the dynamics of connecting with the community in indigenous research ethics, Abel, Metraux and Roll (1987) highlight that there are at least five sources shaping culture: the universal, ecological, national, regional, and racio-ethnic tributaries, with all these sources interactively shaping and influencing all human behaviour, including counselling and related forms of psycho-social support.

3.4 Conclusion

In exploring ethnic music to map out the indigenous dynamics surrounding psycho-social support in grief (with focus on the Shona community's indigenous healing practices), the study espouses an aspirational forecast that rides on the connectedness of the Postcolonial Indigenous Theory, the conceptual tenets of African Cultural Studies as well as the framework of the Culture-Centred Approach. The latter three make a rich conceptual framework that necessitates working from within as members of the Shona cultural group are accorded the space to actively participate in defining problems and developing solutions.

Dunbar and Scrimgeour (2006) posit that in qualitative research, it is paramount to involve members of indigenous communities in the whole value-chain of indigenous knowledge creation, validation, optimisation and deployment as communities are key stakeholders in the articulation of their own sensibilities. Notably, indigenous communities ought to harness their transformative potential to subvert ideologies of neoliberal hegemony (with its loaded epistemic baggage of knowledge creation systems) which disenfranchise local indigenes through the creation and reification of the margins (Dutta, 2008; Dutta and Pal, 2010). Agency on the part of indigenous communities is witnessed as culturally situated voices appropriate the space to atone for the years of exclusion and erasure, actualizing a stake in the knowledge economy whilst also making forays into the discursive spaces which for years have been the preserve of domineering Euro-Western players.

Postcolonial Indigenous Theory (PIT) is characteristically deconstructionist in nature due to the critical energies with which it reverses certitudes and fixities that for years have become the default defining instruments for global systems of knowing (Dunbar, 2008). Postcolonial

Indigenous theory revisits frames of knowing to the extent of questioning the myths around the 'dominant' group's knowledge, experience, culture and language ordinarily touted and superimposed on other global civilizations as being the universal norm (Battiste & Youngblood, 2000). This is the backdrop against which the Postcolonial Theory has capitulated to Euro-Western erasure of other indigenous systems of culture, knowledge and praxis, thereby necessitating the scholarly energies feeding into the Postcolonial Indigenous theory as an essential postulate to mitigate the deleterious effects of Western constructs unilaterally attempting to conceptualise systems of knowing in indigenous communities of the African Global South. Semali et al (2006) interrogate the *tabula rasa* assumptions that for years fuelled Western domination over academia, registering discomfort with the insinuation that Africans possess inferior techniques in terms of initiation of serious research. Arguably, the context and future of the African Renaissance in academia expands the space for alternative knowledge systems that find anchor in indigenous people's unique cultural ramifications.

In their contribution to the seminal discourses shaping African Cultural Studies, Keyan Tomaselli and Handel Kashope Wright adaptively foreground a theoretical middle point between 'nativisation' (as one amongst several strands of African cultural studies) and 'British cultural studies' (Masitela, 1998). Resultantly, the derivations yielded configure African Cultural Studies as a potent theoretical force in dynamic conversation with international cultural studies (Kanneh, 1998). Scholarship in this area is significantly characterised by a re-orientation of intellectual and historical perspectives on cultural studies in accordance with African cultural trajectories and history (Kerr, 1989). There has been a significant vogue of scholarly research drawing on African philosophies and indigenous frames of reference. To understand the applicability of the tenets of African Cultural Studies to the study at hand, it is essential to place them within the broader paradigm where cultural studies in the main have emerged in many different forms on different continents and conditions, each developing unique characteristics, in answering a variety of historical and cultural questions (Wright, 1998).

Within the broader scheme of the conceptual framework developed for this study, it is notable that culture, agency and structure are critical tenets emerging from the Postcolonial Indigenous Theory, African Cultural Studies as well as the Culture-Centred Approach, these three being complementary arms of the framework shaping the study. This trilogy of key conceptual parameters constitutes the critical toolkit of perceptive instruments providing counter-discursive interrogation of the politics of marginality playing out in communities of the African

Global South. Scholarship espouses the task to face head-on the residual hegemonic neo-colonial systems in subaltern communities, especially as revealed in the health sector and other key institutional structures governing indigenous communities. Situating psycho-social support within cultural margins equips indigenous communities with the agency to broach home-grown interventions that are culturally compliant, historically anchored and sociologically congruent.

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

4.0 Introduction

A study's research methodology is a framework that spells out the manner, approaches and style constituting a researcher's techniques of enquiry and data gathering in light of a study's expressed aims, objectives and guiding research questions. Jayne Pitard (2017) argues for the correlation between the questions that a study seeks to answer and suitable methods and tools selected by a researcher, foregrounding the critical role of sensitivity to the context and sociology within which the study obtains. As such, a suitable and appropriate methodological approach is the critical determinant and success driver of a research endeavour. This study deploys a qualitative research approach because of its suitability to the process of examining the social and cultural experiences of a group of people within their natural environment, the Shona (Korekore dialect) community of the Fumhe village located in the Northern Zimbabwean district of Mbire.

Located within the Critical Indigenous Qualitative Research (CIQR), the study uses a Case Study research design, with research data collected via three main methods:

1) Semi structured in depth interviews

2) *Lekgotla* (indigenous African colloquium) with a mixed group of males and females from Fumhe Village (Oliver Mtukudzi's village of origin)

3) A woman-only focus group discussion (as a follow-up to the *lekgotla*) with selected women participants from Fumhe Village.

For the two focus groups mentioned above, the researcher benefits from the Fumhe Village Headman, Mr. Norman Mtukudzi, who assists in the purposive sampling of participants by selecting healers, old retainers, elders, midwives, and middle-aged participants from his jurisdiction who are all part of the indigenous healthcare value chain within the context of the Fumhe village local governance structures.

Being part of the first data set's seven key informant interviewees, Norman Mtukudzi is elder brother to Oliver Mtukudzi, hence he comes into the study by contributing data from the vantage positions of the Mtukudzi family, the Fumhe community's traditional local governance

structures and also being a member of the study's location (community under study). The data sets for this study facilitate scope for data triangulation and corroboration for purposes of reliability, dependability, validity and rigour (Coleman, 2022).

Embedded in the process of dialoguing with data from the outlined three data sets is a discursive navigation through thematic analysis, where the researcher engages with the themes, patterns, phenomena and concepts generated by the data. The study's research questions (albeit in their congruence to the set objectives) aided the development of the focus group discussion guides which produced responses that were subjected to thematic analysis (TA) guided by the Braun and Clarke (2006) six-stage process, to generate patterns and/or themes from the qualitative data. The process was intentionally guided by a comprehensive approach to TA, connecting the research's key objectives to the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm (Braun and Clarke 2019). Through thematic analysis, the study attempts to unpack a people's philosophy, ontology, epistemology and knowledge generation by exploring the historically situated communication patterns whose culturally-situated praxis yields meaning-making paradigms. It is against this backdrop that this study appropriates the lenses of ethnography, folklore and cultural anthropology to explore indigenous knowledge systems as encapsulated in the corpus of African music and its discourse.

The methodological stance adopted in this research obtains from the ethnography of exploring a community's ways of knowing and how these are shaped by their own history, heritage and sociology (Madden, 2022). This study's reflexive mode immerses the researcher within the community's knowledge body and how it fits into the broader global frame of ever-evolving phenomena (Marcus, 1995).

4.1 Research Paradigm: Critical Indigenous Qualitative Research (CIQR)

By definition, a paradigm is a set of assumptions and perceptual orientations shared by members of a research community (Given, 2008). Paradigms ordinarily function in describing powerful experiences and those experiences can be used to inform future practice (Freshwater and Maslin-Prothero, 2005:433). In terms of its paradigmatic perspective, the study at hand is situated within Critical Indigenous Qualitative Research (CIQR) (Denzin *et al*. 2008). Notably, the theories and practices of Critical Indigenous Qualitative Research are ethnographic in nature and, therefore, require researchers to interact with local research participants within the

field, either by working closely together in workshops or via the "methodology of hanging out" (Tomaselli, 2003).

Entering the self-contained cultural universe of the Fumhe village in Mahuwe, the researcher reflects on the tenets of indigenous epistemology (beliefs about the scope and nature of knowledge) – the principles of holism, interconnectivity, interdependency, animism, fluidity, as well as the multiplicity of knowledge sources that include non-human entities (Kovach, 2017). This submission is interesting, particularly as one considers the richness of the broad and diglossic nature of the Shona culture and community, with Shona itself being a composite indigenous language that has got various sub-dialects (Karanga, Ndau, Manyika, Zezuru, Korekore). The Fumhe village is a Korekore-speaking Shona community, and in the community-engagement initiatives that collect data for this study, the researcher is brought alive to the nuances and intricacies of a people whose unique practices reflect the cosmology, cosmogony, mythology and sociology that shape their system of knowledge and practices. Such an ethnographic frame guiding research in an indigenous community resonates with the imperatives of indigenous epistemology:

> In considering tribal knowledges, it is necessary to recognize the specific tribal group from which you are following direction. Many tribal groups share a similar belief system, but it matters to be cognizant of the specific tribal group you are conducting research with. As with any philosophy, indigenous philosophy involves tangling with the abstract (Kovach, 2017: 392).

As such, locating the study within Critical Indigenous Qualitative Research (albeit in its interpretive and phenomenological configuration) guides the research in its goal to understand the subjective world of humanity, deriving meaning to data from the positioning of people under study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013).

According to Dyll (2019), researchers can become literate in local, cultural and spiritual expressions or communication practices by adopting appropriate research methods to collectively work with communities in the co-production of knowledge. Dyll's submission is instructing when one considers the symbiotic relationship between the 'living' and the 'dead' in Shona cosmology, with participants in this study foregrounding a relational dynamic guiding the existence of self within the context of others, environment and nature, resonating with the

community's belief in the nondifferentiation of spiritual and physical energies (Atleo, 2007). Such a research approach is expediently positioned for this study due to its applicability in examining the historical and cultural situatedness of the Shona community, particularly the Korekore dialect of Shona as spoken and lived by the Fumhe village in Mbire.

Notably, there is a sense in which decolonial studies reflect a combative nature in the way they counter the disenchanting certitudes of Western epistemologies and their failure to account for alternative ways of knowing as reflected by indigenous epistemologies. Vine Deloria Jnr. (2002) views the Cartesian dualism of Western scholarship in contradistinction to the indigenous ethic of interconnectivity, noting that when it encountered information from other traditions, Western empiricism had a tendency of suppressing and rejecting such information because it did not fit into its linear cause-and-effect analysis of the world. In claiming its discursive space through self-definition, indigenous epistemology, for instance in the African Global South, has configured a paradigm consisting of flux, wholeness and interconnectivity, with the spirit (human) and space (land) reciprocally determining the cycles, phases and patterns that shape existence animistically (Bear, 2004). This study acknowledges the affordances of the indigenous/decolonial paradigm in creating scope for a phenomenological exploration of reality within the context of its social constructedness (Willis, 2007). This then is the backdrop against which the study explores indigenous approaches to psycho-social support from the perspective of the Shona community in Zimbabwe, acknowledging the merits of community dialogues and conversations where the researcher phenomenologically immerses himself in the community's way of existence to gain a deeper understanding of the research participants' lives and experiences.

The theoretical constructs and methodological tenets of the Critical Indigenous Qualitative Research are mobilised for this research, riding on a qualitative epistemological enquiry into the constructedness and contextual situatedness of multiple realities (Smith, 2012: 130). In this regard, the supremacy of the 'collective' over the 'individual' denotes ontological bearings that privilege 'indigenous values like respect, reciprocity, inclusivity, common good and collective accountability' (Kovach, 2009: 48). As such, deploying *lekgotla* (African indigenous colloquium) as a data collection method in this study augurs well with decolonising methodologies that seek to foreground indigenous communities' pursuit of egalitarianism and relational dynamics (interpersonal, intrapersonal, environmental and spiritual) whilst situating culture, worldview, language, history and spirituality within the broader existential margins of

the cosmos (Wilson, 2008: 73). It is in this context that healing and wellness, as conceptualised and lived by a specific indigenous community (the Fumhe village located in the North Zimbabwean district of Mbire) is explored.

4.2 Research Approach: Qualitative

This study adopts a qualitative research approach as it explores, describes and promotes an in-depth understanding of a particular human experience (Brink, 2008:113). In this study, the researcher uses ethnic music as the lens for exploring African indigenous healing practices in the context of psycho-social support. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:135) add that qualitative research aims at studying the phenomena occurring in a natural setting and study them in their complexity. Notably, data collection and data analysis are not seen as two separate processes in most qualitative studies, but they are rather considered to be intertwined and ongoing (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:81). A practical example of this within the course of this study is how data contributed by participants provides extra-textual material for analysing Mtukudzi's songs that relate to healing, whilst the textual, musical and performative elements of the songs themselves shape the discourse of the study, hence the mutually deterministic and iterative relationship between the data and its concurrent analysis. This qualitative characteristic is explained in further detail in the data presentation and analysis section of this study (chapter 5 and chapter 6).

The understanding guiding the qualitative approach is that data and meaning emerge "organically" from the research context. Scholarship converges on an understanding of qualitative research as an approach to human science research that studies people, cultural practices or beliefs, institutions or communities in their natural settings (Bryman 2012; Yin 2014). In the context of this study, a qualitative approach will enable the researcher to understand the cultural values, philosophies and practices of the Shona community in Zimbabwe (albeit in the context of indigenous approaches to mental health) as projected via the prism of ethnic music (with Oliver Mtukudzi's music as a single case study). The guiding thought is that as a constitutive element of culture and a cogent ingredient of identity formation, music is a social practice that binds members of a group together to create an atmosphere of understanding and belonging (Lidskog, 2017: 3).

4.3 Field work experiences

The researcher conducted focus group discussions (in the form of a dare/inkundla/lekgotla) with purposively selected members of the Fumhe village in Mahuwe, Mt Darwin. It is the same manner in which the semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with seven interviewees: Mrs Daisy Mtukudzi (Oliver Mtukudzi's widow); Samantha Mtukudzi; Albert Nyathi, Mono Mukundu; Walter Wanyanya; Norman Mtukudzi and Pathisa Nyathi. The rationale behind participant inclusivity and exclusion is previously stated in Chapter Four (4). Participants were asked questions about their understanding and interpretation of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in relation to cultural practices of the Shona community with regards to death, bereavement, grief, support for the bereaved and culturally-informed approaches to providing mental health support for the grieving. The researcher observed that focus group discussions (in the form of a dare/inkundla/lekgotla) are restrictive platforms due to local governance protocols that systematically suppress free participation by women. There were instances where women could be observed to be self-censoring and noticeably making effort to be careful in answering particular questions. During that time, participating men would randomly interject and respond, 'on behalf of women'.

To encourage women participation, I would occasionally and diplomatically pose some questions to women whom he identified as itching to express their minds. Much of this evidence is presented and demonstrated in the sections ahead in this chapter. A notable aspect of this experience is that it was self-evident that qualitative research is concerned with meaning and meaning-construction, and interpreting these is always context-bound, positioned and situated (Braun and Clarke 2019). Also, the researcher further observed that qualitative data analysis is influenced by 'telling stories', interpreting, and creating, not discovering and finding the 'truth' that is either 'out there' and findable from, or buried deep within, the data (Braun and Clarke 2019:592).

The interviews were recorded on a tape recorder for the purpose of analysis and safe keeping. The duration of the interviews was kept at between 40-60 minutes. Emerging from the interviews was a pattern of ideas spawned by experience, history, society and exposure, denying monolithic, superficial and narrow conclusions about Shona culture and its constructed systems of knowledge. The interview process was guided by a semi structured interview guide (See Appendices 10 to 17 - interview schedules). Each participant was provided with an informed consent form (ICF) (all forms are in the Appendices 1 and 2). Both English and Shona

(as Appendixed) versions were available as options to cater for participants' preferred language.

4.4 Research Design: Case study

A research design is defined as the basic structure of a research project, the plan for carrying out an investigation focused on a research question that is central to the concerns of a particular epistemic community (Schwartz-Shea &Yanow, 2012:18). A case study research design is adopted for this study. A case study is defined as an object or unit of analysis about which researchers collect information or seek to understand ideographic as well as nomothetic explanations of phenomena (Patton, 2002). Interestingly, this definition foregrounds the definitively phenomenological nature of a case study as an approach to enquiry that necessitates perceptive engagement with thick descriptive phenomena, hence allowing scope for zooming the analytical lens on a people's lived experiences with the endeavour to understand their creation and deployment of meaning in their contained socio-cultural milieu (Sokolowski, 2000).

For this study, such a design creates room to meet the study objectives whilst making for deep analysis of the artiste's music as well as making space for the nuanced 'first-person' voice in the community under enquiry. The research thus deploys methods that "reveal cultural and social patterns through the lens of individual experiences" (Patton, 2002: 478). Adding to the existing body of knowledge, the study privileges indigenous values, basing on collective accountability through stories, narratives and the local governance structures and protocols of the community under study. As such, the study does not approach the community with an extractive mindset, but rather it acknowledges the community's pivotal role in the creation, verification and validation of the research data for the same community's epistemological benefit. Because of the decolonizing backdrop of indigenous methodologies, they constitute a culturally conscious, historically aligned and environmentally determined form of situated response (Hermes, 1998).

Dyll-Myklebust (2012: 63) unpacks the characterisation of a case study design, where 'perspective' is brought to bear on 'evidence' from data collection in an exploratory process of meaning-making. Notably, the constructedness of knowledge is foregrounded in the process, denoting a praxis that engages the unit of study and the positionality of the researcher within the dialectic of meaning-making. Bochner (2001) posits that qualitative enquiry honours

people's voices /stories as data that can stand on its own as pure description of lived experience, or alternatively analysed for connections between various existential domains. This is the backdrop against which a case study design rides on the utility value of phenomenology, which is valuable for this study as it facilitates an exploratory entry into the lived experiences of the Shona indigenous community under focus, revealing long-held assumptions, ontological positioning and the collective ethos of a culturally and historically situated group of people.

In a case study, the unit of study might be an individual, organization, place, decision, event or even time period (de Vaus, 2001: 220). In the context of the current study, the unit of study is constituted by the Shona community's indigenous concepts, practices and approaches to psycho-social support in bereavement as portrayed and facilitated by the music of Oliver Mtukudzi. The underlying argument is that culture is the bedrock for praxis in indigenous communities (Tirivangana 2011; Onyeji 2004, Pfukwa 2019), and this is worth exploring in the wake of cultural contact, demographic mobilities and multicultural co-presences. Music is thus an essential signifier of culturally-codified practices that play out in cultural theorisation and praxis.

4.5 Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to the ability to locate oneself in the picture to understand and factor in how what one sees is influenced by one's way of seeing (Fook, 1999). This denotes a sense of immediate, continuing, dynamic and subjective self-awareness where the researcher, the world and the researcher's experience of the world are intertwined. Hertz (1997) notes that to be reflexive is to have an ongoing conversation about an experience while simultaneously living in the moment.

I am a native Shona speaker who identifies himself with the Shona community's cultural sensibilities from an 'insider' perspective. However, the researcher comes from a 'Manyika' dialect of the diglossic (broad and significantly varied in its multiple dialects) Shona language, whereas the Fumhe village (being the key research site for community engagement and data collection for this research) is a community that speaks the 'Korekore' dialect of the Shona language. The Korekore dialect is a very deep Shona language variety (Doke, 2005) with striking divergencies from the Manyika dialect, hence the researcher anticipates engagement with fascinating alliteration, assonance and exciting linguistic inflections. Additionally, the Korekore community has its own sub-cultural orientation which the researcher sought to

explore and understand, hence the researcher remained constantly aware of his entry into this research space from an 'outsider' perspective. This is the backdrop against which the dynamics playing out in the researcher's 'insider-outsider' positionality are aptly summarised as "evaluating my behaviour whilst also evaluating the behaviours of cultural bearers, as we assume the act of performing ourselves in our cultural space" (Kaghondiwamwa Mwanga, 2021).

Researcher reflexivity is an important step in qualitative research because it provides an opportunity for researchers to acknowledge and grapple with how their personal experiences, characteristics and beliefs have impacted on the research process (Berger, 2015). In terms of background and upbringing, the researcher was born and bred under the influence of a Christian tradition that fostered an implicit sense of moral judgement against African indigenous traditional practices which have for years been stigmatised as 'ungodly,' 'unChristian,' and 'evil.' The metaphysical nuances of indigenous Shona cultural approaches to the pseudo-spiritual domain of psycho-social support, especially within the indigenous conceptualisation of death, life and after-life, potentially stand in opposition to the doctrinal injunctions of Seventh-Day Adventist Christian beliefs, the latter being the religious background of the researcher's upbringing. As such, the researcher wishes to confess that embarking on a study that explores the merits of indigenous health practices felt like a mixed experience of trepidation, fascination, adventure and implicit 'mischief,' especially considering the Christian orientation that was inculcated in my person from a tender age.

Ordinarily, a qualitative approach to enquiry requires that the researcher examines how their relationship with the research field might play a role in the study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). As such, in this study the concept of 'phenomenology' is etymologically understood as a derivative from the Greek word *epoche*, or 'bracketing,' used for the process of exploring the ways through which the researcher develops a level of detachment from his or her pre-conceived knowledge of the field in order to minimise biases (Mwanga, 2021).This study borrowed from ethnography principles to seek entry into a self-contained community, with the researcher aware of the need to dismount the dais of Christian 'righteousness' in order to avoid biases of my religious orientation playing into my framing of indigenous cultural narratives. In her article, 'Criteria for excellent qualitative research,' Tracy (2010) refers to reflexivity as sincerity, which is considered as part of the criteria for quality. Sincerely embracing my personal biases was thus an essential quality tick-box for my study, especially considering

scholarship's submission that the researcher's personal experience cannot be detached from the research context (Ellis and Berger, 2001).

In terms of positionality, it is worth noting that the researcher also belongs to Seboka, a multi-country research team whose work over the years has been driven by the mandate to negotiate space, scope and traction for Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), riding on an Africa-centred consciousness and its affordances as the enabling agency for promoting holism, inclusivity and co-existence between Western science and health practice and African indigenous science and practice in the healthcare domain. This is the background against which the researcher came to appreciate the *lekgotla* as an indigenous method of data collection. Past experiences of field trips and teamwork amongst indigenous Khoisan community members in South Africa form the basis upon which the researcher chose to adaptively deploy *lekgotla* as a method with which to engage the Shona community in Zimbabwe, paying due cognisance to community local governance dynamics, cultural value systems, ethical considerations, norms and taboos, as well as observing standard protocols when interfacing with members of the community.

4.6 Methods of Data collection

The data for this study was collected from semi-structured in-depth key informant interviews conducted with a total 7 interviewees (1st data set), community focus group discussion (whose purposive sampling is explained below) with members of the Fumhe village (2nd data set) and a women-only focus group discussion (3rd data set) that comes as a follow-up to the community focus group discussion. Patterns, themes, concepts and ideas that this study generates result from a triangulation of data obtained from these 3 data sets.

4.6.1 Semi-structured in-depth interview (1st Data Set)

In-depth interviews were conducted with the view to understanding the Shona community's indigenous approaches to psycho-social health in the context of death, bereavement, grief and loss. The interviews are conducted with specific focus on Oliver Mtukudzi's music. The seven interviewees identified for this study are: Daisy Mtukudzi; Samantha Mtukudzi; Albert Nyathi, Mono Mukundu; Nyamasvisva; Pathisa Nyathi and Norman Mtukudzi. The sampling and rationale for the selection of the stated participants are all explained in the table and sub-sections below.

4.7 Sampling method

A purposive sampling strategy is employed to select appropriate participants (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Informant selection is crucial in ethnographic studies as they are conducted against the backdrop of indigenous communities where people are constantly consulted and looked upon as sources of knowledge, ideas and information. Tongco (2007) defines purposive sampling technique as a type of non-probability sampling that is most effective when one needs to study a certain cultural domain that has knowledgeable experts within it.

The participants, profiled in the table below, were selected considering Mtukudzi's family, music career, collaborates, community of origin and the value-chain of the artist's music composition, production and consumption. Because the selected participants represent a spectrum of factors that fed into Mtukudzi's music career at multiple relational touch-points, exploring Mtukudzi's music through African healing lenses entails studying the pattern of relationships shaping the musician's sensibilities at various levels, especially given the understanding that performative healing practices (music included) are viewed as a form of guided journey/tour for the body, mind and spirit, whether individually or in relationships (Sandlana, 2014).

Table 4.1 below profiles the research participants for the first data set and the rationale for their inclusion in the research. The participants were selected on the basis of their suitability to answer key questions of the study. They were also selected not only on the basis of their availability, but on the set of considered reasons stated in the below table.

4.7.1 Profile of research participants for Data Set 1

Table 4.1. Interview participants and rationale for inclusion

Research participants	**Inclusion Rationale**
Mrs. Daisy Mtukudzi (based in Norton, where Mtukudzi's Pakare Paye Cultural Arts Village is located, 40km outside Harare)	Widow of the late artist, Oliver Mtukudzi. Speaking with her assists in collecting data that attempts to address Research Questions [1 and 2]. Interview questions are posed to explore the

	musician's life, cultural inclination and the artist's musical career, insights and testimonials regarding if/how the musician had intentional goals of healing in his music.
Samantha Mtukudzi (based in Harare)	Samantha is daughter to the late musician, Oliver Mtukudzi. She used to be one of the backing vocalists for Mtukudzi's band so apart from being family, she also has hands-on connection with her father's music career. Speaking with her helps in collecting data that attempts to address Research Question [2]. She is currently the Operations Manager of the family enterprise, Tuku Music (Pvt) Ltd. Interview questions are posed to explore insights and ideas from the point of view of family, as well as from the perspective of a performing artist.
Albert Nyathi (based in Harare)	Albert Nyathi, currently the board chairperson of the Zimbabwe Music Rights Association (ZIMURA), is a renowned Zimbabwean poet who had several collaborative projects with Oliver Mtukudzi. Among their collaborations was a series of global tours under the World Health Organization, promoting health communication via performing arts. Albert Nyathi was also present when Oliver Mtukudzi received his accolade of ZimHealth brand ambassador in Geneva, Switzerland. Albert Nyathi shared the stage on many live performances with Oliver Mtukudzi, and he also did a live performance during the artist's funeral. Speaking with Albert Nyathi collects

	data that will attempts to address Research Questions [1 and 3]. Interview questions are posed to explore insights and ideas from the point of view of a collaborating fellow artist and performing arts practitioner.
Mono Mukundu (based in Harare)	Clive Mono Mukundu is a Zimbabwean music producer, composer and multi-instrumentalist largely known as a guitarist. At his Monolio Studios in Harare, he was Oliver Mtukudzi's producer. He is also an adjunct lecturer for music under the department of Ethnomusicology at Midlands State University in Zimbabwe. He brings insights to the research as someone who worked closely with Oliver Mtukudzi, as well as from his perspective as a musician and music instructor. Speaking with him helps in collecting data that attempts to address Research Question [1]. Interview questions are posed to explore insights and ideas from the point of view of a music producer.

Pathisa Nyathi (based in Matopos – Matebeleland South province)	The founder of Amagugu International Heritage Centre in Bulawayo, Pathisa Nyathi is a historian, biographer, writer and cultural expert of repute. He has worked very closely as an advisor to and consultant for the Zimbabwe National Arts Council. He is also a regular columnist exploring culture and heritage subjects for several newspapers in Zimbabwe including the Sunday News, Umthunywa, The Sunday Mirror and Sky Host. He brings to the research immense experience and instructional information on indigenous culture, heritage and history. Speaking with him assists in collecting data that addresses Research Questions [1 and 3]. Interview questions are posed to explore insights and ideas from the point of view of a scholar and researcher in the area of African spirituality.
Nyamasvisva (based in Harare)	Nyamasvisva is the band leader of Mbira dzeNharira, a traditional music group that took its name from the ancient 22-key *mbira dzavadzimu* (the ancestors' three octave thumb piano). The group has presided over cultural rituals and events like the traditional rainmaking ceremonies, with healers, diviners and sorcerers who are part of the culturally-sanctioned healing value-chain of the Shona society. Nyamasvisva brings to the study some insights that inform the research from the perspective of a cultural practitioner who facilitates traditional music-based

	interventions that leverage indigenous knowledge systems and practices. Speaking with him helps collect data that addresses Research Questions [1 and 2].
Norman Mtukudzi (based in Fumhe village, Mahuwe – a village in the Dande district, outside the Northern Zimbabwean town of Mount Darwin – Mashonaland Central province)	Norman Mtukudzi is Oliver Mtukudzi's surviving brother. He is a village headman for Fumhe village at Mahuwe in the Northern Zimbabwean district of Dande, where the Mtukudzi family comes from. Speaking with him collects data that addresses Research Questions [1 and 3]. Interview questions are posed to explore insights and ideas from the point of view of family, community old retainer and cultural expert, as well as part of the traditional local governance structures of the Fumhe village

4.8 Sample recruitment

Guided by Dworkin's (2012) submission that a reasonable sample size for qualitative studies (with due regard to the aims and objectives of the study) ranges from five and fifty, the population of this study's first data set comprises the seven interviewees listed in the table above. The researcher sought signed letters of consent by the key informant interviewees, subsequently visiting them for scheduled interviews upon obtaining ethical clearance from the ethics committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's School of Applied Human Sciences. When I visited Mono Mukundu at his Monolio Studio in Hatfield, I stumbled upon Melody Zambuko who works for Music Crossroads, and she is the one who then gave me contacts for Nyamasvisva of Mbira dzeNharira, a music group that presides over traditional rituals in theatrical and culturally-potent performances.

The researcher also visited Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city, for an interview with Pathisa Nyathi, the founder of Amagugu International Heritage Centre. Considering his regular

newspaper column on indigenous knowledge, culture and spirituality, the researcher selected him with the hope that he would contribute data relevant to the discourse of the study. Daisy Mtukudzi and Samantha Mtukudzi are the key operational cogs of 'Tuku Music' Pvt (Ltd) and all the subsidiaries of the Mtukudzi family enterprise. Samantha is also a musician who sings and performs with The Black Spirits, the music band that Mtukudzi left and which has since grown into a formidable outfit within the arts industry in Zimbabwe. The researcher selected the musician's widow and daughter as a way of getting a close-shave encounter with the family of the musician under study, considering the hands-on music practice experience they partly bring in their contribution to data.

Being a musician, poet and theatrical performer who collaborated with Mtukudzi on many local and international assignments, Albert Nyathi was selected to contribute to the research data for this study. The researcher deliberately selected Pathisa Nyathi and Albert Nyathi also because of their Ndebele background, hence the scope to understand Shona practices from the lenses of other sub-cultures within Zimbabwe. Part of the richness of the discourses generated by this research obtains from its interplay of Shona and non-Shona cultural nuances, creating the broader African context that sets the tone for a more specific exploration of the Korekore sub-dialect of the Shona community in Zimbabwe.

The sample recruitment for this study's first data set was through the researcher's purposive sampling as guided by the already-outlined parameters, and also partly through snowballing, particularly respondent-driven sampling. Purposive sampling makes use of an individual/focal person(s) believed to be highly knowledgeable about the phenomena studied (Burns & Grove, 2009:355; Brink, 2008:133). The interviews address questions related to indigenous African healing practices, focusing on providing psycho-social support in instances of bereavement and grief in accordance with African cultural practices. There is a belief that the larger the sample size, the better the results (Andrade, 2020). Whilst this view may arguably be sustainable in quantitative study, it invariably turns out to be a fallacy in qualitative studies because with qualitative designs, once a specific size is reached, the researcher will not improve the matter significantly by increasing the sample size (Brink, 2008:135). For this study, the researcher relied on purposive sampling as the most appropriate approach as it answers the research questions and meets the objectives of the research.

4.8.1 Fieldwork for interviews

The study enrolled 7 participants for in-depth interviews from 3 provinces in Zimbabwe (Harare, Bulawayo and Mashonaland Central). The researcher anticipated success in obtaining the consent of all the seven initially targeted participants. However, Selmor Mtukudzi (Oliver Mtukudzi's daughter) and Walter Wanyanya refused to participate, resulting in the two being replaced by Samantha Mtukudzi and Nyamasvisva respectively. As it turned out, the latter two were such rich sources of information and they contributed nuanced and unique dimensions that were revealing and informative to the researcher. Mono Mukundu and Albert Nyathi are both based in Harare, 120km away from the researcher's residence in the town of Chinhoyi. Despite their busy schedule, they were both switched-on in terms of immersing themselves in the discourse, generating keen interest from their perspectives as performing artists.

Daisy and Samantha Mtukudzi (mother and daughter) were interviewed on the same day at Pakare Paye Cultural Arts Centre, the Mtukudzi family entrepreneurial base located 40km outside Harare. Daisy was in first, and the researcher had an uninterrupted early morning conversation with her. By the time Samantha came in, there was a reasonably refreshing break in-between the two interviews. The researcher got a thorough sense of engagement with the two interviewees, from the perspective of the family's value-systems culturally as well as from the dimension of music as a business, a practice and a calling.

Pathisa Nyati is based in Bulawayo and the researcher had to drive 450km to meet up with him. As if fate would have it, there was utter darkness due to power outage with the power utility just as the researcher arrived in the evening at Pathisa Nyathi's residence in Luveve, Bulawayo. Upon weighing all options, including avoiding to disturb the family resting in the dark, Pathisa Nyathi agreed to have the interview in the researcher's car parked right infront of his gate. Having warmed up to the conversation, Pathisa Nyathi gave a good 1 hour 20 minutes interview, going well beyond the anticipated 40 minutes. At first, because of the delays in my travel arrangements, I was afraid that Pathisa Nyathi would not be available anymore, yet he very humbly agreed to meet up with me in the uncomfortable hours of the dark evening when electricity had been switched off due to scheduled load-shedding. Pathisa Nyathi is a highly-experienced scholar, historian, arts promoter and writer. He spoke at length on how African spirituality ought to be understood as the interpretive frame for cultural practices amongst

African communities, locating healing within the metaphysical realm that explains the base of African circular motions, relational dynamics, holism and interdependence.

Nyamasvisva turned out to be very busy due to his itinerant duties in the cultural ceremonies and connection with healers within the Shona community. The researcher finally managed to schedule a recorded telephone interview with him and it turned out to be rich in terms of spelling out the Shona religious cosmology, the hierarchy of powers and power-negotiation within the spiritual set-up of the Shona belief-system as well as his hands-on experience with traditional instrumentation which is key to the performances that Nyamasvisva carries out with the Mbira dzeNharira, a music group based on adaptations of the ancestors three octave thumb piano (mbira dzevadzimu).

The researcher's 200km night driving on the rugged, meandering and steep-descend terrain of the Mavuradona mountain-range, north of Centenary on the Zambezi Escarpment in Northern Zimbabwe, was quite an adventure-filled odyssey. It was a mixed experience of fear of rejection, uncertainty and literally venturing into the unknown. Dispelling all my fears and anxiety, Norman Mtukudzi (the Fumhe village Headman) turned out to be a pleasant and amiable personality, an unassuming father figure who was willing to help with my studies. He advised me to drive to Mbire Rural District Council, the community's local authority and as fate would beautifully have it, Chief Matsiwo, a Senator who sits in Zimbabwe's parliament, happened to pass by and Norman Mtukudzi introduced me to him, further making my gatekeeper authorisation way easier. By the time I drove from Mahuwe, the successful trip had secured for me signed consent by the Village Head, confirmation of permission from the Chief as well as official community engagement authorisation from the Rural District Council.

In terms of participants' involvement, the researcher adopted the following process: Participants were asked questions about the music of Oliver Mtukudzi in relation to cultural practices of the Shona community with regards to death, bereavement, grief, support for the bereaved and culturally-informed approaches to providing mental health support for the grieving. The interviews were recorded on a voice recorder for the purpose of analysis. The duration of the interviews averaged between 40-60 minutes. The interview process was guided by a semi-structured interview guide (See the Appendixed interview schedules). Each participant is provided with an informed consent form (ICF) (all forms are in the Appendices). Both English and Shona (as Appendixed) versions are available as options to cater for

participants' preferred language. For the key informant interviewees profiled in the table above, signed individual participation letters were obtained prior to the scheduled interview sessions (signed letters are in the Appendices).

4.8.2 Lekgotla/Dare/Inkundla (African indigenous colloquium) - 2nd Data Set

As a methodological complement to in-depth interviews, the researcher also gathered data through an African indigenous colloquium *lekgotla* with the community elders, cultural experts and practitioners of the indigenous healing domain in the Fumhe village in Dande (the Northern Zimbabwean district from which the Mtukudzi family hails). The *lekgotla* generated data in response to the first and second research questions. Before defining the term *lekgotla,* it is expedient to state that the researcher belongs to Seboka, a multi-country research team that brings together academics and community as partners in undertaking research grounded in indigenous knowledge systems.

During one of the Seboka team field trips in the North West Province of South Africa, a local village chief shed light on a *lekgotla* in an African indigenous context to be a gathering consisting mainly (but not limited to) males (usually residing in that particular village) and discussing any issues pertaining to the village (Motshegare, 2013). *Lekgotla* is a Setswana word that, when translated, directly means 'council meeting' (Pienaar, 2014:6). Characteristically, a *lekgotla* is a form of qualitative data gathering, with the population being of interest to the study that the researcher is undertaking, and ordinarily the researcher is allowed in the gathering as an observer. One person (usually the chief) chairs the discussion, with every member participating by sharing their opinion and expertise. A *lekgotla* comes with the key benefit that the researcher is allowed to seek clarity on any aspect through the chair (Pienaar, 2013).

In terms of procedure, a *lekgotla* occurs when the chief calls a community public meeting to inform them about the research project (after consenting to the project) with the aim to get innovative and authentic outcomes (Pienaar, 2014:5). There is a specific process followed in conducting a *lekgotla*, which starts with the chief being made aware of the matter to be discussed, privately and confidentially (Pienaar, 2014:6). Once the chief is informed, he informs his advisors (usually his paternal uncles or community elders) who are more knowledgeable on the matter discussed, and only then can the chief call the public meeting (Motshegare, 2013).

For this study, the *lekgotla* participants were not just men, but both men and women, who were gathered to a public meeting called by Norman Mtukudzi, the Fumhe Village headman. The headman facilitated the recruitment of participants in the form of four elderly males, four elderly females, two middle-aged widows, two middle-aged widowers, as well as two young couples, adding to a total sixteen participants. Ordinarily, the public meeting has no limit to the number and who should attend the meeting, as everybody in the community can attend (Motshegare 2013). The recruitment ensured a fair representation across three demographic segments, as well as robust conversations backed by evidence-based practice by experts, experienced practitioners of indigenous healing practices within the community. In keeping with *lekgotla* protocols, the chief gave permission to and facilitated the meeting after weighing the risks and benefits of the research to the community over a pre- meeting with the researcher and also assisted by council/advisor(s) (Pienaar 2014:6).

In the context of mental health and indigenous approaches to providing support in moments of grief and bereavement, the community meeting generated interesting ideas as well as a heated debate that reflected generational gaps, cultural orientation, exposure and cultural contact as critical variables that cannot be disaggregated from the process of learning indigenous dynamics around healing.

4.8.3 Fieldwork for the lekgotla (community focus group discussion)

In terms of the indigenous focus group discussion (lekgotla), the sixteen participants contributed robustly, although the researcher figured the possible limitations placed upon female participation due to the patriarchal strictures that dictate the rules of standard female decorum in community meetings. This underscored the follow-up discussions in the female-only focus group discussion where women were allowed their space to engage the healing subject from their own evidence-based experience.

Another key notable from this meeting was the variance between the ideas raised by the old retainers and those put across by the younger participants who reflected the influences of modern trends, cultural dilution and the impact of orthodox Christian doctrines on the sensibilities of young Africans. Cultural negotiation thus turned out to be a dialectic of worldviews that partly played out in antithetical fashion, although there was consensus on the

role of music in healing encounters and therapeutic interventions. It also emerged from the community meeting that whilst the elderly were steeped in the traditional mores and cultural imperatives, the young appeared not very knowledgeable about the exact import of Mtukudzi's music which they largely engaged with on a romantic surface level of aestheticism rather than critical engagement with its cultural import.

There was an observable trend amongst the younger participants that funerals were becoming more of mechanically handled processes with the trappings of modern event-management techniques, and this was in stark variance with the elderly's views that resonated with key informants of the first data set around the subject of spirituality, cosmology, metaphysics and the cultural fundamentals around death, interment, rituals and healing. The discussion posed questions for the participants to share their knowledge and experiences regarding loss, bereavement, support and healing in line with community-sanctioned and culturally-aligned best-practice. The conversations were recorded by an audio recorder for the purpose of analysis. Informed consent forms were administered for signing by all participants in accordance with ethical considerations for the study. Both English and Shona versions of the informed consent form were availed as options to cater for participants' language preferences. Because of the time taken to explain the processes, ethics and free consent, the meeting lasted one and half hours in duration and it generated interesting talking points.

4.8.4 Women-only focus group discussion (3rd data set)

This gender-specific focus group discussion, as a follow-up to the *lekgotla*, was conducted to generate data addressing the first two research questions. Due to its nature and characterisation, a *lekgotla* is typically a forum in which only specific members of a given community may speak or will be inclined to speak. Against the backdrop of the African patriarchal conventions and how they play into structures of local governance within traditional communities, the researcher acknowledged that whilst it was a remarkable indigenous data collection method, the *lekgotla* posed particular limitations that the study could not ignore. These limitations included, but are not limited to, sex-role stereotyping, discriminatory masculinities and culturally entrenched practices that bracket out women's contribution to the broader dialectic of everyday existence

The very presence of the village headman and old community retainers created a structure in which the male elders and local governance council males were likely to be more comfortable engaging, with observable silent undertones of discomfort amongst the women participants who appeared to be either overtly or inadvertently silenced due to the strictures of patriarchy and male dominance. Wayan and Nyoman (2020) foreground the impediments to women's effective involvement in study encounters due to the politics of cultural patriarchy, where culture invariably comes across as a barrier in the way it fosters unequal relations across genders in some communities of the African Global South. The researcher's observations in the community focus group meeting kept him alive to these dynamics as they played out, subsequently taking time to explain the protection, safety and ethics to the women in the follow-up meeting so that participants could engage without the limitations posed by the mixed group.

Interestingly, Zimbabwe as a nation has made remarkable strides with regards to gender parity both in terms of legislative frameworks and the knowledge economy. Whilst on a global level Zimbabwe is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW-1979), nationally the country's constitution as currently configured (Amendment number 20 of 2013) has got 13 legislative provisions on issues of gender equality. Having promulgated a Quarter system that has created a 53% threshold for women's seats and involvement in the country's legislature, the following Zimbabwean ministries are headed by women: Ministry of Defense and National Security (Oppah Muchinguri), Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture (Kirsty Coventry), and Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Monica Mutsvangwa). In addition to these reforms, the Zimbabwean government has, according to Section 245 (establishment) and Section 246 (functions) of the constitution of Zimbabwe, set up the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC), a fully autonomous body with the mandate to mainstream and streamline gender parity dynamics into policy planning and implementation across all key sectors of the country.

Against this backdrop, the researcher is conscious that despite the strictures of patriarchal conventions, there is a functional framework to consider the voices of women in society with regards to ideology, knowledge generation and praxis. With most national, regional and international articles and protocols ensuring gender parity, the researcher found it expedient to

integrate this key consideration in data collection dynamics in order to yield results that would reflect the development trajectory within which this study sought to contribute knowledge.

In light of the outlined legislative dynamics in Zimbabwe, the researcher ensured that the women participants in the first meeting (lekgotla) were encouraged to attend the women-only forum, considering that as a social equality group, women can add voices that contribute significant data to the research's exploration of healing against the backdrop of indigenous practices of the Shona community. The researcher's recruitment for this third data set was also inspired by women's role as natural caregivers, nurturers and baseline providers of health care to families, hence the study's assumption that women's role within the community health-care value chain was worthy exploring. As such, apart from addressing gender dynamics, this meeting harnessed the merits of women as experts in the African community's healing domain. The researcher paid attention to the peculiarities in women's voices as data that speaks to cultural practices in the context of psycho-social support for the bereaved in the Shona community.

4.8.5. Fieldwork for the women-only focus group discussion

Eight women drawn from the sixteen participants of the earlier community focus group discussion were recruited for the women-only focus group discussion. The tone of the earlier meeting was significantly changed, as the researcher observed a sense of solidarity amongst these women despite their discrete age-group categories. Emerging from this discussion was the women's generally agreed position regarding the centrality of women in the caregiving and healthcare value chain of the African society.

The discourse established an overall acceptance of the fact that despite the excesses of male dominance as the social operating system, there is no way women's roles could be downplayed in the comforting, care-giving, and nurturing functions attendant to bereavement-counselling and post-loss healing interventions. The data contributed from context resonated with the scholarly postulations on gendered mourning and grieving rituals amongst Zimbabwean communities (Moyo, 2014).

The women participants outlined the age-old role of old women as *nyamukuta* (midwives) in the traditional practices of the indigenous communities of the Shona people. Further, they also

outlined the role of the *nyahana* (female sangoma) as a deified woman character imbued with spiritual and super-normal characteristics that position her as a central cog in the indigenous community's healing value-chain. These examples were cited to naturalise the role of women as cardinal players in the provision of healing-related support in cases of bereavement and loss. The data yielded by the nuanced conversations in this third data set is presented and analysed in detail in Chapter Six.

4.9 Analysis of Data

The entry point to data analysis ordinarily starts with the researcher transcribing the audio recordings verbatim, describing the setting, also looking for themes within the raw data, thereafter, comparing the themes found (Bloor & Wood, 2006:28). Leedy and Ormrod, (2010:138) cite Creswell (1998) and Stake (1995) who recommend five steps for data analysis. In the first step, the researcher organizes detail about the subject at hand, followed secondly by categorising the data found (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010:138). The third step is then the interpretation of single instances (each of the seven interviews, the *lekgotla* and the women-only focus group discussion).

In the fourth step, the researcher identifies patterns of data, with the fifth (final) step involving the synthesis and generalization of data. For this study, the researcher embedded Critical Discourse Analysis and content analysis of selected songs by Oliver Mtukudzi into the analysis, synthesis, theme-making process of engaging with the research data, iteratively presenting, critiquing and analysing data whilst engaging with it. The five steps are outlined as follows (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010:138):

Step 1: the researcher organizes the facts found about the case in a logical manner.

Step 2: finding of categories from the data to be arranged into themes.

Step 3: data is analysed for specific meanings that can relate to the case.

Step 4: data that is interpreted is examined for underlying themes and pattern.

Step 5: conclusion about the data is made in a form of a narrative or description.

Thematic Analysis

As noted above step four is the examination of data for underlying themes and patterns. It is here that the study was guided by reflexive thematic analysis. The study's research questions aided the development of the focus group discussion guides which produced responses that were subjected to thematic analysis guided by the Braun and Clarke (2019, 2022) six-stage process, to generate patterns and/or themes from the qualitative data. The process was intentionally guided by a comprehensive approach to thematic analysis, connecting the research's key objectives to the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm (Braun and Clarke 2019). Through thematic analysis, the study attempts to unpack a people's philosophy, ontology, epistemology and knowledge generation by exploring the historically situated communication patterns whose culturally-situated praxis yields meaning-making paradigms. It is against this backdrop that this study appropriates the lenses of ethnography, folklore and cultural anthropology to explore indigenous knowledge systems as encapsulated in the corpus of African music and its discourse.

In this study, thematic analysis was used to analyse Mtukudzi's purposively selected songs such as Neria, Todii (What Shall We Do?) and Rufu ndi madzongonyedze (*Death is destruction*). The intention was to sift and extract data relating to death, grief, bereavement, healing and consolation. The same technique was also used to analyse transcribed data from interviews conducted with Daisy Mtukudzi, Norman Mtukudzi, Mono Mukundi, Samantha Mtukudzi, Albert Nyathi, Nyamasvisva and Pathisa Nyathi. In this study, the technique was instrumental to extract data reflecting on indigenising pyscho-social support. Here, the researcher was careful to surf words as 'pyschological pain, trauma, stress, African culture' etc. Be that as it may, the operationalisation of reflexive thematic analysis will be presented in Chapters Five and Six.

4.9.1 Crystallisation of data

When multiple methods of data collection and analysis are used to validate the results, the process is called crystallisation (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007:40). Crystallisation gives a complex and detailed exploration of the phenomenon under study. Nieuwenhuis (2007:81) says that crystallisation aims at allowing the researcher to shift from viewing things in a fixed and rigid manner. Gergen and Gergen (2000) emphasise the point that it is of utmost importance for the researcher to attend to voices which differ from his/her own to learn more about multiple constructed realities. In keeping with the indigenous research epistemologies, this position

guided the researcher to appreciate the egalitarian and inclusive nature (Willis, 2007) of Shona community's relational philosophy in knowledge negotiation, an ethic that plays out in the ecological approach to healing as a holistic practice, a combination of art and science to help an ill person to return to the state of harmony of mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing in relation with the environment and the cosmos (Seboka team, 2013). The researcher thus triangulated data from the seven interviewees of the first data set, the community focus group discussion as well as the women-only focus group discussion. This approach borrowed from the concept of crystallizing data obtained from different sources (Creswell, 2009:191).

Interpretation will be aided through engagement with the three conceptual bodies of knowledge discussed in Chapter Three. Table 4.2 below synthesises the connection between the study objectives, methods of data collection, analysis as guided by the conceptual framework.

Research objective	**Data collection and analysis**	**Conceptual Framework**
1. To explore Shona community healing practices and principles reflected in Oliver Mtukudzi's song lyrics	Interviews, lekgotla and women-only focus group discussion (Thematic analysis and interpretive engagement with research data)	Postcolonial Indigenous Theory; Culture-centred approach & African cultural studies
2. To examine the ways by which Oliver Mtukudzi'smusic facilitates healing for the bereaved in the context of African indigenous knowledge systems.	Lekgotla, focus group discussion, Interviews (Transcription of indigenous colloquium audio tapes and subjecting research data to Thematic Analysis)	Postcolonial Indigenous Theory& Culture-centred approach

3. To explore strategies for promoting and integrating Shona community health ideas and practices into Zimbabwe's psycho-social support framework in light of 'Agenda 2063' as a blueprint for Africa's development via home-grown initiatives.	Interviews (Transcription, Thematic Analysis, Synthesis and interpretive engagement)	Postcolonial Indigenous Theory & Culture-centred approach

Table 4.2 Summary of the study objectives, methods of data collection, analysis as guided by the conceptual framework.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained ethical approval from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, with protocol approval number HSSREC/00004562/2022.

The researcher ensured informed consent for all the research participants by giving them informed consent forms which they voluntarily signed (Appendix 8). The researcher also expressed respect for the right to withdraw by research participants should they wish to do so, as outlined in the informed consent form.

Interviews were conducted at the most convenience of participants. The researcher was asked not to name explicit names of Women Focus Group discussions which he obliged. In order to maintain further anonymity, the data supplied to the researcher was not shared to anyone outside the confines of this research.

Wassenaar and Mamote (2012) emphasise the primacy of the human factor approach in ethical considerations for conducting research, highlighting 4 main aspects: autonomy and respect for the dignity of participants; non-maleficence (do no harm); beneficence (welfare of the research participant as a goal); as well as social justice. The researcher considered these parameters by

seeking gatekeeper letters, observing community protocols and seeking authorization from the local authority under which the Fumhe village falls.

In terms of approved access to participants, the researcher ensured due observance of protocol by observing the respect, dignity and rights of old retainers, elders, grandparents, and senior members of the community (both males and females), whilst also respecting the norms of the community in terms of community secrets, ritualistic observances, including due respect to the sacred and confidential subjects of the community. Appendices 18 and 19 are gatekeeper authorization documents from Mbire Rural District Council and the Fumhe village headman respectively.

The researcher was aware of ethical obligations and considerations, fully aware that they remain relevant throughout the research process from a study's inception, proposal review, data collection, write-up all the way to the sharing of findings with the research communities and stakeholders (Toffoli & Rudge, 2006). This is the backdrop against which the researcher kept open the option of convening follow-up meetings (with focus group participants) as well as availing a soft copy of the thesis write-up upon completion (for key informant interviewees), observing that research participants are not just instruments for data harvesting (in a parasitic extraction form), but that they are key stakeholders (with inalienable rights and entitlements) in the knowledge creation and validation value-chain.

The researcher is committed to protecting the welfare and rights of human participants, being careful to avoid stigmatisation and/or victimization, considering the gender and cultural sensitivity of the lekgotla and women-only focus group discussion with community members of the Fumhe village in Mahuwe, Dande district. In the context of the community engagement via focus group discussions, the researcher committed to protecting the privacy of research subjects by promising not to disclose the person's identity or link their information to them personally. The informed consent forms were availed in both English and Shona to cater for differences in literacy and language preferences. Research participants were notified well on time regarding their participation. All referenced work was also diligently acknowledged to avoid plagiarism.

4.11 Conclusion

Methodology informs the quality, generalizability, tenability and reliability of a study's findings and outcomes, hence its function as the engine-room propelling research as guided by set aims and objectives. An essential aspect of a study's quality control is aligning the design,

instruments and methods chosen with the objectives that drive the research. This methodology chapter made a case for the Critical Indigenous Qualitative Research (CIQR) as the paradigm within which the study obtains, highlighting its suitability as a methodological lens for research that acknowledges the phenomenological margins within which a people's knowledge systems ought to be studied. The chapter also discussed the adoption of a qualitative research approach and its justification as one that allows for an exploration, description and promotion of an in-depth understanding of a particular human experience, that is the Korekore community of the Northern Zimbabwean District of Mbire and its indigenous approaches to psycho-social support for the bereaved as explored in and enabled by ethnic music.

A case study design was chosen in light of the phenomenological nature of the study, hence focus became exploratory in nature, considering the intersecting variables of context, history and background for the community that was under study in this research. Attention was also given to the reflexivity and positionality of the researcher in the context of the subject of enquiry, because the researcher is a Shona-speaking individual conducting research amongst a Shona-speaking community. However, being a Shona (Manyika dialect) researching in a Shona (Korekore dialect) in that the researcher comes from Zimbabwe's Manicaland province yet the research is located in Mashonaland Central province, brought the 'insider-outsider' positionality dynamics into the context of the study.

Communities are shaped by both common and peculiar value systems, hence this research phenomenologically fleshed out these sociological factors. The ethnographic orientation of the study opened observations on how cultural peculiarities of the community that was under focus are configured, and how these played out in the study's potential implications on healing as a factor in the broader sociology of health and public policy. Further discussions in the chapter centred on the population of the study and the sample size in light of the outcomes that were driving the research.

The accompanying instruments for the study are semi-structured interviews, community focus group discussion and women-only focus group discussion and these were conducted in light of the study's enquiry into healing, death, bereavement, wellness and the ecology of health and wellness. By nature, phenomenological and ethnographic studies create space and scope for observations and participation on the part of the researcher, as subjectivities shape out patterns that play out in responses by participants.

The use of thematic analysis on selected songs by Oliver Mtukudzi (both embedded in the analysis and presentation of data) was based on the interpretative and narrative methods of engaging with participants' views and submissions, and the process was situated within the scope of hermeneutics, a critical facet of this study's method of data analysis. Kinsella (2006) defines 'hermeneutics' as the study of interpretation. Because of its applicability to qualitative studies that allow for thick descriptive passages, the method was used to elaborate on and interpret the gathered data, especially in Chapters five and six of this research.

Ethical considerations were acknowledged and addressed for this study considering the rules and protocols characterising local governance structures in indigenous Shona communities, as well as the necessary exercise of sensitivity to the sensibilities, needs, rights and entitlements of all participants as profiled in the study's respective data sets. Such dynamics included collecting gatekeepers' letters, the administration of informed consent forms to study participants during fieldwork, signed participant letters as well as obtaining an ethical clearance certificate from the University of KwaZulu-Natal to carry out the study.The next chapter discusses the observations, trends, patterns and themes from the data that was obtained from purposively sampled interviewees amongst the members of the Fumhe village in Mahuhwe (Mbire District in Northern Zimbabwe)

Chapter Five

Data presentation and analysis: Indigenising psycho-social support through the musical landscape

5.0 Introduction

For this study, the data presentation and analysis are catered for in two chapters, that is chapters Five (5) and Six (6). The current chapter (based on the first data set) engages thematic clusters generated from seven (7) semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted by the researcher. The sampling and inclusion criteria for the seven (7) interviewees are profiled in detail in the preceding Chapter 4. The researcher deployed the themes to address the ways of indigenising psycho-social support through the musical landscape among the Korekore people in Zimbabwe. The thematic analysis in this chapter also interprets and makes sense of the data that emerged from the semi structured interviews by taking guidance from Clarke and Braun (2020). As a methodological follow-up to the first data set, Chapter Six (6) will subsequently present data that emerged from two (2) focus group discussions (the Fumhe community focus group discussion and the women-only focus group discussion, respectively). Notably, Chapters Five (5) and Six (6) both address the study's research objectives and questions one (1) and two (2). Chapter Six (6) thus augments and complements Chapter Five (5). In this regard, research question three (3) – as guided by research objective three (3) – is intentionally addressed more comprehensively in the conclusion (Chapter 7), notwithstanding its continuous and pervasive presence across all the chapters of the study. By virtue of its aspirational forecast and its scope for contribution to knowledge, Chapter Seven (7) concludes the study by way of bringing together the findings emerging from the research data as discussed in Chapters Five (5) and Six (6).

The researcher conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with purposively selected participants who are knowledgeable about the social and cultural experiences of the Shona (Korekore dialect) community of the Fumhe village located in the Northern Zimbabwean district of Mbire. The semi structured in-depth interviews were guided by the following research questions as earlier outlined in Chapter One (1) of this study:

4. How does Oliver Mtukudzi's music reflect Shona healing principles and practices?

(iii) What Shona community psycho-social support concepts are articulated by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?

(iv) What public health principles are foregrounded by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?

5. In what ways does Mtukudzi's music facilitate healing in the context of loss, bereavement and grief?

6. What strategies can be deployed to integrate Shona community health ideas and practices into Zimbabwe's psycho-social support framework, given 'Agenda 63's decolonial blueprint for Africa's development?

However, as already stated - albeit due to its policy-related slant and scope for its potential contribution to knowledge - question number three above is closely and comprehensively explored in Chapter Seven (7).

5.1 Data Procedures and Analytical Process

The above questions guided the development of both the interview schedules and the focus group discussion guides which produced responses that were subjected to thematic analysis (TA) as guided by the Braun and Clarke's (2006: 16) six-stage process. The process was initially shared in 2006 but has been revised. Braun and Clarke (2020: 16) explain that a key amendment is that they relabelled the third phase "generating initial themes" (instead of "searching for themes") to highlight the active role of the researcher in theme creation and he provisionality of themes when first developed. This study has therefore generated themes from the qualitative data as interpreted by me as the researcher, who is guided not only by the research questions and selected theories, but also my own positionality as a Shona. The approach was useful because, unlike many qualitative methodologies, the method was not confined to a particular epistemological or theoretical viewpoint (Braun & Clarke 2019; Clarke & Braun, 2020).

The study adopted (Braun & Clarke 2019 and Clarke & Braun, 2020) after considering the complexities, sensitivities around agency associated with death. This flexibility is well aligned to the diversity of work relating to analysing Oliver Mtukudzi's place, scope and context among the Shona people of Korekore descent in the Fumhe village. Simultaneously, the data

procedures and analytical process applied in this study acknowledge Potter's (1997) argument that qualitative analysis is a 'craft skill' - a subjective, complex, analytical and descriptive process. The researcher acknowledges differing opinions that potentially and understandably arise from the findings based on this approach because 'a shared topic' does not necessarily translate to 'a shared meaning' (Braun and Clarke, 2019). The guiding premise is that qualitative research is creative, reflexive and subjective, yet the researcher's subjectivity is regarded as more of a resource (see Gough and Madill, 2012) than a threat to the knowledge production process.

5.1.1 Concept adaptation from Braun and Clarke

Table 5.1 below contextually demonstrates how thematic analysis was conducted, as adapted from Braun and Clarke (2019/2020).

The coding, categorising and thematising process		
Phase	**Activity**	**Description**
Phase 1	**Data Transcription and Familiarising**	• Conceptual analysis was applied to locate the existence of longitudinal manifestations of decolonising psycho-social support from the semi structured in depth interviews and Mtukudzi's lyrics. • Data from the interviews was then carefully examined to determine any link of their words, statements and nuances in light of Korekore cultural beliefs.

Phase 2	**Data coding**	• Once I arrived at this stage, I also attempted to understand how the selected songs relate to the data from interviews. I immersed myself with key terms of the topic to locate their presence from the responses I got from my interviewees. For example, words such as '*healing, Shona culture, music and healing, everyday life, memories.*' • I also listened to the purposively selected songs. For instance, *Neria*, *Sarawoga* (Left Alone), *Chengetai Mai na Baba* (Take care of Mum and Dad), *Rufu ndima dzongonyedze* (Death is a destroyer), *Ndafunga Dande* (Homesick) • Again, my other intention was to determine how particular words, recurring phrases and word-patterns relate to African ways of healing in the context of grief and bereavement. Such words include: *hunhu/Ubuntu*, *usaora moyo* (don't give up). • Immersion into participant responses included reflecting on data, questioning, imagining, wondering, writing, retreating, returning. I critically questioned, interrogated and examined the data.

Phase 3	**Developing categories**	• This stage included developing categories, which had diverse "patterns of meaning, underpinned by a central organizing concept – a shared core idea" (Clarke and Braun, 2017:297). In other words, the themes/categories were "something important about the data in relation to the research question" (Braun and Clarke, 2013:82). • I then put together sentences or phrases based on the codes in phase 2. By organising and re-organising codes, the study developed themes that were necessary for answering the key questions that constitute the objectives of the study For example, '*healing, stigmatisation, memories, cultural erosion*' • According to Terry et al. (2017:41) the researcher at this stage should gather related subthemes "that are a distinct aspect of a theme but share the same central organizing concept." It means texts cannot make meaning in isolation, but, rather, they can only do so under interrelated circumstances. For example, '*women annihilation, Shona culture custodians*' • The main goal was to interrogate the occurrence of selected terms in the data
Phase 4	**Review and fine tune categories**	• Here I selected words, word sense, phrases and sentences for comprehensive analysis. For example, '*African culture, healing, bereavement, consolation etc*'
Phase 5	**Defining and understanding categories**	• When I felt the categories now represented the data and codes clearly, the themes were analysed rigorously by explaining their significance in the study. I particularly focused on the themes closely applicable to the study's research questions.

Table 5.1 The coding, categorising and thematisation process with examples (adapted from Braun and Clark, 2019 and 2020).

5.2 Self-reflexivity in the study

My self-reflexivity was guided by Braun and Clarke (2022), whose views regarding individual reflexivity underscore the need to intentionally consider one's intersecting social positioning, and how this exerts some influence on the research. Such can include factors like gender, race, age, religion and nationality, depending on which of these have a bearing on decisions made in conducting the study. A significant consideration is how these shape a researcher's worldview and consequently their interactions with research participants.

In this study, I identify myself as a native Shona speaker and thus identifies with the Shona community's cultural sensibilities from an 'insider' perspective. I come from a 'Manyika' dialect of the diglossic (broad and significantly varied in its multiple dialects) Shona language, whereas the Fumhe village (being the key research site for community engagement and data collection for this research) is a community that speaks the 'Korekore' dialect of the Shona language. Apparently, the Korekore dialect is a very deep Shona language variety with striking divergencies from the Manyika dialect, hence the researcher engaged with the dialect's fascinating alliteration, assonance and exciting linguistic inflections which play out remarkably even in the lyrics of Mtukudzi's songs. Significantly, analysis of data for this research engages the discoursal elements emerging from the nuanced socio-linguistic essence of the Korekore community and the culturally-codified factors attendant to it.

The reflexive nature of my involvement in the data gathering process was also situated within the study's epistemological diversity. The study engaged with the robust theoretical and practical potency of Mtukudzi's music, guided by the idea that Oliver Mtukudzi's music serves both as a communicative medium about healing, as well as a healing force in the context of self, others and society. As such, the study spelt an aspirational forecast in its exploration of the affordances and agency of ethnic music in the domain of healing and wellness. In the process of engaging the research participants, the researcher mapped the various levels at which healing occurs, the cultural ramifications of healing as well as the deterministic relationship between music and society.

Notably, the Korekore community has its own sub-cultural orientation which the researcher sought to explore and understand, hence my awareness of his entry into this research space from an 'outsider' perspective. This is the backdrop against which the dynamics playing out in

the researcher's 'insider-outsider' positionality influenced how I evaluated "my behaviour whilst also evaluating the behaviours of cultural bearers, as we engage in the process of identifying and locating ourselves in our cultural space" (Kaghondiwamwa Mwanga, 2021). Most importantly, the researcher is a member and annual participant to the Oliver Mtukudzi memorial half marathon which for years positioned him to acquaint himself and understand the late singer's music. The annual marathon was conceptualised around Mtukudzi's long service as a UNESCO Health Ambassador due to his music's contribution to public health promotion and community health consciousness. I frequently participate in selected cultural functions hosted at the late singer's premises, the Pakare Paye Arts Centre, located in Norton, about forty-five (45) kilometers from the capital city, Harare. This did not, however, affect the quality, nature and context of the data generated in this study because in research, a researcher is entrusted with theory, methodology and data generation. This is the background against which this chapter presents data thematically as demonstrated in subsequent sections below. The data analysis and analytical procedures were also informed by the study's conceptual framework presented in Chapter Three (3). The next section is an overview of how field work was conducted – a process that further sheds light on the study's data presentation and analysis.

5.3 Presentation of themes

Having discussed the dynamics of the analytical process, I submit herewith the set of generated themes: music as a mimetic depiction of everyday life; music as a medium for communicating sensitive phenomena; music and closure in Shona cosmology; community bereavement' as a pathway to social cohesion; music as a generator of cherished memories of the departed.

Within the context of this study's deployment of a conceptual framework that intersects Postcolonial Indigenous Theory, Culture-centred approach and African Cultural Studies, it is interesting to note that these themes mapped here reflect scope for a phenomenological appreciation of the Fumhe village's unique cultural architecture that plays out in their philosophy of life and its everyday mundane manifestations, particularly in the healing and healthcare domain. In light of epistemological diversity, communities of the African Global South are championing self-definition in broaching pathways to culturally-situated and community-sensitive healthcare systems as reflected in their indigenous healing practices. The themes from this study's data deny totalising approaches to health, as wellness obtains within a cultural frame that develops as a given people construct their history. The rest of this chapter is dedicated to unpacking the themes enumerated here.

5.3.1 Music as mimetic depiction of everyday life

This theme emanated from the data which emerged from both semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The section explains certain cultural habits practiced by Korekore people in the context of death, grief and bereavement. It is evident that through Oliver Mtukudzi's music, the Korekore people are influenced to observe what defines them, their expectations, the 'dos' and 'don'ts' that shape their everyday beliefs. This was explained closely in the evidence presented by Albert Nyathi, for instance, who stated that "…music is language, it is a representation of our everyday practices as a people. We compose songs, explain often difficult circumstances of our time in more receptive ways" (interview, 25 July 2025). This was also echoed by Mono Mukundu who stated that "…artists draw their inspiration from society, their music is not divorced from our culture. I often state that music is a voice of the everyday issues – some that are sensitive yet we still have to speak about them! We have no choice" (interview, 25 July 2025). Mono Mukundi is an illustrious long time musician in Zimbabwe whose works spans over a decade. He has on numerous occasions performed alongside the late Mtukudzi

The responses resonate with the conceptualisation of the diverse, multicultural and often controversial nature of culture as a system, a dynamic whole that constructs and is produced by people, places, and practices. The system and its components are two sides of the same coin and engaged in mutual determination: the whole organises the parts and the parts organise the whole (Overton, 2010). People create culture through shared practices in places, and culture shapes how people engage in practices, thereby building places. The researcher raises these views to account for the legitimate space of numerous decolonial healing practices in the sense of grieving and bereavement in the African context. Five of the interviewees emphasised that music is a reflection, articulation, expression and mirror of everyday human life. For instance, Albert Nyathi said, "in Mtukudzi's music, we are taken to a certain spiritual world. In such a world, we are once again reminded of Shona culture and ubuntu. This may include dress code, how we relate with each other" (interview, 25 July 2023). Another participant, Pathisa Nyathi (may his soul rest in peace) supported this view that "…it has always been happening….ancestors may select a few people in form of artists, cultural heritage practitioners. That is why some words in certain songs are deemed complex among current generation" (interview, 10 March 2023). Mono Mukundu also weighed in stating that "…African spirituality, much as it is regarded as a myth, it remains a force to reckon with on how we record, produce and distribute music for our fans. As controversial at it may sound,

after all we sing to unite, teach, educate, ridicule all in the name of upholding human dignity" (interview, 25 July 2023). From this data, the researcher found that music is both a culture and a language. This was further supported by Pathisa Nyathi who noted, "…music that fosters our values is worthy celebrating. Music that is anchored on what we agree as our collective culture deserves recognition. It is the reason why Mtukudzi was our UNESCO ambassador, it is about the potency of Ubuntu" (interview, 10 March 2023). It represents 'spiritual' and physical communities which share common values that bring grieving people together in morally acceptable ways.

The researcher further deduced that Mtukudzi was not singing about his own thinking and creation, but he was instead 'possessed' and represented Shona ancestral beliefs, practices and Shona relations. Another interviewee, Nyamasvisva, also stated, "… it has always been within our culture that how we speak about 'Us' and 'Them' depicts a collective" (interview, 1 May 2023). The manner in which Korekore people navigate death is known amongst themselves and they easily relate with each other, the mood, context and expected deliverables at a funeral. A funeral does not belong to the grieving family, but it transcends beyond that limited scope to include kinsmen, extended family and the community at large as reflected in a carefully selected Mtukudzi song – *Kwaita Mabasa Kuno! Ndozviudza aniko?* (A calamity has struck here! Whom shall I tell?). Although African communities are experiencing new ways of life, in times of grief, sorrow, mourning and bereavement, they come together.

The participants acknowledged that human calamities, such as death, bring sadness as well as emotional and psychological pain which are difficult to contain and accept. It was evident from the participants that Mtukudzi's music carries an instructional value in the way it offers some direction and guidance on life to those mourning and grieving, although not all music is suitable for such purposes. For instance, Norman Mtukudzi stated that "…we get instruction of what ought to be done from funeral music. I say funeral music because not all music is sung for the purposes of a funeral…" (interview, 13 February 2023). The responses to the interview, in their varied tones, underscore the merits of the Postcolonial Indigenous Theory as conceptualised by Chilisa (2012: 45) as a frame of enquiry constitutive of what Walker (1998: iv) characterises as scholarship grounded in the cultural image and historical experiences of African people, paying attention to their aesthetic and philosophical traditions. In reflecting on the Fumhe community's ontological bearing in the context of culture-centred healing interventions, the researcher acknowledges Braun and Clarke's (2019:592) arguments on the diverse nature of TA's different philosophical assumptions about, and orientations to, qualitative research, with

subjective refractions being part of what society uses as building blocks to construct what they share and what has been conditioned to make collective sense. This then plays out in the 'everydayness' of cultural praxis.

As indicated in Chapter 3, post-colonial societies seek emancipation from generations of silence that have resulted in seeing the world in one colour (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). It is vital to appreciate the importance of connectedness and relationships in understanding the positionality of some indigenous scholars whose contributions to the knowledge economy cannot be extricated from the multiple connections they share with those around them (Wilson, 2008). As such, their social history partially informs how they see the world and how they relate with the researched. Considering this study's endeavour to explore African healing practices and principles reflected in Oliver Mtukudzi's music, Daisy Mtukudzi's reflections are telling:

> Oliver Mtukudzi's music touches on the sad experiences we encounter during mourning. There are some funerals where I have witnessed mourners playing Mtukudzi's music as a way of seeking therapy, comfort and celebrating the departed. In some cases, it is not only Mtukudzi's music but artists of their choice whose music relates to their social belief systems. Neria, for instance, is one such good example of a song that offers relief, hope and comfort while at the same time reminding us of the realities of death and its destruction. I can give you yet another example of Sarawoga (Left Alone) and Rufu ndimadzongonyedze (Death is Destruction). Sarawoga (Left Alone) was actually penned by Mtukudzi soon after he lost his son, Sam, and today I find it relating to me as a widow. Equally the same, Rufu ndimanzongoyedze (Death is Destruction) is another song that explains my everyday situation after the loss of my husband (interview, 10 May 2023).

Daisy Mtukudzi's words reflect the connection between music and social realities, as well as (more poignantly) the relationship between the musician's songs and his close encounter with grief at a personal level. Albert Nyathi explained, "…Mtukudzi creatively sang about death and its effects…he did not just sing for the sake of it but he attempted to respond to our different emotions. His music can heal as we listen to it. I think as black people our culture is the same because Mtukudzi's music is a reflection of death among us" (interview, 25 July 2023). From this data, I argue that in the cultural experiences of the Shona community, music mimics everyday life in many regards. The researcher argues along this line of thinking, drawing from

Braun and Clarke's (2019) submission that the researcher's role in knowledge production is equally important.

Samatha Mtukudzi tellingly weighed into the discourse, "…much as death is a difficult subject to talk about, it is part of us as a people. My father projected life from such an angle sometimes reminding us that music is not only meant for dancing on weddings" (interview, 10 May 2023). Emerging from the responses is an observable understanding that music is beyond entertainment. Bereavement is an emotional and psychological feeling that is differently processed depending on cultural beliefs of a given people and the communities they hail from. For instance, Daisy Mtukudzi stated that "… I sometimes feel that Oliver composed some of his songs for me. When I play some of his music, instead of crying I am now determined to face my future. I celebrate him every day" (interview, 10 May 2023). The researcher was convinced that music represents communication experiences of a given people under a given context and circumstances. Human understanding of social life is also shaped by how they process and navigate sad social life events (Bugental, 2000). For instance, Pathisa Nyathi put it on record by stating, "…some of the music is meant to bring humor just to ease and loosen the spirit of those crying. Tears are an expression of deep sorrow. African funerals are thus characterised with cracking of jokes. We have that reflection in Mtukudzi's music and many others in this country" (interview, 10 March 2023). The researcher further argues that circumstances of people determine cultural values, conduct and attitude towards catastrophes such as death. This is supported by Mbembe and Nuttal (2004) who posit that indigenous approaches to mental health as reflected by music in its cultural situatedness (ethnic music) demonstrate that culture is dynamic, hence its expressed characterisation in the network of other global cultural formations.

Sentiments raised by Daisy Mtukudzi and Samantha Mtukudzi find corroboration in the thoughts shared by Norman Mtukudzi, "It's not all music that should be played at a funeral….. for example, you cannot play Alick Macheso's music otherwise we label you as 'benzi' (mentally disturbed person)" (interview, 13 February 2023). Participants' predilection on culture as a key defining base draw attention to the scholarly submission that in contemporary Shona communities, there has been an increasing drift towards secularisation in the way funerals are conducted and on the meaning of rituals (Adamson and Holloway 2012).

From the foregoing, the researcher observed that funerals are conducted "….in line with the dos and don'ts of the deceased. You can tell from the careful choice of words from his music that they are beyond human understanding. The Korekore community perform rituals that I

find captured in Mtukudzi's music. For instance, he sang: 'Tsika Dzedu dziye dzakaendepi? …Kusvikira riini tichitiza mumvuri yedu? (Where has our culture gone?...Until when shall we continue to stray away from our culture?)" (Albert Nyathi, interview, 25 July 2023). The evidence provided by participants, though diverse and varied, draws upon nuances that resonate with the study's key endeavour to understand the phenomenon of psycho-social support in death and grief as explored via the affordances of music in its cultural situatedness. The varied responses account for the researcher's decision to unpack the subject under study by going beyond the monolithic margins of a single theory, opting instead to dialogue with the merits of the three main knowledge bodies constituting the system of concepts framing the enquiry at hand. Scholarship has lately taken heed to the 'post-modern' concern with multi-vocality, paving the way for multiple narratives of heritage (Smith, 2009: 37). The novelty of such innovative approaches to enquiry, especially when working within African communities, creates room for knowledge creation models that afford communities the space and voice to construct and relate their cultural phenomena according to their own terms.

From the semi structured in-depth interviews conducted, the researcher established that bereavement is culturally rooted in the search for healing in the context of death, as the following reflection reveals:

> Shona culture spells out a step-by-step protocol. It has no short cuts. We observe the departed's wishes. That is why Oliver is buried here in Dande despite the government recognising him as a national hero. That way we find peace, closure and satisfaction. It is tradition! Of course, we then calmly sing traditional music that resonates with crying. You will even notice that Oliver sang traditional music which he infused with the guitar (Norman Mtukudzi, interview, 13 February 2023).

The Shona people carefully select music that offers dignity to the living and departed as a sign of a peace, unity and togetherness in times of mourning. This overarching ethic that plays out in Shona ritual practices stems from an African decolonial way/s of bereavement in times of mourning. The researcher's observation in this regard is that musical discourse cannot be reduced to the music itself (Roy 2010: 15). Scholarship points to numerous extramusical aspects in musical discourse analysis, such as psychological dynamics, personal factors, social and historical environment, stylistic conventions, artistic aims and so forth (Blacking 1982; Morgan 1982; De Nora 2000; Roy 2010). A significant revelation which emerged within this

context is that bereavement (mourning, grief and sorrow) among Shona people, specifically the Korekore community, is a gradual process:

> We follow properly laid procedures from the time of burying the dead until we distribute their belongings among the living. If it is a male individual who would have died for example, their wife is taken into the care of their aunt until such a time they are naturally, emotionally, and psychologically strong. That is our culture. That is how we mourn the dead. So when Mtukudzi sang, "*tsika dzedu dziya dzakaendepi?…Kusvikira riini tichitiza mumvura yedu"* (What has become of our culture?...Until when shall we continue running away from our shadows?) he was simply reinforcing and reminding us of the need to remain grounded in our culture (Nyamasvisva, interview, 1 May 2023).

The above is understood in the confines of the Culture-Centred Approach (CCA) - a characteristically counter-discursive frame that endeavours to foreground context-specific factors shaping people's experiences. In the process of 'revisiting communication infrastructure for subaltern communities,' scholarship has championed this restorative framework by locating culture at the centre of the crusade to address health disparities, inverting hegemonic narratives to create space and discursive attention to knowledge systems rooted in the lived experiences of communities at the global margins (Dutta, 2008, 2011). The approach thus queries the communicative disequilibrium and inequalities that have pushed community voices to the periphery in matters to do with health policy formulation, optimisation and utilisation. Dutta's conceptualization of culture's centrality to health matters finds scholarly echoes in the expressed endeavour to work with disempowered communities to help them gain greater control over the resources and institutions that affect their lives (Levine & Perkins, 1997).

5.3.2 Music as a medium for communicating sensitive phenomena

A curious observation emerging from the data, which the current study found to be a novelty, is the agency of music as a utilitarian conveyor of sensitive messages as understood by the Korekore community. In this section, I give an account of how the Korekore people use music to convey certain information that is deemed sensitive. These sensitivities are understood in light of the Korekore people's cultural values and norms. This was revealed by Nyamasvisva

when he stated, '…we communicate the conduct of our values, we convey serious matters of life to the living in our attempts to cement unity and continuity of life. I can make reference to Mtukudzi's song 'Nhaka sandi bonde' (widow inheritance is not a license to conjugal benefits) (interview, 1 May 2023). As stated in Chapter Two (2), conceptualising healing, death and bereavement within the context of peculiar cultural ramifications entails deploying alternative methodologies that transcend the limitations of the traditional positivist approach in order to appreciate the broader ecological perspective of the particular geographical, sociocultural and historical settings shaping a people's lives (Banyard and Miller, 1998).

The responses from Pathisa Nyathi are illustrative of this view when he states that '…as artists we intend to offer a more 'softer'- friendly way of talking about difficult circumstances caused by death. Death brings life gaps that require wisdom when addressing them' (interview, 10 March 2023). Impressed upon the mind of the researcher was the observation that in times of sorrow, Africans, out of culture-driven imperatives, naturally come together to offer psycho-social support. It is a whole way of life. According to Causadias (2020), in this case, 'people' become the most important feature of culture as a system: there is no culture without people and no people without culture. 'People' contextually denotes population dynamics, social relations, and culture in groups, including families, communities, and nations. For instance, Norman Mtukudzi states that '…we do follow procedure so as to avoid the blame game. Remember funerals among us are often fraught with serious suspicions of foul play. So the question is how do we balance whilst seeking fairness and justice? We just have to talk about pertinent issues frankly with so much bravery. Who will look after the family, kids – all those issues' (interview, 13 February 2023).

Healing in the context of death relates to living and working together in times of need, showing sympathy, offering significant, timely and warm support. The participants' views expressed above resonate with Bruin-Mollenhorst's (2018) argument that the lyrical texts of music are tellingly considered in the context of the deceased persons' identity and emotions. The study argues that music is not just about singing but communication of sensitive issues emanating from death. Funeral protocols, family meetings, decision-making caucus and other related engagement protocols attending to funerals entail informed deliberations and position-taking that relate to the bereaved individual as well as the bereaved family at large. Diplomacy, tact and discretion are often called into play at such moments.

5.3.3 Music and closure in Shona cosmology: connecting the living and the dead

This section explores the relationship between music, the living and the dead. Mtukudzi's music reflects the nuanced dynamics of the Shona culture, particularly the cosmological paradigm connecting the dead (departed) and the living (remaining). How does this happen? Studies that examine post-mortem relationships and 'continuing bonds' between the living and the dead remain scarce (Thyrén et al 2020). The data generated from this study fills in this yawning gap by arguing that music connects the living with the dead in the endeavour to seek closure.

Mtukudzi's music is believed to be spiritual among the Shona people, especially the Korekore of Fumhe village in Zimbabwe's Northern district of Mbire. Data that was elicited through semi-structured in-depth interviews showed that most Shona people have a deep sense of understanding the meaning and value of Mtukudzi's music in their journey to seek closure and reconnection with their departed loved ones. Albert Nyathi explained his conviction that in his compositions and arrangements, Mtukudzi obtained counsel, instruction and inspiration from his ancestors. He stated that "*…he was and remains a giant whose ancestors spoke through him to us"* (interview, 25 July 2025). It was further disclosed that when traced carefully from the early days of his music career, Mtukudzi's music serves as a vehicle to connect the living and the dead, discharging the role of providing closure in the wake of loss, pain and grieving. Pathisa Nyathi further stated, " …by so doing, we believe that the strong cultural and moral values we still practice have got the blessings of those who left us (the dead)" (interview, 10 March 2023).

In a pathos-filled in-depth interview with Samantha Mtukudzi, it was revealed that at many times, after composing his music, during practicing sessions, Mtukudzi himself would ask: "Oh, how did I think, write and arrange these words?" He was often "shocked" that he wrote and produced music that could heal, mend and connect the living with the dead:

> The way my dad composed his music was extraordinary as he showed some signs of coming from another world. I can't really say he was possessed. Until this day, his music years after he's gone has a meaning on how we relate with the dead. It is only now that most people confess that 'oh you know what, I didn't know your dad's music captures our human experiences'. But I tell them that it has been like that but they had not given themselves time to listen. I can say my dad's music helps us to believe that after we lose our loved ones because of death, one day somewhere – we shall meet (Samantha Mtukudzi, interview, 10 May 2023)

As postulated by Adamson and Holloway (2012) and also emphasised by Aggedal (2009), the choice of music at a funeral is the strongest way that families and friends can demonstrate who the person was in life. Relatives appear to rubber stamp their relationship of influence when it comes to choosing music, and it is important to know how and why this selection also may affect the grieving process by the bereaved. This finding is further supported with yet another participant in even clearer terms. Norman Mtukudzi states:

> He sang songs of hope with so much belief that in our culture, we accept that death is just a 'sleep'. They will one day wake up. We will meet with those who departed in yet another world. Naturally when we sing on funerals, we are sending a message to the dead because normally, we sing their best songs which they liked when they were still with us. By so doing, we are communicating with them. Mourning becomes lighter as the burden is a little bit painful. Nda funga Dande (I am thinking of Dande) is rich in meaning in this context. It's a song in which we are reminded to relate and trace back to our roots- our ancestors (interview, 13 February 2023).

There is a strong belief among the Korekore people that the dead are merely 'sleeping.' When the dead are 'sleeping' they can peacefully do so when we bury them in their rural homes. This view confirms the affordances of music as a carrier of relational values, hence the way it couches community's collective sensibilities at farewell ceremonies and rituals, evoking some cherished importance as part of a given people's shared experience, especially when conducted for a close relative (Krout, 2003). The living – from wherever they are, are expected to pay a visit to their villages so that their spirits are connected with their ancestors. For instance, Daisy Mtukudzi states, "he built us a very nice rural home with everything that resembles town life – and we are always motivated to constantly visit our rural home. The home for me represents the attachment of black people with their roots. We actually have a thriving farming enterprise there" (interview, 10 May 2023).

Citing Mtukudzi's song 'Ndafunga Dande' (*I am thinking of Dande*), Norman Mtukudzi said they interpret the song to indicate the unity between the dead and the living. This belief, they said, is understood within the context of the spiritual world that guides the living. From the researcher's point of view, it could mean that there are certain conversations that happen between the living and the dead although in a 'mysterious way'. It is notable that ethnographic entries into indigenous communities in cultural studies entail some encounters where reflexive experiences of the researchers bring them alive to culture as praxis not as theory – exceeding

known modes of textual inscription to come to terms with how people relate with their cosmology from the perspective of lived experiences (Tomaselli and Mboti, 2013). For instance, Albert Nyathi said:

> We do not just sing but we attempt to console those who are mourning in ways that assure them that their loved ones are still with us even in death. Even when you listen to Mtukudzi's song, Neria, it's a song that gives comfort and hope. When a person is dead, we perform 'pfungaidzo' (a mini cultural ceremony where we ask ancestors to accept the departed). We also perform 'kuchenura' (asking for forgiveness on behalf of the dead with his ancestors). We believe that the dead's soul once they are accepted with their ancestors, they are now able to peacefully watch over the living. They feel happy when we aid their reunion with their ancestors (interview, 25 July 2023).

From the in-depth interview conducted with Pathisa Nyathi, emphasis is drawn to the thought that when we listen to Oliver Mtukudzi's music, one can tell that he was fully convinced that there is a relationship between the living and the departed. In his response, Nyathi emphasised that healing from painful effects of death is conducted by performing ceremonies that are meant to connect the living and the departed. From his background as a traditional music artist, culturalist and heritage practitioner, Pathisa Nyathi said, "in our traditional music, even tapping from Mtukudzi's music, we attempt to reconcile the dead and the living. In our music we continue to offer such education so that we do not go astray from our culture" (interview, 10 March 2023). Much of Shona people's belief systems reflect a people who have a connection with their ancestral identity. This thinking is significant, particularly as the researcher maps out thought patterns whilst reflecting on the premise that data analysis is the product of deep and prolonged data immersion, thoughtfulness and reflection, something that is active and generative (Braun and Clarke 2019). Data also demonstrates *shared meaning* influenced by a core concept (Braun and Clarke 2013; Braun, Clarke, and Rance 2014). This accounts for the researcher's approach, with Mtukudzi's musical discourse explored at multiple levels in its complex diversity, reflecting on processes as they play out in different practices, rituals, ceremonies and processes of Shona 'life'.

The above reflections are significant in expressed attempts to appreciate indigenous Shona people's decolonial ways of bereavement and healing practices. As Smith (1999) argues, decolonization, does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or

Western knowledge. However, it refers to focusing our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes. The attempts are viewed and analysed at a time where new cultural variants are impinging upon contemporary communities. These include the current trends and their decidedly English conduct of funerals as disclosed by Daisy Mtukudzi who stated that "… but you your generations no longer care much about tradition. You are now English and at crossroads with tradition, that is not our Ubuntu. Correct that Shadreck…of course I mean your generation (She laughs)" (interview, 10 May 2023). These revelations are captured in this study's conceptual framework that mobilises the mutually-inclusive and interlocking tenets of the Postcolonial Indigenous Theory (Chilisa, 2012), African Cultural Studies (see Tomaselli, 2019), as well as the Culture-Centred Approach (Dutta, 2011). Scholarship has lately taken heed to the 'post-modern' concern with multi-vocality, paving the way for multiple narratives of cultural communication (Smith, 2018). The novelty of such innovative approaches to enquiry, especially when working within indigenous communities of the African Global South, creates room for knowledge creation models that afford communities the space and voice to construct and relate their cultural phenomena according to their own terms.

Conceptualising healing, death and bereavement within the context of peculiar cultural ramifications entails deploying alternative methodologies that transcend the limitations of the traditional positivist approach to appreciate the broader ecological perspective of the geographical, sociocultural and historical settings shaping a people's lives (Banyard and Miller, 1998). In African contexts as elsewhere in the world, such ceremonies are meant to embrace farewell as an important aspect of the grieving and healing process. Playing music under such contexts is meant to construct meaningful experiences that positively reflect on human physical interactions (Parkinson, 2009). From the emerging data, the researcher acknowledges that Mtukudzi's music (albeit explored through purposively selected songs) constitutes a site that reincarnates symbols that assist close relatives in coping with the sadness of their loss (Parkinson, 2009), and these are visible characteristics in Shona bereavement, grieving and healing contexts.

Power (and dynamics of its negotiation) is a notably cardinal concept speaking to postcolonial indigenous theory as a key arm of the broader conceptual framework which guided this study. As observed in Chapter 3, Pickett and Fatnowna (2002) postulate that the scholarly quest for the recognition, privileging, positioning, decolonising, protection and involvement of indigenous knowledge and practice in a bid to resist and reverse the pervasive determination

of indigenous matters by 'others' should not only lead to the re-centering of restorative and creative determinations in indigenous hands, but instead should be done within the broader context of the cultural dialectic where flux and dynamism drive the varied worldviews and ethics of humankind. As previously noted in Chapter 3, the Culture-Centred Approach shares curious conceptual cleavages with the domain of African Cultural Studies in the way it champions an epistemic direction that facilitates empowerment on the part of subaltern communities of the African Global South. In locating communication at the intersection of culture, structure and agency, Pal and Dutta (2012) assert that communities are sites of contestation and meaning making, hence the need for knowledge-creation models that empower members of indigenous communities with the space and voices to tap into their shared values, practices and meanings as they negotiate knowledge best suited to address their health needs

An interesting pattern emerged from the two interviewees, Pathisa Nyathi and Nyamasvisva, where Pathisa Nyathi spoke about the Ndebele cultural practice of *umbuyiso* (a rite of passage which facilitates bringing the spirit of the ancestor back home), whilst Nyamasvisva talks about the Shona cultural practice of *chenura* (a ritual ceremony which involves cleansing the spirit of the deceased). Nyamasvisva noted, "The deceased need smooth entry into the council of ancestorhood, inasmuch as they also need enhanced connectedness with the living who look up to them for guardianship." (interview, 1 May 2023). Pathisa Nyathi emphasised,

> Despite regional specificities in terms of carrying out post-death cultural rites of passage, the Zimbabwean communities generally share the belief that the deceased, the ancestors and the remaining (living) are all essential demographics of our society that co-exist in a cordial ecosystem that sustains our essence in equilibrium (interview, 10 March 2023).

Observable, therefore, is a dialectic of both sameness and difference in cultural sub-groups, with multiple influences impacting on each other reciprocally or otherwise. In exploring the uniqueness of the Fumhe village's cultural nuances, this study establishes the scope for observing cleavages and commonalities between and amongst cultural sub-groups and communities, an understanding that resonates with the conceptual framework of this study and its adoption of a position that instead of being explored in contradistinction to each other, Postcolonial (PC) and Postcolonial Indigenous (PCI) theories ought to be understood as facets within the trajectory of an evolving body of thought that is historically driven and sociologically negotiated. As emphasised in Chapter 3, Postcolonial indigenous theory affords

African scholarship the agency to detoxify their narratives in the wake of colonially and historically entrenched Eurocentric epistemologies. Instead of reading Postcolonial Theory (PCT) and Postcolonial Indigenous Theory (PCI) as antithetical frames operating in contradistinction, this study considers the two as essential coordinates that assist in mapping the historiography of thought systems in a traceable continuum within which indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) can be understood and appreciated. As such, it is needful to read the two theories perceptively in order to understand the scope of alternative ways of knowing emerging under synthesis-driven scholarship that foregrounds the merits of epistemological co-determination (Odora Hoppers, 2009). Understanding the Korekore community entails situating them within the context of their own history and the socially-constructed phenomena that have shaped their knowledge of and about themselves in light of other intersecting cultural influences, as demonstrated by the data's apparent presentation of interesting commonalities in the practices of both Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups of the Zimbabwean community.

5.3.4 'Community bereavement' as a pathway to social cohesion

This section is based on the finding that the Korekore community conceptualises bereavement as more of a 'communal' than an 'individual' experience. There is an elaborate sense in which the Korekore community members share the collective ethic of unity in times of death, grieving and healing. 'Community bereavement' is thus a concept that feeds on the ubuntu ethic where shared grief is a site of community togetherness. This study found that social healing practices of the Shona people are anchored on community togetherness, fostering common good and promoting social cohesion. Albert Nyathi tellingly puts this across by stating,

> On my first time to attend a funeral in Mashonaland, I felt as if I was in my home region of Matebeleland. I find the Shona people warm, caring, affectionate, loving and united. Even when you listen to their private conversations, the type of people at the funeral, I saw oneness – togetherness (interview, 25 July 2023).

In the lyrics *'rufu ndimadzongonyedze kune vanodanana'* (death is a brutal destroyer that disrupts the harmony of those who love each other), Mtukudzi transcends cultural boundaries to address the reality of death and loss within the broader context of common humanity. Whilst Mtukudzi's music, as this study establishes, shows different social contexts, conditions and various combinations of social agents that serve as culturally-conditioned and tradition-anchored enablers of social cohesion, the music also reflects universal sensibilities regarding

loss and bereavement beyond cultural confines. This sense of variety is because communicants in musical discourse discharge various social roles that are as descriptive as much as they are also instructive (Aleshinskaya, 2020). This may include point of reference to culturally accepted ways of dealing with grief. Funerals, from observations recorded in this study, are also a site of community togetherness. Mono Mukundu shares his conviction that communal gatherings during a funeral demonstrate togetherness, camaraderie and solidarity during 'difficult' moments of life, making particular reference to Mtukudzi's song lyrics *'..kwaita mabasa kuno, ndozviudza aniko?'* (…there is a calamity that has befallen us….whom shall I tell/share this with?). When communities gather to offer solidarity and support to a grieving family, the unity has far-reaching positive implications on the grieving. Mono Mukundu recounts:

> Since time immemorial, a funeral is a community social burden. We all attend to offer healing, it's a healing that is unique to African people – we the Shona people. During mourning, you agree with me that we then find time for laughter. In Mtukudzi's music, it is not surprising that he emphasises on 'tsika dziye dzakaendepiko' (Where have we lost touch with our culture?) Once the grieving are given communal love and care, they obtain a sense of belonging to a bigger 'family' of fellow kinsmen who care even in the absence of their loved ones. All these processes are led by our headman (interview, 25 July 2023).

It could be deduced that social cohesion is mutually shared, and that it is an enabler of healing in grief to the extent that the pain of loss is partially or potentially mitigated when bereavement is handled as a shared communal burden. This understanding, deduced from the data, influenced the development of the following sub theme.

5.4 Towards an attempt to foster mental health

An outgrowth of the preceding section, this sub-theme addresses deductions, inferences and logical connections spawned by various interpretations as participants engaged Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of attempts to champion mental health against the backdrop of grief and loss. 'Multi-perspective' is a term that denotes those multiple responses from the participants, whilst 'multidimensional' is used in the sense of the far-reaching effects of music, grief, sorrow and healing. From their diverse interpretations, participants seem to converge on the common idea that Mtukudzi's song, *Sarawoga,* is illustrative of mental health implications

in grief. For instance, Daisy Mtukudzi notes that Mtukudzi's loss of his only son, Sam, affected him badly. She recounts,

> the song does speak to how he was mentally affected. He often exhibited signs of a dead man walking. In the song, he sheds light on the fact that we experience the horror of grief in different ways. Some people prefer to be lonely, others wail on top of their voice, whilst others (like Mtukudzi) sing about it (interview, 10 May 2023).

This study makes out a pattern where Oliver Mtukudzi's musical discourse presents complex multi-perspective and multi-dimensional phenomena. His efforts at mental health interventions through musical discourse are understood via the way he integrates textual and contextual elements. Interestingly, Oliver Mtukudzi's musical effects "mediate between social situations and the texts that respond strategically to the exigencies of those situations" (Swales 2009: 14).

Daisy Mtukudzi, reflecting on her own circumstances upon the death of Oliver Mtukudzi, shares these sentiments:

> When he died, I was subjected to all forms of harassment and ridicule. But I think he could foresee this coming because he sort of had prepared me for the day. My daughter Samantha was there for me throughout. Even government, they offered their solidarity, comfort and support (interview, 10 May 2023)

These sentiments were echoed by Samantha Mtukudzi when she said, "…imagine during your time of mourning, you are shamed by your own relatives! I stood with mum all the way" (interview, 10 May 2023). Another participant, Mono Mukundu, said,

> What we see from Mtukudzi's music are social health interventions emanating from a cracking family after death. Remember he song 'Chengetai mai nababa' (Look after your parents) reminds us of the value of family under different contexts. The need to look after orphans, widows, the elderly depending on your circumstances' (interview, 25 July 2023).

Oliver Mtukudzi's articulation of healing in bereavement emanated from his own personal experience of loss and, upon his death, his widow encounters circumstances that help her to reflect and refract on the implications of discourses generated by her husband's musical career and the interventions it offered to others for many years. There is a sense in which the Mtukudzi family members participate in this study from multiple angles – from the experience of music

as a practice (Samantha was one of her father's backing vocalists), from managing the family music business, as well as from the perspective of those that have lost two direct family members (Sam and Oliver himself). It is striking to hear Daisy Mtukudzi retrospectively beginning to appreciate the profound meaning of her husband's music much later after he has died, particularly appreciating the music's significance as a source of consolation for her as she navigates her complex circumstances as a widow in a patriarchally-tilted family and cultural context.

Music is a form of therapy at funerals, especially as it carries and evokes a spectrum of sensory effects that are characteristically soothing. Existing studies such as O'Callaghan and Michael (2015) demonstrate that there are culturally accepted formal practices of expressing grief through music therapy - the healing practices of a society. Such performative and expressive therapy forms have been increasing as effectual tools for releasing emotions during the process of grieving. Mtukudzi's song, *Sarawoga* (Left Alone), has amazingly high tones that combine in a resonatingly haunting refrain '*Sarawooooooooooogaaaaaa!!!,*' the howling tone of a grieving singer who is trying to come to terms with loss by releasing the energy within him therapeutically. In saying *"Chiwerewere wegani, wegani"* (sneaking and gropping in the dark alone, in loneliness), Mtukudzi repetitively refrains on his loneliness (upon the death of his only son) until the repetitiveness begins to conjure some extra-textual innuendos of forthright efforts to heal oneself in the tonality of a vocal crescendo that seems to transcend realms. This performative quality of Mtukudzi's music summons to mind the submissions of DeNora's (2012) ethnographic case study that was conducted in England over a three-year period, although it describes music use with patients in palliative care. The study was conducted with patients and their relatives. DeNora's work found that music therapy in palliative care is a communication site that can add to increased communication between therapist, patient and relatives. In this regard, it offers valuable opportunities for socialising at the end of life. This theorises this study's understanding of Mtukudzi's music and its creation of a post-death sociology for the grieving who can salvage culturally-configured psycho-social accessories as enablers of healing in bereavement.

One significant benefit that this therapy offers is an opportunity for mourners to define their grief. Grief, as a normal adaptive process after a significant personal loss, has a wide range of physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral symptoms that are usually acutely experienced in the first two to twenty-four weeks after suffering the loss (Malcolm, 2020). As previously stated in Chapter Two (2), music's pervasive nature is demonstrated by the indispensable roles

it executes across the social, physical, psychological, economic, religious and cultural spheres of society (Flynn 2018; Agawu 2003; Nzwei 2003). Baaz and Palmberg (2001) posit that music across cultures arguably remains central in identity construction. As such, musicians do not compose or perform their music in a cultural vacuum as their artistic products turn out to reflect the cultural influences behind them. Interestingly, because music is a form of art, the issues it generates can be understandably personal as well. African scholarship theorising the psychology of indigenous healing contends that essential structures and practices characterising modern scientific, academic and professional forms of psycho-social interventions reveal an original psychological theme in Southern African indigenous healing, involving recognition of 'spirit' as source of self that extends into 'transpersonal' realms (Edwards, 2011).

5.4.1 Music as a generator of cherished memories of the departed

A major thematic construct emerging from the data is that of music's function as part of the sociological building blocks that construct historical narratives (even personal ones) and their concomitant crucible of cultural negotiations. Scholarly discussions in the field of music analysis and cultural history engage with music's scope as an enabler of historical understanding and sociological interpretations. In reviewing the sociology and aesthetics of music, Gilbert (2005) explores the intersection between social history and musicology, characterising musical lyrics as oral texts situated within group frameworks, hence their capacity to enrich and illuminate music consumers' understanding of historical contexts. Qualitative responses from participants pointed to the fact that music brings 'happy' memories of the dead, resulting in a healing effect on the living. Participants who were engaged for the purposes of this study revealed that remembering the good old days with the departed generates a therapeutic sense of refreshment. Generally, the participants emphasised that such an approach to the grieving process creates hope. They feel healed. The following response from Daisy Mtukudzi is illustrative of this concept:

> When my son, Sam, died, Oliver would seek relief and express his grief by playing their collabo song – Samatenga – he kept quiet, looking straight. He would shake his head. After that, he would tell us their old days, how intelligent his son was, what he wanted him to be. So I would comfort Oliver assuring him that wherever our son is, he is safe (interview, 10 May 2023).

Daisy Mtukudzi's words cited above augur well with earlier submissions by Cullberg (1986) who argues that the experiences of the grieving must be respected in terms of their unique conditions. He argues that it is significant that those who are grieving be given time and space to express their feelings, and that their ability to process grief is reflected in the ways the grief is expressed. It is also suggested musical psychology studies that a person who unexpectedly hears or listens to a familiar song or piece of music can recall 'memories' of significant life events (Gabrielsson, 2013). A strong connection with music is linked with a sense of being understood and present, an effect that has a strong bearing on the mind's receptiveness to therapeutic interventions.

From these foregoing views, this study found that there are indigenous healing practices expressed and performed in moments of death and bereavement, and these practices draw strongly from culture as a lived experience. Listening to music during times of grieving provides a communication platform in a temporal-spacio dimension better understood by individuals. The research thus makes phenomenological forays into the space of Africa's ethnic music and its place in the existential matrix of African communities, where musical art is at the centre of cultural experiences, mediating key processes and evoking a spiritual framework (Matiure, 2013:10). Pathisa Nyathi (may his dear soul rest in peace) recounted:

> We sing to reconnect with the good old days. Even here in Matebeleland, there are such songs that are sung on a funeral, some are selectively sung by a bereaved family member to remember. Such songs relieve so much pressure; they heal the soul. It may appear awkward in some societies, like in Mashonaland, because remember Zimbabwe has various cultures. In my assessment of Mtukudzi's music, I can say much of it focuses on healing practices. He addresses human misfortunes such as death, HIV/AIDS, climate change but at the end, he makes us to remember the 'good' (interview, 10 March 2023)

This study resonates with the submission that music can "take over the outside world, as consciousness of the present to some extent disappears, with time standing still, the only thing remaining being the music and myself, here and now" (Gabrielsson, 2013: 109). For example, Nyamasvisva noted,

> Music relieves the emotional and psychological stress that come with losing your loved ones. It temporally takes you to another world. Sometimes I feel

> like my mum is still with me when I play Mtukudzi's song 'Chengetai Mai Nababa….chido chaMwari kuva navo' (Look after your father and mother…its by God's will that you still have them (interview, 1 May 2023).

The acknowledgement of music's potency in this sense implies a powerful effect, particularly if the music is performed live (Gabrielsson, 2013).

Whilst the data from semi structured in depth interviews yielded a thematic cluster arguing for communal and collective implications of healing in grief, there is a sense in which music facilitates healing for the bereaved on a personal level also. Juslin et al. (2010) argue in favour of personal music use and the underlying mechanisms behind the role that music plays in one's emotional life. In the wake of these arguments and the various levels at which healing occurs, this research submits that studies on decolonising pyscho-social health practices resonate with individual beliefs in a given context, and this is also understood in light of the broader community. However, decolonising anything is complex. Decolonisation needs to be carefully negotiated because partnership with the people who have historically benefited from coloniality is often important in order for it to be successful. The need for decolonisation requires one to be cautious about unnecessary radicalisation (Mutsvairo and Karam 2022). This study takes the position that decoloniality is not merely and naively counter-discursive in nature, but that it should not wish away the cultural baggage that accrued courtesy of the colonial encounter itself - otherwise it would be frustratingly ahistorical and lacking in its theoretical depth. This explains why this study is premised on a conceptual frame that considers, for instance, the fact that Postcolonial (PC) and Postcolonial Indigenous (PCI) tenets are theoretical milestones that ought to be negotiated in a continuum rather than in contradistinction.

Oliver Mtukudzi's music has been invariably used deliberately by listeners to regulate their moods and emotions. This study thus argues that there is a relationship between a person's healing, bereavement and grieving, and their choice of and/or exposure to music and community. In this regard, healing (within the broader frame of its cultural architecture) occurs at multiple levels – individual and collective.

5.4.2 Music at the service of communication therapy

In contextualising this section, the researcher acknowledges that culture taps its roots in time, as different generations are exposed to unique influences that shape the values they support and the practices they engage (Gentile et al., 2014). For this research, data reflects evidence that points to the generational differences due to exposure to times of economic scarcity at

different stages of development. The study found that African communication practices reflect 'communication of not so easy and comfortable topics.' This was revealed by Norman Mtukudzi who stated,

> During tense discussions, a piece of music can be deployed to interject so that people come back to their true senses. Such music is loaded with meaning of the 'present' times. In my years, I have witnessed cases where say aunties interject during tense discussions to cool down tempers. Such funerals may have been as a result of unclear circumstances (interview, 13 February 2023).

Music is used to engage and negotiate family conflicts that emerge either pursuant to or as a result of death. Participants revealed that the death of a close one can bring accusations and counter-accusations among families, with name-calling, blame-shifting and acrimonious antagonisms around the subject of causality, resulting in serious disintegration of families emotionally, psychologically and sometimes physically. In most cases, as Samantha Mtukudzi notes, "…rich families are the most affected as families jostle to eat the last cake. Women and children are the most affected in these 'crises,' a trend which has developed with the passage of time" (interview, 10 May 2023). What this confirms is that African cultural processes have transitioned over time, not simply by changing, but by following sequences of progressive differentiation and integration in relation to multicultural co-presences courtesy of shifting demographics in the global village.

Mtukudzi's music serves as a moral indictment in the wake of vices such as greed, malice, selfishness and lack of discretion in moments of loss, calling for healing of families, unity and pathways to collectively seek consolation. Music is thus a site of broader mass society communication whose effects find places among different cultural contexts, families and relatives. This was revealed as follows:

> Since time immemorial, our elders deployed music to communicate issues that were deemed complex, things that needed simplicity. We used music to ridicule, condemn, heal and console the grieving. Naturally, death is associated with sorcery and witchcraft in Africa so because of such complexities, music emerged as the best weapon. In Oliver Mtukudzi's song 'Rufu ndi manzongonyedze pane vanodanana' (death is destruction among the loved ones), you will realise the deep meaning embedded in this song

> around this phenomenon. Such music is garnished with idioms and figurative language. That is how we speak (Norman Mtukudzi, interview, 13 February 2023).

The above submission was further supported by the words: "Mtukudzi spoke through music" (Pathisa Nyathi, interview, 10 March 2023). It is notable that Mtukudzi takes significant time and space in his music to explain that there are various ways in which Africans speak, and music is one such effective tactic. Pathisa Nyathi said Mtukudzi's music demonstrates healing practices of the mind and the soul in very unique ways. He said it is deliberate that widows are surrounded with their loved ones listening to cool, soothing melodious tunes that sometimes give 'them a lullaby'. It reduces stress and anxiety as they would have been psychologically affected. Tension that may potentially erupt among families is cured through music.

Research shows that the 'individual-social' dialectic of culture reconciles this tension by moving beyond the notion that the individual and the social are dual opposites at different ends of a spectrum (Cole & Wertsch, 1996). Instead, they are to be seen as intertwined and inseparable entities that are engaged in constant feedback and mutual determination (Overton, 2010). This is understood in the context of society's conceptualisation of a person's development in relation to others, a cultural practice that denotes a systems approach that can help overcome counterproductive practices in contemporary human interactions such as fragmenting, objectifying, and disaggregating (Raeff, 2017). Under such a context, dimensions such as the 'individual-social' manifest at various levels of metatheory, from a specific domain of inquiry to a more general epistemological level (Overton, 2010).

As such, the individual-social dimension refers to relational dynamics between a person and a group, but also to concepts of individuality and sociality in cultural theories that are in tension with each other. These dimensions are not presented as dual categories typical of Cartesian paradigms, but as points of views (Latour, 1993), continuous dimensions (Raeff, 2011), or levels of analysis (Overton, 2010). These cultural dimensions are articulated by Mtukudzi's music in Shona cultural processes. They reflect ways of speaking, healing and consolation operational at various levels.

5.5 Conclusion

As demonstrated in the themes developed from this research's first data set (semi-structured in-depth interviews), Mtukudzi's music demonstrates a presentational and representational art form that is both expressive, performative and therapeutic. His music occupies the centre of

intangible cultural heritage that communities, groups and individuals recognise as part of their existence; providing them with a sense of identity and continuity (UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention, 2003). As such, music dispenses with its utilitarian role as a cultural preservative and an identity reinforcer as demonstrated in this chapter.

Music's pervasive nature is demonstrated by its indispensable roles across society's social, physical, psychological, economic, religious and cultural spheres (Flynn 2018; Agawu 2003; Nzwei 2003). It emerged that bereavement among Shona people is conceptualised within the frame of the community's culture. Mtukudzi's music holds significant patterns of meaning among indigenous people in relation to how they recover from loss/death. This chapter directs its efforts towards decolonising African communication research, and it does so by drawing critical insights from Mtukudzi's music.

The chapter applied thematic analysis to respond to the questions of the study by way of analysing interviewee responses. The researcher rode on the conceptual framework in Chapter Three (3) to explore "…a system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that inform and support a study" (Maxwell, 2008:222).The framework of interrelated concepts from Postcolonial Indigenous Theory (Chilisa, 2012), African Cultural Studies (see Tomaselli, 2019), as well as the Culture-Centred Approach (Dutta, 2011) was enlisted in the quest to answer the research questions of this study as it explores the interface between psycho-social health and indigenous healing practices. Providing guidance to this endeavour were the objectives driving the research, with focus directed towards the ways by which Mtukudzi's music facilitates healing for the bereaved in the context of the Shona community's indigenous knowledge systems.

Chapter Six

Data presentation and analysis: Shona community engagement and psycho-social support in bereavement

6.0 Introduction

To corroborate the themes, thought patterns and idea clusters which emerged from an engagement with the data presented in Chapter Five (based on the semi-structured in-depth interviews constituting the first data set), the present chapter explores data obtained from two data sets. Firstly, the data obtained from a focus group discussion which was conducted in the form of a *lekgotla* (an African indigenous colloquium) whose sampling involved purposively selected community elders, cultural experts and practitioners of the indigenous healing domain in the Fumhe village in Dande (the Northern Zimbabwean district from which the Mtukudzi family hails). Secondly, and as a follow-up to the *lekgotla*, data was also obtained from a 'women-only' focus group discussion conducted with selected women participants from Fumhe village. The principal focus of this chapter is hinged on conversations that are guided by the study's first two objectives as follows: (1) To explore African healing practices and principles reflected in Oliver Mtukudzi's music, and (2) To examine the ways by which Oliver Mtukudzi's music facilitates healing for the bereaved in the context of the Shona community's indigenous knowledge systems.

To enlist community engagement within local governance protocols vis-a-vis the ethnography of grief and healing in the context of death, this chapter's two data sets were yielded as the study's first two research objectives (provided above) guided the exploration of the study's first two research questions:

1. How does Oliver Mtukudzi's music reflect Shona healing principles and practices?

    (i) What Shona community psycho-social support concepts are articulated by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?
    (ii) What public health principles are foregrounded by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?

2. In what ways does Mtukudzi's music facilitate healing in the context of loss, bereavement and grief?

Notably, qualitative knowledge generation in the context of the African Global South, if appropriately historicised, espouses a definitively indigenous perspectives that acknowledges community participants as co-creators of the epistemic margins within which scholarship can understand phenomena as conceived and practiced by a given group of people (Mseleku, 2024). For the researcher, phenomenology remained the methodological compass aiding the process of exploring the philosophies and sensibilities of the Fumhe village, with music in its cultural-situatedness serving as a prism through which the community's healing practices can be appreciated.

6.1 Application of *lekgotla* as a co-constructed data technique in the study

In 2015, the researcher joined a collaborative multi-country research team called Seboka. The team is composed of members drawn from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Malawi and Zambia. Resonating with scholarship trends in the direction of epistemological diversity, Seboka's research work over the years has deployed *lekgotla* (plural: *makgotla*) as one of indigenous research methodologies suited to negotiate space, scope and traction for Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). The deployment of *Lekgotla* in this study, considering the framework of concepts guiding the research, resonates with Mbembe's (2016) decolonial frame that bemoans postcolonial societies whose institutions of knowledge production have remained 'Westernised' to the extent of disaggregating African indigenes from the matrix of knowledge production. Mbembe explains that 'Westernised' knowledge as a body of thought is based on a Eurocentric epistemic canon, with a major pitfall being its narrow and exclusionary certitudes that conceive of truth as being only the 'Western' way of knowledge production.

In motivating for an epistemic model that integrates indigenous methodologies into the ecology of global knowledge systems, Chilisa et al. (2016) posit that indigenous research paradigms deploy decolonial apparatus to address epistemic violence and its concomitant tragedy of cultural erasure. As such, in deploying lekgotla, this study endeavoured to integrate community voices in the process of phenomenologically understanding African ways of understanding death, grief, bereavement as well as the culturally efficacious ways of providing support in the context of loss. Abel Pienaar, the Seboka team leader, conceptualises a *lekgotla* as a form of qualitative data gathering relevant for research conducted with a community in the sense that it forthrightly attempts to give the community back their dignity, which can be lost through research, by giving them a voice to tell their own story (Pienaar, 2015:59–64). A key dialectic emerging from the Seboka team's research excursions over the years is the heightened sense

of vigilance to the merits of co-existence within a global scholarship space characterised by multi-cultural co-presences. Within the domain of healthcare, for instance, Seboka has engaged the philosophy of an Africa-centred consciousness in acknowledgement of the scope for co-existence between Western science and health practice on one hand, and African indigenous science and practice in the healthcare domain on the other.[5] Resultantly, Seboka underscores the merits of holism, inclusivity and co-existence as pillars of African cultural essence that ought to be understood in perspective if the African Global South is to appropriate its self-defining voice against the backdrop of long-entrenched Eurocentric certitudes in scholarship.

The Seboka team's past experiences of field trips and teamwork amongst indigenous Khoisan community members in South Africa form the basis upon which the researcher chose to adaptively deploy *lekgotla* as a method to engage the Shona community in Zimbabwe, paying due cognisance to community local governance dynamics, cultural value systems, ethical considerations, norms and taboos, as well as observing standard protocols when interfacing with members of the community. Because of its nature as a participatory, community appraisal method of data collection within the context of this study's qualitative, explorative approach, a *lekgotla* comes in handy as a culturally-sensitive means of data collection (Magcai, Du Plessis & Pienaar, 2013). This is the background against which the researcher came to appreciate the *lekgotla* as an indigenous method of data collection.

The researcher remained awake to the role of traditional norms and their potential protective qualities, allowing the community members to create the discursive context within which music in its cultural-situatedness discharges its role as a diagnostic tool and a healing apparatus in psycho-social interventions amongst the bereaved. Engaging Mtukudzi's music amongst consumers who are in the environment of the artist's origins generated nuances and insights that play out in the themes and patterns unpacked by this chapter.

6.2 Data Procedures and the Analytical Process

The procedures of data collection as well as the process of analysing the data in this chapter build upon the ideas and concepts in the previous chapter. The questions listed above aided the

[5]https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323130229_Conference_Report_The_First_Seboka_International_Conference

development of the focus group discussion guides which produced responses that were subjected to thematic analysis (TA) guided by the Braun and Clarke (2019) six-stage process, to generate patterns and/or themes from the qualitative data. The process was intentionally guided by a comprehensive approach to TA, connecting the research's key objectives to the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm (Braun and Clarke 2019) explained in detail in Chapter Four (4) of this study. The approach was useful because, unlike many qualitative methodologies, the method was not confined to a particular epistemological or theoretical viewpoint (Braun & Clarke 2019; Clarke & Braun, 2020). This made it a very flexible method, a considerable advantage given the comprehensive scope of work involved in unpacking Oliver Mtukudzi's music and its space among the Shona (Korekore community) people of the Fumhe village.

Notably, the data procedures and analytical process applied in this study all acknowledge Potter's (1997) arguments that qualitative analysis is a 'craft skill', subjective, complex, analytic and descriptive process. Considering this approach, the researcher acknowledges differing opinions that may arise from his findings, given that a 'shared topic' does not necessarily translate to a 'shared meaning' (Braun and Clarke, 2019). After all, it is argued that qualitative researchers of this nature are creative, reflexive and subjective but the researcher's subjectivity is regarded as a resource (Gough and Madill, 2012) and not necessarily a threat to the knowledge production process.

The researcher should forthrightly state that data in this chapter mobilised several Shona cultural variants, bearing the centrality of the Culture-Centred Approach (CCA) to this study's 'conceptual framework' as explained in Chapter Three (3). The Fumhe village is a community that speaks the *Korekore* dialect of the diglossic (linguistically broad and varied) Shona language, bearing in mind the cultural nuances and region-specific dynamics attendant to the rich Shona language as expressed in its other dialects: *Karanga, Ndau, Manyika* and *Zezuru*. The researcher, a native of the *Manyika* dialect of Shona, sought to understand the phenomenon of psycho-social support in death and grief as explored through music in its cultural situatedness by engaging with the *Korekore* community in Fumhe village. The coding process demonstrated in Chapter Five (5) was also applied in this present chapter. The following themes emerged from the community engagement process.

6.3 *Legkotla* (African indigenous colloquium)

The themes generated from the lekgotla are: Shona funerals as protocol-driven community processes; debates on male dominance in community-sanctioned grief support; the 'ancestorhood' rite of passage in Shona cosmology; Shona funeral procession as comic theatre; death and the journey motif in Shona culture. The researcher explores these thematic aspects yielded by the data in the sub-sections below. These themes include: Shona funerals as protocol-driven community processes; debates on male dominance in community-sanctioned grief support and the 'ancestorhood' rite of passage in Shona cosmology

6.3.1. Shona funerals as protocol-driven community processes

This section deciphers the *lekgotla* participant's perspectives and nuances as demonstrated by the customs, protocols, role-plays and hierarchies that play out in the ritual and common practices at Shona funerals. The section also generated its data from perspectives embedded within the cultural terrain of ethnic music and, in the process, also interrogating male chauvinism within the broader frame of human social relations. A telling sentiment was picked up by the researcher from the submission of one participant who said, "…*lekgotla* is punitive in nature, it promotes male egoism even in times of sorrow, can you imagine?" (*lekgotla*, 21 July 2023)

The *lekgotla* was chaired by the village headman and district Chief who were instrumental in creating a set-up in which six male elders are part of local governance council of the headman. The headman said,

> Contrary to some views that our lekgotla does not promote women views, that is not correct. It is just protocol because they have their female representative whom we work with on these matters. She is our reference in everything. But of course, I admit that times have changed (*Lekgotla*, 21 July 2023).

The researcher picked from this submission an apparent social order where women appeared as second-rated principles in matters where the broader community needed representation. The voice of the domineering male patriarchs denoted a foregone conclusion where women were only co-opted into this forum as a default way of creating a superficial sense of equal

representation, with their male counterparts apparently hogging the limelight as the standard social reference point.

In the Fumhe village, funerals are conducted in a manner that generally reflects the community's generally accepted norms and standards. Reinforcing Shona funeral protocols, Norman Mtukudzi shared the following thoughts:

> The headman's presence amongst members of the grieving family sends enough communication to the whole village. Everyone must attend as a sign of unity. In unity there is a strong cultural communication which demonstrates key conversations, sad misfortunes in the village and how to possibly find a lasting solution. Families who are grieving are also given instant justice should there arise a misunderstanding. African funerals are normally associated with accusations and counter accusations of witchcraft, sorcery, unpaid lobola etc. In a sense, such conversations at a funeral are collectively dealt with a view to rubber stamp Ubuntu (*Lekgotla*, 21 July 2023)

With the village headman having set the tone, another participant weighed in:

> When we mourn, we mourn together. In the African culture, consolation for a mourning individual is only meaningful when viewed from the perspective that a village participates in collective mourning because one's loss is our loss together (*Lekgotla*, 21 July 2023).

The above resonates with the concept of 'community bereavement' as highlighted in the interviews analysed in Chapter 5. This pattern of thought is reflected in Mtukudzi's song *Mabasa*, where the singer says, *"Tumirai mhere kuvakuru, kuno kwaita Mabasa. Ndozviudza aniko, vakuru weee, kwaita Mabasa kuno"* loosely translated "Send a wail to the elders of the community, a calamity has befallen us here and whom shall we tell." Informing the elders thus turns out to be part of the protocols involved in enlisting collective participation in the expression of commiseration and consolation to the bereaved families. Because of their character as standard community gatherings, Shona funerals turn out to be reflectors of normative decorum sanctioned by community value systems (Kamwendo and Manyeruke, 2017).

6.3.2 Debates on male dominance in Shona societies

Observable through the *lekgotla* was a heightened sense of protocol as a significant factor in the way a funeral is conducted. Ngugi (1981:87) highlights how Shona people attempt to bring to the fore the perspective that can allow us "…to see ourselves clearly in relation to other selves in the universe." Village members do not rush to congregate at the homestead of the bereaved. Rather, a headman's lead council member is informed so that he passes on the sad news to the headman. The intention is to allow a smooth coordination of the whole village, with this coordination serving as part of the ways of consoling each other in the process of death and bereavement. Patriarchy is the social operating system amongst the Shona people. Despite the changes occasioned by global currents championing the cause of social equality groups, communities of the Shona people in Zimbabwe still carry residual undertones of male superiority passed through generations. The Fumhe village is not immune to this dynamic. One participant outlined the following:

> Men are the custodians of community values, ethics and ethos. They not only provide social security but direction and order. We attempt to bring freedom. You may wonder how? Freedom comes from a shared understanding that community members are structured for good reasons. It loosens the burden. In our culture, we believe that women 'joined' our families (*Lekgotla*, 21 July 2023).

A notable aspect that emerged from the *lekgotla's* conversations is the concept of role-play and culturally-entrenched forms of differentiation that come out clearly in the duties ordinarily assigned to members of the community at funerals across the gender-divide. One participant noted:

> Obviously, at funerals, you cannot expect the men to be busy with meal preparation for the gathering as well as serving of food to the throng when women and girls are there. Part of standard decorum within our culture expects girls and women to discharge their care-giving roles in preparing food, serving the guests, doing dishes and some such duties which are the domain of our wives and daughters. Similarly, you cannot also expect women to chair the family meetings, inheritance ceremonies, as well as to deal with community members and potential post-funeral disputes within the extended

> family because that is the duty of men as the leaders as dictated by our culture (*Lekgotla*, 21 July 2023).

In listening to these submissions, the researcher mapped the traces of patriarchal conventions that have naturalised over time, with some women apparently manifesting signs of having succumbed to the hegemonic effects of male dominance in social processes, as if they were complicit with a chauvinistic set up where they played second fiddle. This strengthened the research's endeavour to engage women in a more neutral forum to probe these social power nuances within the broader decolonial quest for voicing. Segato and Monque (2021) bemoan cracks within indigenous communities whose relational patterns facilitated colonial encroachment by default. The understanding is that the indigenization agenda should not necessarily homogenise communities as they are also fraught with regional, ethnic, gender and age-related contradictions that necessitate a perceptive consideration of social equality groups amongst the demographics of the African Global South.

Members of the *lekgotla* agreed that when the headman is informed of the sad news, he is the first person to arrive at the homestead of the bereaving family, in which case he partially de-roles by vicariously becoming part of the consoled people. This is because he is regarded as the 'father' figure of the 'family'. Family in this case refers to the broader community. The funeral ths belongs to the community. Quizzed on the significance of this process, Norman Mtukudzi (the village headman, in attendance at the *lekgotla*) said it is part of African cultural ways of consoling the living, a show of unity and togetherness.

6.3.3 The 'ancestorhood' rite of passage in Shona cosmology

A curious thought that augurs with Shona religious cosmology is the concept of death as a form of entry into another realm of existence. This belief serves as a philosophical regulator governing relations between the living (remaining) and the dead (departed). A telling reflection was shared by a participant:

> In our Shona culture, when one dies, they automatically enter the domain of ancestorhood, in which case they become part of the revered essence that provides guardianship over the living (*Lekgotla*, 21 July 2023).

This submission stems from an epistemological conceptualisation of "the living dead" in a metaphysical realm best understood from the perspective of the phenomenology of religion

(Uchendu, 1976). Citing Mtukudzi's song, *Tungamira* (Go ahead), another participant echoes this sentiment:

> When you listen to one of Oliver Mtukudzi's oldest songs, *Tungamira,* you hear the musician telling the deceased to go ahead, acknowledging that us who remain are hopeful that we will reconnect with the departed in another realm. The song itself is the voice of the community communicating with the deceased upon their departure from the world of the material, reminding him that he has a duty to watch over us who are remaining. When we mourn, we mourn in the context of also celebrating the deceased's entry into a new ancestorhood, (*Lekgotla*, 21 July 2023)

Another participant shared their thoughts on music's role in the following reflection:

> Remember music's relevance goes beyond the immediate context of the funeral. There are instances where music also evokes distant memories of the long-departed loved ones, as closure takes place in phases. When you listen to Mtukudzi's song, *Mutserendende* (smooth-sailing), you will appreciate that the musician uses both the personal and collective voice in the manner he appreciates the love, values, counsel and example set by the long-gone aunt and father, with these characters used as examples to celebrate the older generation and its ability to culturally hold fort as opposed to the modern generation that has succumbed to cultural erosion (Lekgotla, 21 July 2023).

Death is treated with much seriousness amongst the African people due to the cosmological axiom that "Africans never die because the living connects with the living dead" (Osore, 2021). The researcher established a pattern of relations combining the living, the dead, and their environment, with the Fumhe village drawing cultural resources from their heritage and philosophy to obtain the necessary anchor to surmount grief. Such is the backdrop against which support in grief ought to be understood amongst the Shona.

6.3.4 Shona funeral procession as comic theatre

There bis a sense in which Shona funerals constitute an acted drama that has multiple functions: didactic, comic, therapeutic and aesthetic. The widow-inheritance ritual, cleansing ritual, distribution of the deceased's estate and all other customs that constitute the post-death rites of

passage get more meaningfully highlighted in theatrical depictions that showcase a n uanced and vibrant sociology. A participant noted:

> It is a fallacy for you to think that funerals in the Shona community are outrightly about mourning. They are also a celebration. We often ride on the social license bequeathed upon the family friend, the Sahwira, to act out the funny habits exhibited by the deceased. The funeral is a theatre where a certain degree of license is granted to the close family friends of the bereaved who then begin to sarcastically imitate the voice, common sayings and habits of the deceased. This helps in providing us with some comic relief in mourning, highlighting the beautiful memories that we can hold on to, which then become part of the consolation we need in gradually coming to terms with the loss. Part of our reasons for gathering at funerals is the obligation to reminisce and act out the good from the departed (*Lekgotla*, 21 July 2023).

Theatrical shows in Shona community leverage song, dance, incantations, recitations that reflect the performative function of art in conjuring life mimetically. Notably, in the process of mourning, the bereaved also exhibit some spirited embodiment, and reverence of the departed regardless of their earthly conduct. Muranda (2018) notes that through song, the Shona people draw solace, hope, and peace of mind with regard to life after death, with music being one of the key mechanisms reflexively deployed by the Shona community to deal with grief. It is notable that because of its pervasive nature as a coping mechanism, a memory-evoking tool and as a reflector of shared cultural values, music has been integrated into the funeral rituals and funeral programmes as a necessary expression of life that discharges multiple functions in the domain of healing (albeit at different levels).

The following reflection is telling:

> When we sing at funerals, the songs perform multiple roles. Some songs are, a comic indictment to potential greedy family members of the deceased who might want to take advantage of the estate of the deceased ignoring the immediate family of the deceased and its natural entitlement to the remaining estate. When you listen to the songs, for instance Mtukudzi's song, Neria, you will notice that the song has got an educational dimension because it was sung to educate society on the need to respect widows as a social equality

> group that requires protection, assistance and recognition in a polarised society (*lekgotla*, 21 July 2023).

Arguably, theatre is not only didactic. It also serves entertaining, aesthetic and comic functions that regulate social relations. An interesting part of the funeral theatre that was discussed by participants is the commonly accepted and socially-licensed tendency of family friends who act out the tendencies and behaviours of the deceased during the funeral ceremony. There is an interesting sense of utter mischief on the part of the family friends who might sing songs that are suggestive of many things like the widow's sexual liberation, potential suitors of the widow and the freedom that the wife of the deceased is also entitled to once the mourning season is over.

6.3.5 Death and the journey motif in Shona culture

Arguably, the generational reflections evoked by music constitute an observable journey motif. As such, to understand music's role in the context of healing for the bereaved entails appreciating music's characteristic function a comic indictment to potential greedy family members of the deceased who might want to take advantage of the estate of the deceased. The common funeral dirge in the words '*Fambai zvakanaka*' (travel well) reflects the belief that death, just like life itself, is a journey a comic indictment to potential greedy family members of the deceased who might want to take advantage of the estate of the deceased, but an ongoing function that can be discharged even long after a beloved one has departed.

In the process of engaging with the Fumhe village members, the researcher took note of the fact that a *lekgotla* is a site of cultural communication in that it converges the thoughts that have come to shape a community's system of beliefs over a long time. As previously intimated in Chapter 5, whilst the aim of a *lekgotla* is to get innovative and authentic outcomes (Pienaar, 2014:5), there is also need to acknowledge contributions from various demographics, given the nuances of a patriarchal social order that can potentially muzzle the feminine voice in the process of conceptualising music's role in healing from a cultural perspective. The politics of erasure and exclusion problematised earlier as the backdrop against which communities of the African Global South are championing an epistemic drive towards indigenous knowledge generation finds perceptive articulation in Mohan Dutta's conceptual configuration of the Culture-Centred Approach (Dutta, 2011). Tracing its location to the foundations of postcolonial and subaltern studies theories, the culture-centred approach is an enabling force for transformation that equips marginalised communities with a voice against global

hegemonic structures, heralding resistance to the neo-liberal policies that perpetuate inequalities and the marginalisation of the poor (Beverley, 1999).

6.4 Women-only Focus Group Discussion

This section discusses the data which emerged from the 'women only' focus group discussion (FGD) as a follow up to the lekgotla, as it was imperative that women's voices be heard in a platform that was not polarised by the strictures of patriarchy. The themes generated from the women-only focus group discussion include: the paradox of symbolic annihilation and the 'women-factor' approach to support in grief; echoing voices of bereavement, grief and consolation; the loss of meaning in Shona cultural practices; destructive stigmatization practices in Shona communities. These themes are presented and analysed below.

6.4.1 The paradox of symbolic annihilation and the 'women-factor' approach to support in grief

This is the first theme generated from the women only FDG. Here, the researcher presents the many ways in which women are often looked down upon during community gatherings such as funerals that speaks to issue on indigenous rights and indigenous peoples and self-determination (Smith 1999). The researcher observed that women are largely excluded from the *lekgotla* proceedings, sometimes their presence being a mere cosmetic formality, which raises significant critical questions about the marginalisation of women. From the researcher's observations during the *lekgotla* proceedings, it emerged that women are relegated to the kitchen (the kitchen being a metonymy of the domestic space) to prepare food and drinks, even if it's a fellow woman who would have died. The following response from a participant (add date) is illustrative of this view:

> It is a bit unfair that we discuss issues that affect the whole society in the absence of women. Even in circumstances where a woman is involved. I find it very disturbing that in this day and age, we are too traditional. We need to give them a voice, fair representation. Society is not only made up of men. We exist as a symbol of care, peace and love. Unfortunately, men decide for us. They discuss for us (FGD, 21 July 2023).

The above confirms long-held views regarding the 'domestication' of women in the way they are relegated to roles that render them second-rated members of the society. Women tend to be pushed by default to conduct domestic duties such as housework or caring for children,

predominant chores reserved for women and represented as 'women's work' (Furnham & Paltzer, 2010; Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009). Accordingly, women remain portrayed in stereotypical roles, such as home-maker and mother (Eisend, 2010; Matthes et al., 2016). Gender displays in such contexts, such as conventionalised portrayals of masculinity and femininity, result in the patriarchy-dictated portraiture of women as susceptible, delicate, weak and submissive, with this done in contradistinction to men's portrayal as self-assured, comfortable, influential and aware of their communities (Goffman, 1979). A follow up question was then raised by the researcher to which a participant responded as follows:

> There are cultural processes which are conducted in the absence of women for various reasons. We live in a social set up where women are regarded as *vatorwa* (outsiders) who are married into other people's families. This in a way disregards the fact that women bear children and shape the direction of society as nurturers, teachers and conveyors of society's values across generations. There is a sense in which the patriarchal society dictates that women should not know sensitive issues of the 'family' for they will know the weaknesses of the families they marry into. Women tend to feel that they get treated as outcasts in the way duties are allocated on the lines of gender (FGD, 21 July 2023).

In conceptualising the culture-centred approach, Dutta (2012) espoused the aspirational agenda of social transformation that celebrated agency on the part of humanity's disruptive ingenuity, particularly the transformative energy within the marginalised to subvert repressive structures that militate against upward social mobility. In the course of engaging with the research's women participants in the Fumhe community, this study kept alive to communicative pathways available to explore a redress of disproportionately configured social power relations due to the apparent excesses of patriarchy. With the voices of protest registered by the women participants, the research admitted the existence of hope at the end of the engagement tunnel. The researcher found out that women segregation is a collective family bottom-up systematic annihilation process that spills over to the broader society. This is because of the nature of patriarchy in Shona communities. The concept of symbolic annihilation was first propounded and conceptualised by Gerbner and Gross (1976) in their endeavour to explain the absence of representation, or underrepresentation, of a group of people in certain spaces, for instance, based on sex, race or sexual orientation, which influences deep rooted social inequalities. A participant noted:

> The reasons for women's exclusion are just but funny. Elders will tell you that they are women, that's all. When my sister died under very mysterious circumstances, men in this village led the proceedings without considering our feelings, thoughts and emotions. It seems as if burying the dead, for them, is just mere protocol. But look, protocol should not be insensitive to the feelings of the directly affected persons. Women are just stigmatized on the basis of femininity ((FGD, 21 July 2023).

Tuchman (1978) argues that symbolic annihilation is centered on three effects that impact on women, chiefly trivialisation, omission and condemnation, which resultantly affect women's opportunities to participate fully in society.

According to Walby (1990), patriarchy manifests in a systematic, nuanced and multifaceted manner anchored on structures that belittle women – reflecting intersectional alterations which demonstrate that these structures may be experienced in various ways. In simpler terms, culture is one of them, within which gendered meanings are manufactured and spread from a patriarchal standpoint, in turn reinforcing different norms and values for women and men. In view of this observation, the study found out that *makgotla* (African indigenous colloquia) operate under this structure. The exertion of agency requires engagement with determining structures, discourses, and prevailing conditions (Dutta 2011) in both symbolic and material terms. The symbolic takes the form of voice and self-representation in attaining material agency through economic empowerment or another form of social strengthening. However, within the context of this study's conceptual framework, it is important to reflect how 'agency' is a key tenet mobilised in social change interventions that register the quest for voicing in societies that are historically structured to sustain oppressive conditions and foster multiple relations of negation at gender and other levels (Dutta, 2011). given The study flags out this characteristic of the method, highlighting the scope for future studies in the cultural domain to further interrogate its far-reaching consequences and effects. The following words by a participant are worth noting:

> We expect policy makers to reconsider this set up. What is community if there is a culture of listening only to one gender at the expense of the other? Should we not be guided fairly by national cultural heritage policies or are the policies themselves biased in some way? Even you guys you are still in

> universities, why don't you write about these things if you believe in fairness? Are you not able to break these chains? (FGD, 21 July 2023)

The researcher is convinced that there is room for policies to intervene and proffer solutions to the harm caused by patriarchy even in the conducting of funerals in indigenous communities of the Shona people. Having observed these developments, the researcher emphasises that Shona funeral protocol communicates that what is constructed as feminine is subordinate to what is understood as masculine. As such, patriarchal norms of grief continue to peddle the 'feminine mystique' (Friedan, 1963), whereby a woman's duty is defined through the fulfilment of femininity.

Oliver Mtukudzi's song, *Neria*, despite the heavy emotional, physical and psychological burden that comes with death, women are told to accept the situation as normal, inadvertently reinforcing the stereotype that society should be addressing. Moreso, the song was composed to partly account for the Shona community's funeral and post-interment rites of passage, particularly the sociology attendant to the cultural practice of *kugara nhaka* (the widow-inheritance ritual). Mtukudzi thus sang, *'Usaore moyoka Neria, Mwari vanewe….shinga moyo shinga,'* (Translated: do not despair Neria, God is with you…let your heart be strong…let your heart be strong), creating the paradox of expecting a woman to unquestioningly accept her lot instead of asserting her space within the scope of things. In its contemporary form, a *lekgotla's* 'postfeminist mystique' presents femininity as an 'empowered choice,' with the whole notion of domesticity, for instance, being conceived of as the employment of managerial and leadership skills to control and construct order in the kitchen and not necessarily as a gender-role descriptor (Munford and Waters, 2014). The researcher was thus able to establish the quest for voicing amongst womenfolk as expressed in the sociology of emergent scholarly discourses.

6.4.2 'It is what it is!'- echoing voices of bereavement, grief and consolation

This theme presents the ways in which certain Shona cultural variants have naturalised and normalised despite posing discomfort to the wellbeing of women. Nascent signs of toxic masculinity in cultural practices could be understood in the conceptualisation of Mbembe (2016) who foregrounds how hegemonic ways of knowledge production and social practice influence discursive patterns that have morphed into interpretive frames, inadvertently making it complex to think outside of these frames. But this is not all. This hegemonic tradition also actively represses anything that is articulated, thought and envisioned from outside of these

frames. By extension, the researcher perceives, within decolonial studies, the scope for introspection by indigenous African communities in a bid to debunk counter-progressive tendencies that have been naturalised with time.

The women-only FDG was conducted because of the significance of participatory characteristics (Bennett et al., 2017) particularly in the community-engagement context of this study. Table 6.1 below was created as part of the researcher's systematic effort to meet the objectives of this study. In the context of this study, the FDG was enabled by villagers' willingness to robustly participate, and their involvement was instrumental in generating significant data within their homogenous group. In this regard, the researcher took guidance from Krueger's (1994) argument that participants should share similar characteristics such as gender, age range, ethnic and social class background if the method of data collection is to yield replicable, reliable and verifiable data. Taking these factors into account, the researcher remained alert to the dynamics surrounding the novelty of deploying an FGD in this context, and this application was done as outlined in the table below:

Table 6.1 Participants recruitment and inclusion criteria for the women-only Focus Group

FDGs	**COMPOSITION**	**RATIONALE**
Eight widows	Elderly	They were selected based on their marriage experience. They also possess rich Shona cultural knowledge. They also have gone for years after losing their husbands, hence their age-aided encounter with nuanced dynamics surrounding femininity in a patriarchal community. They, in some way, are a source of reference and hope to young widows in Fumhe village. They avoluntarily participated to share their wealth of experiences.

Eight widows	Middle aged	They bring a fresh perspective on life after marriage. They also have an experience-driven perspective as a social equality group in partriarchy, hence their friendly engagement with the imperatives of Shona culture. They voluntarily participated

From the FDG conducted with sixteen members of the elderly and middle-aged groups, it emerged that Shona funeral processes are guided by ancestral values and norms. There are no short cuts to it because 'it is what it is, its custom,' as revealed by the group leader. The participants revealed that elders of the village, as represented by their headman, remain the custodians of Shona cultural values and ethics. One participant recounted:

> I got married to my husband in this village in 1972. All my life I have been here, I have never been to the city. These eyes have seen it. I offer social support to young widows, but the challenge is with our age differences. They are resistant to our norms and values. It is a taboo to get married to another man barely a year after your former husband has died. But with these current generations it's a challenge because perhaps it is what it is now. We also look up to our headman because naturally we are his responsibility. He makes sure we are safe, we eat, we are part of the society. It is what it is my son, life goes on (FGD, 21 July 2023).

The relationship between people's opinions and their socio-cultural situation is central to decision-making on funeral proceedings because most people relate their notions, mental constructions and interpretations from their immediate surrounding and construct these from experiential knowledge (Berkes, 2004).

Funerals are presided over by the headman to ensure correct healing practices are properly followed. It was revealed that "…the presence of the headman is very crucial…he is the custodian and torch bearer of the whole village in the mourning process. We focus on leading

the healing process. It is instructive from Oliver Mtukudzi'song whose lyrics say *'nhaka sandi bonde, nhaka kuriritira mufi'* meaning 'inheritance does not mean engaging in sexual activities with the surviving spouse, inheritance means looking after the surviving spouse." The researcher quizzed the group leader on how this then provides comfort to the grieving. Group members revealed that 'everything is about communal unity….as reflected from my brother Oliver when he sang *Ndafunga Dande* (I am thinking of Dande)*.'*

The group further revealed that 'there is power in numbers as grieving under such a context is lighter.' A participant highlighted that grieving families are "consoled by the mere presence of various community members whose bond with the family varies. It brings them certain temporal spacio memories, that's how it works." The study has found there is an extent to which Shona protocols are prohibitive in nature. Communication is tightly controlled, with answers, decisions and positions taken solely resting on the headman, hence demonstrating how human perspectives are reflected in decision-making (Bennett et al., 2017). The researcher discovered how participant identification was paramount as a step in the procedures guiding the gathering of data because the technique deployed was principally premised on group dynamics and synergistic relationships among participants to generate data (Green, Draper, and Dowler, 2003; Kitzinger, 1994; Thomas, MacMillan, McColl, Hale, & Bond, 1995). However, the composition of this group depended principally on the main aim of the research study. In listening to the perspectives and experiences raised by the women participants, the researcher retrospectively recalled the muffled murmurings of disagreements with the headman's responses during the *lekgotla*.

6.4.3 Shona cultural practices: losing meaning?

During conversations with some middle-aged couples that participated in the *lekgotla*, it was revealed that what is considered as healing and consoling is now archaic. Middle aged couples contradicted what they termed 'older generations' way of thinking that has outlived its relevance with the passage of time.' The participants in this demographic underscored the concern that times have changed and the way funeral processions are conducted in Fumhe village are not emancipatory. The couples further stated that "in as much as we cannot run away from our culture, what is 'our' culture today? Whose culture?" From this sentiment, it was evident that modernity is now part of young demographics who query healing practices as reflected in Oliver Mtukudzi's music. A middle-aged participant said,

> While Oliver Mtukudzi's music may have a meaning among Shona people, younger generations do not understand meanings attached to Oliver Mtukudzi's music. We now believe in prayer as delivered from our Pentecostal churches. After all, what is the purpose of being controlled by some old headman on how to express my feelings over the loss of my husband? I need close family and church members (FGD, 21 July 2023).

There is a participant who argued that Shona traditional culture actually brings more emotional and psychological pain especially to widows who are often accused of wrongdoing. The participant said,

> There are excessive expectations on how women should behave, conduct themselves, dress, talk and interact with fellow mourners during the funeral process. So, you can see that women bear the brunt of cultural expectations and their excesses even in the process of mourning their husbands.

It is the argument of this study that patriarchal funeral healing processes and practices annihilate women's identity, rendering them as sex objects. Such ideals are mercurial and forever shifting and never acceptable as certitudes cast in stone (Wolf, 1992). This focus on physical appearance fuels both scrutiny upon women's bodies and the alienation of women from their own bodies (Dworkin, 1974) and sustains gendered relations of power (Connell, 1987; McRobbie, 2015). Such representations have a demeaning and dehumanising impact on girls and women (Jhally et al., 2010), for 'when portrayed as objects, women are represented as available for use, exploitation and mistreatment' (Gallagher, 2001: 94)

Some participants from the FGD insisted that indigenous practices must adapt with time. While Oliver Mtukudzi hails from Dande, they also have adopted their own modern ways of healing and consolation. Among the participants, one of the chilling and gripping revelations was that:

> Our elders' approach to some of these issues have lost relevance. Imagine as young as I am being asked to wait for close to three years to move on after my spouse's death. The longer I take to move on, the more I feel lonely. The songs they expect us to sing on a funeral, many of them I cannot relate with them. The songs are laden with deep complex Shona words difficult to for me understand (FGD, 21 July 2023).

Another participant noted:

> Quite understandably, as a young and modern generation, we prefer to manage our funeral procession right from clothing, protocol and everything. I feel like being told on how to control my feelings which is not fair. I listen to my English music – at least that way I easily understand it (FGD, 21 July 2023).

The above discussion cannot go unchallenged. The question is: to what extent can the oppressive power structures of patriarchal Shona death and healing practices that systematically and symbolically annihilate women be challenged? The study raises this question, taking a cue from the feminist view point that argues that knowledge comes from social position and aims to yield alternative knowledge that prioritises thinking from subalternised lives, such as those of women, as a ways of destabilising power relations that contribute to subordination and oppression (Harding, 2004). This played out in this account:

> We just need to reset our mind-sets, our way of doing things. I believe there are women who can do better than men. There are also men who can do better than women. What it means is that we need each other as people. Some of these practices may have lost meaning in this day and age. In our constitution, we recognise both males and females as leaders. Therefore, it is imperative that we acknowledge social development as grassroots-led. It must begin right here from the community. Continued stigmatisation will not take us anywhere (FGD, 21 July 2023)

The above data shows that not all women share a single locus or viewpoint. Society must be sympathetic to women's different experiences at the intersections of various oppressive social structures (Collins, 1990). Unfortunately, although women's experiences may differ because of their social positions, all still experience sexism under patriarchy. This was further revealed by one widow who stated that "Shona cultural practices are oppressive to women, and this has been going on for years. Women are under-represented on intricate issues which affect their wellbeing, its men who should decide for them. Quite unfair!" (FGD, 21 July 2023). The researcher quizzed the widows if they are doing something to liberate themselves, only to be told:

> … you will be framed as a hard core, incorrigible and unwomanly. Challenging male dominance is not easy, especially in this kind of poverty, educational illiteracy. So we therefore are responsible for reproducing our

> misery year in and out. Unless if there is someone out there who is willing to hear our voice. We need to challenge a healing process that is autocratic – one that induces pain to the living! (FGD, 21 July 2023)

The above revelations, from a postcolonial perspective, show that women's lives have started to stand up against the dominance of patriarchal notions of healing in the context of Shona cultural practices in bereavement. Many such efforts have been driven by women organisations at national or regional level, as well as creative teams that are dominated by women, recognising the need to drive change from within (McDonagh & Prothero, 1997). On one hand, men are determined to maintain the status quo, while on the other, women desire cultural changes that are inclusive and emancipatory in nature. The exertion of agency requires engagement with determining structures, discourses, and prevailing conditions (Dutta 2011) in both symbolic and material terms.

6.4.4 Stigmatisation and gendered perspectives on Shona healing practices

To produce data that aptly respond to objective number two, the researcher was engaged in a conversation with widows. This was influenced by the researcher's observations from the responses raised by this group. They all unanimously stated that they suffer from stigmatisation emanating from Shona cultural practices during bereavement. It was revealed that as Shona communities mourn, widows and widowers quickly suffer from stigmatisation, further inflicting unbearable pain on them:

> Our culture is in somewhat oppressive and yet it has to be liberating. The way we do things must be for us, so why should we find ourselves oppressing the next person in the name of culture and gender? Psychological pain endured by women in this village is unbearable beyond imagination. No wonder why *baba* (father) Mtukudzi sang *'rufu ndi madzongonyedze'* (death is destruction). We suffer from loneliness to a point where you feel chronic effects related to depression (FGD, 21 July 2023).

From the above context, widows find themselves lonely in the name of conforming to culturally-aligned forms of healing and closure. From the conversations conducted, the study established that spousal bereavement (the state of having experienced the death of one's spouse) is a site for culturally-engineered contestations at various levels. Its effects usually vary and have more personal than communal effects and meanings. Widowhood, notably, is a

long-term and recurrent state whose individual consequences are saddled saddled with social consequences and meanings – personal, collective, accrued, entrenched – which play out in the dialectic engagement with cultural expectations in patriarchy. It is significant to differentiate between effects on one individual as compared to another. For instance, there may be short-term disruptions in sleeping and eating patterns because of bereavement, but these do not often continue into long-term widowed life (Mahraban Pienta & Franks, 2006). One participant said:

> I rarely sleep, neither do I eat. Women are naturally weak by nature. Some therefore are broken beyond repair. We have a community that is conditioned against the positive social wellbeing of women. Some women are affected to such levels that may affect their social relations with the broader community. For example, you are quickly labelled as a prostitute ever ready to snatch other women's husbands. But remember Mtukudzi sang *'Nhaka sandi bonde...'*(looking after a widow does not mean engaging in sex with her). How do I avoid responding to mere greetings from the same person I know over the last couple of years? (FGD, 21 July 2023)

The above sentiment is addressed in studies that map out the demerits of stigma in communities where gender creates steep polarity of relations (Hughes & Waite, 2009; Umberson, Wortman, & Kessler, 1992), with the widowed population invariably suffering due to lower levels of psychological wellbeing. Under such a context, as with Shona communities, this study found that commonly accepted healing practices often expose (albeit paradoxically) widowed women to higher levels of depressive symptoms, lower morale and lowered levels of social interaction (Bennett, 1997, 1998; Bennett & Morgan, 1992). For instance, one participant emotionally stated:

While Oliver Mtukudzi's music has been hailed for its therapeutic and comforting effects, depending on one's circumstances, it aids depression and stigmatisation in some aspects. A participant poignantly revealed:

> I feel lonely my son. Music usually entertains and helps in coping but in my case, it triggers chronic memories and instead of refreshment, the music vividly summons scenes from my husband's funeral years back, and I must confess that to date, the music exacts a tear or two each time I listen to it in solitude (FGD, 21 July 2023).

The effects of healing practices in some contexts present traumatic effects as opposed to consolation (Zisook, Schuchter, Sledge, Paulus, & Judd, 1994). Dugan and Kivett (1994) established that certain levels of loneliness in widowed people emanate from such acts like stigmatization and labelling. At a time when communities are believed to be healing those grieving, they ironically do the opposite. A participant noted, "It's not all music that heals. Mtukudzi's music makes me cry as if my wife died today." The levels of dependency on the spouse during the marriage is positively associated with reported anxiety in widowhood (Carr et al. 2000). This came out clearly when one widow said:

> Our social construction of healing is destructive in that it accuses the surviving spouse of being responsible for the death. When I listen to Mtukudzi's music, much as it rightly attempts to heal, it reinforces the notion of stigmatisation. He attempts to make us retrace our culture in ways that also reproduce segregation (FGD, 21 July 2023).

It is often argued that the negative impact of becoming widowed on psychological health may take time to be reversed (Mouton, & Loevinger, 2003). The consequences on physical health are less straightforward. For example, the following participant confessed the following:

> My healing took longer than I anticipated. Oliver Mtukudzi's song lyrics *'rufu ndi madzongonyedze pane vano danana'* (death is destruction on the loved ones) kept me crying. Unfortunately, his music is irresistible. Until this day, I sometimes feel like I am yet to psychologically recover. As it happens, I feel lonely and the only therapy I have is Mtukudzi's songs which, however, also give me sad memories. These memories are reinforced by our not so friendly cultural practices that are imbued with stigmatisation. Instead of understanding my unique situation, I find myself faced with a culture that is denigrating, can you imagine? (FGD, 21 July 2023)

From the above data, it emerged that there is an extent to which Shona cultural practices can be derogatory and autocratic in nature. They inflict harm, thereby causing long periods of grief. In a context where music is supposed to heal, it further reinforces emotional pain. The study argues that normal grief under such a context symbolises what most people experience during their everyday experiences of losing someone dear to them. In some contexts, grief is influenced by stigmatisation, which turns out to be longer-lasting. In extreme cases where grief results in acute and multifaceted reactions, grief is often described as pathological. The study

found that bereavement in Shona communities reflects such context-specific differences. Peter Marris, in 1958, interrogated bereavement among women who had lost their husbands in the normal course of events. He found that there were lower rates of morbid grief than had been found when the loss had been more traumatic. However, he also found that regardless of the type of death, there were shared similarities, and particularly the basic sense of the deceased's absence.

The focus group discussion revealed that Shona local governance system is predatory, autocratic and unfriendly to women. The researcher noted with concern that some of the agreements arrived at by women are not because of their own accord. Women are expected to submit to patriarchal norms so that they are regarded as 'good wives' or 'well cultured wives.' As this happens, they are naturalised to accept their sad conditions. During the focus group discussion, the researcher located some few brave women who were forthcoming enough. They expressed a deep desire to break the chains. In the follow up questions, one of the women revealed:

> It's tough being a woman in a patriarchal community conditioned to silence women. When a man loses his wife, they are allowed to quickly remarry on the basis that they need a helper. It is the opposite with us as women. Do you know that we are even expected to listen to 'dignified music' that resembles a mother? You ask yourself, why is it like that? We need to be honest to ourselves that times have changed. Pain knows no gender.

Overally, the focus group discussion shed insights on certain aspects that characterise Shona culture and practices. Whilst the research's key focus was on Shona indigenous approaches to support in grief, the focus group also foregrounded the convergence of traditional knowledge and conventional scientific knowledge. In the process, the data also revealed culturally deleterious elements peddled by patriarchal conventions, and these include stigmatisation, labelling and disregard for the legitimate space of women's rights in the sociology of community life. It further emerged from the data that understanding Shona people's sensitivities is central to establishing how and why people respond to psycho-social issues in a particular way. A focus group discussion was mainly used to explore people's views, interpretations and legitimisation of healing and bereavement initiatives and levels of support for such initiatives. This provided insights into the community's perceptions on destructive Shona practices in the context of death, healing and bereavement. Community engagement via

both the *lekgotla* and focus group discussion facilitated the researcher's exploration of a people's conceptualisation, interpretation and operationalisation of socially-constructed knowledge on indigenising healing.

6.5 Conclusion

The study's set of participatory data collection techniques, as presented and analysed in this chapter, revealed that Shona people are culturally tied to their traditions of healing and support in the context of bereavement. Their practices subtly denote covert signs of resistance by the younger generation whose understanding of culture is now subject to the context of multicultural co-presences. The chapter was focused on interpreting data that deals with indigenous ways of dealing with death. Oliver Mtukudzi's music, as it emerged in the study's course of community engagement, may have 'lost' meaning amongst some demographics of the society. What was reinforced is the notion that music has a sense of meaning which is polysemic, although various age groups relate to types of music differently.

Music is indeed integral to the healing process but its effects are complex as it sometimes exacerbates the severity of grief in instances where it is actually expected to alleviate pain. As such, healing turns out to be context-specific, given that no monolithic explanation can account for loss and its impact on the bereaved. To situate healing for the bereaved in the context of the Shona community's cultural practices is to first admit that the cultural practices themselves are somewhat a site for both entrenched and emergent contestations. A major parameter within this cultural terrain, as the data revealed, is the gender divide. Understanding Shona indigenous approaches to psycho-social support is enhanced by vigilance to nuances generated by gendered social power relations, given women's symbolic seclusion by patriarchal structures that feed on cultural reinforcement. Equally important is the acknowledgement of agency on the part of the Shona community in general (and the Shona women in particular) as a force for social transformation through tackling counterproductive cultural aspects when broaching home-grown solutions to indigenous healthcare interventions.

Whilst a lekgotla created the context in which the researcher was a semi-detached observer, the focus group discussion bequeathed upon the researcher a vicarious sense of participation in mapping out thought patterns due to its high level of interactivity as an iterative form of data extraction. Cultural conformity does not deny the prevalence of dissenting voices that interrogate long-held assumptions. The Shona community is subject to heterogenous perspectives with regards to the role of culture in defining normative steps to be followed in

bereavement. Healing in bereavement is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ as various factors impact the healing process at various levels – gender, age, exposure, cultural literacy, socialisation and temperamental variations amongst the population.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion: Strategies towards an inclusive Africa

7.0 Introduction

This chapter marks the conclusion of this study. The chapter presents a conclusion that is structured to cater for the following: the study's key findings, contribution to new knowledge and areas for possible future research. The researcher should hasten to state that the present chapter's submissions are done with closer focus on the study's objective number 3 (three) stated in Chapter One as follows: To explore psycho-social support promotion pathways that leverage on indigenous health practices, in keeping with 'Agenda 2063' as a blueprint for Africa's development through home-grown strategies. All these issues are elaborated bearing in mind the study's two key objectives: (1) to explore African healing practices and principles reflected in Oliver Mtukudzi's music, and (2) to examine the ways by which Oliver Mtukudzi's music facilitates healing for the bereaved in the context of the Shona community's indigenous knowledge systems. Whilst the stated third objective has been latently addressed via decolonial lenses throughout the previous chapters, the present chapter draws attention to the objective's aspirational focus, potential effects on policy as well as contribution to the corpus of epistemic studies driving scholarship amongst communities of the African Global South.

The study was focused on decolonising psycho-social support through an analytical examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of the Shona community's indigenous health practices. The researcher sought to engage the nexus between health and culture as projected and facilitated by the music of Oliver Mtukudzi, with particular focus on the interface between psycho-social health and indigenous healing practices. The study particularly explored the role of ethnic music in both depicting and facilitating support in the context of death, loss and bereavement. As previously emphasised elsewhere in this study, the study forthrightly embraced engagement with the theoretical and practical potency of music, both as a communicative medium about healing, as well as a healing force in the context of self, others and society. The study's set of objectives converged on an aspirational thrust in exploring the affordances and agency of ethnic music in the domain of healing and wellness.

7.1 Towards African Union's Agenda 2063

The aim of this section is to lay the ground work upon which the conclusion, recommendations and areas for future studies on decolonising psycho-social support could focus. The section also acknowledges the continent's strides in championing a developmental trajectory guided by the determined pursuit of pan Africanism. One of the aims of this study was to explore psycho-social support promotion pathways that leverage on indigenous health practices, in keeping with 'Agenda 2063' as a blueprint for Africa's development through home-grown strategies. This objective's significance rests upon the title of this study: Decolonising psycho-social support: An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of the Shona community's indigenous health practices.

The African Union's Agenda 2063 aims to support Africa's new path for attaining a people-centred and sustainable socio-economic and political African development (2013). The call is based on the attainment of the Pan African Vision of 'An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena' (Agenda 2063 Report, 2015). In keeping with 'Agenda 2063' as a blueprint for Africa's development through home-grown strategies, this study attempted to offer Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) that resonate with Mbembe's (2016) decolonial frame which bemoans postcolonial societies whose institutions of knowledge production have remained 'Westernised' to the extent of disaggregating African indigenes from the matrix of knowledge production. Mbembe explains 'Westernised' knowledge as a body of thought that is based on a Eurocentric epistemic canon, with a major pitfall being its narrow and exclusionary certitudes that conceive of truth as being only the 'Western' way of knowledge production.

In this study, major focus was on how Shona cultural practices can be understood within the context of contributing to African Union's Agenda 2063. Indeed, the African Union's Agenda 2063 attempts to influence a more inclusive and sustainable unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism. In this study, data from both Chapter Five (5) and Chapter Six (6) demonstrated how Shona people reflect collective sensibilities drawing from cultural values and African philosophies. The African Union's Agenda 2063 not only calls upon nation states to unite based on the ideals of pan Africanism and the vision of African Renaissance, but also on a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics. In the context of the African Renaissance and the way it champions a change-

driven paradigm emphasising complimentarity and interconnectedness rather than duality, Hoppers (2002) figuratively submits that a culture based on dualisms, on opposites and confrontation, breeds violence and confrontation, whereas one that generates respect will breed respect. Postcolonial indigenous theory, as a frame of reference in this study, reinforces African scholarship as part of the epistemic means to detoxify their narratives in the wake of colonially and historically entrenched Eurocentric epistemologies. As previously stated elsewhere in this study, understanding how the colonial discourse framed and fixed the African as a *tabular rasa* (blank page) that needed to be filled, Ntuli (2009) celebrates how indigenous knowledge systems function as a counter-discourse in the context of the African Renaissance, contesting sustained disdain for African indigenous knowledge. Some of the analytical tools dictated by Eurocentric templates of musical instruction do not fit into the cultural framework of the African communities. For example, in Chapter Five (5), Daisy Mtukudzi states,

> I envision a collective African community that does not stray away from culture regardless of modernisation. Young men and women are quick to shun our culture, ignoring its significant contributions to a shared prosperity. I wish our community leaders would come up with grassroots-led initiatives that drive our *hunhu/ubuntu* (personhood).

This submission resonates with interventions that are reflective of the cultural and epistemic mileage in scholarship and practice around decoloniality. The next section presents key findings of this study.

7.2 Key Study Findings

This study's key findings are drawn from two chapters: Chapters Five (5) and Six (6). In order to carefully guide the reader, the findings presented in the two chapters are summarised separately as follows: Data procedures and the analytical process in this study was subjected to thematic analysis (TA) guided by the Braun and Clarke (2006) six-stage process, in order to generate patterns or themes from the qualitative data. The intention was to demonstrate a comprehensive approach to TA that relates to the research's key objectives and in line with the assumptions of a qualitative paradigm (Braun and Clarke 2019) applied in Chapter Four (4) and Five (5) of this study.

The approach to data gathering, handling and analysis explained was significant in that, unlike many qualitative methodologies, the method was not confined to a particular epistemological or theoretical viewpoint (Braun & Clarke 2019; Clarke & Braun, 2020). This made it a very

flexible method, a considerable advantage given the diversity of work in unpacking Oliver Mtkudzi's place among the *Korekore*-speaking Shona community of Fumhe village. However, the data procedures and analytical process applied in this study acknowledges Potter's (1997) arguments that qualitative analysis is a 'craft skill' – a subjective, complex, analytic and descriptive process. The researcher acknowledges differing opinions that may arise from his findings based on this approach because a *shared topic* does not necessarily translate to a *shared meaning* (Braun and Clarke 2019). After all, it is argued that qualitative research, such as of this nature, is characteristically creative, reflexive and subjective, but the researcher's subjectivity is regarded as a resource (see Gough and Madill 2012) and not necessarily a threat to knowledge production.

7.3 Chapter Five (5) Key Findings

Findings from this chapter emerged from nuanced in depth interviews that were conducted with purposively selected participants. Data that emerged from this chapter drew its guidance from the study's objectives number one and two as they are stated in Chapter One (1). This data elicitation technique was aimed at extracting significant data relating to African cultural healing practices in the context of death and bereavement. These interviews were largely shaped, guided and conceived of by the study's conceptual framework that mobilised the mutually-inclusive and interlocking tenets of the Postcolonial Indigenous Theory (as theorized by Bagele Chilisa, 2012), African Cultural Studies (as conceptualized by Keyan Tomaselli, 2019), as well as the Culture-Centred Approach (as propounded by Mohan Dutta, 2011). The novelty and innovative nature of such an enquiry created room for knowledge creation models that afforded Shona people in Fumhe community the space and voice to construct and relate their cultural phenomena according to their own terms.

What also emerged from this chapter are the peculiar cultural ramifications that transcend the limitations of the traditional positivist approach by acknowledging the broader perspectives of the Fumhe community, bearing in mind the centrality of socio-cultural and historical settings shaping a people's lives (Banyard and Miller, 1998). The chapter also found that human lives and livelihoods can be meaningfully understood when viewed in context, that is, when the various ecological determinants of being, becoming and behaviour are taken into consideration (Trickett Kelly, & Vincent, 1985). It was within this context that the current study framed the Shona community rites of passage from the perspective of their community-centredness or social-embeddedness. It also emerged that in light of contestations attendant to biomedical

models of healthcare in general and psycho-social support in particular, a culture-centred approach hinges on the merits of dialogue and direct engagement with a given cultural community in a bid to co-construct meanings other than super-imposing analytical paradigms upon particular cultural communities (Nehya & Dutta, 2010).

Data from this chapter was analysed within the context of the Postcolonial theory to acknowledge what Walker (1998: iv) characterises as scholarship grounded in the cultural image and historical experiences of African people, paying attention to their aesthetic and philosophical traditions. What was glaringly striking was that engaging with the Shona community to establish the indigenous community's approaches to psycho-social support in grief (albeit via the affordances of ethnic music) resonates with the crusade to allow space for alternative epistemologies that involve culturally-anchored parameters like spirituality in research, as well as respecting communal forms of living that are not necessarily Western (Ross, 2010). In depth interviews thus facilitated negotiation of space for enquiries based on relational realities and forms of knowing constructed by 'other' communities. The thematic clusters yielded by the data were quite telling:

i. Music is just but our whole way of everyday life
ii. Music connects us with the dead as means of finding closure
iii. 'Community bereavement' brings social cohesion
iv. Music brings 'happy' memories of the dead
v. To sing is to speak, affectionately heal and console

The above data provided the rationale for phenomenologically appreciating how indigenous communities relate at multiple levels – with the self and with each other. Music is part of the performative culturally-codified apparatus that express human life in its 'everydayness.' Its key focus goes beyond entertainment, especially when looked at within the healing of the bereaved, with the ecology of healing and restoration expressing the connectedness of the living, the departed and the wider environment. This is better understood within Shona spirituality and cosmology and how it underscores continuity of life beyond the realm of 'physicality. Support for the bereaved, subsumed under the broader context of social cohesion, denotes that healing exists within the broader margins of connection, interrelatedness, restoration and union – a holistic consummation of sorts.

It emerged that Mtukudzi's music generates discourses that are useful within the Shona community, both at personal and collective levels (Horton, 1957). The researcher's thematic

analysis of Mtukudzi's musical lyrics explored the influence, impact, meaning and relevance of the music to the Shona community under different epochs and circumstances (Carey, 1969; Chesebro, Nachman, Yanneli, & Foulger, 1985; Cole, 1971; Denisoff & Peterson, 1972; Harmon, 1972; Pichaske, 1979). When Shona people relate with Mtukudzi's music, the lyrics have a special impact on the listeners; they result in personal meanings and/or social relevance. It emerged that Shona people share similar (although to some extent different) views on Mtukudzi's music, hence the richness of the messages they create and reinforce (Lull, 1988). Participants explained that Mtukudzi's music and his many performances enlist reactions from the Shona people, providing feedback on their feelings during bereavement. This may explain why Shona people tend to develop parasocial relationships with performers as they become interested in their favourite artists' lives (Harwood, 2015).

It was also evident that people can create rapport with other individuals using music as a means of connection beyond moments in contact with music (Riesman, 1950). Clark (1973) previously argued that music diminishes people's inhibitions in social contexts, helps listeners gain acceptance and approval from other peers, provides an appropriate background for certain interpersonal or social exchanges, generates entertainment for audiences, and transmits warm feelings in foreign environments, among other uses. Through music, listeners can externalise feelings, whilst mental states have the capacity to lead towards satisfactory experiences (Panzarella, 1980). Listeners from certain sub-cultures can identify strongly with a music genre or specific artists, outlining lifestyles, group values, and ways of expression that appeal to that audience (see The Subcultures Network, 2014). Sharing musical habits and preferences provides the potential to build group membership, even in large-scale groups where people do not know each other (Harwood, 2015). This explains music's place in the sociology of healing in particular communities.

7.4 Chapter Six (6) Key Findings

The chapter extracted data from the *lekgotla* and the Women-only focus group discussion. 'Lekgotla' is a Setswana word that, when translated, directly means 'council meeting' (Pienaar, 2014: 6). It was applied as a qualitative data gathering method. It allowed the researcher to seek clarity on Shona cultural aspects relating to healing and bereavement as chaired by Norman Mtukudzi. The method was deployed in the context of decolonial techniques that promote understanding African existential dynamics through phenomenological respect for African ways of knowing. It is crucial to understand how emergence from a colonial encounter

sets the epistemic trajectory for African communities in their quest for re-arrangement, re-presentation and re-distribution (Smith 1999). Therefore, the researcher sought to understand Shona cultural practices through theoretical lenses that debunk perspectives unilaterally imposed upon African knowledge systems.

Indigenous communities are part of the self-determination agenda that engages quite deliberately in naming, framing and conceptualising the world according to their indigenous worldview (Smith 1999). This form of scholarship attempts to bring to the centre and privileging indigenous values, attitudes as opposed to differentiating them within Westernized terms such as 'collaborative research' (Smith 1999).

The women-only focus group discussion, conducted to complement data from *lekgotla,* found that women annihilation is commonly naturalised among Shona communities. Participants emphasised that ‘It is what it is!’ Shona cultural practices have arguably lost meaning in a context where young adults no longer relate with traditional life. As young adults attempt to resist traditional cultural practices, they are often viewed as posing destructive stigmatisation practices in Shona communities. However, Mambanga (2020) observes that what has significantly sustained the healing culture and practices of the Korekore people of Northern Zimbabwe (the community under particular focus in this study) is the way in which traditional healers have demonstrated their efficacy over the years, remaining a powerful establishment in society due to their easy access to the ancestral spirits. As such, this study establishes the intersecting benefits of social justice, cultural sensitivity and spiritual literacy in the following way: offering women the platform to express their centrality to community care giving value-chain in bereavement is a step in unearthing the perpetuated culture of symbolic annihilation (exclusion of women from the space where they have traditionally been leading despite the culturally entrenched partriarchal tendency to push women to the periphery). The study’s data gathering method of deploying a women-only focus group discussion thus yieds fruit in setting the tone for addressing gender imbalances in the quest for social justice within the community’s indigenous healthcare space. There is thus scope for further explorations on how best complementarity between the genders can be achieved through amicable dialogue if community governance can be engaged through social diplomacy, moral suasion and continuous engagement. Healing is thus a space and potential driver for upward social mobility.

The chapter observed that culture is central in traditional forms of healing interventions that entail the entire spectrum of diagnosis, interpretation, treatment and prevention of mental

illness (Taruvinga, 2016). Arguably, the healing rituals of traditional health practitioners turn out to be more responsive to the psycho-social context of illness. The study thus establishes the merits of spiritual literacy, where the community under focus (Northern Zimbabwe) has traceable success stories of efficacy in the spiritual success stories of healers in healthcare interventions as Mbamanga (2020) argues. Indigenous healthcare systems thus reflect the capacity to become a force to reckon with (even within the context of existing conventional healthcare models) as the spiritual anchor and sociology of healing playing out provides intersecting parameters that define an indigenous society's capacity to frame and deploy health knowledge phenomenologically.

7.5 Contributions to New Knowledge

The study foregrounded forms and varieties of knowledge that cannot be taken for granted. The study strongly affirms the observation that African culture is anchored on people's shared local experiences. The study argues that scholarship on decolonial psycho-social efforts should attempt to rethink and influence African epistemology in every possible sphere of scholarly enquiry. African communities have, out of their own creative genius, spawned musical creations and performances that reflect their unique cultural experiences. The study also contributes to self-determination in African research that dismantles potentially discriminatory and oppressive forms of expression. The study champions social justice, cultural sensitivity and spiritual literacy during bereavement. The study argues that understanding these various parameters has the potential to bring decolonisation which in itself is a broader form of healing for communities that have reeled from the baggage of colonial hegemony. The processes, approaches and methodologies guiding the enquiry - while dynamic, innovative, adaptive and reflexive - are critical elements of a strategic de-colonial research that herald fresh epistemic possibilities.

7.6 Areas for future research

i. Although the community-based research approaches may have greater community control and ownership than it is possible to achieve through Eurocentric methodologies, it is not always the case. *Lekgotla* as a research approach (data gathering) must be taught in African research as it offers local narratives that have not been given much prominence. Sunch curricula leveraging culture and heritage must be taught in African universities so that we produce researchers who can produce liberatory knowledge?

ii. To what extent can grassroots-led initiatives be championed to liberate African communication practices that are deemed exploitative to women?

iii. How best can Western cultural practices be infused with African values to construct a shared society in times of bereavement. For instance, how can European music and African music co-exist and co-contribute to healing interventions in the context of psycho-social support?

iv. How can a community-based research endeavour like this one promote and champion the merits of cultural values for the good of humanity? This is because Shona societies have also adapted with time, regardless of policies aimed at fragmenting family bonds and separating people from their traditional places of origin, customs and values. Indigenous communities have made even their most isolated and marginal spaces a home place imbued with spiritual significance and indigenous identity.

7.7 Conclusion

This study focused on music in its cultural-situatedness as a reflector and enabler of healing at multiple levels, with particular focus on psycho-social support in grief as reflected by Shona healing practices. Riding on epistemological diversity as an emergent paradigm in scholarship, the study explores the indigenous health practices of the Shona (Korekore) community of Fumhe village in the Mashonaland Central Province of the Northern Zimbabwean district of Mbire. Being Oliver Mtukudzi's village of origin, the community's participation is enlisted in the co-construction of data speaking to the artist's music as a case study for music's affordances as a culturally-conditioned tool in mediating, facilitating, interrogating, monitoring and evaluating the sensibilities of the community that produces it.

Understanding the ecology of healing from the perspectives of the communities of the African Global South entails appreciating holism as the broader paradigm within which wellness, completeness, wholesomeness and restoration play out. In this context, healing in African communities turns out to be much broader than the monolithic perspective ordinarily super-imposed on Africa by conventional interventions broached in other cultural formations; healing involves the dialectic connecting oneself to others and the environment. The sociology of health has served as an epistemic pedestal to foreground the cosmology, ethnography and phenomenology of healing within African cultural science and the philosophical ramifications attendant to health in its comprehensive sense. Psycho-social support in grief (in light of the

Shona community's indigenous health practices) can be understood within the context of relational patterns connecting the living and the departed, as well as the environmental implications of this connection. As such, healing at individual level turns out to be a variable of restoration at the collective level. To reduce health to the monolithic confines of 'biomedicalisation' is to miss out on the nuanced and intersecting variables shaping the culturally-configured concept, knowledge and practice of wellness in the Shona community.

There is need to further explore decolonial psycho-social support through African culture as systems that can help improve healing from stress accrued from death. Such an approach should influence adoption of measures, policies, and interventions focused on specific people, places, and practices in the context of healing. The argument is carried herewith that this may trigger creation of preliminary connections among components of broader networks, gradually improving society's appreciation and understanding of the whole system (Kendler, 2005) of decolonising psycho-social support. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that these efforts are only addressing parts of a larger system and do not provide a full account of African cultural relations during bereavement. The search for cultural anchor necessary to overcome mental stress, for instance, demands tackling the system as a whole, as well as its parts, with healing occurring invariably at multiple levels. If society is not up to the task in terms of probing the dialectic shaping the healing and culture matrix, then there is a "…risk of perpetuating a mere science of excitement and pink lemonade" (Cronbach, 1957: 671).

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Informed consent form (English version)

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

For research with human participants

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: _____

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Shadreck Nembaware, a PhD student with the Center for Communication, Media and Society under the School of Applied Human Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Below are the details of the researcher and the institution of research:

Researcher	ShadreckNembaware	[redacted]	[redacted]m

			221119187@stu.ukzn.ac.za
Department	Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS)	+27-31-2602505	http://ccms.ukzn.ac.za
Institution	University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)	Howard College Campus, Masizi Kunene Ave, Glenwood, Durban, South Africa	http://www.ukzn.ac.za
Supervisor	Prof. Lauren Dyll	+27-31-2602298	dyll@ukzn.ac.za
UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Committee	Chairperson, UKZN HSSR Committee	+27312604557/3587/8350	HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on "Decolonising psycho-social support in death and grief: An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of the Shona community's indigenous health practices." The aim and purpose of this research is to foreground and promote cultural preservation and identity conservation by exploring indigenous approaches to mental health, leveraging on the affordances of African ethnic music as a mode of performative production that mediates both the sustenance of self-essence as well as co-existence within the context of cultural contact, demographic mobility and multicultural co-presences. The study is expected to enroll 7 participants for key informant interviews from 3 provinces of Zimbabwe (Harare, Bulawayo and Mt Darwin), as well as a focus group discussion (in the form of a dare/inkundla/lekgotla) with selected members of the Fumhe village in Mahuwe (Mt Darwin). In terms of your participation, the research will involve the following process: You will be asked questions about the music of Oliver Mtukudzi in relation to cultural practices of the Shona community with regards to death, bereavement, grief, support for the bereaved and culturally-informed approaches to providing mental health support for the grieving. The interviews will be recorded on a tape recorder for the purpose of analysis. In terms of focus group discussion (dare), other participants will be involved in the discussion/conversations. The duration of your participation, if you choose to enroll and remain in the study, is expected to be between 40-60 minutes.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (_____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at [redacted] and email address: n[redacted]or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this study is voluntary. As a participant, you may withdraw from the research at any time without negative consequences or incur penalty or loss of treatment.The interview/focus group discussion will not be paid for in money. In general, responses will be treated in a confidential manner. Confidential information will not be used without your permission. If you agree to be interviewed, we will request that you choose a pseudonym for the purposes of this research, so your real identity will not be revealed in the final reports. As a participant, you will be treated with respect and dignity.

The data will be kept securely for five years for purposes of verification by the University of KwaZulu-Natal,after that it will be destroyed. At your request, an electronic copy of the final projects will be sent to you on completion.

Your willingness to participate in this study will greatly be appreciated.

CONSENT

I (_____) have been informed about the study entitled "Decolonising psycho-social support in death and grief: An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of the Shona community's indigenous health practices" byShadreckNembaware.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study:to foreground and promote cultural preservation and identity conservation by exploring indigenous approaches to psycho-social support, leveraging on the affordances of African ethnic music as a mode of performative production that mediates both the sustenance of self-essence as well as co-existence within the context of cultural contact, demographic mobility and multicultural co-presences.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at [redacted] and email address: [redacted]

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

_____ _____

Signature of Participant **Date**

_____ _____

Signature of Witness **Date**

(Where applicable)

_____ _____

Signature of Translator **Date**

(Where applicable)

Appendix 2: Informed consent form (Shona version)

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

For research with human participants

Gwaro retsanangudzo uye mvumo yekuva nebandiko mutsvakurudzo yezvedzidzo

Date: _____

Dear Sir/Madam

Zita rangu ndinonzi Shadreck Nembaware, mudzidzi wefundo yePhD muCenter for Communication, Media and Society inova bazi reSchool of Applied Human Sciences, pachikoro chikuru chefundo chinonzi University of KwaZulu-Natal. Zvamungada kuziva maererano nemudzidzi uye nechikoro chake ngezvinoti:

Mudzidzi	ShadreckNembawa re	+[redacted]	[redacted]

			221119187@stu.ukzn.ac.za
Bazi	Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS)	+27-31-2602505	http://ccms.ukzn.ac.za
Chikoro	University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)	Howard College Campus, Masizi Kunene Ave, Glenwood, Durban, South Africa	http://www.ukzn.ac.za
Mudzidzisi uye mutungamiri wetsvakurudzo yedzidzo	Prof. Lauren Dyll	+27-31-2602298	dyll@ukzn.ac.za
Komiti yeUKZN Human Sciences Research	Sachigaro weKomiti yeUKZN HSSR	+27312604557/3587/8350	HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Munokumbirwa kuti muve muboka reavo vachatora rupande muhurukuro dzetsvakurudzo yedzidzo iyo ine musoro wenyaya unoti **"Decolonising psycho-social support in death and grief: An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of the Shona community's indigenous health practices."** Chinangwa chetsvakurudzo ino ndechekukurudzira tsika nemagariro evanhu vatema uyewo nekuchengetedza hunhu hwedu maringe nenzira dzedu dzechinyakare dzeutano neurapi kunyanyanyanya hutano hwekugadzikana mupfungwa mushure mekusangana nedambudziko rekufirwa nekurasikirwa nevadikani vedu. Tsvakurudzo iyi ichange yakazembera papukosha kwenziyo dzechivanhu nekushanda kwadzo mukudzokedza pfungwa nekunyaradza vafirwa sezvinotarisirwa mutsika dzedu dzevaShona. Mungada kuziva kuti tsvakurudzo ino inosanganisira vamwe vanhu vanomwe vane zvinzvimbo zvakasiyanasiyana vakatopa mvumo yekuti vazoitwa navo hurukuro dzimwewo mufundo ino kumahofisi avo ekuHarare, kuBulawayo uye kuMbire. Kuwedzera kuhurukuro idzi, pane hurukuro dzichaitwa nevachatora bandiko mudunhu reMahuwe (Mbire) mubhuku riri pasi paSabhuku Fumhe. Maringe nekuvamo kwenyu muhurukuro idzi, muchange muchivhunzwa mivhunzo yakarerekera kutsika nemagariro evaShona pahutano nekurapa kwekupa nyaradzo kune vafirwa, zvikuru sei takatarisana nekukosha kwenziyo dzemushakabvu Oliver Mtukudzi. Kubatsira mukuunganidza, kuongorora nekukwenenzvera pfungwa dzevana veZimbabwe, hurukuro idzi dzichaunganidzwa kuburikidza netape recorder. Kana muchinge mabvuma kuvawo mumwe wevanhu vedunhu renyu vachafarira kuva muhurukuro maererano nekukosha kwetsika dzenharaunda yedu, muchaona kuti hurukuro idzi dzichaitika mu awa imwechete kana kuraudzira zviroma.

Tsvakurudzo iyi irikuitwa mushure mekunge mvumo yapihwa zvizere kubva kuKomiti inoongorora nezve Humanities and Social Sciences Research pachikoro chefundo yepamusoro chinonzoi University of KwaZulu Natal kuSouth Africa.

Kuti muchinge maita mivhunzo kana kuti muchida kunzwisisa zvizere maererano netsvakurudzo yefundo iyi, makasununguka kuchaya runhare kumudzidzi wetsvakurudzo panhamba dzake dzinoti +[redacted] kana kumubata kuburikidza netsamba yemagetsi pakero inoti: [redacted]. Makasununguka zvakare kubata vabati vezvigaro pachikoro chikuru ichi vari mubazi reUKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, muchishandisa kero nenhamba dzinotevera:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Kuva nebandiko muchidzidzo ichi kwakasununguka chose uye hakuna mbunyikidzo pakodzero dzenyu. Makasununguka kusuduruka kubva muhurukuro idzi kana muchinge maita kakushushikana kenzira ipi zvayo uye kuti kumira kuva mumwe wehurukuro idzi hakurevi kuti mune chitarafu chamuchatongera sezvo iri hurukuro yakasununguka uye inotevedzera mutemo pakukoshesa kodzero dzevana veZimbabwe. Hapana mari ichapihwa vanhu mukuva muhurukuro idzi. Kurukurirano idzi dzakanangana nefundo chete pasina kana dzimwe pfungwa dzisineyi nedzidzo dzechikoro. Pfungwa dzevanhu vese vachange vari muhurukuro idzi dzicharemekedzwa uye hadzizopihwi ani nani kunze kwekuendeswa kuchikoro chefundo kubatsira mukuvaka hwaro hwedzidzo. Hamuzovhunzwi mazita enyu nekuti tsvakurudzo iyi iripo pakutsvaga pfungwa pajekerere pasina kutsvaga mazita evanhu saka hapana tarisiro yeshungurudzo kana mbunyikidzo.

Zvichabuda musarudzo iyi zvichachengetedzwa pakakotsekana kwemakore mashanu pachikoro cheUniversity of KwaZulu-Natal mukubatsira kupepeta pfungwa dzedzidzo. Mushure menguva iyi, zvichazoraswa nekupiswa zvachose. Kana muchida, muchazoratidzwa gwaro repakombiyuta redzidzo ichabuda mustvakurudzo ino kana makasununguka zvenyu.

Ndingafara nekuremekedza zvikuru sarudzo yenyu kuva umwe wevachabvuma kuva muhurukuro dzetsvakurudzo ino.

MVUMO

Ini (_____) ndatsanangurirwa zvizere maererano netsvakurudzo yedzidzo inoti "Decolonising psycho-social support in death and grief: An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of the Shona community's indigenous health practices" nemudzidzi anonzi Shadreck Nembaware.

Ndanzwisisa chikonzero chetsvakurudzo iyi uye matanho ose akakosha mudzidzo iyi. Ndanzwisisawo zvekare kuti dzidzo iyi inokosha mukukurudzira kunzwisiswa kwetsika nemagariro enharaunda yedu maringe netsika dzvakare vedu pakurapa, kunyaradza uye nekubatsira vafirwa.

Ndapihwa mukana wekupindura mivhunzo maringe netsvakurudzo iyi uye tsanangudzo dzapihwa zvizere.

Ndinoda kubuda pachena kuti kutora kwangu bandiko muhurukuro idzi kuburikidza nekunzwisisa uye nekubvuma kwangu pasina shungurudzo kana mbunyikidzo uye ndakasununguka kubuda muhurukuro idzi kana ndisisakwanisi kuenderera mberi nenyaya idzi dzemagariro edu echuvanhu.

Ndaudzwa zvakare kuti hurukuro idzi dzakasununguka kuvanhu vese venharaunda yedu uye hapana mari yatichapihwa sezvo ingori hurukuro maererano netsika dzedu chete.

Ndanzwisisawo zvekare kuti kana ndaita mibvunzo pahurukuro dzezvidzidzo izvi ndakasununguka kuvhunza panhamba nekero zvinotevera: pa +[redacted] uye pa [redacted]

Kana ndikaita mimwe mivhunzo, ndanzwisisa kodzero nemvumo yandinayo kuvhunza vakuru vechikoro pakero inoti:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

_____ _____

Signature of Participant **Date**

_____ _____

Signature of Witness **Date**

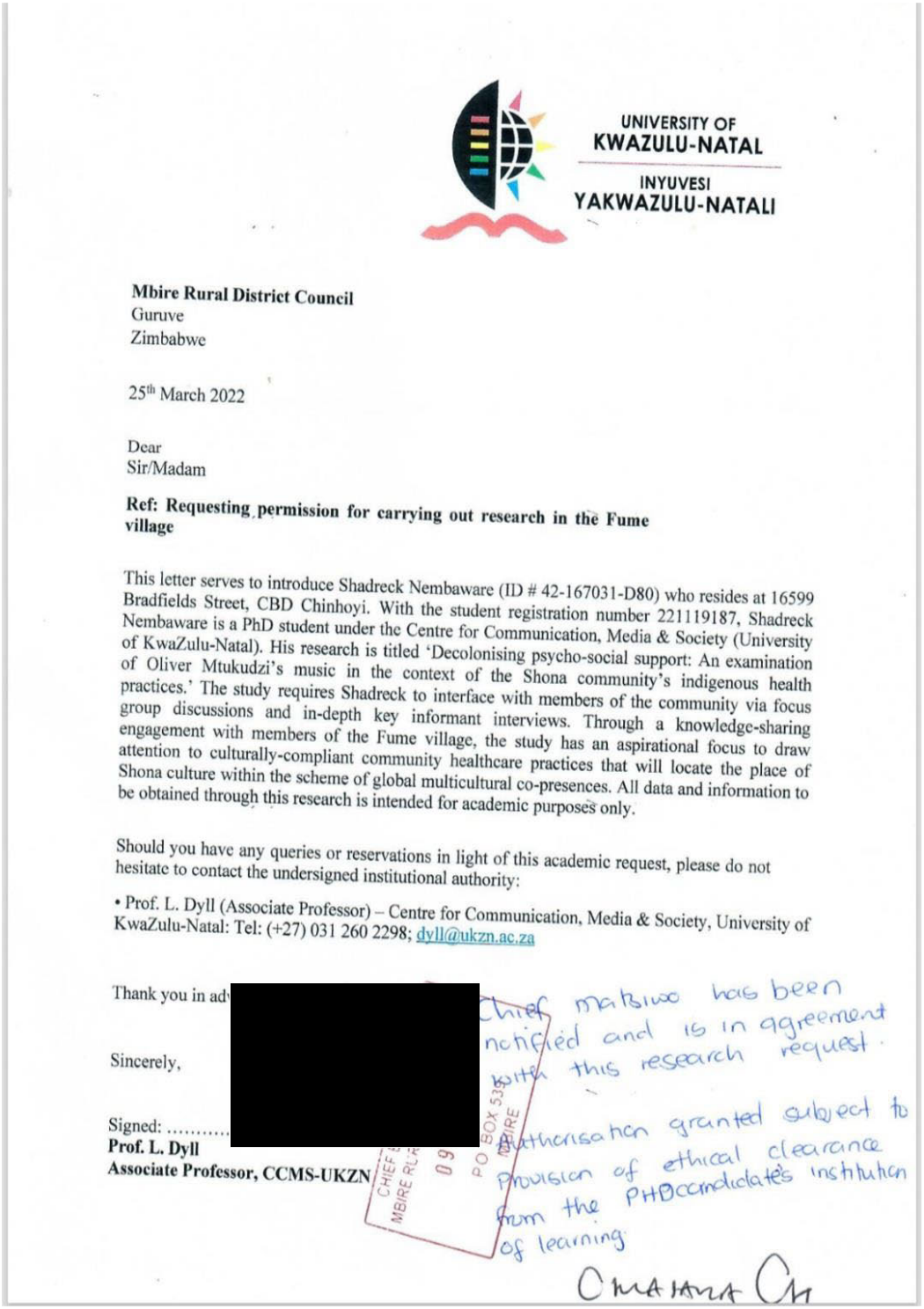
(Where applicable)

_____ _____

Signature of Translator **Date**

(Where applicable)

Appendix 3: Local Authority Gatekeeper Letter



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Mbire Rural District Council
Guruve
Zimbabwe

25th March 2022

Dear
Sir/Madam

Ref: Requesting permission for carrying out research in the Fume village

This letter serves to introduce Shadreck Nembaware (ID # 42-167031-D80) who resides at 16599 Bradfields Street, CBD Chinhoyi. With the student registration number 221119187, Shadreck Nembaware is a PhD student under the Centre for Communication, Media & Society (University of KwaZulu-Natal). His research is titled 'Decolonising psycho-social support: An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of the Shona community's indigenous health practices.' The study requires Shadreck to interface with members of the community via focus group discussions and in-depth key informant interviews. Through a knowledge-sharing engagement with members of the Fume village, the study has an aspirational focus to draw attention to culturally-compliant community healthcare practices that will locate the place of Shona culture within the scheme of global multicultural co-presences. All data and information to be obtained through this research is intended for academic purposes only.

Should you have any queries or reservations in light of this academic request, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned institutional authority:

• Prof. L. Dyll (Associate Professor) – Centre for Communication, Media & Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal: Tel: (+27) 031 260 2298; dyll@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you in ad[redacted]

Sincerely,

Signed: .....
Prof. L. Dyll
Associate Professor, CCMS-UKZN

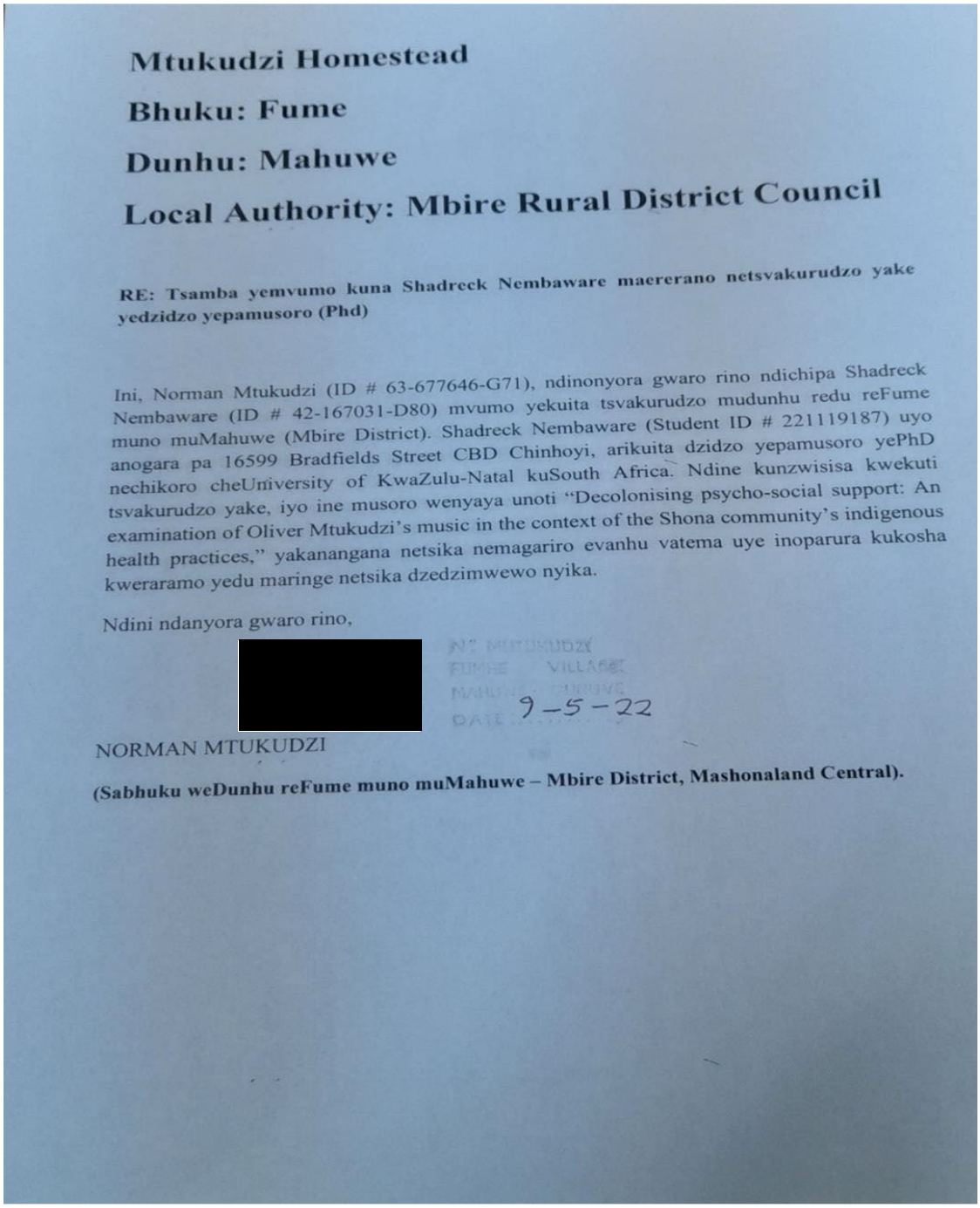
CHIEF MBIRE RU[illegible] 09 P.O. BOX 53 MBIRE

Chief Matsiwo has been notified and is in agreement with this research request.

Authorisation granted subject to provision of ethical clearance from the PHD candidate's institution of learning

CHIEF MATSIWO CH

Appendix 4: Village Headman (Norman Mtukudzi) Gatekeeper Letter



Mtukudzi Homestead

Bhuku: Fume

Dunhu: Mahuwe

Local Authority: Mbire Rural District Council

RE: Tsamba yemvumo kuna Shadreck Nembaware maererano netsvakurudzo yake yedzidzo yepamusoro (Phd)

Ini, Norman Mtukudzi (ID # 63-677646-G71), ndinonyora gwaro rino ndichipa Shadreck Nembaware (ID # 42-167031-D80) mvumo yekuita tsvakurudzo mudunhu redu reFume muno muMahuwe (Mbire District). Shadreck Nembaware (Student ID # 221119187) uyo anogara pa 16599 Bradfields Street CBD Chinhoyi, arikuita dzidzo yepamusoro yePhD nechikoro cheUniversity of KwaZulu-Natal kuSouth Africa. Ndine kunzwisisa kwekuti tsvakurudzo yake, iyo ine musoro wenyaya unoti "Decolonising psycho-social support: An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of the Shona community's indigenous health practices," yakanangana netsika nemagariro evanhu vatema uye inoparura kukosha kweraramo yedu maringe netsika dzedzimwewo nyika.

Ndini ndanyora gwaro rino,

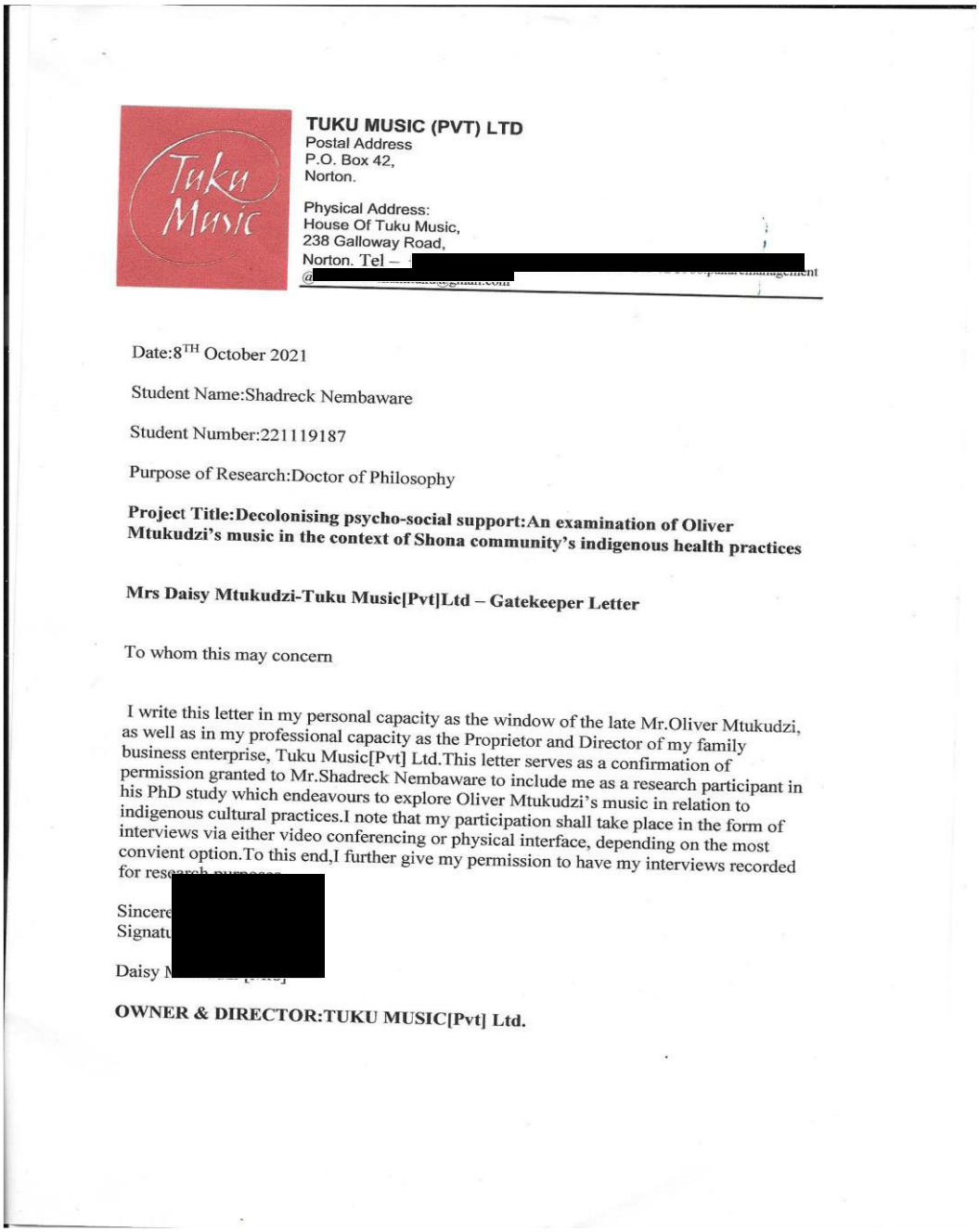
[redacted]

N. MTUKUDZI
FUME VILLAGE
MAHUWE DUNHU
DATE 9-5-22

NORMAN MTUKUDZI

(Sabhuku weDunhu reFume muno muMahuwe – Mbire District, Mashonaland Central).

Appendix 5: Daisy Mtukudzi (Individual participation letter)



TUKU MUSIC (PVT) LTD
Postal Address
P.O. Box 42,
Norton.

Physical Address:
House Of Tuku Music,
238 Galloway Road,
Norton. Tel – [redacted]
[redacted]

Date:8TH October 2021

Student Name:Shadreck Nembaware

Student Number:221119187

Purpose of Research:Doctor of Philosophy

Project Title:Decolonising psycho-social support:An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of Shona community's indigenous health practices

Mrs Daisy Mtukudzi-Tuku Music[Pvt]Ltd – Gatekeeper Letter

To whom this may concern

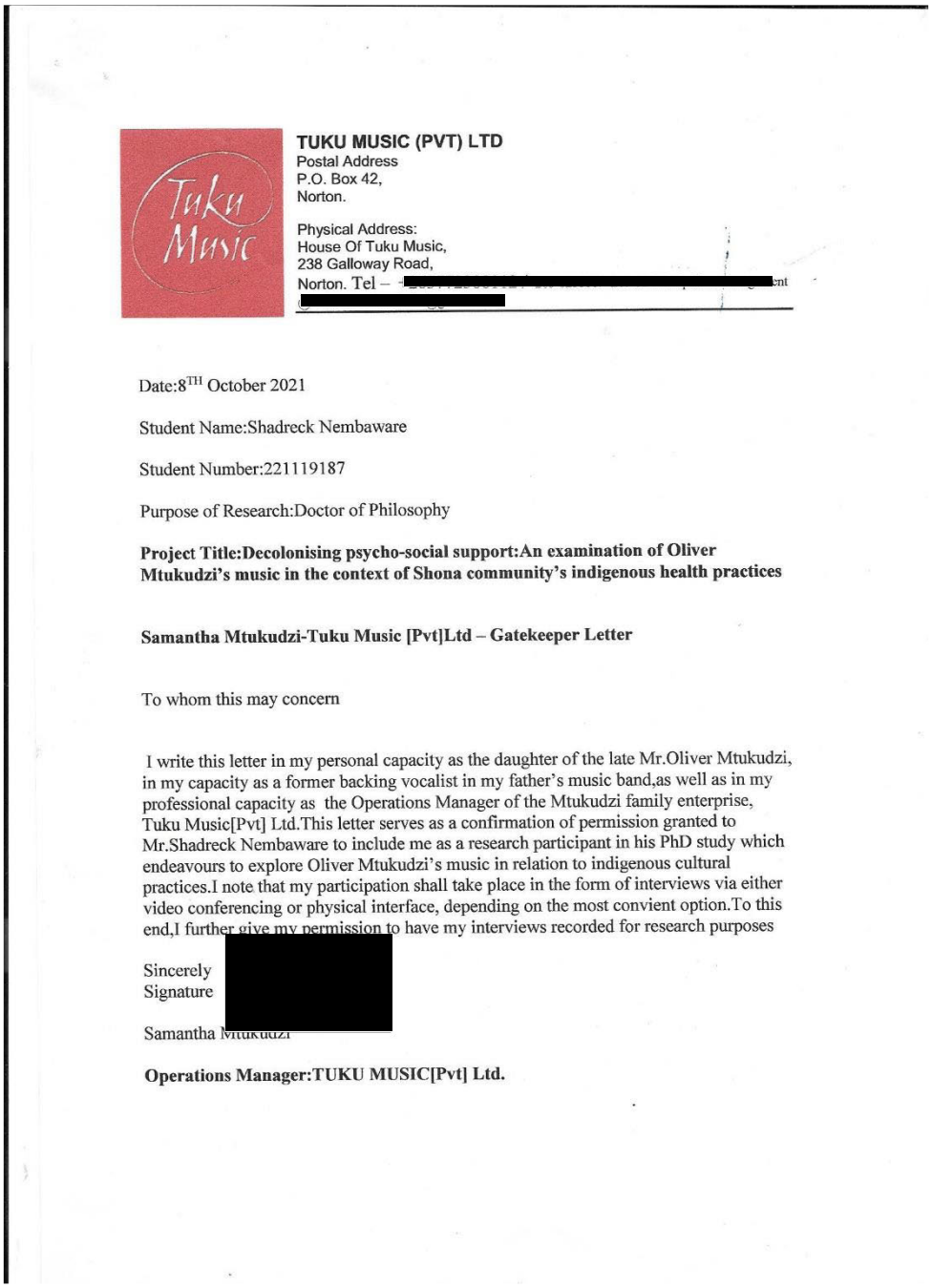
I write this letter in my personal capacity as the window of the late Mr.Oliver Mtukudzi, as well as in my professional capacity as the Proprietor and Director of my family business enterprise, Tuku Music[Pvt] Ltd.This letter serves as a confirmation of permission granted to Mr.Shadreck Nembaware to include me as a research participant in his PhD study which endeavours to explore Oliver Mtukudzi's music in relation to indigenous cultural practices.I note that my participation shall take place in the form of interviews via either video conferencing or physical interface, depending on the most convient option.To this end,I further give my permission to have my interviews recorded for research purposes.

Sincere[redacted]
Signatu

Daisy M[redacted]

OWNER & DIRECTOR:TUKU MUSIC[Pvt] Ltd.

Appendix 6: Samantha Mtukudzi (Individual participation letter)



TUKU MUSIC (PVT) LTD
Postal Address
P.O. Box 42,
Norton.

Physical Address:
House Of Tuku Music,
238 Galloway Road,
Norton. Tel – [redacted]

Date:8TH October 2021

Student Name:Shadreck Nembaware

Student Number:221119187

Purpose of Research:Doctor of Philosophy

Project Title:Decolonising psycho-social support:An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of Shona community's indigenous health practices

Samantha Mtukudzi-Tuku Music [Pvt]Ltd – Gatekeeper Letter

To whom this may concern

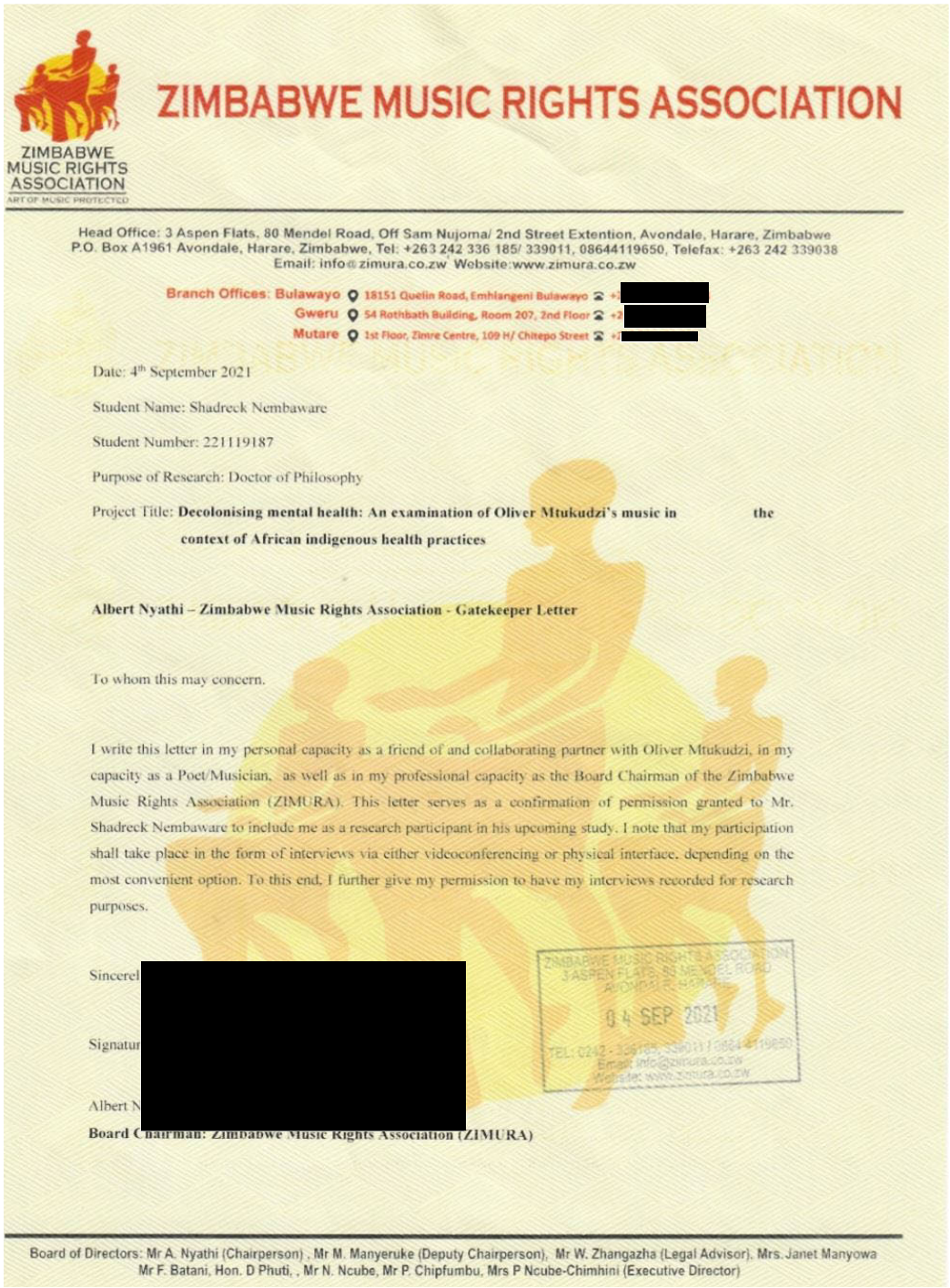
I write this letter in my personal capacity as the daughter of the late Mr.Oliver Mtukudzi, in my capacity as a former backing vocalist in my father's music band,as well as in my professional capacity as the Operations Manager of the Mtukudzi family enterprise, Tuku Music[Pvt] Ltd.This letter serves as a confirmation of permission granted to Mr.Shadreck Nembaware to include me as a research participant in his PhD study which endeavours to explore Oliver Mtukudzi's music in relation to indigenous cultural practices.I note that my participation shall take place in the form of interviews via either video conferencing or physical interface, depending on the most convient option.To this end,I further give my permission to have my interviews recorded for research purposes

Sincerely
Signature [redacted]

Samantha Mtukudzi

Operations Manager:TUKU MUSIC[Pvt] Ltd.

Appendix 7: Albert Nyati (Individual participation letter)



ZIMBABWE MUSIC RIGHTS ASSOCIATION

ZIMBABWE MUSIC RIGHTS ASSOCIATION
ART OF MUSIC PROTECTED

Head Office: 3 Aspen Flats, 80 Mendel Road, Off Sam Nujoma/ 2nd Street Extention, Avondale, Harare, Zimbabwe
P.O. Box A1961 Avondale, Harare, Zimbabwe, Tel: +263 242 336 185/ 339011, 08644119650, Telefax: +263 242 339038
Email: info@zimura.co.zw Website:www.zimura.co.zw

Branch Offices: Bulawayo 18151 Quelin Road, Emhlangeni Bulawayo +[redacted]
Gweru 54 Rothbath Building, Room 207, 2nd Floor +[redacted]
Mutare 1st Floor, Zimre Centre, 109 H/ Chitepo Street +[redacted]

Date: 4th September 2021

Student Name: Shadreck Nembaware

Student Number: 221119187

Purpose of Research: Doctor of Philosophy

Project Title: **Decolonising mental health: An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of African indigenous health practices**

Albert Nyathi – Zimbabwe Music Rights Association - Gatekeeper Letter

To whom this may concern.

I write this letter in my personal capacity as a friend of and collaborating partner with Oliver Mtukudzi, in my capacity as a Poet/Musician, as well as in my professional capacity as the Board Chairman of the Zimbabwe Music Rights Association (ZIMURA). This letter serves as a confirmation of permission granted to Mr. Shadreck Nembaware to include me as a research participant in his upcoming study. I note that my participation shall take place in the form of interviews via either videoconferencing or physical interface, depending on the most convenient option. To this end, I further give my permission to have my interviews recorded for research purposes.

Sincerel[redacted]

Signatur[redacted]

Albert N[redacted]

Board Chairman: Zimbabwe Music Rights Association (ZIMURA)

ZIMBABWE MUSIC RIGHTS ASSOCIATION
3 ASPEN FLATS 80 MENDEL ROAD
AVONDALE HARARE
04 SEP 2021
TEL: 0242 - 336185/339011/08644119650
Email: info@zimura.co.zw
Website: www.zimura.co.zw

Board of Directors: Mr A. Nyathi (Chairperson) , Mr M. Manyeruke (Deputy Chairperson), Mr W. Zhangazha (Legal Advisor), Mrs. Janet Manyowa
Mr F. Batani, Hon. D Phuti, , Mr N. Ncube, Mr P. Chipfumbu, Mrs P Ncube-Chimhini (Executive Director)

Appendix 8: Walter Wanyanya (Individual participation letter)

NGOMA™
NEHOSHO

Office No. 2
Summer Gallery
Avondale
Harare

Date: 16th September 2021

Student Name: Shadreck Nembaware

Student Number: 221119187

Purpose of Research: Doctor of Philosophy

Project Title: **Decolonising mental health: An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of African indigenous health practices**

Walter Wanyanya – Ngoma neHosho - Gatekeeper Letter

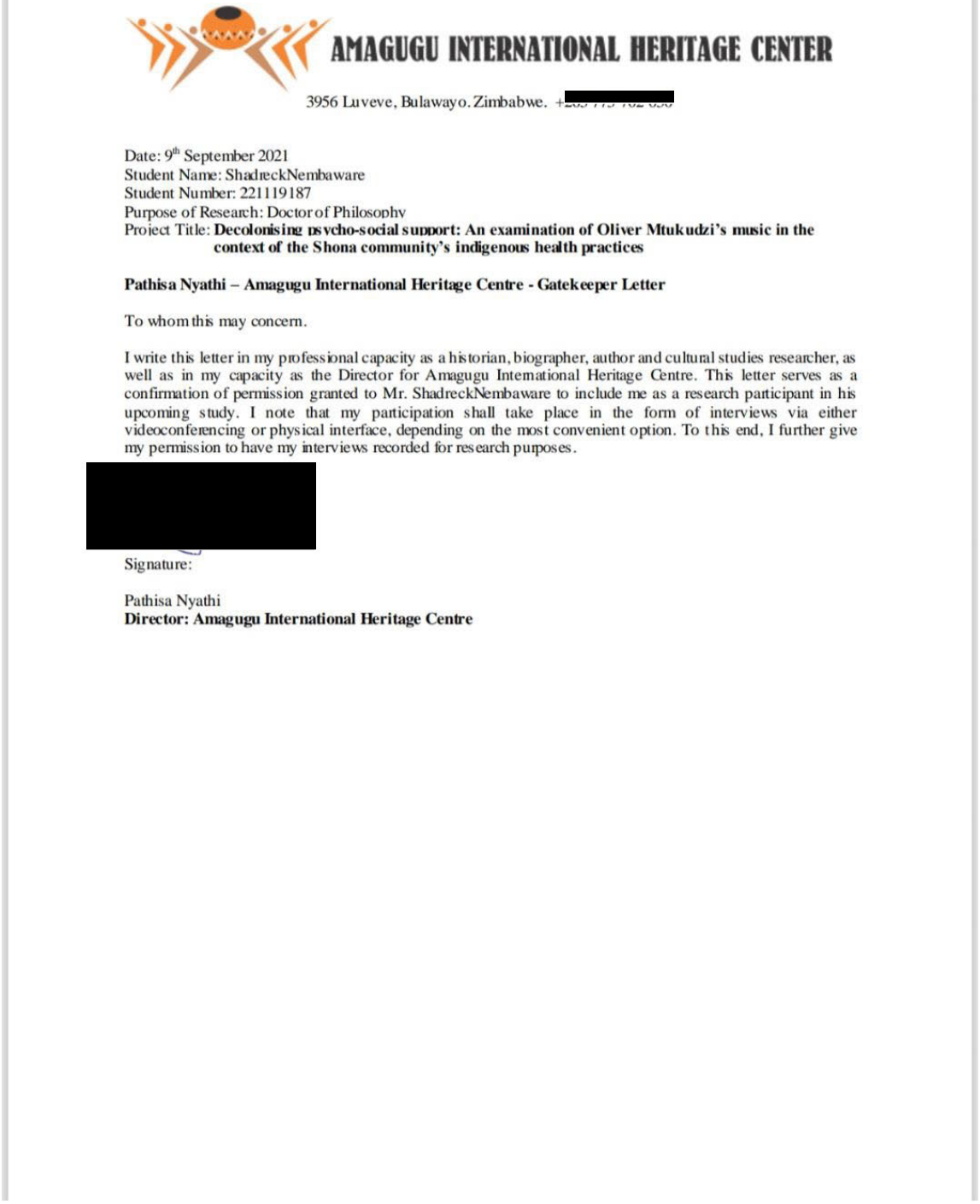
To whom this may concern.

I write this letter in my personal capacity as the nephew to the late musician, Oliver Mtukudzi. I also write in my professional capacity as the Director for Ngoma neHosho, a music and performing arts promotion organisation, as well as in my capacity as someone who served as the last Manager of the artist, Oliver Mtukudzi, before he passed on. This letter serves as a confirmation of permission granted to Mr. Shadreck Nembaware to include me as a research participant in his upcoming study. I note that my participation shall take place in the form of interviews via either videoconferencing or physical interface, depending on the most convenient option. To this end, I further give my permission to have my interviews recorded for academic research purposes.

[redacted]

Walter Wanyanya
Director: Ngoma neHosho

Appendix 9: Pathisa Nyathi (Individual participation letter)



AMAGUGU INTERNATIONAL HERITAGE CENTER

3956 Luveve, Bulawayo. Zimbabwe. +[redacted]

Date: 9th September 2021
Student Name: ShadreckNembaware
Student Number: 221119187
Purpose of Research: Doctor of Philosophy
Project Title: **Decolonising psycho-social support: An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of the Shona community's indigenous health practices**

Pathisa Nyathi – Amagugu International Heritage Centre - Gatekeeper Letter

To whom this may concern.

I write this letter in my professional capacity as a historian, biographer, author and cultural studies researcher, as well as in my capacity as the Director for Amagugu International Heritage Centre. This letter serves as a confirmation of permission granted to Mr. ShadreckNembaware to include me as a research participant in his upcoming study. I note that my participation shall take place in the form of interviews via either videoconferencing or physical interface, depending on the most convenient option. To this end, I further give my permission to have my interviews recorded for research purposes.

[redacted]

Signature:

Pathisa Nyathi
Director: Amagugu International Heritage Centre

Appendix 10: *Lekgotla* Questions

Focus Group Schedule: Fumhe Village Lekgotla (community colloquium)

The following questions will form the basis for the key discussion points:

Key research questions:

a) How does Oliver Mtukudzi's music reflect African healing principles and practices?

3. What Shona community psycho-social support concepts are articulated by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?
4. What public health principles are foregrounded by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?

b) In what ways does Mtukudzi's music facilitate healing in the context of loss, bereavement and grief?

Additional Questions:

1. How is music used at funeral programmes and funeral rituals in your community?
2. In what ways does music provide support and healing for the bereaved?
3. What cultural practices are carried out at funerals in your community?
4. When using music to support, comfort and facilitate healing for the grieved, what are the key elements of your culture which you must observe? Are there any norms and taboos in traditional customs that a healer/provider of support must be guided by? (**Probe:** Does music itself heal the bereaved, or there are other cultural approaches to providing support and healing to the bereaved? In what ways could these approaches be linked to the use of music?)
5. What type of music is used when providing psycho-social support for the bereaved? (**Probe:** What *Korekore* community cultural aspects of support for the bereaved are carried and/or produced by music? What are the ways of monitoring or ensuring the effectiveness of the intervention process when music is involved/used in providing support to the grieved?)

NB: Whilst this set of questions will guide the colloquium, follow-up questions will be generated and addressed by the flow of the conversation.

Appendix 11: Questions for the Women-only Focus Group Discussion

The following questions will form the basis for the key discussion points:

Key Research Questions:

a) How does Oliver Mtukudzi's music reflect African healing principles and practices?

5. What Shona community psycho-social support concepts are articulated by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?
6. What public health principles are foregrounded by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?

b) In what ways does Mtukudzi's music facilitate healing in the context of loss, bereavement and grief?

Additional Questions:

6. In what ways does music provide support and healing for the bereaved?
7. What are the roles unique to women in the provision of care and support for the bereaved in your community?
8. What elements of culture play out in the music of Oliver Mtukudzi in light of music's role (if any) when providing support to the bereaved?
   (**Probe:** How does Oliver Mtukudzi's music depict the unique *Korekore* community cultural aspects of support for the bereaved?)
9. What cultural aspects of support for the bereaved are carried and/or produced by music?
   (**Probe:** Does music itself heal the bereaved, or there are other cultural approaches to providing support and healing to the bereaved? In what ways could these approaches be linked to the use of music?)
10. What are the gender-specific roles (if any) for supporting the bereaved in your community?
    (**Probe:** How does music fit into these gender-specific roles when providing support and healing to the bereaved?)

NB: Whilst this set of questions will guide the colloquium, follow-up questions will be generated and addressed by the flow of the conversation at this platform.

Appendix 12: Daisy Mtukudzi Interview Questions

The following questions will guide the interview:

Key Research Questions:

a) How does Oliver Mtukudzi's music reflect African healing principles and practices?

7. What Shona community psycho-social support concepts are articulated by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?
8. What public health principles are foregrounded by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?

b) In what ways does Mtukudzi's music facilitate healing in the context of loss, bereavement and grief?

Additional Questions:

11. Mrs Mtukudzi, your husband is a lifetime inspiration to many of us (may his dear soul rest in peace). In what ways (according to your own understanding) does Oliver Mtukudzi's music address issues to do with death and bereavement?
12. Would you say Oliver Mtukudzi had specific healing agendas in the composition and performance of his music, particularly healing in the context of the bereaved?
13. Can you single out specific songs by Oliver Mtukudzi that address healing for the bereaved?
    (**Probe:** Does music itself heal the bereaved, or there are other cultural approaches to providing support and healing to the bereaved? In what ways could these approaches be linked to the use of music?)
14. What are the family-related customs and norms that are reflected by your husband's music, especially in light of providing support and healing for the bereaved?
15. Are there any particular Korekore cultural values that played out in your husband's music in the context of healing for the bereaved?
16. Are there any changes notable when considering the traditional order of things on one hand, and contemporary approaches to providing support for the bereaved on the other?
    (**Probe:** What are the implications of these possible changes in light of the dictates (norms and taboos) of culture when relating to the context of death and supporting the bereaved?)
17. Before he passed on, Mtukudzi shared some thoughts regarding music and coping with loss, specifically after the loss of your dear son, Sam (and may his soul rest in peace). How do you relate to this experience, in your personal capacity and in the context of your family as a collective?
18. Would you like to share any personal reflections regarding your husband's commitment to cultural values in the context of his music and healing for the bereaved?

NB: Whilst this set of questions will guide the interview, follow-up questions will be generated and addressed by the flow of the conversation and engagement in this interview.

Appendix 13: Samantha Mtukudzi Interview Questions

The following questions will guide the interview:

Key Research Questions:

a) How does Oliver Mtukudzi's music reflect African healing principles and practices?

9. What Shona community psycho-social support concepts are articulated by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?
10. What public health principles are foregrounded by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?

b) In what ways does Mtukudzi's music facilitate healing in the context of loss, bereavement and grief?

Additional Questions:

19. Samantha, as we celebrate your father's legacy as a thought leader, may you kindly share your own reflections regarding his music in relation to healing and support for the bereaved?
20. Would you say Oliver Mtukudzi had specific healing agendas in the composition and performance of his music?
    (**Probe:** In what ways does his music reflect this?)
21. As a backing vocalist for your father on a couple of music projects, can you single out specific songs by Oliver Mtukudzi that address healing for the bereaved?
    (**Probe:** Does music itself heal the bereaved, or there are other cultural approaches to providing support and healing to the bereaved? In what ways could these approaches be linked to the use of music?)
22. Where does culture come into the context of grieving and healing?
    (**Probe:** In what ways does Oliver Mtukudzi's music reflect aspects of culture and its place in the context of healing for the bereaved?)
23. What is your assessment of audience reception of Mtukudzi's healing and grieving-related music?
24. Are there any changes notable when considering the traditional order of things on one hand, and contemporary approaches to providing support for the bereaved on the other?
    (**Probe:** What are the implications of these possible changes in light of the dictates (norms and taboos) of culture when relating to the context of death and supporting the bereaved?)
25. Are there any culture-driven expectations at family level with regards providing support and healing for the bereaved?
26. Before he passed on, Mtukudzi shared some thoughts regarding music and coping with loss, specifically after the loss of your dear brother, Sam (and may his soul rest in peace). How do you relate to this experience, in your personal capacity and in the context of your family as a collective?

NB: Whilst this set of questions will guide the interview, follow-up questions will be generated and addressed by the flow of the conversation and engagement in this interview.

Appendix 14: Norman Mtukudzi Interview Questions

The following questions will guide the interview:

Key Research Questions:

a) How does Oliver Mtukudzi's music reflect African healing principles and practices?

11. What Shona community psycho-social support concepts are articulated by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?
12. What public health principles are foregrounded by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?

b) In what ways does Mtukudzi's music facilitate healing in the context of loss, bereavement and grief?

Additional Questions:

27. Mr. Mtukudzi, as we celebrate your brother's legacy as a thought leader, may you kindly share your own thoughts regarding his music in relation to healing for the bereaved?
28. As a community leader and village headman, how do you relate Oliver Mtukudzi's music to cultural expectations in light of supporting and healing the bereaved?
29. From your experience as a community leader and village headman, what are the cultural do's and don'ts in the context of death and support for the grieving?
30. Would you say (and how so) Oliver Mtukudzi had specific focus on healing for the bereaved as shown in the composition and performance of his music?
31. Can you single out specific songs by Oliver Mtukudzi that address aspects or elements of healing for the bereaved?
    (**Probe:** Does music itself heal the bereaved, or there are other cultural approaches to providing support and healing to the bereaved? In what ways could these approaches be linked to the use of music?)
32. Are there any expectations at family level (according to the cultural practices of the Korekore community) with regards to providing support and healing for the bereaved?
33. In contemporary community life, are there any deviations from cultural norms in the handling of death rites of passage?
    (**Probe:** What are the implications of these possible changes in light of the dictates (norms and taboos) of culture when relating to the context of death and supporting the bereaved?)
34. Would you like to share any personal reflections regarding Oliver Mtukudzi's commitment to cultural values in singing about healing for the bereaved?

NB: Whilst this set of questions will guide the interview, follow-up questions will be generated and addressed by the flow of the conversation and engagement in this interview.

Appendix 15: Albert Nyathi Interview Questions

The following questions will guide the interview:

Key Research Questions:

a) How does Oliver Mtukudzi's music reflect African healing principles and practices?

13. What Shona community psycho-social support concepts are articulated by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?
14. What public health principles are foregrounded by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?

b) In what ways does Mtukudzi's music facilitate healing in the context of loss, bereavement and grief?

c) What strategies can be deployed to integrate Shona community health ideas and practices into Zimbabwe's psycho-social support framework, given 'Agenda 63's decolonial blueprint for Africa's development?

Additional Questions:

35. Mr. Nyathi, from your collaborative engagements with Mr. Mtukudzi on global health initiatives, how would you explain the interface between performing arts and healing?
36. How does music function particularly when providing support and healing to the bereaved?
37. Can you single out specific songs by Oliver Mtukudzi that depict healing or support for the bereaved?
    (Probe: How do these songs reflect cultural approaches to healing, particularly in the context of bereavement?)
38. Where does culture come into the context of grieving and healing?
    (**Probe:** Does music itself heal the bereaved, or there are other cultural approaches to providing support and healing to the bereaved? In what ways could these approaches be linked to the use of music?)
39. Are there any changes notable when considering the traditional order of things on one hand, and contemporary approaches to providing support for the bereaved on the other?
    (**Probe:** What are the implications of these possible changes in light of the dictates (norms and taboos) of culture when relating to the context of death and supporting the bereaved?)

NB: Whilst this set of questions will guide the interview, follow-up questions will be generated and addressed by the flow of the conversation and engagement in this interview.

Appendix 16: Mono Mukundu Interview Questions

The following questions will guide the interview:

Key Research Questions:

a) How does Oliver Mtukudzi's music reflect African healing principles and practices?

15. What Shona community psycho-social support concepts are articulated by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?
16. What public health principles are foregrounded by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?

b) In what ways does Mtukudzi's music facilitate healing in the context of loss, bereavement and grief?

c) What strategies can be deployed to integrate Shona community health ideas and practices into Zimbabwe's psycho-social support framework, given 'Agenda 63's decolonial blueprint for Africa's development?

Additional Questions:

40. Mr. Mukundu, from your experience as Oliver Mtukudzi's producer and as a musician in your own right, how do you understand music's role in healing encounters?
    (**Probe:** More specifically, how does music provide support and healing to the bereaved?)
41. Would you say Oliver Mtukudzi had specific healing agendas in the composition and performance of his music, especially healing for the bereaved?
42. Can you single out specific songs by Oliver Mtukudzi that address aspects or elements of healing for the bereaved?
    (**Probe:** Does music itself heal the bereaved, or there are other cultural approaches to providing support and healing to the bereaved? In what ways could these approaches be linked to the use of music?)
43. Where does culture come into the context of grieving and healing?
    (**Probe:** In what ways does Oliver Mtukudzi's music reflect aspects of culture and its place in the context of healing for the bereaved?)
44. May you kindly share any thoughts with regards audience reception of Mtukudzi's healing and grieving-related music.
45. Are there any changes notable when considering the traditional order of things on one hand, and contemporary approaches to providing support for the bereaved on the other?
    (**Probe:** What are the implications of these possible changes in light of the dictates (norms and taboos) of culture when relating to the context of death and supporting the bereaved?)

NB: Whilst this set of questions will guide the interview, follow-up questions will be generated and addressed by the flow of the conversation and engagement in this interview.

Appendix 17: Pathisa Nyathi Interview Questions

The following questions will guide the interview:

Key Research Questions:

a) How does Oliver Mtukudzi's music reflect African healing principles and practices?

17. What Shona community psycho-social support concepts are articulated by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?
18. What public health principles are foregrounded by Oliver Mtukudzi's music?

b) In what ways does Mtukudzi's music facilitate healing in the context of loss, bereavement and grief?

c) What strategies can be deployed to integrate Shona community health ideas and practices into Zimbabwe's psycho-social support framework, given 'Agenda 63's decolonial blueprint for Africa's development?

Additional Questions:

46. What is the place of music in the provision of support and healing for the bereaved?
47. From your experience as a cultural expert and scholar in African spirituality, what are the African cultural issues surrounding the subject of death?
    (**Probe:** How do these issues play out in the process of providing support and healing for the bereaved?)
48. In what ways (if any) does the music of Oliver Mtukudzi fit into culturally-codified healing dynamics for the bereaved?
    (Probe: How do the songs reflect cultural approaches to healing, particularly in the context of bereavement?)
49. Where does culture come into the context of grieving and healing?
    (**Probe:** Does music itself heal the bereaved, or there are other cultural approaches to providing support and healing to the bereaved? In what ways could these approaches be linked to the use of music?)
50. Are there any changes notable when considering the traditional order of things on one hand, and contemporary approaches to providing support for the bereaved on the other?
    (**Probe:** What are the implications of these possible changes in light of the dictates (norms and taboos) of culture when relating to the context of death and supporting the bereaved?)

NB: Whilst this set of questions will guide the interview, follow-up questions will be generated and addressed by the flow of the conversation and engagement in this interview.

Appendix 18: HSSREC (Ethics Clearance Letter)

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

17 August 2022

Shadreck Nembaware (221119187)
School of Applied Human Sc
Howard College

Dear S Nembaware,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00004562/2022
Project title: Decolonising psycho-social support in death and grief: An examination of Oliver Mtukudzi's music in the context of the Shona community's indigenous health practices.
Degree: PhD

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 28 July 2022 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 17 August 2023.
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 Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

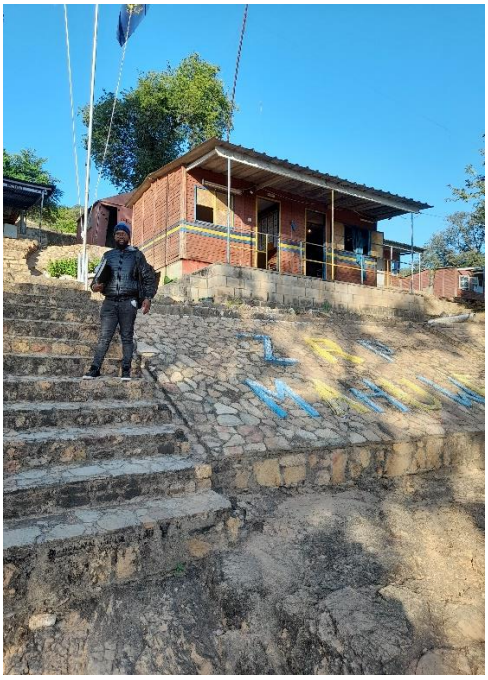
Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 **Email:** hssrec@ukzn.ac.za **Website:** http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics
Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendix 19: Gallery of Researcher's Selected Fieldwork Pictures

With the late Oliver Mtukudzi at his 65th Birthday Celebrations at Pakare Paye (September 2017)

At the inaugural Oliver Mtukudzi Memorial Half Marathon (Pakare Paye, January 2020)

With Village Headman, Sabhuku Norman Mtukudzi at his homestead, Fumhe Village, Mahuhwe (April 2022)



At Mahuhwe Police Station, Mbire District, at the foot of the Dande Mountain (April 2022)

With Mono Mukundu at Monolio Studios, Harare (July, 2023)

With Pathisa Nyathi (May his dear soul rest in peace) at his home in Luveve, Bulawayo (March, 2023)

With Albert Nyathi at the Zimbabwe Music Rights Association (ZIMURA) offices in Harare (July, 2023)

With Oliver Mtukudzi's widow, Mrs Daisy Mtukudzi, at her offices, Pakare Paye Arts Centre, Norton (May, 2023)

With Oliver Mtukudzi's daughter, Samantha Shami Mtukudzi, at Pakare Paye Arts Centre, Norton (May, 2023)

Breakfast, courtesy of Oliver Mtukudzi's surviving brother, Village Headman (Sabhuku) Norman Mtukudzi at his homestead, Fumhe Village, Matsiwo , Mbire Rural District Council (April 2022)

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