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## **Unemployed youth and exposure to farm community conflicts: A case of Bindura district, Zimbabwe**

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### **Abstract**

The study explored some of the lived experiences of the youth especially regarding conflicts and their means of resolution. This followed the disruption of farm community lives after the land reform programme of year 2000. The study applied a phenomenological approach to engage participants in their natural environment. The study also relied on a contextual framework of farm community violence and how it is resolved. A total of 55 participants were randomly sampled from across young people aged between 20 and 40 including five key participants who are permanently resident at Foothills farm compound. Content analysis was employed to process data. The study established some conflicts that had been submerged, concealed, invisible and otherwise denied before exposing some of the most applied approaches to conflict resolution. The study also established that there is serious lawlessness in the farming communities.

**Keywords:** unemployment, farm community, conflict resolution, conflict, young people

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### **1. Introduction**

Zimbabwe's land reform programme stretched from 2000 up till 2005 though there are still cases where some people are either being moved in or out depending on either availability of land or one's political allegiance. These movements continually affect the lives of the former farm workers who are now farm inhabitants. In Bindura district, there is a farming business service centre at Foothills that has been turned into a hub of both political and economic activities owing to its centrality in location. Foothills business centre has been turned into a centre for prostitution, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, and a dormitory for illegal gold panners and informal vendors in Bindura urban. At the centre of all these activities are unemployed young people, some of whom cannot afford rentals in Bindura urban.

It is the depth and gravity of conflicts, lawlessness and joblessness that have inspired this study. The study hoped to expose some of the Land reform policy flaws, highlight the plight of the young people in the farming communities, and expose the menace that unemployment has caused to the new farmers and the risk of diseases and violence facing young people. Basically, conflicts and their resolution mechanisms in the farming compounds were unraveled. In the study, deliberately, the term 'youth' is avoided for young people as a way of accommodating a wider age group that participates in conflicts and violence. This is also in recognition of different definitions of the term 'youth' in different circles.

### **2. Background**

Foothills business centre is located nine kilometres from Bindura along the Bindura-Matepatepa road. It is at the confluence of Foothills farm, Ledbury farm and Malvern Farm. There is a clinic, an abandoned grocery store, a primary school and a secondary school. Within the compound, there are six tuck-shops which convert to liquor stores by night. Because the business

centre mushroomed from a farm compound, there is a thriving compound housing over three hundred households with over 2140 people. Foothills primary school has an enrolment of 540 pupils and the secondary school has an enrolment of over 200.

Foothills compound originally housed 105 farm workers for the farm since Malvern and Ledbury had their compounds. This arrangement where inhabitants of the farm were solely Foothills farm workers was last experienced in 2003 when the former white farmer was forced to vacate following its allocation to new black occupants. Ever since that time, the population has been growing with more plastic and thatch shacks getting erected almost on a daily basis. Since most farm workers were brought in from Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, over 70% of the farm community had nowhere to go after the acquisition of the farms (FCTZ, 2001; Tandon, 2001) <sup>[6, 26]</sup>. From the survey and statistics from the compound leadership, there are more people during the day than at night as there are more trading activities. Besides, at night, some women go to Bindura for commercial sex work.

From the statistics obtained from the compound committee as at 2018, there were 710 and 519 permanently resident women and men respectively with another 911 being children. The compound is located on an average 30 hectare piece of land implying that an average homestead utilizes about 0.1 hectare. It is on that 0.1 hectare piece of land that all the required housing units and latrine toilets are built, exposing the inhabitants to the risk of infectious diseases. To demarcate household perimeter, they use thatch walls, which further worsen their exposure to the risks of fires.

The set-up at Foothills is reminiscent of several other former thriving commercial farm compounds and business centres in Zimbabwe where people are embarking on various other activities to earn a living. Similar activities are also in existence at Matepatepa Sports Club, Chihumbiru farm compound, Rosetta farm compound all in Bindura, Hayshot farm, Davaar farm,

Msonedi farm and Barwick farm, all in Mazowe district. In Shamva district, Tafuna farm, SOS farm, Enterprise farm and Hopedale farm compounds are also into the same situation.

### 3. Methodology

The study employed the phenomenological design to understand the experiences of the young people who live in farm compounds in Bindura district post the land reform programme. The study applied a phenomenological approach in order to understand the lived experiences of the young people especially with regards to conflicts and their means of resolution.

A total of 55 participants were randomly sampled for their knowledge of the area, their involvement in different activities, and their ability to analyse and explain what they see. Of the 55, 25 were men, 25 women and five key participants all drawn from the compound. All the men and women were aged between 20 and 40 and this was meant to cover age groups that are supposed to; be employable, have attained tertiary education, have born children, have started families, have participated in active politics and have in some way engaged in some economic activity. The key participants (three men and two women) were also elderly compound residents of respected stature in the community.

All the sampled participants were interviewed at a mutually arranged place by trained research assistants. Individual interviews were conducted separately for precision and confidentiality. This research process was iterative and reflexive with the researchers engaging the participants in their natural environment. This was based on the understanding that the participants from whom data was required are authorities in their own experiences, thus understand themselves and their circumstances better than any other person. Ravitch and Carl (2016) <sup>[19]</sup> observe that in qualitative research, fieldwork requires the process of gathering data in a natural setting.

The interviews sought to gather data on the following aspects; exposure to violence in the compound, prominent conflicts recorded and their causes and prominent measures used to resolve conflicts. A basic qualitative data analysis approach, content analysis was employed to process data. All the research participants were informed about the nature of the study and the implications of their input to the body of academia to which they consented freely.

### 4. Contextual Framework

The research relied on a contextual framework of farm community violence and how it is resolved without external intervention. The study focused on the way Foothills farm community in particular is organized in contrast to its previous structure and activities before the land reform programme. Despite the changes in land ownership models, the people's lives should not have been affected to this magnitude where poverty, crime and violence have become the order of the day. It is in light of these developments that the study sought to explore violence in a farming community setting and possibly establish how the same conflicts are resolved at community level. The findings from this study are generalizable in most of the farm compounds in Zimbabwe.

## 5. Literature Review

### 5.1 Poverty, Crime and Violence

Poverty, crime and conflict are commonly understood to be related. All recall images of destitution, destruction and human suffering. Poverty and lack of basic essential services are also believed to be major influences of violence and crime. It is known that in the pre-land reform era, over 70% of farm inhabitants were formally employed and earning some income. According to FCTZ (2002) <sup>[7]</sup>, over 900 000 people were evicted from the farm compounds. It was only after the reform programme that only 3-5% of the same communities are now employed. This development has exposed over 95% of the farming households to poverty, destitution and crime (Dodo and Musorowegomo, 2012: 134-143) <sup>[4]</sup>.

It used to be general knowledge that development automatically enhanced peace and stability (Verstegen, 2001) <sup>[27]</sup>. There was also a common belief that empowerment of local people also enhanced development and peace. The two hypotheses have been proved wrong by the Foothills community scenario where, following the empowerment of local people and a declaration of 'sovereignty', severe poverty and potential instability become imminent.

Even though it is clear that, in general, farm community youth are exposed to some form of domestic and cultural violence which is likely to have harmful effects on them, not all children in the same community are exposed to it (Widom, 1989: 355-367) <sup>[31]</sup>. Other children are protected from contact with both forms violence. Determinants of risk for exposure to violence differ with settings. However, some that have been established from various studies include poor parental education, low income, irregular marital status, and unusual living arrangements (Verstegen, 2001) <sup>[27]</sup>. In most farm compounds, owing to poverty, accommodation is limited and of poor standards so much so that some families share squashed rooms thereby eroding the essence of privacy.

Exposure to violence is associated with noticeable levels of distress which include signs of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, internalising behaviours and anxiety (Gorman-Smith and Tolan, 1998: 101-116; Hammack, Richards, Luo, Edlynn, and Roy, 2004: 450-462) <sup>[10]</sup>. Studies show that exposure to violence and unemployment can have varying effects. Deducing from other studies in the field of effects of family and community violence, it appears that one probable consequence of exposure to violence is an upsurge in aggression. Research has established that when young people stay unemployed for long episodes, it risks lopsided hopes and social strife that could diminish the investment environment and growth (World Bank, 2007) <sup>[32]</sup>.

### 5.2 Motivation for Violence

Violence is analysed as central to societal developments (Garland, 2001 and Wacquant, 2009) <sup>[8, 28]</sup>. It was a subject addressed by classical sociologists such as Marx and Engels (1967) <sup>[12]</sup> and Weber (1968) <sup>[30]</sup> after they had realised its impact on peace and development circles. The discovery of new systems of violence challenges a number of the hypotheses that submit that violence regresses with modernism (Walby, 2012: 95-111) <sup>[29]</sup>.

Studies on risks for community violence exposure have constantly found males to be at higher risk than females (Stein, Jaycox, Kataoka, Rhodes, and Vestal, 2003: 247-264) <sup>[25]</sup>. It has also been established that the risk is related to age, gender, culture, socio-economic class and susceptibility to manipulation through intellect (Resnick, Bearman, Blum, Bauman, Harris, and Jones, 1997: 823-832) <sup>[20]</sup>. There is proof that young people exposed to community violence repeatedly can suffer mental injuries that result in poor academic achievement (Saltzman, Pynoos, Layne, Steinberg, and Aisenberg, 2001: 291-303) <sup>[23]</sup>. According to Rutter (2001: 13-42), if public violence typifies the daily atmosphere of people, they are pushed to build coping styles and tactics to react to persistent intimidation, threats to well-being, and loss of personal control.

Violence especially in the farming areas where most of the young people are considered of no-fixed bode, is rampant and often bloody and fatal. Violence in the farming areas was taken to a new level in 2000 during the era when white commercial farmers fought against farm invaders with the support of their employees who naturally sought to safeguard their jobs (Dodo and Musorowegomo, 2012: 134-143) <sup>[4]</sup>. While farm workers, before the land reform programme were bound to farm owners in a quasi-feudal relationship (FCTZ, 2001) <sup>[6]</sup>, in the post-reform era, the same people are now owned by the ruling ZANU PF party, which arm-twists them for its benefit. During this period, political polarization between the ruling party and the opposition defined new violence levels. However, over time, factors influencing violence in the farming communities have changed depending on various circumstances (Muchabaiwa, Chiminya and Dodo, 2010) <sup>[15]</sup>.

Besides politicized violence pitting supporters of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) against the opposition Movement for Democratic Movement (MDC) (Rutherford, 2001) <sup>[21]</sup>, people still conflict over other issues. It is generally known that the level of morality in the farming compounds is low so much so that marriage practices allow a bride for almost nothing. In most compounds, there are unending reports of infidelity and cases of people exchanging spouses. There are also reports of people killing and maiming their enemies using black magic and getting away with it. There are also reports of traditional healers who provide with medicine (*juju*) used to pacify and soothe men in marriages so that they become naïve, docile and submissive. In the same vein, there are some cases of violence driven by jealousy while others are over women. Mabala (2011: 157-181) <sup>[11]</sup> posits that young farming community women are more likely to rely on sexual exchange and prostitution as a way of survival. Unfortunately, during the process, conflicts and violence are recorded.

The other form of violence that is often reported in war zones is sexual violence. It has an intense effect on the physical and mental health of the victim (Randall, 1995: 6-31) <sup>[18]</sup>. It may also take place when the victim has not consented and such cases occur while drunk, intoxicated or sleeping. Sexual violence includes other methods of assault involving a sexual organ, including forced contact between the mouth and penis and vulva or anus. Other aspects impelling the threat of sexual violence include (Njovana and Watts, 1996: 46-54) <sup>[16]</sup>.

- being young
- Poverty

- consuming alcohol or drugs;
- having many sexual partners;
- having previously been raped or sexually abused;
- Involvement in sex work.

Poverty can have an intricate influence on how relationships are discussed by young people. Young people in the farming communities employ various mechanisms to cope with economic pressures and marginalisation. Some of the ways include developing a solid sense of belonging, achieved through joining gangs, or friendship groups (Sommers, 2010: 317) <sup>[24]</sup>. It is sometimes influences from these gangs that young people decide to engage in violence (Dodo, Nsenduluka, and Kasanda, 2016: 208-219) <sup>[2]</sup>. Sometimes it may be over economic, political or social matters (Dodo and Dodo, 2014: 19-54). In some areas, they conflict over either ownership or control of mine fields while in others; it is over dominance within their cultural spheres especially the traditional dance called *gule* or *nyawo*.

According to some scholars, violence is inspired by excessive intake of drugs and alcohol (McDonald, 1994) <sup>[13]</sup>. In most developing countries, most of the unemployed people spend their time drinking, which leads into violence at the expense of development. Research shows that intoxication inhibits one's ability to assess situations and make sound decisions (Pederson and Skrondal, 1996: 565-581) <sup>[17]</sup>.

## 6. Findings and Discussions

### 6.1 Why young people are not stable

There was an issue that was raised by 12 youth about economic certainty. It was revealed that insecurity affects the sense of obviousness of life choices; the sense of being able to forecast and plan the future. In the absence of the capacity to forecast the future, it turns out to be challenging to make long-term plans like commitment into marriage where children will also expect love and attention. Under such conditions, the participants pointed out that it is necessary to be open-ended and non-committed in order to adjust to varying situations.

The growing susceptibility of underprivileged young people born in the farms to the vicissitudes of the economy appears to clarify their avoidance of both marriages and permanent settlement. 14 youth indicated that being out of marriages and looking after children born out of wedlock are some of means of concurrently keeping one's choices open and affirming one's self.

The five key participants (3 men and 2 women) reported that though the compound population had increased almost tenfold since the era of the land reform, it was evident that single parent headed households had increased from 31 in 2003 to 347 in 2016. It was revealed that more couples were breaking up with either party starting another relationship with new inhabitants in the same compound.

There was a voice within the participants expressing concern over their reluctance to settle and start families. The voice indicated that fear of unforeseen future violence and the desire to revenge on their past persecution had stalled their plans for settle.

With regards to such single-parent headed households, the most desired way of survival is dependence on men, followed by vending, farm work, prostitution, begging and stealing. It was pointed out that despite huge numbers of unemployed single-parent households; there were very few vegetable markets in the compound to show that they were making some effort to eke out an honest living.

## 6.2 Motivation for violence

Thirty-seven participants (20 male and 17 females) reported that they were inspired to engage in violence by basically the level of completion in the community where survival was based on one's strength. They indicated that the large numbers of people residing in the compound mainly for commercial reasons had introduced a law of the jungle mainly because of non-existence of relationships that were long-term. One male participant said;

*"Ini ndinotorwa kuti yard yedu isachekwe"*

(I fight to defend our residential premises)

One of the family characteristics found to be related with violence exposure was living arrangement. Those participants who reported higher levels of seeing violence lived with either single mothers or had relatively older siblings who bullied others in the compound. 11 participants (5 males and 6 females) revealed that they felt the manner in which they lived at home influenced their world-view. They indicated that they often witness domestic violence at home with their parents fighting almost daily. It was these fights at home which eventually hardened them turning into the monster people that they are.

Thirty-three participants (12 males and 21 females) indicated that their sleeping arrangements at home were not conducive especially from a cultural perspective. They reported that they sometimes share the same rooms with either their sisters or their married siblings.

Exposure to violence has been linked to critical levels of anguish including signs of post-traumatic stress disorder, despair, and nervousness. Three key participants (2 males and 1 female) gave out that they had observed that most of the children from families that were known for either domestic violence or inter-family violence were always down and withdrawn. They had also established that children from the same violent homes were not doing well in school despite the fact that they bullied others. However, they could not establish reasons for their poor academic performance.

Forty three participants (21 males, 20 females and 2 key participants) disclosed that they had been involved in numerous reports of drunkenness related violence in the compound. They reported that since the liquor stores sell beer almost daily till the early hours of the morning, cases of violence were a daily routine with injuries treated at the nearby clinic. All the male participants reported that most of their violence is a result of the following; poor communication, competition for women and suspicions of gangsterism. The two key participants reported that the activities at these liquor stores were perpetuated by the presence of ladies of the night who compete for attention dancing and exposing their bodies to the drunken patrons. One female participant revealed this;

*"Hanzvadzi, ndodii, ndinozongoudzwa kuti ndanyisa munhu ndakadhakiwa. Vanonditangirei?"*

(Brother, I'm told by people that I have assaulted another patron. I will be drunk)

Five key participants brought up a new dimension to the violence that was often experienced pointing out that there was an argument about political affiliation between the ruling party and the opposition. While Bindura district is in the hands of ZANU PF political party, Foothills general area is largely a strong hold of the opposition MDC political party. Therefore, there are incidences when groups of ZANU PF supporters are ferried from other areas to unleash violence in the compound and specifically

on the local young people. They said under such circumstances, they fight back in defence of their area and integrity.

Sometimes, according to the participants' information, agricultural farming inputs are distributed to the farming community by government along political party lines where deliberately, all known and suspected supporters of the opposition are denied access. The same discrimination also extends to such other programmes like food relief and selection of young people for part time jobs with the Department of Roads. It is such cases that the aggrieved young people seek revenge through violence.

The compound has become a hive of commercial activities. Therefore, to stay afloat and relevant, every trader has to be very competent. According to 34 participants (20 males and 14 females), there were an average of two incidences of violence reportedly over market niche. Though some participants were referring to jealousy, it was finally concluded that unending need for innovation and perfection in whatever commercial activity had sparked a number of incidences of violence.

The same argument about jealousy and competition was also attributed to some incidences of violence by men. According to 17 participants (3 key participants, 10 males and 4 females), there were an average of four cases of violence per week over claims to ownership or access to mining areas along the nearby Mazowe river and other small scale mining shafts.

## 6.3 Forms of violence and conflicts experienced

All the participants reported having either seen violence or experienced some form of conflict during their stay in the compound between 2003 and 2015. It was reported that because of the nature of settlement and commercial activities taking place, there was bound to be a high record of conflicts and violence. Some of the cases of violence experienced include sodomy as punishment, day light murder and concealment, killing by black magic, forced marriage and organized group attacks using some of the most horrible weapons like shovels, spears and axes. Some of the experienced conflicts have been over the following; ownership of household piece of land, public smoking within the crowded compound, child abuse, noise from radio volume, disposal of used condoms in open bins and bullying amongst others. However, they all confirmed that most of the conflicts usually led to violence hence the discussion of more violence than conflicts.

Rape involving at least two or more offenders was reported to happen both in the compound and in the illegal mining areas around. According to three key participants (2 females and 1 male), most of these attacks are perpetrated by people known to their victims. The problem is experienced when most of the victims refuse to report to the Police for investigation and prosecution. It was reported that there are numerous cases where victims are threatened with death should they report. Besides, some of the perpetrators are reportedly connected politically such that they are not arrested.

According to two participants (2 females), there are reports circulating in the compound to the effect that there have been two males who were gang raped by a group of illegal miners for allegedly seen attempting to mine from their hole. Because they were forced to believe that they had committed a crime, they then thought that gang rape was a fairly corresponding punishment. They never reported the cases.

Twenty seven participants (20 females and 7 males) reported of cases of sexual exploitation of children especially by men who come from Bindura to trade various wares. It was reported that some of these pedophiles lure school-going girls to the bush using small gifts like watches, ear-rings, and junk food from Bindura. While such cases of child abuse are common during month-ends when more traders come either to trade or collect their outstanding credits, they are rampant during public holidays like Christmas, Heroes, and Easter holidays during which periods more people converge and abuse intoxicants. As proffered by Njovana and Watts (1996: 46–54) <sup>[16]</sup>, most of the reported cases of sexual violence are to some extent, linked to the abuse of alcohol, age and being at the wrong place at the wrong time amongst others.

One female participant disclosed that her sisters' daughter had also been raped more than 4 times in a single night by one man during the 2012 Christmas holiday. She said;

*“Mwana wasisi vangu .....[starts crying] akarepwa kakawanda paChristmas. Vanhu tese taifara takadhakwa saka hatina kuziva kuti.....aripi. Takatozoti kwayedza vanhuvese vasisina bhabharasi, ndoopakawuya mwana asinganyatsogone kufamba.....”*

(My sisters' daughter was raped repeatedly by one offender during a Christmas holiday. We were all drunk that we did not notice her absence till the following morning when she came home limping)

Another form of violence that is common at Foothills is forced marriage of minor girls. Four key participants and 36 others (20 males and 16 females) indicated that on average per year, there are four to six cases of girls forcibly taken as wives by other men. Most of these cases are pre-arrangements with the parents of the girls who are convinced to release their children in exchange for material or financial benefits. Interestingly, despite a Police station being nine kilometres away, no one has ever dared reporting such forms of violence.

Closely akin to the challenge of child marriages is cohabitation. While adults are expected to live together as husband and wife after following some cultural procedures, which include payment of *lobola*, in this compound, few do marry. All the five key participants confirmed that in the compound, there were more than 100 cases of couples who live as husband and wife and yet would not have fulfilled any of the required procedures. Two participants who are in such arrangements confessed that, theirs were for convenience especially during their stay in the compound. This was despite the fact that they all have children.

Eleven female participants confessed that they were 'sort of' prostitutes in the compound as a response to poverty. They indicated that it was not in their desires to engage in such a practice especially in the same neighbourhood. They blamed lack of jobs in all the surrounding farms where traditionally, their parents used to work for sustenance. There were also four participants who indicated that they were into prostitution as a result of coercion by some of their elders who looked after them when they grew up. They said the conditions under which they grew up indirectly forced them to adopt prostitution as a practice. In 2008, the compound experienced a new type of violence which shocked everyone. In one year, there were four reports of people getting murdered while another three just disappeared without a trace. Two of the deceased bodies were recovered in shallow

wells in the compound while the other two were between Mazowe River Bridge and Tsambe River Bridge. Between the two bridges, it is a stretch of less than a kilometre. Two key participants revealed that since 2008, there have been groups of political activists who move around instilling fear in people by threatening with deaths.

Three male participants indicated that though they were not clear about the actual details, they had heard that all the reported deaths had been perpetrated by some of the young people in the compound. They revealed that the deaths had been inspired by political arguments. One female participant revealed that there were also reports that there were other people who had disappeared. She indicated that these' bodies are suspected to have been concealed in the nearby hills.

Reports of people either being murdered or dying mysteriously in this compound have been triggering conflicts amongst neighbours. However, the most intriguing of them all is where people get killed through black magic. While these mysterious deaths could not be scientifically attributed to black magic, 14 participants (5 females and 9 males) and four key participants did point out that there were some individuals who had powers to wish others dead especially if they had wronged them. In this case, all the deceased are suspected to have either impregnated girls or failed to pay for the goats that they had previously bought from some known elders.

Forty one participants (23 males and 18 females) confirmed the existence of group attacks of established gangs. They said that the gangs are established along political party lines, age groups and membership to particular traditional dance groups known as 'nyawo' or 'gule'. They also confirmed their membership to some gangs.

Twenty nine participants (11 females and 18 males) revealed that their violence against people who come to trade is to some extent, retaliation for their support and participation in the assaults against farm workers during the farm invasions' era. They pointed out that they do not regret assaulting and robbing them of their wares and money because that is what the current situation requires. It was remarked that;

*“Vakatiparadzira hupenyu hwedu mhani vanhu ava”*.

(These people ruined our lives)

Seven participants (6 males and 1 female) indicated that they dropped from primary school because of the violence inflicted by non-farm workers who, demanding land ended up robbing them and the white farmers' property.

#### **6.4 Conflict resolution approaches applied**

Wherever there are conflicts and incidences of violence, there are bound to be systems in place looking at all the possible ways of addressing the challenges. Especially so in Zimbabwe where cultural practices still reign, it is expected that there are already various conflict resolution measures on the ground. Unfortunately, that is not the case owing to a diverse of challenges, principally fear of reprisals by some young people's groups aligned to the ruling party. These groups are not comfortable with the involvement of state security systems arguing that they are able to resolve their challenges. Other participants (32) argued that the groups aligned to the ruling party are benefitting materially from the criminal and most commercial activities, which are considered part of the indigenous economic empowerment programme.

With the goal of eliminating systemic causes of violence, teachers from the two schools, compound elders and some members of an apostolic church have come up with programmes of meetings, and workshops where they expose people to the dangers of conflicts and violence. The school authorities have devised escort groups for vulnerable children to and from school. Escort groups are mainly made up of mothers from specific areas rotating in groups. These follow a realisation that pupils from the surrounding farms were falling victims to sexual assault, robberies and murder.

The challenge with such escort groups is that they were short-term, hoping that there would be an intervention by the relevant authorities. The programme also to some extent interfered with household chores and the need to engage in some income generating programmes for the sustenance of the families.

The school authorities that are too living in constant fear and persecution have encouraged each other to ensure that there is maximum school attendance by all the pupils. This drive is meant to ensure that children see the essence of education in life especially in view of conflicts and violence. The school authorities desire to achieve their results in the long term where, after the pupils have completed their education, they despise and shun violence. This belief is against a background where less educated people become more dangerous in community than their more educated group.

Education as a conflict resolution measure is long term. The approach by the school authorities to ensure that children around the area attain education is noble in addressing long term conflicts. If taken from a peacebuilding perspective, it is anticipated that in the next 10 or so years, the current group of pupils will be able to apply its knowledge towards peace and development. The beneficiaries of the current efforts will be expected to spread and influence the rest of the community to realise the importance of harmony and development.

There were some cases of individuals and groups that had developed sworn hatred and who would fight at every available opportunity. There were also reported cases of households that could not share public facilities because of hatred. According to 13 participants (3 females and 10 males), it was sometimes necessary for such sworn enemies to fight so they could end their hostilities as argued by Dodo (2015). Fighting according to Dodo (2015) has traditionally served as an effective conflict resolution measure especially within the Shona people of Zimbabwe. The defeated in physical fights would always keep some distance from the conquerors and too pay some respect. It was reported that one of the most notorious gangs in the area had temporarily gone into hiding after some of the gang members had been defeated in a beer brawl in the compound.

It appears that about a third of the participants believe in fighting as an effective and necessary approach to ending conflicts. As argued by Dodo (2015), that fighting helps identify the strongest, young people in this study fought to threaten the weaker groups away from areas and activities of controversy. It is unfortunate that it was the weak and vulnerable people who were targeted in the fights.

Some of the groups and individuals who had either fought or conflicted had always pledged to revenge. According to 40 participants (22 males and 18 females), they had at some point revenged previous wrongs by either insulting or imposing some

sanctions against their rivals. All the 40 participants indicated that revenging past deeds had helped calm their anger. According to 24 of the participants, it had reduced hostility especially if the other party had realised the reason behind the retaliation. There were also some elders in the compound who were encouraging the victims to at least inflict some pain on their perpetrators as a way of relieving themselves. According to the participants, it had effectively worked though in some cases, some parties would want to continue retaliating thus creating a cycle of retaliation.

While revenge as an approach helps reduce emotions and anger, it has a tendency of creating an unending cycle of retaliation. This approach does not really show the winner or conqueror, rather, it allows the use of the slightest opportunity available to inflict pain on the other part. This can go on till it gets embraced by future generations as a normal practice. It often results in more damage and destruction.

Talking and negotiation are some of the cheapest and easily available approaches to conflict resolution in most communities. These approaches require parties to a conflict to engage with a view to establishing areas of disagreement and of potential amendment. The approaches require sober and mature people to lead. Similarly, in Foothills compound, there are some elderly people who have always ensured that peace and cooperation are maintained ever since the times before land reform era.

Talks and negotiations though usable interchangeably, are in the compound applied differently. According to 47 participants (25 females and 22 males) and three key participants (2 females and 1 male), talks are a casual exchange of ideas hoping to resolve a conflict whereas negotiations are a more formal way of bringing conflicting parties together. The latter approach according to the participants is led by compound elders of a respectable stature while the former may be initiated and led by any concerned person. In the compound, according to the participants, what is most common is the application of talks by fellow members of the compound taking advantage of either friendship or sharing beer.

According to 38 of the participants (20 females and 18 males), there are over 20 respected elders who usually lead in the negotiations. They are also instrumental even in the formal marriages and other cultural rituals. They also disclosed that the school system was also being used to facilitate negotiations. The participants revealed that the school authorities were respected for both their superior intellect and good behaviours and standing in the neighbourhood.

It is evident from the results that though the compound community is of mixed cultural backgrounds, they still respect and adhere to some of the most basic cultural practices around conflict resolution. Negotiations and talks are some of the oldest means used by most societies. In this case, the approaches could have worked effectively because of the existence of the school authorities who are respectable and knowledgeable about the implications of conflicts and violence.

There is often a challenge of managing diversity. This is especially so if it involves people. By nature, people compete for recognition, power and scarce resources in a manner that threatens everything else around. With regards to the study, the elderly who led in resolving conflicts realised the need for tolerance. Whenever there were conflicts, the interests of all the parties would be looked at with a view to accommodating them for a sustainable solution.

The other approach that also helped reduce compound conflicts involved inter-marriages. It was realised that most of the households whose children had either married or were co-habiting had created a special relationship such that they were no longer conflicting. No matter how irregular and unofficial they were, from a farm compound standpoint that was enough to create a bond necessary for peace and good neighbourliness.

Given the fact that most of the households in the farming compounds adhere not to cultural practices, most of the marriages are expected to collapse leaving a trail of single-parent headed homes and hordes of single parent supported children. In the long term, these children may become a nuisance to both the local community and security of the state given their inadequate provision of social services.

## 7. Conclusions

The study found some forms of violence that had been submerged, concealed, invisible and otherwise denied. Some of such forms of violence especially in a 'sovereign' state include sodomy as punishment, day light murder and concealment, killing by black magic, forced marriage and organized group attacks using some of the most horrible weapons like shovels, spears and axes. The study also revealed some of the most common approaches to conflict resolution as negotiations and talks, accommodation, fighting, revenge, inter-marriages and education amongst others.

Poverty is related to both the commission of violence and the risk of being a victim of it. Poverty pushes many people into jobs that carry a comparatively high risk of exposure to abuse and violence. It has been shown in the study that poor communities are vulnerable to abuse and manipulation by those of comparatively better standing and from the towns where they claim to be connected with relevant authorities. Such abuse and manipulation has often been seen in political circles and especially during political election campaigns periods. However, it also goes beyond election periods; seeing more people get abused in the farming compounds largely because of poverty and unemployment.

The violence by farm workers, the majority of whom are originally non-Zimbabweans, is a reaction to the land reform era xenophobic attacks by non-farm workers who naturally were originally Zimbabweans. Contemporary studies however show that most of the supposed migrant workers are in fact second or third-generation descendants of the migrants brought in during the first half of the 20th century (MPSLSW, 2001)<sup>[14]</sup>. The responsible authorities should at least shoulder part of the blame for the conflicts in the former commercial farming areas. Almost the entire source of livelihood for this community has been eroded as the new occupants have literally employed not.

Alcohol has been shown in the study to play a disinhibiting part in certain forms of violence. Actually alcohol and drugs have a psychopharmacological influence of blurring judgments, reducing inhibitions, and damaging the capacity to interpret cues. From most of the conflicts and cases of violence reported, there is evidence of serious influence of abuse and intoxication of both drugs and alcohol. From the results, a sizeable population in the compound is exposed to intoxication through peer pressure and poverty.

Though there are previous studies relating risks for community violence exposure to be higher in males than females, this

particular study showed that both male and females are exposed from the same plane and suffer the same risk. From the findings, it is evident that both male and females are engaged in various and heinous forms of conflicts and violence. The study could not however relate the long term effect of exposure to violence since it was conducted focusing on a 13 year period from 2003. What has however emerged clearly is the fact that most of the conflicts and violence instigated by the young community in the farming compounds is a reaction to poverty, joblessness and lack of social services. There is also an element of exposure to immorality and criminality without adequate policing by relevant institutions.

## 8. Recommendations

There is need for an analysis of the conflicts and the potential for further escalations. Traditional analysis has often focused on the root causes of the conflicts with the belief that addressing the root cause, the entire problem gets resolved. Unfortunately, this has been without really understanding the mutable nature of the conflicts and fluctuations in the environment in which it is set. Conflict assessment should focus on the identification of problem areas and the danger of escalating trends.

The study realizes the differences in the needs and expectation of the community members given that there are now a mix of traditional farm inhabitants, commercial opportunists and refugees hiding from crimes committed elsewhere. Therefore, there is need for a review of policies and laws around settlement in the farming areas so that the welfare of former farm workers is revisited. Realizing that in Bindura alone, over 30 000 people directly survived on farming; there is need for a deliberate safety net for these communities which may be funded from the new farm beneficiaries. Either a separate levy is created or a percentage may be deducted from the farm levies going towards their welfare. It is on this basis that potential conflicts and community crime can be either minimised or outrightly erased. The study also recommends proper semi-urban planning in the farming compounds to allow the provision of social services and control of diseases and outbreaks. The present hap-hazard establishment of housing units and toilets creates a safe haven for criminals and a breeding ground for diseases.

It is recommended that efforts to both lessen violence and the effects of exposure to violence must comprise individuals, households, education systems, surrounding communities, and key groups and relevant government departments. This coordinated intervention by the above cited constituencies is critical for assisting to lessen violence and to help young people appreciate the importance of sustainable conflict resolution measures.

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