Soldiers in Exile: The military habitus and identities of former Zimbabwean soldiers in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

After analysing stories of 44 former soldiers from Zimbabwe (39 army deserters and 5 who resigned from the army), I argue that even though they were disillusioned by the Zimbabwe National Army's conduct both in war and during peacetime deployment, in exile in South Africa they continue to hold on to their military identities. While in many studies trained soldiers are presented as capable of becoming civilians in post-combat life, my thesis points to the difficulties associated with such a process. Even though scholars present military identities as fluid, I argue that it is also deeply embodied and expressed through 'bodily disposition'. In substantiating my argument, I employ Bourdieu's (1990) theory of habitus and field, to reveal how what was learned in the military is difficult to unlearn. I argue that the practice of clinging onto a soldierly identity is a social and economic resource for the former soldiers who became my research participants. The soldierly habitus is social because of its capacity to elicit and provide a bonding space in the absence of a supportive exile host community. It is a financial resource in the sense that it represents military skills that enable these former soldiers to access productive work in the formal and informal markets. I argue that, even though these former soldiers have the capacity to engage in violence, they have remained disciplined, while skillfully deploying their 'soldierly-ness'.

Although these former soldiers experience nightmares of, for instance, having killed in war, they continue to 'soldier on' in their exile context. They journey between two different, but complementary, spaces of healing, the Pentecostal churches and a soldier-in-exile support group. Even so they remain dissatisfied with what both spaces have to offer. The two spaces, with different kinds of support for the former soldiers, present seemingly contradictory results which the soldiers themselves try with limited success to integrate, in rebuilding their lives. They do not find conclusive healing in either space and continue to experience nightmares, while perceiving such a situation as part of the soldiering 'self': an on-going military life outside the barracks.

Methodologically, I employed qualitative research methods. I utilised ethnographical tools which included the life history approach, field conversations and group discussions in order to understand the exiled soldiers' past and how and why they have remained stuck in their military past. Having been a soldier in the Zimbabwe National Army myself for more than 10 years, I explain why I found it interesting, yet complex, to study my comrades. The interviews were done in the IsiNdebele and ChiShona languages, with a few done in English. The choice of language was influenced by each former soldier's preference.

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DEDICATION

In memory of my Mother: Juliet Mukushi who died in 1998 and my Father: Jameson Mudzingwa who died in 2003.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work. It is submitted to the University of the Western Cape, for a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Sociology. At no other University or institution has it been submitted as a requirement for a degree or any other qualification.

Signature…………………………………………

Date……………………………………………….

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMMOZA - Affected Military Men of Zimbabwe Association

AU- African Union

BMATT - British Military Advisory and Training Team

DDR - Disarmament Demobilisation Reintegration

DRC - Democratic Republic of Congo

MDC - Movement for Democratic Change

SADC-Southern African Development Community

SIB - Special Investigation Branch

UN- United Nations

ZANLA - Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army

ZANU PF - Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front

ZAPU - Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZIC - Zimbabwe Intelligence Corps

 ZIPRA - Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

ZMP - Zimbabwe Military Police

ZNA- Zimbabwe National Army
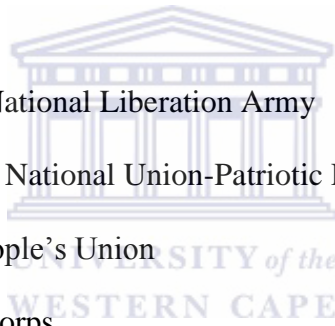
CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Soldiers who join the army serve in it and can leave it in terms of five distinct categories: those who complete a full contracted period of military service; those who are medically discharged; those who are dismissed for disciplinary reasons; those who apply to terminate their contracts and those who desert from the army. It is interesting that most research on the military has paid greatest attention to the first category: those who complete a full contracted term of their military service. In contrast, my thesis focuses on the fourth and fifth categories: soldiers who terminate their service contracts, and especially those who desert. I raise the following questions: What motivates these soldiers to desert from the army? This question is especially pertinent given the tough military training which they had gone through and the risks of being heavily punished when arrested (Chapters 3, 4 & 5 respond to this). Secondly, irrespective of whether they had resigned or deserted, what happens to the military identities and training inculcated into them, during their military service? (Chapters 6, 7, 8 & 9). Because this study focused on soldiers who had been in the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) I also explore the reasons why they had deserted or resigned in the first instance. To do so I had to attend in particular to the economic and political crisis in and outside the barracks and to give an account of the ways in which these soldiers were 'manufactured' through army training.

The participants in my study were soldiers who, since 1980, had joined the Zimbabwe National Army and so served in post-independence Zimbabwe. They differ from former

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liberation guerrillas who were incorporated into the Army after independence.[1] For the latter the military at the time had a political meaning and goal.[2] The deserters, as well as those who successfully terminated their contracts, joined the Army mainly because it was an opportunity to serve the country as well as secure paid work.

Since 2000 the ongoing political and economic crises in Zimbabwe has led to the Zimbabwe National Army being acutely affected by desertions and the resignation of soldiers. Even though the government of Zimbabwe has maintained silence on the issue, the public commercial (i.e. not state controlled) media has reported that many of these men found refuge in neighboring countries, in particular in South Africa. While the exact number of those who deserted from the army is not known, it is estimated that thousands of army deserters are now living in South Africa (Baldauf, 2007). Despite such desertions academic research has paid scant attention to it, and we do not know what kind of people these former soldiers (deserters and those who successfully ended their contracts) are, what they are doing and what they are able to do, or how they think about themselves in the context of the past and their current situation in exile.

My thesis focuses on this category of ex-soldiers. Interestingly, even though they feel that the army has become de-professionalised, they hang on to their soldierly way of living in

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[1] In the 1970s men and women of Zimbabwe joined different armed formations to fight for the independence of Zimbabwe. The guerrilla armed groups includes the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) an armed wing of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) the current ruling party of President Robert Gabriel Mugabe. Other guerrillas joined the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army an armed wing of the Zimbabwe African People's Union led by the late Vice President Joshua Nkomo, which also fought for the independence of Zimbabwe. At independence in 1980, some of the guerrillas were integrated into the new Zimbabwe National Army together with former Rhodesian forces.

[2] When guerrillas joined different armed formations to fight for the independence of Zimbabwe, they were driven by the desire to liberate Zimbabwe rather than economic gain.

their post-combat life, in a context of 'exile' in South Africa. I will argue that while those who participated in my study - the army deserters and those who had resigned - were deeply disappointed by the erosion of professional ethics in the Zimbabwe National Army (especially the ways in which the army had become de-professionalised), they clung to and reproduced their military identities and habitus (dispositions): it was in many ways socially and economically productive or helpful.

The men whose stories are presented in this study are mostly army deserters, as well as a few who had reluctantly resigned from the Zimbabwe National Army. They can be seen as a distinctive category of ex-soldiers and are quite different from and not easily compared to those who render on-going and/or periodic military service. Reserve forces, for instance, slip in and out of combat uniform to comply with their call ups and evince a capacity to juggle civilian and military lives (see also Vest, 2012; Griffith, 2009 & 2011; Lomsky-Feder et al., 2008). In addition, my participants are also different from soldiers who leave the military at retirement (whose service is recognised by the state and receive at least some pension). My participants are also distinct from liberation war fighters (mostly in Africa) who are perceived and recognised as heroes. Previously, much of the work on former soldiers focuses on the ways in which Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) in post-colonial Africa dealt with the return of ex-combatants to their own home communities (Dzinesa, 2008; Gear, 2005; Harris; 2006; Gear, 2005; Lodge, 1995; Kriger, 2003; Kingma, 2000a; Mashike; 2004; Musemwa, 1995; Rupiya, 1995 Grundmann, 1997; Kriger, 2006; Kingma, 1997; Clark, 1995; Musemwa, 1995 Ozerdem, 2002; Walter, 1999; van der Merwe & Lamb, 2009; Knight, 2004; Humphreys,

2007; Alden, 2002; Willibald, 2006; Metsola, 2006). No attention is given to former soldiers in expatriate settings and in self-imposed exile. Thus the participants of my study are somehow unique: their particular circumstances set them apart from demobilised soldiers/guerrillas.

1.2. Justification for this research

The overriding justification for this study stems from the continued migration of Zimbabwean former soldiers to South Africa and the dearth of studies focusing on this group. As Baldauf (2007)[3] notes, thousands of soldiers deserted from the army and are living permanently in South Africa. However, given the fragmented nature of formal and informal responses to Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa (Polzer, 2010), it is not known how exiled soldiers are coping with the memories of war and political violence of their former lives. Little is known about the persistence of the military 'being' of disgruntled soldiers who either deserted or resigned from the army in search of a better life in exile.

The existing representation of Zimbabwean soldiers is that all are deemed to support President Robert Mugabe and his political regime (see Alexander, 2013; Muzondidya, 2009; Ndhlovu-Gathseni, 2009; Raftopoulos, 2003; Raftopoulos, 2009; Solidarity Peace Trust, 2010; Tendi, 2013). Following on this, Zimbabwean soldiers are frequently labeled as perpetrators of political violence. They are perceived as President Robert Mugabe's henchmen, who keep his violent system in power. Ultimately, there is no understanding

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[3] http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0425/p04s01-woaf.html Zimbabwe Army's deserters underscores country's troubles

of how soldiers – especially those who joined the army in post-independence Zimbabwe - became victims of the same Mugabe regime. Their experiences in exile are equally shrouded in secrecy and have only been tangentially explored.

Usually, accounts from human rights groups have focused on the lives of civilians migrating from Zimbabwe in South Africa. The desertions, resignations and displacement of former soldiers to South Africa, as well as their experiences in their new context, remain insufficiently researched. Little is known about their everyday worlds and practices or lived realities in exile.

In this thesis I will argue that the former soldiers who participated in this study should not only simplistically be perceived as perpetrators but also as victims and survivors of violence. Given my focus on army deserters and those who terminated their contracts, the thesis also contributes to filling a gap in the literature on former soldiers in post-colonial Africa. Much of what we know about these soldiers was generated in studies conducted in the context of DDR interventions. These interventions promote disarming, formal retrenchment and the provision of financial packages to facilitate ex-combatants' reintegration into civilian life. The interventions are targeted at combatants who formally leave the army after ceasefire and/ or peace agreements, but overlook soldiers who desert from the army to find new lives in exile. There have been few studies which have focused on soldiers who deserted from conventional army structures in post-colonial Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe. As a result there is little understanding of the meanings they give to their experiences of desertion.

The only approximate and detailed account is that of Alexander (1998) who studied soldiers who deserted from the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) in 1982. The 1982 deserters were former liberation war fighters from the Zimbabwe Peoples' Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) an armed wing of the Zimbabwe African People's Union party led by Joshua Nkomo. On integration into the new Zimbabwe National Army they were motivated to desert because of ethnic-based political tensions within the army and the country at large. Most of them were Ndebele compared with the majority of Shona people in Zimbabwe. Long before and after their desertion, their relations with the government deteriorated and their political leaders, for example Dumiso Dabengwa and Lookout Masuku, were jailed. These deserters were called 'dissidents' (Alexander, 1998) based on claims that they planned to subvert President Robert Mugabe's government and had retained arms caches. Some of the latter were apparently discovered by Mugabe's army and security personnel in Matabeleland in 1982 and were seen as an indication of a plan to overthrow the government of Mugabe (CCJPZ, 1997 & 1999).

In my study, I focus on soldiers who deserted and resigned from the ZNA in post-independence Zimbabwe at the height of the economic and political crisis of the years 2000-2008. Unlike Alexander's (1998) study, which attended only to Ndebele soldiers who deserted when they were politically as well as ethnically targeted and persecuted in the army, I focus on Ndebele and Shona speaking soldiers who joined the ZNA in post-independence Zimbabwe between 1986 and 2001 and subsequently deserted or resigned and went into exile in South Africa. Contrary to Alexander's (1998) study, my participants did not participate in the liberation war for Zimbabwean independence. They

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were deployed in post-independence wars, i.e. in Mozambique (1986-1992) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (1998-2002). Apart from Alexander's study, there has not been any other account that explores the experiences of disillusioned Zimbabwean soldiers who left the army, including those who migrated to seek refuge in South Africa. The reasons for abandoning the military and migrating to South Africa, as well as their lives in this host country, have thus far remained obscure.

This study departs from existing research on the topic of ex-combatants and offers a critical reflection on how former soldiers maintain their military past as migrants in South Africa. As Gear (2002) notes, the military past of former soldiers is situated both in conflict and post-conflict society. According to Gear, issues of soldiers' military past – especially once soldiers depart from militarised structures - is a less studied area. Most of the existing literature assumes that former soldiers will just leave behind their militarised identities and habituated training (Harris, 2006). However, as Gear notes, this process does not happen so easily, especially when there are few opportunities for former soldiers (who are also ex-combatants) to rebuild new, alternative and acceptable lives. In the thesis I will show with regards to these former soldiers who participated in this study how they were 'made' through military training and, importantly, the way they left the army through desertion and resignation hampered their transition to a civilian life.

What is specific and explicit about the former soldiers who participated in this study is that many were victimised by the army and consequently resigned or deserted. They are now living among civilian migrants and locals in Johannesburg and elsewhere in South

Africa. Most of the people around them are unaware that they are army deserters. In this regard the experiences of my participants differ from former South African soldiers whose identities are known to the communities they live in (Gear, 2002; 2005). The challenges and problems my participants face are also partly different from those of former soldiers who resigned or deserted from the army but remained in Zimbabwe. The latter are mostly with their families, or can have frequent contact with them.

1.3. Research problem

Army deserters who live as migrants in South Africa are in a dilemma. They face social, financial and political problems. Their families have mostly remained in Zimbabwe but owing to financial difficulties and for political reasons they can neither go back to Zimbabwe to visit their families, nor afford to bring family members to South Africa. The most pressing issue that prevents their return is the fact that the Zimbabwe Military Intelligence (ZMI), in conjunction with the Zimbabwe Military Police (ZMP), are apparently involved in a massive manhunt for army deserters.[4] Within the army ranks in Zimbabwe there is suspicion that army deserters are working with opposition political parties and that they may use their military experience to topple Mugabe from power.[5] Captured army deserters are subjected to torture, interrogation and indefinite detention in Detention Barracks (DB). If they survive, they are court-martialed by army judges. Most Zimbabweans nonetheless perceive these (ex) military men as 'Mugabe and ZANU PF

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[4] http://www.thezimbabwemail.com/zimbabwe/8107-massive-manhunt-for-army-deserters.html, Accessed on 16 May 2011

[5] http://www.thezimbabwemail.com/zimbabwe/8107-massive-manhunt-for-army-deserters.html, Accessed on 16 May 2011

soldiers' who are propping up a violent government. Few people know about the extent of the victimisation of soldiers in the army barracks.

The plights of the former Zimbabwean soldiers and their experiences in self-imposed exile have remained shrouded in secrecy. In Zimbabwe, the state media has been silent about army deserters. Instead, an image is propagated that 'all is well' in the rank and file of the Zimbabwe National Army. On the other hand, former soldiers, especially those who have deserted, are reluctant to disclose their military past to researchers or to speak about their lives as migrants in South Africa. Therefore the problem at the heart of this study is the question: why and how do these former soldiers cling to their military identity in post-military life, when they felt so disillusioned by the same Army in which they served? The findings reveal that, hanging-onto their military identities and skills was a social and economic resource. It was social because it binds former soldiers in their past military networks. Lastly, it was economical because it provided them with an opportunity to seek employment mostly in the private security industry. In this thesis, I will reveal how my participants were deeply disappointed by the army both in wartime and in the barracks. I also argue that even though my participants are now in self-imposed exile, they maintain their military habitus: they retain their military identities and uphold social bonds. These former soldiers retain a military closeness; so socialities continue to act as sources of their social, economic and emotional lives.

1.4. The research in context: Soldiers as perpetrators and as 'victims'

The Zimbabwe National Army was promulgated and formed at independence in 1980. Its formation mainly involved the integration of two former liberation armed groups: the

Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army - an armed wing of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front led by Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwe Patriotic Revolutionary Army, an armed wing of the Zimbabwe African Patriotic Union, as well as members of the former Rhodesian Security Forces. In the early 1980s the army was professionalised and regularised with standardised principles, policies, organization, uniforms, training etc. through the advice, supervision and involvement of the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) (see Alao, 1995; Tendi; 2013). Until the departure of BMATT in 2001, the Zimbabwe National Army was still professional - though with some political challenges, especially following the disturbances and the Matabeleland massacres of the early 1980s under *Gukurahundi*[6] (see Young, 1997). In the late 1980s the Zimbabwe National Army recruited the first cohort of soldiers who had not participated in the liberation war (Young, 1997). The reasons for such recruitments were twofold: first to support an aging group of veteran soldiers who had served in the liberation army and secondly, for deployment in armed conflicts in Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the later years, the army became much more politicised, publicly supporting President Robert Mugabe, while denigrating the opposition political party (see chapters 4 & 5).

A brief description of the armed conflicts abroad, as well as the political crisis in Zimbabwe - in which my study participants were involved - is needed to understand what

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[6] *Gukurahundi* literally translated as the first storm of the rainy season that washes away the chaff was a massacre of civilians in the early 1980s immediately after Zimbabwe independence in 1980. Violence was perpetrated by a Korean trained Brigade, the 5th Brigade, which was dominated by the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army-ZANLA an armed wing of President Robert Mugabe party-ZANU-PF. The purpose of the Brigade was to unleash violence against the Ndebele dominated region-Matabeleland. It is estimated that more than 20 000 people died during the massacre (Alexander, 1998; CCJPZ, 1997).

they went through and why they deserted or resigned from the army. While soldiers who fought in the Zimbabwean liberation war from the 1960s to the late 1970s joined the army for political reasons (Alexander, 1998; Alexander and MacGregor, 2004; Chung, 2006; Kriger, 2003; Mhanda, 2011), the former soldiers, who participated in this study, did so mainly to find employment. They joined the ZNA from 1986 onwards, when the Zimbabwean government embarked on the mass recruiting of soldiers to support the Mozambican government (1986-1992) against the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) rebels (Young, 1997).

The Zimbabwean soldiers were deployed to protect the oil pipeline, stretching from Mozambique to Zimbabwe, against rebel attacks. Subsequently, ZNA soldiers were also deployed, between 1998 and 2002, to support the war of the government of the DRC against a rebel group which was backed by Rwanda and Uganda's National Army. In 2003, after the cessation of this war, the Zimbabwean troops returned to barracks in Zimbabwe. From there, they operated in internal deployments. Scholars have described the Zimbabwean situation at the time as a multiple crisis (Crush and Tevera, 2010; Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003; Raftopoulos, 2009; Worby, 2003) exacerbated by internal state-sponsored political violence. This violence became known as *jambanja*, which refers to an uprising, chaos, disorder and a general loss of political morality, as brutality grew against opposition party supporters (Chaumba et al., 2003). Muzondidya (2009) notes that[7] ZANU (PF) political party led by President Robert Mugabe deployed

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[7] The Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) was the first ruling political party to rule Zimbabwe after independence in 1980. It is still the ruling party in Zimbabwe but recently, since 2008 February, the party entered into unity government with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Morgan Tsvangirai after a controversial and contested presidential election in 2008.

its militant youth to shore up support during elections and marshaled state resources and institutions such as the army and the police to ensure electoral obedience. My participants became perpetrators and victims of *jambanja*. They were politically deployed to threaten and commit violence against civilians (defined as members of the opposition political party) and against perceived enemies of the State, including white farmers (Sachikonye, 2011). This created acrimony and a social distance between soldiers and a large part of the civilian population. All soldiers were viewed as oppressors, like the ZANU PF, especially as a result of the violence committed by soldiers during these operations.

The Zimbabwean army remained politicized in the post-2000 crisis the army publicly supported President Robert Mugabe (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). This phenomenon, which began in 1980 has been described as the 'politicisation of the military' in post-colonial Zimbabwe (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Politics centered on Mugabe and every political action was undertaken in support of his regime. This is what Ranger (2004) called 'Mugabe-ism' (see also Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Thus, in Zimbabwe, soldiers are perceived as anti-democratic beneficiaries of Robert Mugabe's patron-client relationship, a perception reinforced by the involvement of the army in political violence.[8]

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[8] In June 2011, Brigadier General Nyikayaramba said; "Daydreamers who want to reverse the gains of our liberation struggle will continue daydreaming. They can go to hell . . . they will never rule this country." He declared that he would not serve under the leadership of anyone who did not have liberation war credentials and that security forces would do anything to make sure President Mugabe remained in power until they felt the "threat" was over. He was referring to Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, the president of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) opposition political party http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/tsvangirai-warns-brigadier-general-douglas-nyikayaramba/ Accessed on 10 May 2012.

Soldiers were deployed in rural and urban areas, for instance during the land reform programme and during election periods (Alexander, 2003; Hammar, 2005; Hammar et al, 2010; Solidarity Peace Trust, 2009; Worby, 2003; Worby et al., 2008), as well as during Operation *Murambatsvina* ('Clean the filth in all cities') in 2005. At the time, amidst the political and economic crisis from the year 2000, a large number of soldiers were positioned around the country to ensure the implementation and success of different government political actions, forcing people to chant and celebrate President Robert Mugabe's slogans and songs, harassing and flogging civilians (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003; Hammar, 2008; Raftopoulos, 2009; Solidarity Peace Trust, 2008). This was done to ensure a solid bloc of votes for President Mugabe against his opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Morgan Tsvangirai.

According to Raftopoulos (2009) most of the political violence against civilians was directed by the Joint Operation Command (JOC) of the armed forces. While Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) argues that since Zimbabwean independence in 1980 Mugabe has never been tolerant Ranger (2004) notes that Mugabe shifted from 'nationalist historiography', which advocated a welfare agenda and reconstruction, to 'patriotic history', which divides the nation into black and white 'patriots' and 'sell-outs'. Elections were approached by ZANU-PF as 'battles' and political opponents were viewed as enemies to be annihilated rather than as political competitors (Muzondidya, 2009).

In the post-2000 crisis, the continuing political violence and economic decline of the country profoundly affected soldiers in the barracks.[9] Many became frustrated and, with rampant inflation, their salaries could not meet their basic needs. In some cases their monthly salary was insufficient to enable them to buy the staple food. The return of Zimbabwean soldiers from the DRC in 2003 coincided with the political and economic meltdown of Zimbabwe. The market was considered to be *kupenga* (mad in ChiShona) (Jones, 2010b).

Subsequently, the economic crisis deepened, with unprecedented levels of hyper-inflation. Jones (2010a) described the Zimbabwe's economy at the time as *kukiya-kiya,* which points to an indescribable scenario where normal strategies of life are rendered useless. People resorted to illegal strategies to survive. Hanke (2008) observed that, by November 2008, the annual hyper-inflation index rate was close to ninety sextillion percent (sextillion: 1 followed by 21 zeros). There were virtually no cash transactions taking place and the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange had stopped trading. President Robert Mugabe tried to control inflation by using what Tendai Biti, the former Minister of Finance[10] called *ginyanomics* - the controlling of inflation by arresting industry and commerce leaders and imposing price-control monitors on shops.[11] When presenting the

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[9] Soldiers played and occupied double roles, as unquestioning tools of oppression, and also silent victims who had to be whipped into line so they would not undermine ZANU PF.

[10] Tendai Biti became the Minister of Finance at the inception of the Zimbabwe Unity government in 2009. He is the current secretary general of the Movement for Democratic Change, the strongest opposition political party in Zimbabwe.

[11] http://changezimbabwe.com/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=1023, Zimbabwe is another kettle of fish by Makusha Mugabe 15 Jan 2008: Accessed 18 May 2013.

2013 national budget, Biti emphasised that the economy had become *feja-feja*[12] (a game of dice). The actors in the Zimbabwean economy were using random and at times criminal strategies, most of which fell outside what was normal, in a collapsing economy.

Jones (2010b) observed that by February 2009, immediately before the Zimbabwean dollar was replaced by the US dollar, an egg cost two trillion Zimbabwean dollars. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe had printed a hundred trillion (Zim-dollar) note and, along with ordinary civilian Zimbabweans, the soldiers faced financial disaster when the Zimbabwean dollar collapsed. The continuing economic crisis destroyed the livelihoods of soldiers and other civil servants; their monthly salary was at the time equivalent to US$10.00.

At the same time, in the barracks, many junior soldiers were increasingly victimised by local military intelligence, military police and paranoid veterans of the former liberation struggle. Furthermore, army generals were re-directing soldiers' food rations for their own use and hunger was common in the barracks. Faced with such an economic crisis and severely suffering from political victimisation, a number of soldiers[13] decided to end

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[12] http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-9571. 'We are running a *'feja-feja'* economy'
We%E2%80%99re+running+%E2%80%98feja+feja%E2%80%99+economy+Biti/news.aspx

[13] There is no exact figure but the private media estimated that more than 1200 soldiers deserted each year since the year 2000 (see Baldauf, 2007). Even the private media figures are conflicting with some choosing to use the word mass exodus of army deserters to present huge unknown figures. In some cases the private media exaggerate the number of army deserters. The state and state media has remained silent on the issue.

their contracts or, because of the stringent conditions associated with resigning, simply deserted from the army and sought refuge in South Africa.[14]

Some of my participants stated explicitly that they deserted from the army because of an increase in cases of persecution and the indefinite detention of troops by the Zimbabwean military police, the Special Investigation Branch (SIB) and military intelligence. This usually followed on suspicion that the soldiers supported the opposition political party, the MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai.

I have provided a background to and the context of the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis which led to the mass desertion and resignation of soldiers. Below, I give a thesis outline.

1.5. Thesis outline and brief description of chapters

While the thesis is a narrative of how these former soldiers went to war, how they left the barracks and how they retained a military-style life in exile as well as ways in which they seek healing, each chapter is self-contained, with its own argument and related literature. The following is the descriptive focus and argument of each chapter.

In Chapter 2 I describe how I met and accessed the former soldiers who became my respondents. I interviewed 39 army deserters and five who resigned, thus 44 in total. The most important tools I used to gather data are presented in detail. The main tool was a life history approach in which all the interviewed soldiers were made to feel comfortable

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[14] http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0425/p04s01-woaf.html Zimbabwe Army's deserters underscore country's troubles.

talking about their military lives. Nonetheless, having been a soldier and researching soldiers has its methodological challenges. I explore this and how I dealt with it.

Chapter 3 reveals how soldiers felt that their expectations of a professional army were not met in war. They were disappointed by the army's failure to provide enough food and the equipment required for combat and failure to repatriate the dead soldiers back home. In Chapter 4 I discuss the politics of 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' soldiers in the army barracks and how promotion was dependent on loyalty to ZANU-PF and President Robert Mugabe rather than their professional conduct in the army.

In chapter 5 I focus on the victimization of junior soldiers in the barracks. I explore how they became targets of political victimization, labeled as sell-outs and supporters of the opposition political party, the MDC. Foucault's (1977) idea of viewing army barracks as 'artificial cities' is discussed in this chapter exploring the ways in which commanders aligned to ZANU-PF punished soldiers reluctant to support President Robert Mugabe. The argument I advance in this chapter is that while soldiers have been perpetrators of political violence in Zimbabwe, they have also become victims in the process which led to mass desertion and resignation and ultimately drove them to seek refuge in South Africa.

In Chapter 6 I focus on how soldiers remain embedded in their military past. I argue that it is difficult to 'unmake' a soldier even in post-combat life. I employ Bourdieu's theory of habitus in discussing how former soldiers reproduce and co-ordinate that being. Chapter 7 discusses military identities. In exploring the concept of military identity, I

draw on the different experiences of former soldiers elsewhere in the world including Israel, the USA and Britain and post-colonial African countries. While military identity has been presented as fluid, in this chapter I argue that it can also be understood as a kind of habitus, deeply embodied and generative of the social world around former soldiers.

Chapter 8 focuses on how former soldiers retain their military bodies, which are ingrained with specific skills, especially the use of the gun and military tactics. I argue that while the dominant thinking is that military skills are lethal and violent, they are also productive since they are sources of and resources for survival. I employed Bourdieu's (1990) theory of habitus to show ways in which the military skills are reconstituted in exile. Alongside Bourdieu, I use Foucault's (1977) concept of 'disciplined bodies' to explore the ways in which former soldiers bodies have been shaped as tactful and disciplined bodies.
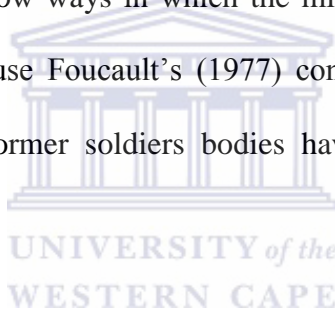
In Chapter 9 I focus on why and how former soldiers form military bonds in exile. I argue that military bonds represent a form of sociality and military life, but they are also a way of mediating their problems, including that of lobbying for a political amnesty. Chapter 10 deals with how former soldiers seek healing in two different spaces; the space of (mainly) the Pentecostal churches and that offered by their own association, the Affected Military Men of Zimbabwe Association. I argue that even though they journey between the two seemingly contradictory spaces, which offer spiritual and social healing of their experiences as perpetrators and victims of war and political violence, they cannot find

total healing. Instead, as the former soldiers put it, 'they can only experience total healing if they are granted a political amnesty'.

Chapter 11 the concluding chapter, ties together all the major arguments of this thesis. I have made it clear that even though my participants were disappointed by the de-professionalization of the army in exile, they continued to act, think and conduct themselves as soldiers. Hanging on to their military identity was not unintentional, it served the specific purpose of helping them to survive in an often unwelcoming exile context.

CHAPTER 2: Methodological Framework

2.1. Introduction

According to Tankink and Vysma (2006) the subjectivity of the anthropologist influences the research process. This is particularly the case for a researcher who shares similar experiences with his research participants. I am a former soldier with combat experience and doing research among other former soldiers often made me feel as if I was again deployed in the war-zone. I was fascinated and disturbed by the stories of my participants of their experiences of war and being in the barracks. My military past resonates with the group of men I studied: we were deployed in war and spent time together in the army barracks. For this reason I decided to write this thesis in the first person, a practice common in ethnography (Denzin, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The shared military experience unconsciously and consciously influenced the ways in which I approached the field of research. I will take this issue up again in the course of this chapter, but first I provide an overview of the study group.

The research group of 39 army deserters and five men who resigned had all been in the service of the Zimbabwe Army and all had combat experience in Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or both (cf. Chapter 3). At the time of the interviews, my participants were aged between 30 and 45 years, with the majority being in their mid-thirties. The primary data for this research was gathered between 2009 and 2012 in the inner city area of Johannesburg. I spent a great deal of time 'hanging out' with the participants. I used a snowball sample technique (Creswell, 2008) to recruit participants. I use this word rather than the usual 'informants' because, given the history of South

Africa and Zimbabwe, negative connotations have become attached to the latter. A number of social science researchers (cf. Hall and Callery, 2001; Roberts and Sanders, 2005; Schmidt, 2007) have begun to use 'participants' instead. This also indicates that the research process is one in which both researcher and researched co-constitute and co-produce the knowledge related to the study.

I collected personal life histories of 23 of the men and also conducted in-depth interviews with them. The interviews varied in length from 45 to 220 minutes. I had multiple interviews and discussions with each participant, all recorded and transcribed in full. I conducted one formal focus group discussion with three deserters as well as six informal focus group discussions with mixed groups of men who had either deserted or resigned from the army, and also spent time with 21 of the other deserters in many activities and informal discussions. Fieldwork notes were taken during and/or immediately after interactions. The interviews and discussions were done in IsiNdebele and Chishona. The research participants were conversant in these languages, and I speak both fluently. The choice of language was determined by the research participants.

As indicated above, the ways in which I have interviewed the exiled soldiers, read the interview transcripts, analysed and framed the research results were influenced by my own wartime experiences (cf. Chapter 2, 2.7), which resonated with those of my participants. Because I was in part trained as a sociologist, I initially pursued an objective reality out there in the field of study, yet, during conversations I sometimes struggled to maintain the position of the researcher (cf. Chapter 2, 2.3). While I consciously thought of myself as a researcher, I would at times slip into the 'world' of former soldiers, which

encompasses experiences and visceral memories, deeply habituated responses and conversations in what Vigh (2006:19) refers to as a 'community of experience'. Our shared past and current experiences converged and produced mutual understanding, a common language and frame of reference. However, even though we have the same experiences, we did not share as equals. The writing process also made me reflect on my past experiences, that is, of what I did during my career as a soldier and the meanings I still attach to it.

In this chapter, I explore how I met my former compatriots in the inner city of Johannesburg, South Africa: how I interacted with them, interviewed them and how I felt during and after our interactions. Because I shared social and emotional proximity with my participants, it was initially difficult to convince them that I was actually doing a study. As far as they were concerned I was already familiar with their experiences and could not learn much from them. I explore this dilemma further in this chapter. The section on ethics reveals how I conceived the study in relation to ethical issues. These include the subjectivity of soldiers as participants in a study that has potential security risks for them. I discuss how I endeavoured to protect the identity and persons of the former soldiers who took part in the research. In the next section I elaborate on the ways in which I selected and made contact with my research participants.

2.2. Re-connecting former soldiers

Having conceived of this study as an investigation by an ex-soldier concerning other former soldiers, in 2009 I coincidentally met one 'exiled' former soldier (Charlie Mike: pseudonym) at Johannesburg station. He had been a colleague during military training at

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Llewellyn Barracks in Bulawayo,[15] but had deserted in 2008. He was delighted to meet another former soldier in Johannesburg, away from the barracks. We had shared a lot in the past. We were trained in the same platoon and after training we were posted to the same battalion in the same section. We were deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) war and operated in the same platoon. We had a lot of shared memories from our war-time and barracks experiences.

During our conversation he told me that he had deserted from the army. I quickly, and unconsciously, slipped into military language. "S*aka tine mamwe magun-men here ari muno"? (*Do we have other gun men (soldiers) around? Chishona*),* I asked. Astonished, he enquired: "A*ah watova mucivilian ka iwe hauchaziva vamwe vako kuti chikundi chiri tii"? (*Are you now a civilian? We are many, but if you don't know that there are sections of soldiers here, then you are now a civilian.) I told him that I had just arrived in Johannesburg (2009) for my studies. Jokingly, he said: "*Musoja akangwara haakanganwi zvaakadzidziswa nainstructor wake"* (A clever soldier does not forget what he was taught by his military instructor.*)* We shared some military jokes, and talked about our past experiences. At times we mimicked drills and the voice of command (I was his senior: a corporal in the army and he was a private soldier. So I gave commands and he responded). "*Chaaaaaa"!* (Attention!*),* I said, and we both stood to attention. *"*Dressing right dress", I said, and we automatically formed a straight drill line. We had practiced those drill movements over and over on the parade-ground square: it had constituted a part of our lives in the barracks. Before we parted ways my compatriot gave me the

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[15] Bulawayo is the second capital city of Zimbabwe
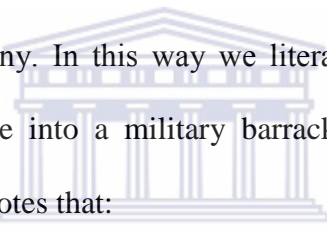
contact details of six other former soldiers with whom I had been in Zimbabwe in the barracks. As indicated above, we had both served in the DRC war.

Later on, I phoned the other former soldiers and they were happy to hear that I was around. I organised an informal meeting with them in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. We met at a café which sells *sadza* (pap), our Zimbabwean staple food. I bought some and we ate together. While we sat around the table, I observed that we had seated ourselves according to our former ranks in the army. The former lieutenant, our platoon commander during the DRC war, was at the head of the table. Once again we relived our experiences and the past caught our imagination more than the present. We spontaneously 'reverted back' to being soldiers in our behaviour and conversation.

I also told them that I wished to do a study on Zimbabwean former soldiers living in Johannesburg. They were all interested and willing to participate. They gave me more contact details of other soldiers. As indicated above, through a process of snowballing, the network of Zimbabwean former soldiers grew larger. In this way I began to recruit a sample for my study. I interviewed all of the former soldiers I connected with during my data collection phase and included them all in my study sample. I understand the merits and de-merits of using snowball sampling: the method helps to find participants who are in some way 'hidden' (not easily accessible), but a snowball sample tends to bring in participants with more or less similar experiences (Creswell 2008). The former soldiers shared a number of defining characteristics: wartime and barracks experiences. I was particularly interested in how these former soldiers gave meaning in their post-military life to a particular military past.

In conversations, I learnt that there were many former Zimbabwean soldiers in Johannesburg. Living in self-imposed exile after they had either deserted (most of them) or resigned (a few) from the army, they did not constitute a military unit but rather a rhizomatic (in the sense of rootstock) network. I gradually built a network of men who had fought in the DRC war and had worked in the barracks in Zimbabwe. Some participants had also fought in Mozambique (cf. Chapter 3). Once my research proposal was approved and registered, I organised meetings with the potential research participants and we subsequently spent a great deal of time together.

We almost intuitively addressed each other by past military ranks, and behaved like soldiers in each other's company. In this way we literally and figuratively turned the fieldwork/city space/exile space into a military barrack space. In doing this kind of research, Foucault (1980:174) notes that:

> If one is interested in doing historical work that has political meaning, utility and effectiveness, then this is possible only if one has some kind of involvement with the struggles taking place in the area in question. I tried first to do a genealogy of psychiatry because I had had a certain amount of practical experience in psychiatric hospitals and was aware of the combats, the lines of force, tensions and points of collision which existed there. My historical work was undertaken only as a function of those conflicts. The problem and the stake there was the possibility of a discourse which would be both true and strategically effective, the possibility of a historical truth which could have a political effect.

The extract above speaks to how I ended up thinking and doing this research with ex-soldiers. When I joined the army, I had no intention of becoming a researcher. Once I decided to enrol at a university, I became interested in asking certain questions, for example: What does it mean to have been a soldier and then to live outside a military setting? This is one of the questions which I aimed to answer in this thesis. My previous

relationship with and knowledge of the army made this research possible. I understood the rationale behind the events the interviewees narrated. I was largely perceived by the ex-soldiers as a sympathetic listener in whom they could confide. This allowed them to speak without censoring themselves and to divulge their war experiences as well as their experiences as migrants in South Africa.

Notwithstanding this, I had some challenges in making my participants understand what I wanted to do and why I was interested in their past and current lives. This dilemma was a result of the fact that the army 'world' in Zimbabwe is quite paranoid and anyone asking about a soldier's life is considered a 'spy'. Most of these former soldiers are deserters, albeit in self-imposed exile. They are still very concerned that they will be prosecuted for desertion. The fear of being hunted by the army is constantly on their minds. Hence, asking them about their lives was a complicated and difficult task. An example of this is when I was asked: "Are you not going to tell General Constantine Chiwenga[16] where we are staying"? The participants were concerned about the possibility that the information gathered would be made public and fall into the wrong hands. They feared that knowledge about them could be used against them by military intelligence and that the military police would arrest them.

I had to be aware all the time that my participants were on the 'wanted' list of the Zimbabwean state. To talk about my research project, I used the Chishona word, *tsvakurudzo*. It literally means one is seeking to investigate and understand people's lives. In Zimbabwe this is mostly done by intelligence officers. By saying that I wanted to do

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[16] General Constantine Chiwenga is the current Zimbabwe Defence Force Commander since 2003.

tsvakurudzo, I had momentarily transformed myself into an intelligence officer who intended to spy on them. Eventually, through extended explanation of what academic research means, and with reference to my university, as well as by showing them my credentials (letter of registration, ethical clearance letter from UWC and university ID) they understood the parameters of academic research and its difference from 'spy work'.

They became interested in their voices being heard through this research. I informed the research participants that the study findings would be published and they consented to this if pseudonyms were used when writing about them. Throughout my thesis I use military codes such as Alpha Romeo, Bravo Mike, Sierra Tango and Oscar Papa. During our interactions, we did not address each other using these codes. We used our former military ranks. But the use of such codes in writing has a dual purpose: while concealing the identities of the soldiers, these codes are rich in meaning in the military world. Apart from giving a vivid image of the issues discussed, military codes would help to hide the identities of these men and lessen their fear of being traced or hunted by the military.

In a formal interview with Alpha Romeo, who had been a former platoon commander in the DRC, he said: "but you know me from war, why do you need to ask what you know"? For him the knowledge I was seeking had already been shared in real life. Thus, knowing about and having been part of the group was both a resource and a challenge in the research process. As mentioned above, I found it challenging to maintain my position as a researcher, separate from that of an ex-soldier. My past relationship with my participants in war and in the barracks impacted on me in data collection, in positive and negative ways.

2.3. Caught between being a counsellor and a researcher

One of the challenges that I wrestled with was being caught between being a researcher and becoming an 'advisor' and/or counsellor for this group of former soldiers. When I was in the army, I was attached to the counselling unit and I used to counsel soldiers in the barracks. Now, in the research process, my participants wanted someone 'educated' to advise them. They wanted to know how to engage with the Zimbabwean state and how to lobby for political amnesty. In many cases exiled soldiers viewed me as well-positioned – being a PhD student as well as a former counsellor - to understand their concerns and their plight. They saw me as a resource, as someone with the capacity to make their voices heard and possibly help them to obtain amnesty from the Zimbabwean government.

I refrained from becoming the spokesperson of the ex-soldiers, but I did participate in their activities in order to become immersed in their social world. I maintained the 'invented', 'temporary' and 'artificial' distance and position of researcher, sometimes with great distress. Oscillating between the spaces and experiences of a former soldier and a researcher allowed me to deal with what Bourdieu (1990: 124) calls two incompatible points of view, objectivism and subjectivism.

In revealing how important I was to the group of other former soldiers in exile, Whisky Papa sent me a cell phone text message saying:

> We want to issue a statement condemning military involvement in politics, may you urgently contribute? What's in your mind, remember we are already in trouble, no more fear. (Whisky Papa)

I did not respond, but kept the text message on my phone. It reminded me of the ethical issues related to my study and the ex-soldiers' awareness that they had no support to lobby authorities to address their plight. It also showed how they perceived me as tied in with their agenda. To a degree, in light of my experiences shared with them, I was emotionally involved with this group.

Although they were now in Johannesburg, as former soldiers, they continued looking up to me for counselling interventions, especially those who were experiencing emotional distress and wartime-related nightmares. I referred those who needed it to free counselling services in Johannesburg. Most of them refused. They regard these institutions, staffed by professional psychologists and counsellors but with no military background, as ill-suited to deal with their issues. Nonetheless, I did not counsel any of the former soldiers in my study group. I felt that such an intervention would be contrary to the ethical undertaking I had given to UWC that in the event of my participants requiring counsel I would refer them to professional counsellors.

I communicated with the research participants by cell phone and Facebook chats, Whats-App and such. As part of building my fieldwork relationship with these former soldiers, I accompanied some of them to their work places which were mainly in the informal labour market. I visited them in the streets where they worked as street vendors. At one point I had to help one former soldier (Bravo Mike) to sell his wares, and I took the opportunity to have conversations and pose some questions, which would not have been possible if I had remained idle or a visitor to his 'street office'. I observed that the Metro Police were harassing vendors selling in the street. As the Metro Police approached,

Bravo Mike introduced me as a soldier to one of the Metro Police. I later asked him why he was "telling the police that I am a soldier, when in fact I had already left". Looking surprised he said: "You are still a soldier! Even here where I am selling airtime, some policemen know me as a soldier!" I realised that Bravo Mike was using his past to claim space in the city of Johannesburg. By revealing his past as a soldier, he established a particular professionalism which was recognised and respected by the police. It allowed him to claim a spot to sell in the street without being harassed.

While this study does not focus on the everyday lives of these former soldiers I have learnt that like many migrants, my participants have left their spouses in Zimbabwe. At a time of doing this study, 23 former soldiers involved in the study (19 deserters and 4 who terminated their contracts) are employed in the private security. The other 21 (20 deserters and 1 who terminated his contract) work in the informal sector: they either sell goods in the street or are fruit-and-vegetable vendors.

2.4. Reproducing the past through story telling

Initially a structured questionnaire was used to solicit responses to queries about former soldiers' experiences in exile. It soon became clear that whenever a question was asked about desertion, most would dwell on their life experiences, going back to the time before they joined the army. They delved into the events that led them to become soldiers. This showed that the use of a life-story approach was more suited, especially coupled with follow-up in-depth interviews. The life- stories enabled me to trace how these men joined the army, their wartime experiences, and the violence they experienced in the barracks as

well as how they later deserted or resigned from the army and sought refuge in South Africa.

In re-telling their stories they revealed their experiences at four levels: Firstly *as lived* - the events that touch on a person's life. Secondly, the related life *as experienced*: how a person perceives and ascribes meaning to what happens. The third level involved their lives *as told*: how experience is framed in a given context to a particular researcher. Finally was life as *a text*: interpreted and presented by the researcher (Denzin, 1989; Eastmond, 2007). The telling and re-telling of stories is contextual and in most cases stories are told, targeting specific audiences or to address certain issues. According to Gubrium and Holstein (1998: 165):

> We may focus, for example, on *how* a story is being told, while temporarily deferring our concern for the various *whats* that are involved- for example, the substance, structure, or plot of the story, the context within which it is told, or the audience to which it is accountable. We can later return to these issues, in turn analytically bracketing *how* the story is told in order to focus on the substance of the story and the conditions that shape its construction.

While I am aware that storytelling is both actively constructed and it is the researcher and the story teller who gives narrative coherence which Gubrium and Holstein, (1998) calls 'narrative practice', my personal experiences and military assumptions acted as filters through which the stories were subsequently produced as meaningful text. I understand their experiences as 'organised' narratives given meaning in the re-telling of their stories.

Life histories produce what Bourdieu (1990:124) calls an 'account of the accounts' i.e. it produces detailed stories. Many of the life history interviews lasted for three hours, with the longest lasting for four hours and producing a 50-page transcription text. At times,

especially when participants became distressed, we had to break and resume the interviews on other days. Sometimes the participants simply had too many experiences to discuss. Then we would resume, for example after four hours of talking, on another day. Life histories evoke stories and memories that would not be possible to share in ordinary conversations (Bruner, 2004; Dhunpath, 2000; Eide and Kahn, 2008).

The stories were told differently by the ex-soldiers. They narrated it in ways they believed were meaningful and that helped reveal their experiences. Afterwards some felt good while others were disturbed. In such cases they often asked to continue the discussion online at night. Our social bonds and connections were re-configured within these interactions. Ultimately, the research process has also been a therapeutic tool that allowed me to come to terms with my own experiences in post-combat life.

I was able to follow my participants' stories because I understood the context of events being narrated. I found the research productive to me as a learning process which gave me an opportunity to find some perspectives on the past of which I am a product and also a part. The stories of the exiled soldiers revealed that soldiers' experiences of war and combat constitute the greater part of their personal biographies. This is because combat experience stands out as a dominating story in former soldiers' lives. Thus the ways in which former soldiers construct their stories of war, is influenced by what they had experienced in combat duties but importantly by their current situation/status.

Because of my shared wartime experiences with these exiled soldiers, the life history approach turned out to be a tool in the re-construction of these events. When participants were talking, I was sometimes seized by nostalgia about the past. I would begin to think

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of my own experiences in the army and the war in particular. In such moments we shared the laughter and pain of having been in war. In a way, I was also silently telling my own story. When interacting with my research participants and in reflecting on the study material I was consciously and unconsciously re-appropriating my own military history, identity and being. For Eastmond (2007), stories in life histories reconstitute identity. While she was referring to the identity of the participants, in my study my own former military identity was reproduced both consciously and unconsciously as I negotiated my way into and through the lives of the exiled soldiers. The struggles that I encountered and still encounter as I move between the social worlds of a soldier, and that of a civilian, sometimes leave me stuck betwixt-and-between, in contradictory positions. I am still engaged in that struggle.

For Goodson (1992:241), the story of the researcher's life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which he/she derives his/her identity. While I am aware that this thesis is not about my own experiences, the stories presented in this thesis have been told in ways that resonate strongly with my own story. As I emphasised above, it also unconsciously regenerated my own identity of being a former soldier.

2.5. Reflecting on reflexivity

It will be misleading to tell readers that I have managed to escape from my own past to understand the current research. Instead I used my military experiences to discuss the stories told by the soldiers. As stated earlier, I have historical and emotional ties to the group of exiled soldiers I studied. My military past continues to haunt me and this is represented in the ways in which the text has been interpreted. Below I discuss issues

related to reflexivity, and how I situate my own involvement in this study. I will start by reflecting on reflexivity in a broad sense with regards to research, and then I will narrow it down to 'reflexivity and researching the military' (Higate and Cameron, 2006). I am indebted to the theorizing of reflexivity by Higate and Cameron (2006), which helps me to shed light on my study and history as a former soldier.

In doing this kind of study I involuntarily and deliberately reflected on my own post-combat life. This made me understand that being reflexive is not only about my past experiences as a soldier, but also about the way I accessed my participants, the relationships I forged and maintained in and outside the field with my fellow comrades. Borrowing from Giddens' (1991) idea on the 'temporal dimensions of reflexivity', I have realised that reflexivity is not temporal but moves beyond the fieldwork phase. Riach (2009) emphasises that reflexivity is embedded *in* and *after* the moment. This is what Finlay (2002:532) refers to as 'thinking about'. In this regard Hall and Callery (2001) argue that, when collecting data, the researcher will be doing it with participants, but when writing he/she is doing it in conversation with the interview scripts. I explore all this *in* and *after* my fieldwork experience (when writing-up) below. Scholars on reflexivity question the epistemological and ontological issues related to understanding the social world and diverse views. They argue that the social world is not an object to be discovered; rather, researchers actively construct reality as they study it on the basis of their epistemological and ontological assumptions (Cunliffe, 2003). How we think shapes research and how we formulate our research questions, the data collection tools we use and the stories to include in the data analysis. Reflexivity recognises the influence of

researchers' values and assumptions on the process of inquiry (Cunliffe, 2003; Finlay, 2002). Thus *being* reflexive 'is about the interpretation of data through which meanings are drawn rather than found' (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003:414).

Being a former soldier doing a study with other former soldiers had its epistemological and ontological advantages as well as challenges. In order to explore this I lean on Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) who argue that this kind of reflexivity is drawn from 'practical mastery' which is derived from past experiences learned and inculcated in one's individual being and practice. This is also 'symbolic mastery' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, ibid) in which the researcher draws on his subjective experience. Nonetheless, Alvesson et al (2008) argue that the process is not only about carrying the past self in the field but recreating it in conversation with participants. Military culture creates insider and outsider categories vis-à-vis soldiers and civilians (Higate and Cameron, 2006). Thus in doing this study, researching former soldiers while being a former soldier, the self was carried and reproduced rather than created. Reflexivity enhances methodological rigour and it is at the centre of creating opportunities for soldiers doing research on soldiers as it enhances the 'deep' hanging-out with other soldiers (Higate and Cameron, 2006). Thus for Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:41), it is the 'social condition' that forges a relationship between the researcher and the participants. I reflected on my own personal combat and post-combat experiences in data collection and presenting the narratives of the soldiers. For Schmidt (2007), what we know informs how we act in specific contexts. This is what Bourdieu (1991) calls 'epistemic reflexivity' which shows how our

subjective experience forms a particular kind of analysis. Thus reflexivity is a methodological and analytical resource (Higate and Cameron, 2006).

While I endeavoured to minimise bias, it will be an epistemological fallacy to say that I have detached myself from the data gathering process and analysis. The motivation to engage in this study was premised on the past experiences and the on-going relationship between myself and my research participants. While Hardy et al (2001: 536) talk about 'a research process which produces subjects of that particular research', in my study this research not only produced subjects *per se* but reproduced 'soldiers' on both sides: my participants and I. When the soldiers in exile were telling their stories in an interview it was not only a time of remembering what they did and how they did it, but it was also a time for me to reflect on my own experiences. I shared with them a kind of soldierly-ness, i.e. being a soldier. It viscerally reminded me of war times in the DRC and brought back memories of how we survived the harsh terrain of war, and experiences of being victimised in the army barracks as junior soldiers when we returned from the battlefields.

On reading the transcripts, I felt as if the research had 'deployed' me back into the war. Though these thoughts constantly entered my mind, it was also fascinating to re-read, both transcribed texts and the previous experiences in which the former soldiers depicted themselves as 'hero soldiers' surviving war. It is a past that I now relive - re-translating and re-narrating the experiences of former soldiers through an anthropological study in an academic space. The values of the researcher cannot be eradicated from his/her work and methodological techniques and their declaration of bias never completely strips them of their theoretical presupposition (Higate and Cameron, 2006).

In order to make sense of my own personal experiences, my biography played a significant role in the whole research process. This is well supported by Roberts and Sanders (2005: 294), who demonstrated 'how biography and institutional knowledge (the latter to me is about the knowledge I gained in the barracks and war) are two resources that influence research practice.' The research process allowed me to understand the lives of other soldiers while understanding my own transition from military to civilian life. I came to realise that I am neither a soldier nor a civilian but that I am constantly torn between two contexts in a bid to understand myself. So the self, including *my own self*, is always negotiated. The ways in which I probed and questioned during interviews somehow reveal a degree of prior knowledge of the events narrated. The same applies to what I wrote in my fieldwork diary. Bourdieu (1996) classifies this as subjectivity research, which reveals how prior knowledge is what steers us in delimiting our research work.
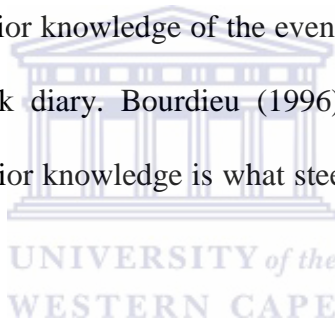
There were also on-going power relation tussles between me and my former platoon commander when I was interviewing and interacting with him. This is what Bourdieu (1990:127) calls a 'field of power' which he explains as 'positions in the space of power position'. I experienced 'momentary reversion' to the role of junior officer (Higate and Cameron, 2006). I occupied a subordinate position. For Bourdieu, 'the interactions, which are accepted at their face value by people…one can observe them, film them, record them…conceals the invisible which determines it' (1990:127). I was constantly reminded of my former military rank. The following conversation at the beginning of the interview captures this:

Alpha Bravo: 'Corporal *tuma mashoko* (corporal talk to me).
Me: *Chef*[17] (it means boss, a position of power; it is a term of submission
to a higher rank) I am here for an interview with you as I indicated in
our last cell phone conversation'.

Interviewing my former Chef momentarily reintroduced our past relationship in the army, that of platoon commander and section commander. The 'social facts' which defined our army relations for a moment constrained my behaviour (Durkheim, 1973). My presentation of self in relation to my former platoon commander was different from my interface with other ex-soldiers. There was a persistence of debasement of my past (by my former chief) which continued when I was doing fieldwork. This is what Bourdieu calls 'strategies of condescension' by which agents who occupied a higher position maintain social distance to gain the profits of recognition (1990:127). My own military *habitus* was revealing itself. The interview transcript with the platoon commander revealed a different interview dynamic - including my probing style. Drawing from Bourdieu, my self-presentation to the *Chef* was a 'product of an internalisation of the structures of the social world' (1986: 131). However, in spite of my 'junior' status in the re-invoked army barracks that constituted my field at that moment, I was able to do a good in-depth interview with my former *Chef*. In order to triangulate getting data from the *Chef* - in case I had been too guarded in my interview - I also followed up with a group interview where the *Chef* shared a lot of information about his past and present. Even though the former soldiers respected each other's' former military rank when

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[17] Chef is borrowed from French and the Mozambican version of the Portuguese language, "Cheffe" means boss, and it is a relic from the liberation struggle when Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) was operating from Mozambique and they inevitably picked up and added onto their military salutation vocabulary. It is the same in Spanish, "El Jeffe" but pronounced more or less the same.

talking, they all shared a lot. In many cases they reminded each other of what happened in war and the barracks.

2.6. Data analysis: The writing process

The process of data analysis proved to be a tedious process which began with transcription and re-listening to the transcribed data to do a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The transcripts were coded according to the themes that emerged from the data. In presenting the themes, I employed an inductive approach, i.e. drawing from the data. Thus former soldiers' stories helped me to capture the essence of their experiences and the meanings they attached to them in 'exile'. Throughout the writing process, the analysis drew me closer to the experiences of war and barracks. At the end of the writing process, I felt I had become more re-embedded into a military life than before, going back and forth through the data I had collected, and making sense of it.

The approach that I adopted to read the transcripts was to try and have a closer reading of the interviews alongside existing literature. The reading of transcripts helped me develop an in-depth understanding of transcripts especially how to draw themes emanating from former soldiers' voices and to rethink and use the often taken-for-granted terms that I used in my thesis. I also followed what Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006) called the 'thematisation of meanings', which implies that the meanings derived from the data are categorised into themes.

The writing process was not very different from a continuous process of reading and re-reading of transcripts in the sense that I continuously reflected on the data collection

process. The study itself, as well as the process of listening to the tapes, transcribing them, re-reading, thinking about and analysing my data was very evocative and even disturbing. The things my participants told me haunted me. Sometimes, it would come back in my dreams as I reflected on my fieldwork and writing. To avoid nightmares, I began to work during the night and slept during the day, and this recurred throughout my writing process. It was my choice and it worked for me.

2.7. Conclusions

The chapter invited us to reflect more on the subjectivity of the researcher. Being a former soldier researching on other former soldiers has its methodological benefits and drawbacks. The data collection and writing process made me reflect more than before on my past experience as a soldier. In doing this kind of research, my identity as a former soldier was more resilient than I initially thought. At first, I was more concerned with just going to the field and collecting data, not knowing that I would be immersed in my participants' shared world view. Indeed, my military ethos is evident in the ways in which I accessed the field of study, collected data, and analysed it.

In the next chapter I focus on the former soldiers' wartime experiences, but much more importantly on how the expectations of a professional army were not fulfilled in war. I argue that their current wartime narratives are also shaped by former soldiers' current exile context; they are a disillusioned group of men who unceremoniously left the army, without dignity or honour

CHAPTER 3: War narratives and de-professionalisation

3.1. Introduction

> That war was stressing because when we initially entered, the military was looking after soldiers, the way military men should be looked after and taken care of. This changed as time moved on. As Zimbabwean commanders started copying the Congolese way of doing things, the military deteriorated. We became like militias, because money meant to benefit us, was taken by commanders whilst the military men were dying out there. (Sierra Tango)

The war stories presented in this chapter are narratives of former soldiers who were sent to fight away from home in Mozambique (1986-1992) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (1998-2002). They ultimately felt betrayed by the Zimbabwe National Army. They were telling their stories in 'exile' in South Africa, in a context where they found it difficult to be heard by the Zimbabwean government. Soldiers' narratives revealed that their expectations, as professional soldiers who were sent to war, were not fulfilled. According to these former soldiers when the Zimbabwe National Army was, for example, deployed in the DRC it was "looking after soldiers". But this changed: Sierra Tango uses the notion of a 'militia' to depict how the undermining of professional standards, codes and ethics affected the army.

In this chapter my central analytical question has to do with how soldiers expressed their experiences as representative of the 'de-professionalization' of the military at a particular time. Ultimately they were soldiers in war away from home; they expected the necessary support from the Zimbabwe National Army. As members of a professional army, they had expected to be briefed beforehand if, and when, they were bound for war (cf. Baines, 2008). They had, as members of a professional army, anticipated that they would have

enough food, supplies and the necessary combat uniforms, arms and equipment. They expected engagement with an 'official' enemy, i.e. soldiers. Instead they ended up killing civilians. In addition, soldiers expected that the bodies of their dead comrades would be repatriated for burial, but their fallen comrades were buried in the DRC or left on the battlefield. In this chapter I explore soldiers' accounts of profound disappointment during the Mozambican war (1986-1992) and the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (1998-2002). When Zimbabwean soldiers were dispatched to the warzones they thought of themselves, as well their commanders, as professionals, but they ultimately became deeply disillusioned. The reason for this was, according to my study participants, the result of irresponsibility and the corruption of their commanders. Consequently the soldiers questioned the professionalism of their senior commanders, as well as that of the army in general. In the next section I allow the former soldiers speak in detail about how their understanding of professional military ethics was compromised.
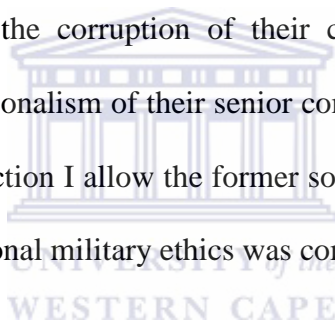
3.2. What it means to go to war

Like the stories of many soldiers who went to the battle front in war (Alexander and McGregor, 2004; Baines, 2008; Daly, 1982; Gibson, 2010; Hanson, 2005; Marlantes, 2010; Ramsland, 2012; Rawlence; 2012; Rosenthal, 1991; Owen & Walters, 2004; Wong et al, 2003), my participants' accounts revealed 'the things men do in war and the things war does to them' (Hynes 2001: 23). While such studies are extremely valuable in their own right, I opt to focus here especially on the perspectives of deployed soldiers, as well as on the representations and interpretations of war on their 'war front'. My participants' stories were about how they endured, managed hunger and experienced and dealt with

anger/stress. They also narrated how their comrades were killed, their sense of loss, terror and trepidation. Despite the fear, anger and tension of war there were also moments of excitement and even happiness. According to Marlantes (2011: i) 'combat is like unsafe sex in that it's a major thrill with possible horrible consequences'. This was evident when soldiers shared jokes in war, talked about their girlfriends etc. The men presented here narrate what the 'foreign' wars (DRC and Mozambique) meant to them. In this regard, Hynes (1999: 208) emphasises two distinct, albeit seemingly opposing elements, which occur when remembering war: immediacy and reflection. In exploring these Hynes (ibid: 208) emphasises that

> The nearer the act of recording is to the events recorded, the greater the element of immediacy, the further the narrative is from its events, the less pure the happenings will be, and the greater the element of reflection which shifts the focus inwards to meaning and subject-response. No longer simply what happened, but what did it mean? How did it affect me? How was I changed by it?

The above trend is also evident in my participants' accounts. They responded to phenomenological questions about the war and reflected on what the experience of these armed conflicts in foreign countries, and their involvement in it, meant for them. Participants indicated that they were neither informed as to why they were going to war in another country, nor how long they were likely to spend there. In addition, my participants were caught in unfamiliar terrain. There they had to fight and try to survive. They endured hunger, pain and loss. Below I explore how they encountered the physical terrain of war.

3.3. War as an unfamiliar terrain
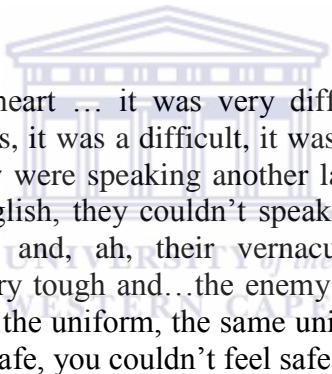
Being in war means a soldier has to quickly immerse himself in the unfamiliar and hostile environment and terrain while constantly being vigilant for the enemy. The immersion does not happen overnight. The DRC, for instance, has a hot and humid climate with many thunderstorms and frequent torrential rain. The vegetation is dense, there are poisonous snakes, tsetse fly and mosquitos that carry malaria or yellow fever. There are large numbers of feral dogs. Rabies is endemic, even among the wildlife. Besides the inclement weather, vegetation, insects and local fauna - the snakes and scorpions-soldiers had to deal with larger dangerous animals (hyenas, baboons, monkeys, jackals, etc.). This was also the experience of my participants. Narrating his DRC war encounters, Whisky Papa for example said:

> Firstly there were insects that pestered us. The mosquito veils that we wore around our faces proved useless. Besides the fear of the rebels, the scorching sun and the waterlessness of the deployment area added thorns to the flesh. At first I found it difficult to share the stress of being in war with other soldiers. (Whisky Papa)

'Being in war' involved fear of rebels, enduring intense sunrays and a lack of water fit for drinking. Whisky Papa stresses the foreign-ness of the war terrain, a 'different world which cannot be applied to normal daily life' (Lomsky-Feder 1995: 475). In the literature, deployment into a warzone is often represented as a watershed or critical moment in the life of a soldier. According to Hynes (2001:4-5) war 'is a genre without a tradition; it is presented as travel-writing where it is fought in places that are unfamiliar and odd'. In the DRC in particular, the terrain itself was harsh, unpredictable and threatening. Firstly, the war had no particular "front" and rebel fighters could not always be distinguished from the local population. For my participants, the lack of distinction

between rebels and civilians, the unfamiliar terrain, abundant insects, scorching sun, lack of clean, uncontaminated water and stress were an inescapable reality. It was a place of violence, potential injury and death. When soldiers narrate war they often give 'exact physical existence to those strange places to describe immersion in the alien, often terrible existence and how they learned to live in it or through it' (Hynes 2001:5). Similarly, when my participants talked about the war, they were always, even if inadvertently, creating a representation of the hostility of the landscape, physical, cultural and social environment in which they had been fighting. For them the war terrain (Mozambique and DRC) was always another place – weird, unpredictable, threatening. According to Bravo Charlie:

> I felt the pain in my heart … it was very difficult for us to adjust because, the first thing is, it was a difficult, it was another environment. Two, those people, they were speaking another language that we don't know. I mean even English, they couldn't speak English because they were speaking French and, ah, their vernacular language. So to communicate, it was very tough and…the enemy that we were fighting … they were putting on the uniform, the same uniform with the friendly forces. So we were not safe, you couldn't feel safe. (Bravo Charlie)
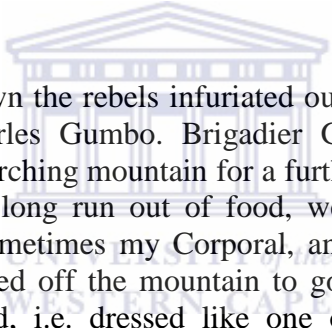
The environment was 'like a thorn in the flesh' (Whisky Papa). The warzone, and the local people, remained alien. In both the DRC and Mozambique the local people spoke a 'foreign' language. The soldiers could not trust their own senses: things were never what they seemed. A seemingly harmless setting could be full of hidden menace. People who seemed to be allies could also be enemies. For my participants, the geographical site of war is presented in its physicality, sociality and materiality. In its sociality, there is an inseparable and symbiotic relationship between soldiers and the landscape. My participants lived, fought, endured and saw comrades die in that setting. While they

fought in, and with it, they were simultaneously expected (so they were told) to protect it on behalf of the locals. The local inhabitants (civilians) were supposed to be on the side of the soldiers. The possibility of relations with the locals was hindered by a lack of shared history, cross-cultural misunderstandings, language and political differences. This was exacerbated by the unfamiliarity of the terrain, as well as the constant need to identify the 'enemy'. From my experience, being in war is about living in the 'war-scape'[18]. It is a life of learning how to exist far away from home: in a strange and always potentially violent place. While the soldiers were apparently immersed in the 'war-scape' they lived and "smelled like a wild animal". While they endured, the terrain nonetheless remained unfamiliar and hostile. Tango Romeo notes "I couldn't figure out the east or west, north or south, everything was new". For Whisky Papa the experience of war (DRC) was pre-eminent.

> We ascended a barren mountain with scattered trees without leaves and we waited for the 'prey' to pass by. The scorching sun made life unbearable for us. Within two days we had run out of water despite the fact that we had arrived carrying jerry cans of water to survive on for the next seven days. Having run out of water we were left with no option but to drink from our drips. Each one of us had two drips meant for emergencies. A few days later the tasteless drips were finished and now it was time for the survival of the fittest. For 14 days we had run out of food. Initially our mission was supposed to have been accomplished within a seven day period but our target escaped unharmed. Aircraft reinforcement was sent to fire missiles but missed the target. (Whisky Papa)

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[18] Appadurai (2002) used the idea of 'scapes' to describe land and the people who live in it, the meanings they give to it. Here I also use 'war-scapes' in metaphorical ways to include soldiers warfare trenches, war equipment-guns, combat uniform, food etc.

The extract reveals how soldiers live in war. They had to "drink from their drips" and were deployed on "barren mountains". Nonetheless, even though soldiers were confronted by difficulties, they were expected to effectively counter the enemy in the diurnal course of the war. The strangeness of the landscape, and the difficult circumstances were not supposed to affect them personally. At the same time war, especially for the soldiers immersed in it, is very much a collective experience (Winter, 2006; Winter & Prost, 2005; Winter & Sivan, 1999). This is expressed by the use of "we fought...we survived...the enemy saw us...our equipment...our emergency drips..." – all of which convey a collective doing and being in war. Whisky Papa vividly remembers fighting:

> The failure to bring down the rebels infuriated our commander, the late Brigadier General Charles Gumbo. Brigadier Gumbo ordered us to remain on top of the scorching mountain for a further two weeks without food or water. Having long run out of food, we survived on *piripiri* (chilli) and salt. But sometimes my Corporal, an artillery and bravery man, occasionally slipped off the mountain to go down to the enemy-infested bush, disguised, i.e. dressed like one of them in rags. The corporal would get to the tip of the river below and take muddy water up the mountain. If it was not (for) the brave corporal, we could have perished as the situation was totally unbearable. I signalled to the Headquarters about the shortage of rations, but there was no response. We endured up to the 23rd November [they were deployed for three weeks with no food or potable water]. When we climbed down, rain fell for the first time and we drank it as it trickled down our cheeks. Never in my life had I experienced such difficulties as the one that I underwent in battle. (Whisky Papa)

While the soldiers had to fight the enemy, food and water shortages were a challenge to endure. Despite the fact that their top command seemingly cared little about the difficulties faced by the soldiers, the bravery of a corporal saved their lives. For Hynes (2001), this is the strangeness of war; young men go to war and enter a peculiar world

governed by weird rules. The landscape itself becomes an enemy. Alpha Romeo remembers his advance to the frontline zone:

> From Lubumbashi airport (DRC), we advanced with 80 Chinese armoured cars supplied by the DRC government. We travelled for three days instead of the expected eight hours in a muddy road which makes travelling difficult. When we reached Kasenga, the Officer Commanding (OC) asked us to dig trenches overnight. The heavy rain made the task difficult and absolutely impossible. We finally slept under a tree. The rain was just pouring on us, there was no option except to endure it. In the morning, we managed to dig the trenches where we put our ammunition and rucksacks. (Alpha Romeo)

In war, the unexpected happens. Thus even the usual activity such as driving along the muddy road, became an ordeal. In such situations, digging trenches is not by choice but it is representative of being in war. Unlike the familiar landscape of Zimbabwe the killing fields of a warzone gives a sinister aspect to the environment. It has to be accessed for its strategic importance, but is also potentially threatening. The surrounding area can be "enemy-infested". To cross certain spaces, is to run grave risks. The whole landscape becomes saturated in the potential for violence.

At the same time, as Bravo Charlie stressed, "When we arrived we were supposed to … start making that place our home." Bravo Charlie tried to create a sense, or at least a semblance, of 'home' for himself, some place or space of familiarity where he could feel safe. Thus when soldiers dug trenches and made desolate mountains their habitat, a relationship was forged with the previously perceived unfamiliar and an uninhabitable terrain, the weather, insects and animals. In the DRC, hunger, malaria and rain proved to be the biggest enemies, worse than concern about the Rwandan and Ugandan forces. Lima Delta emphasised that even the Company Commander, who had fought in the

(Zimbabwe) liberation war, the Mozambican war (during the liberation war), in Angola and Somalia (a peace-keeping mission) confessed that: "the war in DRC was totally different from any other kind of war because geographically the terrain is very difficult... even the logistics were very different and difficult."

When I was deployed in the DRC war I, like most of my comrades, was initially terrified of the cobras, vipers and mambas that slid into the trenches. One morning at three, I found a snake coiled around my AK 47 in the sleeping bag. After the initial fright I cautiously pulled it off my gun and out of the bag. Like my comrades, I eventually became quite casual about snakes and even began to see them, like the many black scorpions, as somehow protective – as long as they were not threatened or harmed by us. My platoon sergeant reiterated "don't harm snakes in the deployment, they can harm you more" while our Battalion commander opined that "snakes, they don't bite soldiers. They are our friendly forces!" I, and other soldiers, carefully lived side-by-side with snakes, but none of us were bitten. Indeed, snakes became our 'friendly forces'. In Bravo Charlie's story the trench did not only 'house' the soldiers, but the war equipment as well. By digging trenches, a killing zone was both produced and mediated by war practice. My participants had all killed and seen someone die in war.

3.4. War as the art of killing and being killed

Being a soldier in war means to be, at times, keenly aware of the nearness of death. A soldier has a duty to kill the enemy and to avoid being killed himself. This hostile engagement occurs in a bigger social milieu, which includes civilians. In war, soldiers are supposed to protect civilians and not to kill them. Nonetheless, it is difficult to

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disentangle civilians from a war zone and to not alienate or harm them. The lives of the soldiers in the war terrain were governed by the strategies of war: responding to commands to advance, attack and do a tactical withdrawal and so on. War is full of uncertainty. Killing is the utmost reality of armed combat. Oscar Papa and Tango Kilo describe their experiences:

> In the army if you don't shoot you get shot. It's not me who declared war, I was sent to go and fight, so we went there, we fought and killed. (Oscar Papa)

> Two weeks after training the army commander addressed us, saying, gentlemen I marvel at your training. We are going to deploy you to DRC. Go there, kill the bugger and come back. (Tango Kilo)

The above excerpts present the war as a terrain for and of killing. The 'enemy' is constructed as the "bugger" to be killed. It dehumanises the enemy. For Baines (2004:7) 'in naming the enemy, soldiers tend to use monosyllabic terms which can be spat out with contempt'. The naming of the enemy as "buggers" motivates soldiers to kill. It undermines the 'other' in war. In the above quote soldiers are presented as "gentlemen" who are neat, highly trained and disciplined. Nonetheless the warzone had little to do with gentlemanly behaviour. The war was fought on mountains, along rivers and on plateaus. Soldiers had to be as tough and unforgiving as the terrain itself. The "bugger" was equally set on victory: they fought and killed the Zimbabwean soldiers. For Hynes (1999: 219), 'personal narratives of war are not victims' stories… no man with a weapon in his hand can be entirely a victim'. They are stories of survival and they are told in a heroic way (Dawson, 1994).

As indicated above, the terrain itself becomes an actor in the war. Describing his war experiences in Vietnam, Marlantes (2010) notes that, 'it was all absurd, without reason or meaning. People who didn't know each other were going to kill each other over a hill none of them cared about'. Thus war is represented as a space and time of killing without questioning why. The killing in war is not personal; it is a response to the state's command, in this case in defence of another state. As Tango Kilo emphasised, they were ordered: "go there, kill the bugger and come back". The war zone was an alien world where strangers faced off in mortal combat. There were struggles within struggles.

Whisky Papa described:

> We moved upstream where we slept on the plateau and in the morning we embarked on a dawn attack to search and destroy. Unfortunately the enemy spotted us and began firing at us. We did not return the fire for we realised that firing was meant to warn other enemies of our presence in the enemy territory. We took a prone position, remained like that without retaliation till the fire ceased and we rose to continue searching the enemy's main base. We found the base abandoned, except for some unattended chickens. By midday we settled for lunch and my immediate commander, a Lance corporal, ordered me to go down the stream to collect water but I preferred to cook. When the Lance corporal went to the river, he came back fuming, because he saw the enemy approaching to attack us. We hastily packed and moved to a higher ground in order to avoid being a target. The enemy followed and there was an exchange of fire. Bullets were whizzing which made any further movement impossible for it could only have meant perishing. We were later reinforced with helicopters. The enemy was wiped out. But, I still feel the bullets that whizzed around, and the bombs prolonged that day. (Whisky Papa)

According to Hynes (2001) the 'tradition of war' is that it penetrates every aspect of life. The movement of the participants/soldiers, talking, lunch, eating and all other daily practices are affected by war and they have to be on constant alert and guard. The overriding practice and condition of combat is killing, it underlies the whole pursuit and

state of being in war. Thus having survived the "whizzing" bullets, the participants viewed themselves as battle-hardened. It is this experience of war that 'makes' a man (Dawson, 1994). At the same time war is full of the unexpected and of the potential for disaster. This is stressed by Charlie Mike:

> Early in the morning we took ambush positions along a footpath. We put down landmines. In a short while, a loud thunder of two landmines burst, followed by sporadic gunfire. I joined in, firing my gun without seeing any target due to grass and the thick bush. After moments of firing, we stood up to search the ground with the rest of other soldiers. It was a disaster, the whole ground was full of innocent civilians dead and injured. I could not believe it. (Charlie Mike)

For Whisky Papa the war turned him into a legitimated murderer - all to eliminate rebels. Yet sometimes the supposed enemy targets were civilians. According to Whisky Papa "It was at Vila Paiva that my hands really got tainted by innocent blood". Like soldiers, civilians become casualties of war, as emphasised below by Whisky Papa.

> There was also a RENAMO rebel, injured, pleading with the ruthless Corporal Mponde to end his life. Beside the rebel was his bible. His injuries were such that he could not move but if Cpl Mponde had any heart, we could have uplifted him for medical attention as required by the UN. Unfortunately this ruthless Cpl left him to die from his wounds together with another girl of about sixteen. This particular girl had faeces coming down her ass but had she also been given medical attention, she could be alive today, but unfortunately, we just left, although my heart was bleeding. Another injured person crawled away and only one woman and her niece survived the mayhem. I remember giving them my tinned beef and took them to the camp. This particular horror left me an unwilling murderer to the extent that whenever I think of it, it troubles my mind. The ambush left me wondering if politicians have a conscience. (Whisky Papa)

From the above it seems that, in war, and especially in battle, the distinction between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' killing is blurred. The decision to send soldiers to another country and to command them to kill is ultimately political. However, Whisky Papa

stresses that soldiers can exercise agency, and decide to save civilian lives. For him there are levels of killing, which determine whether the killing is justified or not. War is against other armed fighters, not civilians and vulnerable people. Whisky Papa seems to indicate that a soldier can be tough, but humane. They should be guided not only by international regulations, but also their own conscience.

> No, no, being a soldier doesn't mean that you are a killer; there is a difference between a soldier and a killer, because when you are killing in the military you kill other military men who are armed, not whereby you come across small bones that suggest this is a small baby who died innocently. Already it suggests that there is no application of mind in one's execution of duty. When you are fighting you need to concentrate only on the military men.

While civilians are vulnerable in war, as Whisky Papa's testimony reveals, soldiers are themselves at risk. Mostly, soldiers are made to believe in the fallibility of the enemy – the "buggers" to be killed. By contrast their own army, their commanders, as well as the equipment they have and carry with them is presented as invincible. While soldiers are aware that they may be killed in the battle, it is not common for soldiers to be warned that they may die. My participants revealed how this misconception was unmasked in the reality of combat. Battle situations undermine mathematical calculations and the 'science' of winning a war. Soldiers also become vulnerable to pain and attack.

> I fail to understand how the bullet hit a protected person, leaving me, who was in the open. However, the injured driver (soldier) managed to continue driving although he was bellowing *ndafa* (*I am dead*). The driver cried. (Victor Romeo)

As seen above, in the war zone some of the taken-for-granted assumptions of soldiers about themselves are challenged. When they were sent to the DRC and to Mozambique the soldiers were supposedly ready for combat. Instead, the reality of war tested their

courage to the limit. Their fear, their humanity and vulnerability were exposed. They saw

comrades and civilians die as well.

> The Lance corporal was killed under bombardment from RENAMO
> forces. Being a survivor of this ambush, I remember 2-23 November as
> the time when I suffered an incomparable experience, witnessing the
> death of my compatriot. (Whisky Papa)

> The fact that I had to see bones of dead people, who would have been
> bombed in a convoy, skeletons all over. Those bones that we had seen
> there, they had frightened me; although I was hardened. But that type of
> death that I could see along the road had really, really, really left me too
> much hurt. (Lima Delta)

While soldiers expect death in war, the manner in which their fellow comrades were

killed and buried "frightened them".

3.5. The "other world-liness" of war: Death, dying and burial

The soldiers in my study all assumed that, if they died while deployed in another country,

their bodies would be repatriated for burial. Accordingly, their spirits would then also

come 'home' and be with the ancestors (Lan, 1985). But this did not necessarily happen.

The failure of the Zimbabwean Army to repatriate fallen soldiers made my participants

question the government and their commanders. The participants also began to fear for

their spiritual after-life. In this regard the spiritual beliefs of the soldiers were similar to

those of many people who live in Zimbabwe. Even in war, the soldiers believed that there

is a 'spiritual life' (Groves & Klauser, 2005) after death, in which they would become

spirits and/or ancestors. For this to happen, the necessary rituals had to be observed. Most

of all, their bodies had to be interred at home. The 'improper' burial of soldiers, who died

in the DRC and Mozambique, was a matter of deep concern for my study participants.

Their anger and frustration was directed at the corruption of army commanders who,

instead of repatriating the bodies of comrades killed in battle, pocketed the money. The deceased were buried in the war zones. Sierra Tango noted that:

> One thing that I didn't like, ah, was, ah, the way, ah, the Zimbabwean soldiers died there. You know, long back in the Zimbabwean military, when a soldier died on the battle line, he, his body was to be taken back home for burial. Burial with his family, friends; but because of lack of resources, soldiers were buried in shallow graves in DRC. To mark where the soldiers were buried, they put a bottle with a cork with his name inside it, they buried him there in a shallow grave just half of my, my lap. They bury a soldier there with a bottle; inside the bottle are his details, his name, which shouldn't have happened in the military. This was because of lack of resources. The commanders, they had taken the money for their own personal use, using the money that's supposed to fund the body of the soldier to be taken back home. They do their own personal things, you see? So I was not happy with that behaviour. You see most of the soldiers, when they go back home after they seen it, after someone has seen his friend being buried in a shallow grave, he could not come back home. They could go, they could run away, they could run to South Africa, because what he has seen here is something he has never seen his entire life that when you are dead you are buried there. So young soldiers after seeing these issues, they could not come back (to Zimbabwe), did you hear that. Such situations have never happened in any military, that when a soldier dies and they bury him there (in foreign soil) so this was actually a problem to the soldier. (Sierra Tango)

According to Alpha Romeo, "we buried my fellow comrades like dogs, no grave but we buried them in shell-scrapes". Burial rituals were neglected due to the conditions of the war and the greed of some commanders. Burial in the war zone was in deep contrast to how people were 'properly' buried in Zimbabwe. Ranger (2004:114) refers to this as 'dignified death', in which the body is buried 'with its face looking to the direction from which the person's ancestors had come'. Contrastingly the soldiers were, "like dogs", buried in shallow graves and without permanent markers. At home the family would be responsible for the proper death rituals. For Ranger (ibid), 'those who carried out the burial had to be purified with herbs and the digging tools ritually cleansed'. In the war

zone, burial is undignified and it also cuts the dead off from the living, the ancestors and the spiritual world. For the participants, the desire to be buried at home was strongly linked to the fact that, at birth, their *rukuvhute* (Chishona: umbilical cord) was buried in the earth back home, usually in the rural home. In this regard Mbiba (2010) emphasises that Zimbabweans in the diaspora spend a great deal of money to ferry the bodies of their deceased home. Similarly, Nunez and Wheeler (2012) reveal that repatriating the dead body is a shared concern among Zimbabwean migrants. Englund (1998) also notes that 'proper' burials help reconnect the living and the dead in the spiritual world of their ancestors. In this regard Tango Romeo noted that:

> Every day you will be seeing that you are further from your family. If you look at it, some of the places (in the DRC) were so thick that, in DRC, your spirit will never be able to cross that jungle (Tango Romeo).

In this way a soldier's spirit could be lost forever. The study participants accordingly conceptualised being sent home at both a physical and spiritual level. Many Zimbabweans believe that additional death rituals have to be performed a year after a person's death. This is called *umbuyiso* (Isindebele) or *kurova guva* (Chishona), i.e. bringing 'the spirit back home'. This practice elevates the dead to the status of the 'living' dead - who are able to communicate with the living, guiding and protecting them (Ranger 2004). Thus, when a soldier dies and is 'properly' buried, he is transformed into an ancestor who protects the living from any other evil spirits and attacks (Lan 1985). The war, however, disrupted this spiritual dimension and the observance of these rituals. For some of those who died in war the important rituals that create a bond to continue the cycle of life and death among Zimbabweans were not performed. Lan (1985:20) stresses that 'home for the living is essentially the home of the dead, and life is good if you live

where your ancestors lived before you'. It connects a person with the spiritual world. The fallen Zimbabwean soldiers were completely disconnected from home and from their ancestors.

Fighting in a foreign country is different from fighting within one's own country, where the relationship between the soldiers, the land, the people and the ancestors has a long history. In this regard David Lan (1985) showed how, pre-independence, the guerrilla war ultimately linked the past and present, living and dead, ancestors and their descendants in an alliance against the 'enemy'. The war forged relations between soldiers and the spiritual world. There is a materiality of war that relates soldiers and the spirit (cf. Fontein, 2011; Fontein, 2006). In my study the spirits of dead soldiers could not travel and navigate home, to where their forefathers had lived. In this regard Lan (1985:32) emphasised that spirits (*mweya; umoya*: in Chishona; Isindebele respectively) can see and hear, they have emotions and desires. Charlie Delta, for instance, was very concerned about the distance from DRC to Zimbabwe, which he assumed the spirit could not navigate after death. Alpha Romeo emphasised that:

> Seriously, even if you were to die in Congo your spirit will never be able to come back to Zimbabwe because of the jungle and it's too far that place. The jungle that is there, you can see that my spirit will remain here. (Alpha Romeo)

The concern in war was not only about physical death, but spiritual annihilation as well. Once they realised that the bodies of fallen comrades were not being repatriated, my participants feared that their spirits would be lost after death. They tried to allay such concerns by attending prayer meetings in the war zone. According to O'Brien (1990:4) 'war is a time when fantasies are shattered and notions of honour are rendered obsolete in

the frightening face of death.' For my participants it meant that their physical death could also mean their spiritual death, i.e. forever being cut off from the living and their family. This impacted on the psyche of the living soldier. For Fontein (2009: 426), war is a "liminal period in 'the bush'," when yearning for home is spiritually present. This was a critical concern for soldiers because of the strong emotional bond that existed between these soldiers in war and their spiritual life; much like the connection between people and the land. In light of the fact that death in war is an imminent threat, and soldiers do die, concerns about the after-life, and where their bodies go after death, weighed on soldiers' minds. Death became entangled with home and fear of its permanent loss.

While the soldiers were in the war zone they longed for home and they could not wait to return. For Hynes (2001) nostalgia is one reason why soldiers write letters in war. My participants were also worried about their families, as well as the general economic and political situation in Zimbabwe at the time. For Sierra Tango,

> Sometimes it was very tough and, ah, even communication back home, we, you know, like what I said the time when they told us we didn't prepare enough, they just said it's time to go. It was painful that actually we wanted to communicate with people at home so you, we were just using that old way of communication, like writing letters, that letter, it would take three months to, to arrive that side and it would take another three months to come back to you, so I'm telling you, you won't stay up to date, up to date with the news and, um, we had to stay, I think more than, more than three years, whilst we were there, some of the people, they managed to come back I think after one and a half years and some of the people they, they stayed until we withdrew. (Sierra Tango)

The disconnection with their families was compounded by the fact that it was difficult to communicate with them. The poor communication excluded them from the daily lives of

their families and impacted on their relationships with family, spouses and friends. They literally existed in another world, divorced from that of their relations.

3.6. Praying, preaching and being saved in war

Spirituality constitutes part of one's embodiment and is expressed through an adherence to certain bodily and spiritual practices (McGuire, 2003). Soldiers' narratives revealed that in war time they found psycho-therapeutic relief in religion and belief. It helped them to remain hopeful and enabled them to fill the spiritual void that military life cannot deal with: that feeling of being at peace and the hope that one can survive. Although there was no formalised structure and institutionalization of their spirituality, they prayed, asking God for intervention in the war. Their fears lessened as a result. The soldiers organised church congregations within the deployment areas, and prayed for protection against injury and death. My participants were convinced that they had survived because they prayed often in the war zone. They had spiritual beliefs and needs that the military could not cater for, and in their most desperate time of need they turned to God. One participant, Tango Romeo noted that:

> We came together on Sundays, prayed and preached the word. It helped us; my spirit was at peace. (Tango Romeo)

Being "at peace" in war sustained soldiers on the front. Apart from collective praying, Bravo Charlie said individual prayers in his trench helped: "I prayed in my trench, I escaped danger, I could find snakes in my trench but they didn't bite me." Prayers gave comfort and made them feel that they were spiritually protected in a hostile context.

> On Sundays we were having some church services so others would preach to us, so those encouraging messages which they were preaching to us, sometimes it keeps you motivated, it keeps you moving because

there's a time that actually when you are seated alone you feel like, no, I think the world is closing up to me, because you'll be just thinking about the distance of where you are and home. You begin to think that I won't make it and you hear about some of your comrades who have been engaged in the battle with the enemies and some of them, they are dead, some of them, they are injured. Then you would be thinking but actually, maybe next it will be me. We were not certain what tomorrow will hold for me. (Tango Romeo)

In above excerpt the emphasis is on what the men do in war. Church services and prayers kept them going and motivated them and were a way to deal with the war.

3.7. Relieving stress in war: Sex as a tool

There is often a strong emotional and social connection between war and sex for soldiers. My intention here is not to dismiss the idea that there is rape in war, rather sex in war for these soldiers was often perceived in war terms. I understand that in the DRC Congolese soldiers and rebels raped women in war (see Baaz & Stern, 2009; Merger, 2010). As Merger (2010) notes, men tend to carry preconceived thoughts about women, and these preconceptions are reproduced in wartime. I argue that the very fact that these men carried guns into war terrain negated the idea of consensual sex. It is very difficult to argue that sex was consensual when my participants were always armed in the diurnal course of war and in their engagement with the local population. Nonetheless the study participants tended to not dwell on power relations in sex, but to rather strip it down to a biological need that had to be met. For Alpha Romeo:

When you are in conflict stress comes into play and the only way of relieving stress is through such other indulgences, while normally you know sex is a reliever. The moment a man is away from his wife they become a boy because to start off with you are not even certain of when your life can end, so you live for the day just typical of any man in a conflict. You live for the day because tomorrow you can wake up without your leg. (Alpha Romeo)

War is presented as stressful (cf. Caforio, 2007) while having sex in the same context is viewed as a way to find relief. The risky nature of war and the threat of death create the possibility to engage in situational sex, sometimes with no condoms. Whisky Papa details this below. Soldiers are made to believe that sex is a solution to a stressful wartime environment. Whether that is true, is contestable and open to debate. According to Kelly, 'the transient life of a combatant' hinders him from understanding the moral codes and society's expectations (2010: 8). Baaz and Stern (2009: 497) argue that sex in war is driven by male libido, but it can also be an expression of anger and rage. However, in war, the distinction between consensual sex and rape can become blurred. My participants did not talk about having raped, instead they emphasised that the stress of war "pushed" them to pursue sex as a form of relief. This is in contrast to views about sex as a weapon of war (Baaz and Stern, 2008; Merger, 2010). I argue that for these former soldiers, sex in war was seen as somehow normalising them. It was a coping strategy after separation from their wives at home. Alpha Romeo transfers the blame to the war situation.

> That's why you see when a military man comes across money under normal circumstances he spends lot of it. Because of this boiling pressure that will be kept suppressed, because of the lack of time. Because you can even see when we were in war, whichever camp you are in you are not always allowed to go out. The few minutes that you are allowed to go out maybe you would have run away, so you try to compensate and stretch three hours to 24 hours. Everything that you will be doing, you will be totally abnormal, you will be under pressure. So sex will be a big Christmas [laughing]. (Alpha Romeo)

The confinement within a military zone of war separated soldiers from the 'civilian' world out there. This, Alpha Romeo argues, fuelled the need to 'blow off steam' through sex: the "big Christmas", and moments of pleasure and even happiness in war. Some of

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my participants also became progenitors, impregnating women, though with little responsibility as fathers or partners. Whisky Papa emphasised that:

> The moment a person would be deployed fully, what do you expect that person to do? We end up having unprotected sex; the end result was that those women they also don't take contraceptives. The end result is the children because those women would be thinking that I have found a man who can actually support me. (Whisky Papa)

War makes soldiers compromise the morality that governs them at home. According to Whisky Papa, "I had one relationship, but it was short- lived. I had to come back to my senses". Sexual relations during time of war were viewed as losing one's sense of morality.

3.8. Suffering of junior soldiers in war territory: When war became business

Participants noted that senior army officers ceased to take responsibility for their men in the war zone. Instead they focused on enriching themselves at the expense of their troops at the frontline. According to Oscar Papa, "in some cases medical drugs were sold in the nearby civilian localities, leaving soldiers at risk when they fall sick. Food meant for the soldiers was also traded outside the trenches". Nonetheless, this relationship shifted depending on power dynamics and the war situation. Alpha Romeo revealed how they suffered in the DRC war;

> This is where the notion of military men being fed on dried beans came from. It was not part of the Zimbabwe National Army (regulations) that military men can be fed on beans but it's something that we went to copy from a barbaric army: an army that has never been an army but militias, a bandwagon, a lot of indescribable things. We copied those things and those are the very same things that are now being practised in the ZNA. We were British in conduct, our way of life is British but now with these new standards that we imported from Congo our military is no longer British in nature. It is now Congolese meaning that our

standard as an army and military is no longer what it should have been.
ZNA is now behaving like a band of rebel soldiers. (Alpha Romeo)

While it is not the purpose of this study to trace how the former Rhodesian Security Force had operated in Zimbabwe pre-independence and immediately after independence, I can tease this point out a bit. This is because the men's stories point to that particular history. In short, soon after Zimbabwean independence in 1980, the British Military Advisory Training Team (BMAT) was in Zimbabwe to assist in turning the (now combined) army into a regular, professional military force and institution (cf. Chapter 1, 1.4). The way the army was organised and administered was very British - as pointed out by Oscar Papa above. The British influence was apparent in for example the professional standards and the "proper" way in which the army took care of its soldiers. There is a sense of nostalgia about 'British' military norms and codes of conduct which did not fit with the way the Zimbabwe National army fed and clothed its soldiers in the DRC and Mozambique. For my participants, upholding the comportment and ethics of a 'British' army is synonymous with being a professional. Instead the ZNA has become a "militia" and a "bandwagon" of soldiers: the army was "no longer what it should have been". It had become like the Congolese army: a "band of rebel soldiers", prone to maladministration and "barbaric" in its nature. The term barbaric is used to denote an 'uncivilised' Congolese army. By virtue of their power, Generals and other high ranking officials could enrich themselves by looting the resources meant for soldiers. This corrosive behaviour did not end and remain in the Congo, it was 'exported back' to Zimbabwe. Charlie Mike spoke with anger:

You know when commanders receive trunks of money. If you look at the Namibians they only sent a small number of military men. They

never went out to do what Zimbabwe was doing. Zimbabweans, on the other hand, took that war to be *their* army's war; they made it theirs and in the process they neglected the worth of their military men. (Charlie Mike)

In the quote above the Namibian army is presented as a symbol of professionalism in war: adhering to the country's own mandate concerning the DRC war. Even though the Southern African Development Community (SADC) had sanctioned Zimbabwe's intervention (along with other countries such as Angola and Namibia), in the DRC the war was driven by greed. Ultimately the "war was totally barbaric" (Charlie Mike). The difficulties of war were worsened by disease (especially hepatitis A, malaria, typhoid), and the inhospitable nature of the terrain. For Tango Mike:

> It was the most horrible place to be because to move in the Congo; their roads, you cannot move, their roads are impossible, vehicles get stuck, there is too much mosquitoes, too many diseases and above all, it's too vast a country. (Tango Mike)

The participants were left with no choice but to endure the suffering that goes with war. They had learned during military training to 'soldier on' regardless of the difficulties of the terrain. Sierra Tango notes:

> You find that actually there, our food supply, ah, you could, we could go some days without eating because, ah, the food, where the food was coming from, apparently like what I told you it was like around a six hour journey but just because of the road it took [more] time. Ah, it was, umm, our food supply was coming from Lubumbashi then we were deployed in Kasenga so it was just about five or six hour journey, driving but just because of the burnt road, the, the, jah, the transport could, could spend three days, four days, five days so, umm, that was another challenge and, umm, but anyway we, we, we endured and, ah, we, we worked and, umm, all the situations that we were facing during the training, I think it, ah, helped us a lot to endure. (Sierra Tango)

The problems of war were not limited to the battlefield. Instead the war also affected other areas of social life. Families broke up when soldiers were unable to take care of

their wives and families at home. War entered their social lives with a negative impact.

For Kilo Golf:

> You can imagine how many diseases we brought from that country. You can imagine how many break-ups in families; you can imagine the children that were left there. I remember I had to photograph another soldier's child. He had impregnated somebody. (Kilo Golf)

Nonetheless, some junior soldiers - working as quartermasters and cooks - learnt to be like their commanders, stealing army rations, re-selling it, doing what Sierra Yank called "living life outside the trenches". Victor Tango, who worked as a quartermaster, emphasised that, apart from partying at the Forward Logistics Base (FLB) in Lubumbashi, they could also acquire US dollars and sent some money home. Other quartermasters deployed in Lubumbashi town ran a syndicated network, stealing and selling army rations. They ended up sending money home through Western Union. In order to circumvent the military police and military intelligence, quartermasters connived with them, sharing the money and rations. Sierra Yank notes that:

> Soldiers end up learning to steal. Stealing beans, stealing anything that was available from the military, anything available in order to sustain life outside the trenches. (Sierra Yankee)

There is a representation of war life, life in the trenches, which is different from "life outside the trenches" (Sierra Yankee). The life outside requires more resources, encouraging soldiers' to steal rations. Young (1997) said that, in Mozambique, soldiers thieved during the war - they sold the rations to civilians and brought the money to Zimbabwe. Mhanda (2011) calls this (*chirenje* in Chishona) meaning 'individual wartime initiatives'. Notwithstanding, junior soldiers who were involved in stealing rations

viewed the DRC war as mostly enriching the top military officers: generals and colonels.

For Alpha Romeo:

> It was common knowledge to every military man that we were in Congo just because some people had been given huge money. It was common knowledge that diamonds were used to buy Zimbabwean blood. (Alpha Romeo)

The political relations, particularly those that brought financial gain to Zimbabwe's top hierarchy of politicians and commanders, made the DRC war 'illegitimate' in the eyes of the lower-ranking soldiers. It was no longer a national war, but 'personal financial scores' for the powerful and well-placed. Civilians and human rights organisations, inside and outside Zimbabwe, were not able to distinguish between the haves and have-nots among soldiers in the DRC war. Thus, while dominant narratives about the DRC war tend to homogenise all soldiers in the DRC war - as benefiting from it and destroying Zimbabwe's economy (Makumbe, 2002; Sachikonye, 2011) - the narratives of my participants challenged this view. The narratives revealed that low-ranking soldiers were 'sacrificial lambs' for officers to use for their own gain. Junior soldiers also point to the geographical disconnection between DRC and Zimbabwe. Oscar Papa emphasised that:

> Generals were doing business at the expense of our blood. So that war was illegitimate, Congo was never our neighbour, it's not our neighbour. We had no reason to destroy our own economy going to fight a war which was in Congo. (Oscar Papa)

The soldiers' narratives here speak to, and resonate with, scholarly debates (Makumbe, 2002; Mhanda, 2011) which view the DRC war as having contributed to rising inflation in Zimbabwe. For the soldiers in war, armed conflict can be legitimised if it benefits the country, not individual commanders or politicians. Soldiers lost the will to fight, perceiving the war as geared specifically towards enriching commanders. In this regard,

they shared commitment to human rights perspectives (Chung, 2006; Makumbe, 2002; Mhanda, 2011) on the events in Zimbabwe: that the war destroyed the country's economy by financing soldiers in wars outside the country. For Alpha Romeo, "Zimbabwe's economy was going down because of this DRC war".

Despite the shortage of food, soldiers attended to the everyday military routines, like going on patrol and standing guard. Nonetheless, soldiers also coerced civilians to assist them. The swamps in the DRC were often flooded and as swift as rivers. When on patrol, soldiers forced civilians to ferry them in small wooden boats. According to Bravo Charlie:

> I thought it was normal during that time. Now I am thinking differently. But during that time I did not see it like forcing them. They were using it like a kind of job. It was a job to them. They were paid to do that because they were not carrying only soldiers but also civilians to cross swamps. So when we arrived there as seven soldiers doing patrol we used to ask them: '*Rafiki* (my friend), can you take us across?' So they would say 'where is the money?' and we would say 'money for what? We are doing the job for you here in DRC. We are here to liberate you from these rebels and you are asking for money, money for what?' During that time we were very cruel, to the extent that we were even pointing a gun at them, ordering them: 'take us through!' (Bravo Charlie)

Issues that emerge, signify a number of perceptions and assumptions on the part of the soldiers with regards to the war. In DRC the soldiers saw the war as the responsibility of all the Congolese, rather than only being a soldier-versus-rebel confrontation. They apparently viewed civilians as having an obligation to contribute and assist towards their own 'liberation'. Although at the time this violence against civilians was seen as legitimate and justified by the war, years later it was viewed differently and came to have different meanings.

In the absence of effective government support in war, soldiers transferred the responsibility to civilians. Nonetheless, Lima Delta reflected on those actions:

> Some of them did not want to cooperate. But we would end up pointing the gun at their head, to scare them. And then they would do it. But now I feel like that was not good. But in the context of war when you were a soldier you felt like you were doing your job very well. And you did not feel guilty when you do it. We would cross the swamps and come back. So even if we ran short of food, we asked civilians to carry us with those *pirogues* (small wooden boats) across the swamps. (Lima Delta)

The varying perceptions and meaning, where what was once seen as normal becomes strange and callous, speaks to the brutal nature of the battlefield and war situation where every act counts, either towards your death or staying alive. This has to be taken in cognisance with soldiers' narratives of seeing their colleagues' blood and bones close-up. What impact do such scenes have on moulding wartime morality? In addition to the constant threat of death by enemy fire, there was the shortage of food and lack of transport and other army equipment. Lima Delta remembers vividly the commanders briefly addressing soldiers in 2002 in preparation for their withdrawal.

> This war is very difficult. I am a very experienced soldier, as an army commander, and I am telling you that the DRC government has actually failed to support their own war ... Initially we had agreed that the DRC government were supposed to do all the logistics, including the rations, the food, the clothing, the transport, etc, but they were no longer doing it. (Lima Delta)

A final issue raised by my participants was the fact that the late President Laurent Kabila's *Forces Armees Congolaises* (FAC) deserted to join the rebel forces. Lima Delta notes that: "the FAC soldiers were really fucked up!" The unreliability of the FAC affected the Zimbabwean troops negatively as well. Lima Delta talked about what he observed among the FAC soldiers. He states that:

> It was in DRC war where for the first time I saw that a soldier can walk with slippers... and torn uniforms, but with a gun. So what made the FAC soldiers was not this kind of dressing (combat uniform), but the gun. They were not like well-trained soldiers. They were not disciplined. But with them, they were just taught the gun. (Lima Delta)

Lima Delta differentiates himself, and other Zimbabwean soldiers, from the FAC soldiers who he viewed as untrained, ill-disciplined and shabby but dangerous bands of men with guns. Lima Delta regarded the FAC as inferior.

3.9. Conclusion

The question one may ask in reading this chapter is, why do these former soldiers tell the war stories in this way? Part of the answer is that the narratives of war were told at a time when the former soldiers were in a contentious relationship with the Zimbabwe National Army, having resigned or deserted from the ZNA. Their stories represent courage and suffering, the fear of being killed, not having their bodies repatriated and properly buried; what is more explicit is the ways in which they felt that the army had been de-professionalized, particularly by their commanders. Their stories reinforce existing public debates about the illegitimacy of the Zimbabwean government's deployment of soldiers and involvement in two 'foreign' wars: Mozambique and DRC. The former soldiers' accounts help us understand a particular version of, and narrative about, the war from people who experienced it first-hand. The stories of these former soldiers differ from civilians accounts. Their lived experiences come with being caught in between duty and humanness, legitimate and illegitimate killing, as well as guilt and remorse for acts committed in war; above all between professionalism and unprofessionalism.

In the next chapter I focus on the politics of 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' soldiers in the army barracks. The former has been used to refer to veterans of war i.e. those of fought in the liberation struggle while the latter is used to represent my study group, soldiers who joined the army in post-independence Zimbabwe. I focus on this political dimension by exploring the politics of promotion in the army; where the 'authentic' soldiers were preferred at the expense of the latter.

CHAPTER 4: The politics of 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' soldiers: Promotion and demotion

4.1. Introduction

In post-colonial Africa, and Zimbabwe in particular, those who fought in the war for independence are recognised not only as 'freedom fighters' or as war veterans[19], but as 'authentic' soldiers. Since my participants joined the army in post-independence Zimbabwe, they are perceived, especially by the top structure of the army, as 'copies' or inauthentic rather than being the 'original' soldiers. Even though all my study participants were deployed and fought in warzones, they were not seen as 'real' war veterans. In Zimbabwe, a war veteran is defined by the War Veteran Act of 1992 as:

> Any person who underwent military training and participated, consistently and persistently, in the liberation struggle which occurred in Zimbabwe and in neighbouring countries between the 1st January, 1962, and the 29th February, 1980, in connection with the bringing about of Zimbabwe's independence on the 18th April, 1980.

This Act of 1992 is still applicable today. Unsurprisingly, the Act sparked controversy, even among liberation fighters, as to who is a war veteran, and with what benefits. The Act defines war veterans in terms of a timeline. It means that those who joined the army prior to, or after, a specified date and year are excluded from the status of veteran (cf. Chung, 2006; Mhanda, 2011). The use of 'consistently' and 'persistently' in the Act above indicates that, even those who fled during the liberation war or were wounded and could not continue fighting in the war, were not considered war veterans. The Act honours a specific category of people legally defined as war veterans. Thus ZANU-PF

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[19] This means that they get not only stutus and recognition but also monetary benefits.

youth who invaded white farms and farmers (*Border Gezi*[20] *or* Green bomber youth brigade) during the land reform programme (in post-2000), declaring themselves as 3rd *Chimurenga*[21] war veterans (see Sachikonye, 2011; Chaumba et al. 2003), are in fact not veterans of Zimbabwe as defined by the above Act. It follows that war veterans are a special group in the Zimbabwe liberation history.

Even though my participants were deployed on the frontline in two wars[22]: the Mozambique war (1986-1992) and the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (1998-2002) (cf. Chapter 3), they were never accorded the status of war veterans. This was in spite of the reality that Zimbabwean intervention in the DRC was sanctioned by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) under Operation Sovereignty Legitimacy (OSL) (cf. Chapter 3).

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[20] *Border Gezi* or Green bomber youth brigade were militias trained in different militia camps around Zimbabwe in early 2000 during white farms and farmers invasion. The name Border Gezi was derived from a ZANU-PF minister's name who was the Minister of Youth Service after the 2000 elections. Green bormber was named after the militias uniforms which were green.

[21] Zimbabwe's liberation struggle is divided into three categories: 1st *Chimurenga* was in the 1890s and it was mainly led by spirit mediums such as Mbuya Nehanda and Sekuru Kaguvi; 2nd Chimurenga was in the early 1970s against the Ian Smith regime in which resistance was led by ZANLA and ZIPRA forces and this led to the Zimbabwe 1980 independence and the 3rd *Chimurenga* was a ZANU-PF land reform programme in which the majority of the unemployed youth militias were trained as Border Gezi in different camps to invade white commercial farms. In this latter process which targeted whites, youths labelled themselves as 3rd *Chimurenga* war veterans.

[22] On the basis of the stakes involved, the conflict in the DRC has been referred to as the 'Great African War' (Reyntjen, 2009). On the Mozambican war, Chung (2006:315) writes about her war memories of Zimbabwe's liberation struggles and notes that 'the Mozambican war was well supported by the populace who understood it as a continuation of the liberation struggle'. There has long been a liberation struggle relationship between Mozambique and Zimbabwe, thus when Mozambique was at war, Zimbabwe was obligated to help. Chung (ibid.) asserts that Zimbabwe could not enjoy independence if Mozambique was still in a state of civil war.

As in the case of the Vietnam War (Marlantes, 2010; Marlantes, 2011) and the Namibian border war (Baines, 2009; Baines, 2008; Baines, 2007; Baines, 2004; Baines, 1995; Gibson, 2010), the involvement of Zimbabwean troops in the DRC and in neighbouring Mozambique, is still much contested in public debates - inside as well as outside Zimbabwe. Inside Zimbabwe, this involvement is perceived to be responsible for the country's subsequent hyperinflation. Outside Zimbabwe, the conflicts were seen as 'greedy' wars that benefited army generals and top politicians loyal to President Robert Mugabe. Consequently, when the soldiers returned after the 'foreign' wars, they received no recognition, but rather public disparagement. Referring to former South African soldiers' involvement in the Angolan Border War, Baines (2007:1) argues that, 'the construction and sharing of a common history is itself a form of manipulating the past to serve a political purpose'. In Zimbabwe this 'shared history' involves the 'liberation struggle' and the 'memories that are placed in the service of the national project...which are transmitted through various state-controlled arenas such as media and school curriculum' (Lomsky-Feder 2004:3). These agents/institutions who transmit and reify national memories are what Baines (2014:4) refers to as 'memory makers' or 'memory bearers'. Thus in the Zimbabwean context, any armed conflicts in which soldiers fought (Mozambique and DRC) after independence, are excluded from the national memory making process. The memories, experiences and realities of the wars, for the soldiers who had been involved, are thereby politically negated.

In this chapter I address debates and politics surrounding the representation of 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' (Kriger, 2003; 1995) veterans of war in the army barracks. I focus on

how these politics played out and were mediated in the army barracks through favouritism and the promotion of veterans of the 'authentic' war. At the same time those who had participated in the much maligned wars in Mozambique and the DRC were constructed as 'inauthentic' and thus not 'real' veterans. Because many of the 'war veterans' (of the liberation war) still serve in the Zimbabwe National Army, there is a hierarchy – as well as abuse of power- between different 'categories' of soldiers in the barracks.

Following this, the chapter first highlights the politicisation of the Zimbabwe National Army. I will then move on to the debates and politics of 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' war veterans in the current political discourse in Zimbabwe (Kriger, 2003). Such a discussion helps to clarify the status of a 'veteran' which is defined by politics.

4.2. A politicised army

The year 1980 marked Zimbabwe's independence, and led to the formation of the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) through the integration of former guerrillas and Rhodesian Security Forces soldiers (cf. Kriger, 2003; Young, 1997). As indicated before, the guerrillas integrated into the ZNA included the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) - an armed wing of the ZANU [PF]. It also involved the Zimbabwe Patriotic Revolutionary Army - an armed wing of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). In order to strengthen the integration exercise, the British Military Assistance and Training Team (BMATT) was called to help to train and 'professionalise' the ZNA into an efficient force that adhered to certain (British) benchmarks, guidelines and codes of conduct and to ensure that the ZNA was technically

up to international standards, as well as educated in military ethics (Alao, 1995; Tendi; 2013). Despite the presence of BMATT from 1980-2001, there were still clear divisions, and lines of allegiance, in the army: war veterans were openly loyal and affiliated to ZANU PF (Alexander; 1998; Kriger, 2003). Below I tentatively explore how the new Zimbabwe National Army developed over time and how it progressively became involved in politics.

As part of maintaining a professional army the Zimbabwe National Army embarked in 1986 on a drive to recruit young men and women, who had not been part of the liberation struggle. The idea was to regenerate the army by introducing 'new blood' and to build a stronger and professional army disconnected from politics (cf. Young, 1997). However, over time the army became increasingly politicised and openly attached to ZANU-PF politics. This became especially evident during the late 1990s - right up to (and after) the post-2000 political crisis.

In the current Zimbabwe National Army, President Robert Mugabe and his political party-ZANU-PF has a direct relationship with the army generals (Alexander, 2013; Chitiyo, 2009; Muzondidya, 2009; Raftopoulos, 2009; Sachikonye, 2011). This relationship was evidenced by army Generals who publicly declared their allegiance to ZANU-PF (cf. Chitiyo, 2009 Mhanda, 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009; Tendi; 2013). For example, in 2002 the late General Zvinavashe openly stated that he would only salute those who had fought in the liberation struggle.[23] This attitude was extended to other

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[23] http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/army2.11737.html ; Zimbabwe army chief 'won't allow change of power: Accessed on 10 November 2013

uniformed forces, such as the former Prisons Commissioner, Major General Paradzai Zimondi, and Police Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri [24] .Their outspoken allegiance to ZANU-PF meant that soldiers who did not conform were punished – initially, mainly through demotion. This political mantra was constantly emphasised among soldiers. For example, in 2007, General Constantine Chiwenga (Commander Zimbabwe Defence Forces) visited all the Brigades. I vividly remember his assumption that 'genuine' soldiers support and defend the politics of President Robert Mugabe.

In addition (the recently promoted) Major General Douglas Nyikayaramba represented former Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the MDC, as a security threat[25]. He emphasised that:

> MorganTsvangirai doesn't pose a political threat in any way in Zimbabwe, but is a major security threat; He takes instructions from foreigners who seek to effect illegal regime change in Zimbabwe. Daydreamers who want to reverse the gains of our liberation struggle ... can go to hell ... they will never rule this country.[26]

The above sentiments were constantly reiterated and became a guiding refrain in the barracks. In an analysis of the political statements of, for example General Zvinavashe, Major General Nyikayaramba and others, Tendi (2013) posits an interesting argument. He argues that such declarations by army Generals need to be understood against the background of the influence of external politics and responses to the Zimbabwe crisis

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[24] http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/mar/15/; Zimbabwe We will not let Mugabe be beaten, police and army chiefs warn by Chris McGreal, Africa correspondent; The Guardian 15 March 2008: Accessed on 10 November 2013

[25] http://www.voazimbabwe.com/content/zimbabwe-army-chief-calls-pm-tsvangirai-security--threat-124437939/1463323.html Zimbabwe Army Chief Calls Prime Minister Tsvangirai a Security Threat; Accessed on 10 November 2013

[26] http://www.voazimbabwe.com/content/zimbabwe-army-chief-calls-pm-tsvangirai-security--threat-124437939/1463323.html; Zimbabwe Army Chief Calls Prime Minister Tsvangirai a Security Threat; Accessed on 10 November 2013,

since 2000 (Tendi, 2013).[27] For Tendi (2013) the Generals' political statements were made in response to Western media reportage and representations of Zimbabwean politics: the army and President Robert Mugabe were portrayed as ruthless and predatory. In addition, since 2000 the US government and other European countries had imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe. Moreover, when the British Military Assistance and Training Team (BMATT) were withdrawn by Britain, efforts to professionalise the ZNA were abandoned. All of the above reportedly angered the Generals and fed into their consequent harsh responses.

My experience and that of my study participants, in the ZNA was that, once a General had made such threatening public statements, for example concerning Morgan Tsvangirai, he was promoted. Major General Nyikayaramba (then Brigadier General and Commander of 3 Brigade) made such inflammatory statements and was, within months, promoted to the rank of Major General and transferred to Army headquarters in Harare. Apparently, public threats to the opposition political party were a good way to hasten promotion in the army. The ZNA had become so closely aligned to ZANU-PF that soldiers could use the 'national podium' to threaten the opposition political parties, especially the MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai. Similarly, in 2008 Major General Chedondo gave soldiers an order to vote for ZANU-PF. In his speech at a parade he publicly said:

> We cannot be seen supporting a political party that is going against the
> ideals of a nation. ZANU-PF came by as a result of a liberation struggle,

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[27] From the year 2000 the Zimbabwean government led by President Robert Mugabe engaged in a violent and politicised land reform programme, confiscating land from White commercial farmers.

> which saw many of the country's sons and daughters losing their lives. As soldiers we must support ideologies that we subscribe to, I for one will not be apologetic for supporting ZANU (PF) because I was part of the liberation struggle. (The Zimbabwe Mail, online newspaper)
> Soldiers are not apolitical…we have signed an agreement to protect the ruling party's principles of the defending the revolution. If you have another thought, then you should remove your uniform. The constitution says the country should be protected….we shall therefore stand by our commander-in-chief, President Mugabe.[28]

In the above speech Chedondo used the history of the liberation struggle to drum up support for Mugabe's regime. It is clear from the excerpt that those who had fought in the liberation struggle viewed themselves as the vanguard of the army and the nation. The two excerpts above reveal a deeply-seated historical relationship between the army and ZANU-PF (cf. Chung, 2006; Mazarire 2011; Mhanda, 2011). No distinction was made between ZANU-PF and the ZNA. ZANU-PF overshadowed all structures of governance and all national institutions, especially the army. The party was the driving force and the army fell in line.
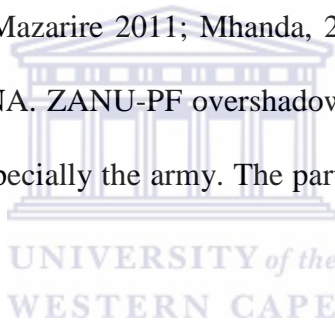
The aspiration of the more recent recruits (post-independence soldiers) to serve their country was affected by ZANU-PF infused national 'politics', which also controlled life in the barracks. For these soldiers, what was supposed to be a non-partisan and professional army had become part of a political party construct. As a result, soldiers were compelled to vote for ZANU-PF. The army had become a ZANU-PF tool imbedded in politics and directed by politicians. Soldiers were coerced to openly support and proclaim ZANU-PF as their employer. Let me turn to the politics of making 'authentic and inauthentic' soldiers.

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[28] http://www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71639?oid=90701&sn=Detail&pid=71639; Army must vote against Tsvangirai, 31 May 2008; Accessed on 13November 2013

4.3. Representation of 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' veterans

As argued above, the ZNA has been heavily politicised since independence. It became, to all intents and purposes, an extension of Mugabe's political party, the ZANU-PF. It follows that, 'war veterans' who had been ZANU PF guerrillas, were effectively constructed and treated as the 'authentic' veterans of Zimbabwe. This trend is perpetuated in the 'politics of remembrance' (cf. Baines, 2014; Baines, 2012; Winter, 1995): publicly and especially in the barracks. The public war narratives consequently efface veterans of the DRC and Mozambican wars and only liberation veterans are given any status.

In this regard, the extant debate on the Zimbabwean war (Alexander and McGregor, 2004; Kriger, 1995; Kriger, 2003; Werbner, 1998) and nationalist discourse is still dominated by authoritative and heroic accounts of the liberation war - even though it ended 33 years ago. This is similar to what Lomsky-Feder (2004:82) refers to as 'memory field' in which, in the case of Zimbabwe, the current politics of ZANU-PF shapes a particular history of war. The narrative of the liberation war is more highly celebrated and recognised than any other war in which Zimbabwean soldiers have since been deployed. But what differentiates an 'authentic' war veteran for inclusion in, or and 'inauthentic veteran' for exclusion from the national narrative of war?

According to Kriger (2003), the discourse about war veterans is layered. Not all veterans are equal. Kriger identifies three trends in this regard. The first is dominated by the discourse of 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' veterans, linked to the politics of legitimation and de-legitimation of the roles different categories of soldiers played in the liberation

war. Secondly, veterans construct themselves as scapegoats of official neglect and thirdly, the Zimbabwean constitution has been used to include or exclude veterans in terms of political recognition and financial compensation (Kriger, 2003). So who is a war veteran in the Zimbabwean context? And who is responsible for choosing them (Kriger, 1995)?

According to Dandeker et al. (2006:162):

> definitions of veteran not only shape the scale of what is considered to be the veteran population but also underpin the socio-legal framework within which their needs, rights and concerns evolve and are dealt with.

In Zimbabwe, being a war veteran is used as a resource, to claim political rights. It is a form of 'capital', in terms of Bourdieu's (1990) concept. In spite of war gratuities of US$ 4000.00 paid to "war veterans" in 1997, they still insist that what they receive from the government is their just reward for liberating the country. For Kriger the discourse about 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' war veterans is utilised in struggles among war veterans who 'compete for status and benefits based on participation in the liberation struggle' (2003:324).

These debates, on who is a war veteran, are complex and on-going. For instance, in 1999 the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veteran Association (ZNLWVA) implemented a re-vetting process to weed out 'inauthentic' war veterans. Some former guerrillas, especially those who had been members of the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), were excluded after the initial vetting exercise. In March 2014 former ZIPRA complained about the re-vetting process, which they claimed was flawed. For instance, as supporting evidence, those who were re-vetted had to bring their former 'liberation'

military instructors. After 34 years of Zimbabwean independence,[29] many of these former instructors had long since passed away.

What is interesting is that, even within ZANU PF itself, there is no consensus as to who is a 'genuine' veteran. The disagreements derive from historically-imposed distinctions. There are veterans who view themselves as the 'old guard' (those who started the guerrilla movement). For them everybody else are 'newcomers' (Kriger, 2006). The distinctions made between "veterans" in ZANU-PF also relates to roles assigned during the liberation war. Former political educators see themselves as more important than other veterans (cf. Kriger, 2003). This is similar to the position of those who had been detained as political activists. Men and women, who worked in guerrilla camps but were never actively deployed, also claimed 'war veteran' status. The claim to being a 'war veteran' even extends to former youth collaborators (*Chimbwido and Mujibha*: in Shona language) who provided logistical support during the guerrilla war (Chung, 2006; Mhanda, 2011). In addition, there are tensions between guerrillas who had been trained locally and those trained in exile. In the post-2000 crisis, the ZANU-PF youth militia also claimed 'war veteran' status. They presented themselves as an armed vanguard of ZANU PF's revolution and Mugabe's political ideology.

These struggles of classification that circulate around 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' war veterans are a reflection of the country's broader struggle in the context of the politics of representation. For instance, ZANU-PF has constructed its own Heroes Acre: a place

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[29] http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-14707-Ex-Zipra+cadres+slam+new+vetting+exercise/news.aspx
Ex-ZIPRA Cadres not happy with new vetting exercise Written by Staff reporter on 06-03-14, Accessed on 06-0-14

where 'authentic' veterans are buried. Access to the national shrine rests solely with ZANU-PF's highest decision making body, the Politburo. They decide who is to be buried in the National Heroes Acre. According to Baines (2009:331) 'memorials serve as significant markers of postcolonial society's (re)construction of its past'. But in the Zimbabwean context, the construction of the heroes is confined to past and present ZANU-PF 'authentic veterans'. Werbner (1998) reported that the status of a hero was determined by ZANU-PF. Even if a veteran had fought in the liberation war, his/her profile has to be re-vetted to decide if he/she qualifies to be buried at the National Heroes Acre. In this way, 'war veterans' are accorded status, what I call the 'sacralisation of ZANU-PF veterans after death'. The burial of veterans in the Heroes Acre has also emerged as a site of public contestation. It assumed new symbolic meaning as the distinction between ZANU PF and the nation (and the associated issues of nationalism and patriotism) became increasingly blurred. The inclusion or exclusion of the deceased from burial in the National Heroes Acre is almost inevitably based on the deceased's relationship with fellow ZANU-PF members and Mugabe. Those defined by ZANU PF and Mugabe as 'sell-outs' are excluded from the National Heroes Acre. An example of this is the late Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole. He was the first ZANU PF leader in 1963, but he is not buried at the national shrine. In this way, Werbner argues (1998:78), 'it has suited the ZANU-PF regime to manufacture grades of heroes' or war veterans.

For Dandeker et al (2006), the history of warfare of each country is central in defining a 'war veteran'. In the Zimbabwean context, past experiences of armed conflict are

continuously used to demand recognition, entitlement and domination of the national history (Kriger, 2006). In his contribution to the debates, Werbner (1998:99) argued that:

> Zimbabwe provides the example of a post-colonial nation-building regime which tries to turn the trace of the past into prestige and legitimacy for itself and tribute for others.

Hynes (1999: 213), in turn, notes that, 'heroes are by and large no good for war memoirs; they stand too close to the centres of the war values…' The past memories of war are renewed in the present (cf. Baines, 2008; Dawson, 2005; Olick & Robbins, 1991; Roper, 2000). In Zimbabwe, veterans' profile of the liberation war is constantly renewed by celebrating President Robert Mugabe - while everything and everyone falling outside this is denigrated (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:5). Furthermore, the exclusive and mutual association of Mugabe with Zimbabwe as an independent nation state is similar to what Bennett (1995) sees as 'nationing history' and 'historicising the nation', i.e. determining who belongs and who does not belong to the nation. In the case of Zimbabwe, Ranger (2004) refers to it as 'patriotic history'. Extending this explanation, patriotic history divides liberation 'veterans' from soldiers who joined the army in post-independence Zimbabwe – even if they had also fought in wars. Below I focus on what was experienced by the so-called 'inauthentic' soldiers, a label used to describe those who were not part of the liberation struggle.

4.4. Narratives of the 'inauthentic' soldiers

The narratives of my participants revealed that soldiers in the ZNA barracks are, and continue to be, divided between two categories: liberation veterans, and the soldiers who joined the army in post-independence Zimbabwe. Civilians often perceive soldiers as the

same, because they march and are paraded together, yet there are profound differences.

For Alpha Bravo:

> There are two different armies in the Zimbabwe National Army. I remember the Brigadier telling the Brigade Sergeant Major that jah, you must beat all young soldiers so that they can be disciplined. You must treat them roughly. I remember him emphasising that only war veterans must be respected but these other ones who are not war veterans, deal with them. (Alpha Bravo)

The excerpt above represents the reality for many former Zimbabwean soldiers. They are belittled and abused in the post-independence Zimbabwean National Army. Here, I focus on how this manifested through the politics of promotion in the army barracks. Whisky Papa emphasised that:

> There was favouritism with war veterans being treated like a grade A-Army and the rest of us being Grade B, C, or D. Children from one mother shouldn't be in the military[30] because the military must be cohesive; it must have a single identity. It must operate in a professional manner whereby abilities are the only things that should be considered in a person's promotion. It should not be about duration in your military because no matter how many years you keep a donkey inside the kraal it will never become meat for you. So now we found ourselves in a situation whereby a donkey now was being made a cow and a cow was now being made a donkey. (Whisky Papa)

The feelings of frustration, anger and 'othering' in the ZNA were echoed by many soldiers. They questioned and criticised the army for having no uniform standard for promotion. In the ZNA a soldier can theoretically only be promoted from a junior rank to a sergeant after having successfully completed a junior tactics course. To be promoted from the rank of Sergeant to Staff Sergeant, a senior tactics course must be passed. To

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[30] Children from the same mother are prone to favour each other as ZANU PF was doing with its 'true heroes' the war veterans.

become a Warrant Officer Class 2, the successful completion of a ceremonial drill course is a pre-requisite. However, such promotion standards were not followed. All 'war veterans' were consistently promoted without having to complete and pass the necessary military courses. Tango Oscar, who was with the mechanised brigade, noted that:

> I had all the military courses, squad drills course, junior tactics, instructors course, ceremonial drill and other cadre courses, but my promotion to sergeant was stopped, my commander said there are many war veterans waiting for this promotion. (Tango Oscar)

'War veterans' were easily promoted, while those who had joined the army after independence found it difficult to advance through the ranks. They were also easily demoted – especially if 'war veterans' regarded them as politically disloyal. For example, when I was in the army in 2002, every 'war veteran' was given so-called 'one-ups' – i.e. automatic promotion to the next rank. The politics of promotion affected soldiers' lives in the barracks.
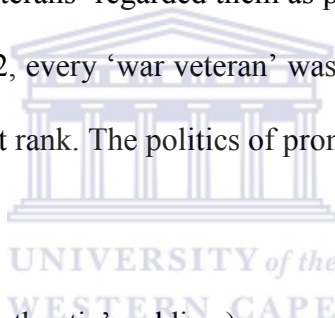
War veterans in the army ('authentic' soldiers) were seen as a different category of soldiers. The constant presence of politics in the ZNA created divisions within it. 'Authentic' soldiers and 'war veterans' were increasingly allowed to oppress 'inauthentic' soldiers, especially since strong patron-client relationship were allowed to flourish in the army. For Whisky Papa this was unprofessional, because an army should promote soldiers based on merit.

> Look at it, it's not about the type of people. If you have abilities you are supposed to be promoted according to your abilities because this is a national institution. This is about national security. It's not about allegiances. It's not about the period you have served in the army. A person can stay in Grade One for forty years but still be unable to write his name. So it's not about all those things about where you come from or anything like that. When you join the army you join a professional

organisation in which your abilities are the reason for the promotion process but that was no longer happening. We were now seeing two armies, where there was the lesser army and the main army. Yet we are not saying that all war veterans were bad, no, no that's not the case. There are a lot of good war veterans, very good guys, very rich in the army, very reasonable gentlemen. But just because you know he just finds himself in a situation, they ended up also being made to believe that they are more superior but that was never the case. (Whisky Papa)

In the army, as elsewhere, promotion is a symbol of success and competency. Yet in the ZNA promotion has become a signifier of political fidelity to the ZANU-PF regime. For Dandeker et al (2006: 162) 'definition of a veteran provides the context within which the government responds to the needs of veterans.' It therefore meant that loyalty and patriotism were conceptualised in terms of history and allegiance to ZANU PF. It was not about what a soldier could do for the army, but how he (or she) had contributed to ZANU-PF victory, and the party's ability to stay in power. The ways in which soldiers were commanded, was later drawn from liberation ways of doing: politics guiding the gun (cf. Mazarire, 2011). The idea was to deal with the current political challenges in and outside the army, by utilising the army itself (see Tendi, 2013). Liberation struggle veterans were promoted to maintain the ZANU PF veteran's presence and influence in the army. While many of the war veterans were neither able to read nor write, their 'legitimacy' for promotion was substantiated by their participation in the past liberation struggle. Promotion for soldiers who joined the army in post-independence Zimbabwe was perceived as endorsing the MDC. Contrastingly, the advancement of 'war veterans' was seen as victory for Mugabe and ZANU PF. Reflecting on how promotion was done, Bravo Charlie reiterated that:

Jah, jah, there were rampant promotions because younger soldiers were now becoming corporals, sergeants, deciding all those things. The other

guys were remaining at the bottom and then they said, no, we fought for this country, we need promotion. You could see that commanders said to themselves, for us to be able to retain this army let us take these uneducated men, let us take these 'extra loyal' people who give the army a political standard and make them commanders of these 'other ones' who are professionals so that we maintain a certain Hitler doctrine [laughing], that was now treatment of the army. So the end result was that the promotion system became distorted. The morale went down because of this. (Bravo Charlie)

The excerpt above reveals the consequences of commanders' adoption of a partisan style of command while complaints about promotions indicated that morale was affected in the army barracks. The promotion of 'war veterans', at the expense of those who joined the army in post-independence years, resulted in demoralized troops. In the military, morale is a lynchpin in keeping soldiers going either in war or in the barracks, bringing hope even in times of crisis. In military life, morale primarily reflects the cohesion of soldiers within the unit/barrack (Ulio, 1941). An army which cares for its soldiers can be said to have a "good morale" or "high morale". Low morale "shatters" (cf. Chapter, 3) the occupation of being a soldier because it depletes the soldierly spirit. Thus morale is an 'inner spark'. Once a soldier is demoralised, everyday routines in the barracks are also affected. Like good morale, a lack of morale is seemingly contagious. When competent soldiers are promoted the rank and file are reassured that they are in good, capable hands. It also gives them the hope that they have a chance be promoted in the future. They feel appreciated.

While promotion strengthens the morale of soldiers, demotion (being stripped of a rank) brings humiliation (and pain) in the army barracks. In the ZNA demotion is a political technique of exercising power meant to whip soldiers into line and make them

subservient to ZANU PF. Charlie Mike was demoted and stripped of his rank because he was suspected of being an MDC supporter. Below is his ordeal when he appeared before the Brigadier General:

> Ah, actually, ah, you know these political, ah, commanders, when they see, they see a small soldier, a boy soldier, like a young soldier, they don't treat you, ah, as a soldier, but as an MDC soldier. So when you go, ah, for the orders, the superior orders, they see politics in you, so instead of him giving you a fair trial, he puts you on the side of the opposition political party. Even if you are supposed to get a fair sentence they give you a harsh sentence because of that. You see that is what happened to me. When I went for his orders, when he saw me, you know, he saw an MDC soldier, so when I went before him he actually gave me a harsh sentence. He demoted me to a rank of a private. I was a corporal and he sentenced me to 21 days in DB[31]. (Charlie Mike)

From this excerpt, the Brigadier viewed Charlie Mike as 'inauthentic'. Charlie Mike uses 'boy soldiers' or 'MDC soldiers' to distinguish himself from 'authentic' soldiers. It follows that the ways in which a soldier is viewed, depends on one's war history. If one falls outside ZANU-PF's liberation history, then he is perceived to be an 'MDC soldier'.

4.5. Conclusion

The chapter has engaged with the debates on the politics of defining war veterans and why certain memories of war are preferred and others neglected. Like many countries, the selection of veterans is contextual in Zimbabwe; it continues to shift over time. Thus the end of war is the beginning of another 'war' fought in official and unofficial spaces with the aim of having a place for recognition and secure benefits from the state. Drawing from scholarly literature and these former soldiers' narratives, there is no single 'one

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[31] DB (detention barracks) as it is normally referred to by Zimbabwean soldiers, is an army prison where soldiers are detained, and while they are detained they will be subjected to a harsh punishment such as crawling, and rolling from point A-B, obstacle crossing and singing the whole night.

truth' even for the so called veterans of war. The competing discourses (in scholarly literature and from my participants) on who is a war veteran are endless, but they fall short of giving the complete story. Thus a fight over recognition for participating in war is a never-ending story as each generation of soldiers wants to be recognised for what they did.

In the next chapter, I focus on the experiences of political violence in the barracks, which for many of the deserters gave them the ultimate reason for their desertion or resignation from the army. Politics permeated the barracks and those who joined the army in post-independence Zimbabwe became the target of political violence, as they were labelled as loyalists of the opposition political party the MDC.

Chapter 5: Becoming victims of political violence in the army barracks: Desertion, surveillance and spying on soldiers

5.1. Introduction

> I did not desert the army; I was forced to leave. A military man in the barracks is a man under confinement. He is a man who is not sure of his freedom. The moment you are forced by the army to conform to certain things, that compromises your manhood. The time I left the army, the army was no longer an army. You were forced to worship ZANU PF[32] and President Robert Mugabe. ZANU-PF is the army and the army is ZANU-PF. On pay day you are forced to say, "thank you ZANU PF for paying me". (Alpha Romeo)

> Politics had taken over the life of a soldier, because you had to denounce the MDC in front of war veterans in the army so that you wouldn't get tortured. I was criminalised and displaced. I was turned into a refugee. From a military man I was made a refugee. I did not even have time to prepare; the only thing that I left with is my soul. Being a refugee means that someone is in hot pursuit and even when you are on top of a woman you are afraid that someone is hot on my heels and hunting me. You cannot work for twenty-one years and eight months and then simply desert the army. It only goes to show how bad the military had deteriorated. It is us who were called the *Mafikizolos*. (Whisky Papa)

The excerpts above reveal the anger and frustration of soldiers who deserted from the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA). Alpha Romeo's and Whisky Papa's feelings are quite representative for *Mafikizolo* (those who joined the army in post-independence Zimbabwe) and of soldiers who absconded from the same army. *Mafikizolo* is a derogatory Ndebele term which means 'those who came yesterday' *(*and thus have no memory of the liberation war or firm rooting, but are easily swayed*)*. *Mafikizolo* differs from the so called 'authentic' war veterans (cf. Chapter 4). I use the term *Mafikizolo* because my informants use it in their stories to distinguish themselves from former guerrilla 'war veterans' who are currently still serving in the army.

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[32] The Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) is the political party which has been in power for 32 years now since independence of Zimbabwe and for those years it was being led by President Robert Mugabe.

In this chapter I explore how *Mafikizolo* soldiers experienced victimisation, harassment, punishment and detention as political acts in ZNA barracks. According to military rules and regulations, a soldier like Whisky Papa had deserted. However, my participants contest such an understanding and definition. They strongly felt that they were forced out of the army as a result of politics when ZANU-PF members of the ZNA consistently victimised *Mafikizolo*, whom they (ZANU-PF) constructed as MDC sympathisers and supporters. Thus the reasons for demotion, resignation and desertion were political as any of the *Mafikizolo* soldiers, who did not publicly support ZANU-PF and President Robert Mugabe, was perceived to be aligned to the MDC of Morgan Tsvangirai. What I want to emphasise here is that while the (1983) army desertion studied by (Alexander 1998) were fuelled by ethnic divisions in the army: Ndebele (ZIPRA) and Shona (ZANLA), desertion in post-2000 crisis did not have an ethnic dimension; rather both Ndebele and Shona *Mafikizolo* soldiers were targeted. While it is important to know how many soldiers deserted the army; based on my personal experiences in the military at one time working as a battalion clerk, statistics of deserters have not been publicised. The Ministry of Defence is reluctant to talk about army desertion (see Ncube, 2007). However, there are conflicting figures reported in the private media: some reports notes that each year 1,200 soldiers deserted the army (Baldauf, 2007), others speculate that more than 7 000 soldiers deserted the army since the year 2000 and are now living in South Africa (The Zimbabwean News, 2011) and other reporters chose to use the word 'exodus' to describe a huge and unknown number of disgruntled soldiers who deserted the army (Chibaya & Mbanga, 2005).

This chapter addresses key events which, during their military service, forced the study participants to either desert or resign. In order to situate my discussion, the chapter draws on Foucault's (1977:171) understanding of the army barracks as an 'artificial city, a diagram of power that acts by means of general visibility, built and reshaped to exercise power over armed men.' I focus on two personal accounts, interwoven with other *Mafikizolo* soldiers' stories, to bring to life the process through which my respondents were persecuted. In the end they felt they had no other choice than to either resign (a long, drawn-out process which could result in even more harassment) or to desert from the ZNA and seek refuge in South Africa.

5.2. Soldiers as victims in the army barracks

The stories of Charlie Mike, Whisky Papa (both deserters) and other former soldiers below reveal continuous persecution in the barracks. I selected the narratives of Whisky Papa and Charlie Mike for two reasons. Both joined the army in 1986 and 1995 respectively when the ZNA was still professional in its conduct. Furthermore, both these soldiers had been deployed in Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo. They were later victimised and demoted from their ranks in processes of political, rather than normal army punishment. My intention here is not to generalise the soldiers' experiences of political persecution in the barracks. Their stories are not exceptional. Many other soldiers had similar experiences during the post-2000 crisis. What should be considered here is that the post-2000 situation in the barracks was explicitly political that every battalion, corps and rank came under political surveillance, particularly by the Zimbabwe Military Intelligence Corps (ZIC), Special Investigation Branch (SIB) and Military Police

(MP). In some cases punishment was deliberately meted out by the Officer Commanding (OC), Lieutenant Colonels and Brigadier Generals to suit their own political goals and to punish *Mafikizolo* soldiers thought to be sympathetic to, or members of, the MDC.

Deserting from the army was perceived by my participants as a response to constant arrests and indefinite detentions. It was a means to free oneself from repressive army commanders and the partisan soldiers in military intelligence and military police. It was a response to tension within the army between senior officers and *Mafikizolo* soldiers - in which the latter were the victims. Deserters rarely referred to the economic crisis in explaining their desertion. Victimisation and 'politics' were seen as the primary factors which drove them out of the army. I now turn to the personal accounts of the *Mafikizolo* soldiers.
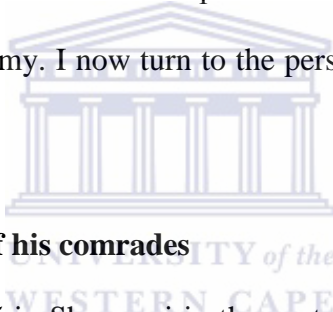
5.3. Charlie Mike and some of his comrades

Charlie Mike was born in 1975 in Shurugwi in the central part of Zimbabwe. He joined the army in 1995 with the encouragement of his father, a former soldier. On completion of his basic military training, he was attached to the Signals Corps as an operator and later became a Detachment Commander. Between 1998 and 2002, he was deployed to the war zone in the Democratic Republic of Congo. When he returned, the situation in the army had become difficult.

> You know, actually why I deserted the military. Ah, we went for some campaigns...jah political campaigns which I do not think were good for the soldiers. The army would check where you come from and tell you to go and campaign for ZANU-PF in your province. So when I was campaigning in my province, you see, I could move with my father's young brother, my uncles, my nephews, I could move with those people but they were not, ah, ZANU-PF supporters or sympathisers. So when they see me moving with

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these people, they would say, now look at this soldier he is moving around with these opposition people so he is not, ah, ah, a ZANU-PF soldier, he's an opposition soldier. But they did not consider that the person that I'm moving with, he's my father's brother, he's my uncle, he's my nephew, blood relatives who support their own party. I support my own party but the fact remains that these are my blood relatives. (Charlie Mike)

For Charlie Mike, soldiers' duties outside the barrack, like deployment into civilian communities, was seen as a space with relative freedom from the close surveillance of the Generals and military intelligence. Delta Echo, who worked in the Engineering Regiment, noted: "I was told that I have a similar surname with one of the MDC senators, so I would not be deployed outside the camp. I thought it was a joke but it happened." Even outside the barracks a soldier had to carry with him a particular ideology, way of thinking, behaving and acting. It refers to an ideological notion that a soldier has to prioritise the 'nation' before anything else – including family. However, in this context, the 'nation' meant ZANU-PF and President Robert Mugabe. The army increasingly scrutinised the relatives and friends of soldiers.

Thus soldiers had to conform to the reality that ZANU-PF took precedence over everyone else, including one's family. Soldiers had to live by 'orders' from above - which also permeated into their social lives outside the barracks. Being a soldier during the Zimbabwean political crisis meant spearheading ZANU-PF campaigns and propagating ZANU-PF ideology - despite what the soldiers themselves, or their families, believed. Charlie Mike noted that he had family responsibilities and also a right to choose which political party he wanted to support and vote for. For many of the soldiers who deserted, their resistance to the General's orders and political indoctrination stemmed from their own political convictions that the army should be apolitical.

While Charlie Mike was expected to move around with ZANU-PF supporters, he prioritised his family members. They, however, supported the opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The lack of liberty to freely interact with his family became a source of dissatisfaction with the military authority. Charlie Mike argues that being a soldier should not turn him into an enemy of his family, regardless of their political sympathies. He stated that:

> I moved with them because they are my blood relatives, not because they are MDC. But these ZANU-PF people were saying, no, you're moving with them so you are one of them. So they had to withdraw me from this campaign. I went back to the barracks [pause], they started harassing me. (Charlie Mike)

Sending Charlie Mike back to the barracks is a way of ensuring surveillance of soldiers. It is seen as a 'technique of controlling' (cf. Foucault, 1977) rogue soldiers. The barrack became a space to manage soldiers according to ZANU-PF ideals.

> They marched me into Officer Commanding orders, and they quoted one dubious defence act called disobeying lawful command when I was referred to the Commanding officers' orders...ah then to Brigadier. I was detained in the barracks (DB) for 40 days with heavy punishment. (Charlie Mike)

The barracks is represented as a metaphor for punishment. Being in such a space means a soldier can be dealt with effectively. The barracks is made in a way which makes the soldier comply with the rigid military code of conduct. Being detained does not only affect the individual soldier but other soldiers as well. It sends a warning signal to those soldiers who are deemed 'disobedient'. Even though the military is about obeying orders, in some cases some soldiers disobeyed the command especially during the June 2008 Presidential run-off. Charlie Romeo states:

During the 2008 presidential run-off all the soldiers were asked to come and vote inside the camp. They used our force numbers for each soldier to vote and each soldier voted under his company. Some soldiers did not come, and there was *Operation Chigunwe chitsvuku* meaning *Operation red finger.*[33] We were paraded and they inspected who had voted. I was one of the soldiers who were in the camp, but I decided not to vote because I did not want to be herded like goats to vote for President Mugabe and ZANU PF. So I and others with no red finger were immediately detained without trial; we were told that, because MDC had withdrawn from the elections, now you don't want to vote. I and other soldiers were told to sleep with no blankets - detained by the military police. (Charlie Romeo)

From the above it is evident that the commanding structure of the ZNA supported ZANU-PF. Soldiers were inspected and those who did not vote were suspected of harbouring MDC sympathies and were consequently detained. They were "sell-outs". Bravo Lima, who was in the infantry battalion, recounted a similar experience. He states that, "I was told that you will show me your ZANU-PF vote" or "*tokutamba yechicomrade" (*either you prove to us that you are a ZANU-PF supporter or we will punish you the way we did comrades who were selling-out during the war*)*. Like many civilians in Zimbabwe, the right to a free and secret vote for junior soldiers was not realized. Charlie Mike stole away from the camp and sought refuge in South Africa.

Actually, when I was released, that's when I sneaked out of the camp. I had to run away and I came to South Africa. I couldn't live in fear. Jah, I had to come to South Africa because I was not a soldier for the ZANU-PF party. I am a soldier for the people of Zimbabwe. (Charlie Mike)
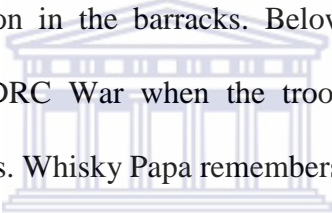
Charlie Mike deserted from the army. Desertion was a way to deal with issues of fear in the barracks, of being arrested and detained. While in practice fear does not necessarily end with desertion, it was seen as a way of moving away from repressive structures with a hierarchy which demands a particular brand of subordination.

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[33] Everyone who had voted was identified by a red finger.

5.4. Whisky Papa and other deserters

Whisky Papa has comparatively more experienced than the other deserters I interviewed. Whisky Papa who was born in 1968 in Nkayi, a district in Matabeleland North, joined the army in 1986. Immediately, after basic military training, he was posted to Harare One Commando barracks for further training as a member of the Commando Special Forces. He was deployed in Mozambique from 1986-1992, the Angola peace-keeping mission in 1996 and the DRC war from 1998-2002. Having served in the army for twenty one years and eight months he was eligible for pension - it accrues at the twenty year service mark. So he had already exceeded the normal pensionable service. As he indicates below, he was demoted and then denied the opportunity to resign. In the context of Zimbabwe, resigning from the Zimbabwe National Army is a tedious and frustrating process. One has to write an application and intention to resign, giving reasons for such a decision. The application will first go through the Company Sergeant Major, who recommends it to the Officer Commanding (OC). If the OC recommends it, the application will be sent to the Commanding Officer (CO) through the Adjutant office. Once it is signed at battalion level, the application goes through the same process of signatory from the Brigade Major's office, Brigade administrative officer then the Brigadier recommends if he/she sees it fit for onward processing to Army Headquarters. It is at this level where the application goes from one intelligence office to another for clearance then the Army Careers Chief of Staff would ascend his/her signature before the Army commander approves it in the board of senior officers.

Considering the political situation in the barracks, once soldiers lodged their intention to resign, they were further persecuted, labelled as 'traitors' and 'cowards'. If soldiers had to follow this procedure, then they were to endure everyday punishment and victimisation. The majority of my participants were left with no option other than to desert. Whisky Papa was punished on every parade: being labelled as an MDC sympathiser. In the end Whisky Papa felt obligated to desert from the army, sacrificing his pension and other benefits. What is interesting in Whisky Papa's story is that he not only refers to his own experiences but to those of others. He uses 'we', meaning other soldiers. Whisky Papa identifies himself as a victim of politics in the army. His story is full of memories of persecution in the barracks. Below is his personal account. His problems started during the DRC War when the troops were asked to vote in the Zimbabwe presidential elections. Whisky Papa remembers:

> That was 2004, 2005, 2006. In 2006 I can say my problems began, they eventually led to my being here in South Africa today. Actually this is quite a sensitive and emotional issue. To start with, you know when the voting process came in Congo in 2002. Envelopes came, they were serialized 001, 003, and in each envelope there was your name. So you would be given an envelope '001'. So I remember when I told some junior military men in the trenches that, 'gentlemen, gentlemen watch out here. These envelopes have got serial numbers watch out for what they are planning to do?' It was so tricky; the commanders could easily see how you voted. When we got back home after the fraudulent vote because it was not a secret, meaning that if you voted otherwise you would find yourself in prison. So you cannot say that there was any vote, [because] we were not expressing our wishes. (Whisky Papa)

The political disciplining of soldiers apparently began in the trenches in the DRC War. Soldiers were expected to vote under the watchful eye of their commanders and each ballot paper was clearly linked numerically to a specific soldier. While the dominant

discourse in Zimbabwe perceives all soldiers as pro-ZANU-PF and pro-President Robert

Mugabe, the excerpt above shows that soldiers, like Whisky Papa, wanted a president of

their own choice. Serial numbers on the envelopes recorded their vote (cf. the discussion

in Chapter 4, 4.2). Whisky Papa's narrative of ballots with serial numbers accentuates the

fact that it was well-nigh impossible for soldiers to express their free vote under the gaze

of their command structure. In the barracks the army was immersed in politics.

> So when we came back we discovered that indeed the army had totally
> changed. It was now politics in the military. There was now indoctrination,
> a sort of brain washing, a sort of blinkering, and channelling of ideas to the
> extent that, at the end of it, when it got to around 2006, things were really
> bad in the military. We were now faced with this thing; forced politicisation
> of the military. Starvation in terms of meals, and torn uniforms compared to
> the luxurious life styles of commanders. (Whisky Papa)

Conditions in the barracks, as described by Whisky Papa, forced *Mafikizolo* soldiers to

leave the army. What *Mafikizolos* had expected from the army was not fulfilled. Like the

conditions from which they suffered in war (cf. Chapter 3), the Zimbabwe National Army

had changed from being apolitical to being political, with soldiers being neglected and

even harassed.

> Jah, jah, morale went down, (there were) resignations now; it began with
> retirement, a retirement that comes not out of your own will but out of a
> situation where you see that something is no longer right here. And then
> there was this, as times went on, around 2007, these retirements they were
> banned. They were serving no retirements anymore. They were saying, you
> are now joining MDC and the forces of imperialism. Meaning that, if you
> look at it I have worked …for the country and the constitution, but it does
> not make me a slave of anyone. The constitution does not say that I should
> *not* have my rights. We found ourselves now being told that you cannot
> leave the army. You want to go and join MDC, meaning that my life, my
> own life, my God given life, was now being controlled by another man for
> his own benefit, against my freedom, against my will, making me a slave of
> him. (Whisky Papa)

There is anger in Whisky Papa's narrative, as he was talking he became agitated. He understands that even soldiers should have their rights enshrined in the constitution. The right to freedom to leave the army was his personal choice, but that choice was not respected. The soldiers view freedom of choice as embodied in the constitution. This means that, despite repression, soldiers like Whisky Papa were aware that the constitution enshrined their rights. There is a consciousness of their rights, which are inalienable, regardless of them being in the army.

It is clear from Whisky Papa's narrative that soldiers who wished to resign were thought to be MDC supporters. The ZNA did not want soldiers to be MDC loyalists within the barracks, but also did not wish them to leave the army. The normal processes, according to which soldiers could resign, were stopped. This was because the Generals suspected that soldiers would join the MDC. There was concern about the mass resignation of soldiers from the army (cf. Chapter 1, 1.2). The right to resign, as stipulated in the Defence Act, was no longer adhered to; it was all 'politics'. The suffering of *Mafikizolo* soldiers contrasted with that of the command structure. The latter greatly benefited from ZANU PF patronship. Whisky Papa emphasised that:

> When I joined the military in 1986, I was told to be apolitical and to have nothing to do with politics - politics was a civilian matter. But unfortunately things turned the other way round. We have soldiers administratively discharged, just because a commander said I saw so and so soldier attending an MDC rally. A commander could come up with an idea of his own and then make it his word against a soldier and no witness was needed. As long as a commander who is totally loyal to ZANU-PF would say I saw (that) particular soldier evidence was thrown out whether this one is right or not and you suffer the consequences. (Whisky Papa)

Unlike 1986, when the army was supposed to be a-political, the situation in the military had changed drastically by 2000 and after. Whisky Papa had originally joined a 'professional' army - when politics and politicking were seen as civilian matters. Now, soldiers who had joined the army in post-independence Zimbabwe were increasingly perceived as 'sell-outs', they actually dared to quote their rights under the constitution. The victimisation of soldiers in the army barracks was a result of the politicisation of the military. Whisky Papa uses the language of censorship of soldiers' conversations in the barracks to express how they were limited in their choices to comment especially on political issues in the country. Soldiers outside the barracks, over the weekends, were also monitored by other partisan soldiers whose eyes were meant to see if they were not supporting the MDC.

Whisky Papa's experience of censorship in the army barracks was similar to that of India Sierra, who was working in the Signals Corps. India Sierra emphasised that: "the shift commander was a war veteran and he didn't want me to work as an operator, he was always saying you are too junior to know what is happening in the army, you will sell out." Censorship in the barracks reveals how the Zimbabwe National Army feared *Mafikizolo* soldiers, that "they will sell-out". Whether the fear was real or imagined is immaterial. For a *Mafikizolo* soldier wished to be 'safe' he had to praise President Robert Mugabe and his ZANU PF political party (cf. Chapter 4, 4.2). This to some extent reveals how the army was fearful of soldiers' support of the MDC. Because the MDC had a lot of support and was gaining a dominant position in politics, *Mafikizolo* soldiers were forced

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to praise ZANU PF, not to choose any alternative or embrace any other 'truth'. For Whisky Papa:

> You were no longer allowed to even read the private media newspaper; you were no longer allowed to put on a red cap. Anything that is red was not allowed. You had to hide anything that is red because the moment you are seen with anything that is red it was a problem. Red, jah, that's the colour of the MDC. (Whisky Papa)

The red cap and red t-shirts are currently MDC regalia used in public campaigns. The extract reveals how soldiers were caught in the ZANU-PF politics in the barracks. The barrack became a space controlled by partisan soldiers who had turned to spying on other soldiers. Military intelligence was responsible for monitoring what soldiers were reading and which radio station they listened to. Soldiers who were caught with anything red, or reading private media newspapers, were detained and harassed.

For example, in 2002, two lieutenants were dismissed from the army when it was reported that they seemed 'too happy' in the Officers Mess when MDC winning parliamentarians were announced by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. When a soldier wanted to read or listen to private (not state-controlled) broadcasting, he had to do so surreptitiously. Radio stations such as Voice of America (VOA) and Voice of the People (VOP) were said to be anti-government. In addition, newspapers such as the Daily News, The Standard and Financial Gazette were forbidden material for soldiers in- and outside the barracks. Those with satellite dishes were not allowed to watch and listen to programmes on BBC and News24. Such news was said to represent the views of the West and America whose leaders were ZANU PF enemies. Soldiers were kept in the dark; they were not supposed to know how the MDC was progressing politically in the

election campaigns. The only radio and television stations that were allowed in the barracks were government-controlled broadcasting stations, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and the Zimbabwe television (ZTV). In addition, soldiers had to read only the state controlled newspapers, The Herald, The Chronicle and other state provincial newspapers like Manica Post, Masvingo Star, which spearheaded the ZANU PF 'patriotic history' (cf. chapter 4) (Ndlovhu-Gatsheni, 2013; Phimister, 20012; Ranger, 2004; Tendi, 2008; Thram, 2006) and propaganda in the post-2000 crisis. The state newspaper ran front-page stories that were worshipful of President Robert Mugabe's rule while private newspapers denigrated that view. So it was the contrasting news and debate which the army generals did not want *Mafikizolo* soldiers to hear of (cf. chapter 4.2). Soldiers caught reading private newspapers or listening to Voice of America, were frog-marched and punished by either the regimental or military police. Labels such as 'sell-outs', were imposed on those caught doing so.
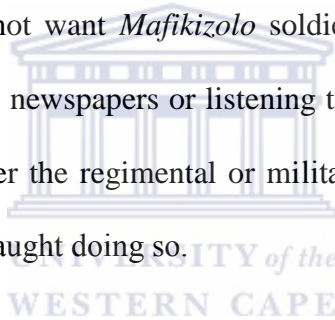
Over time there was an increase of parades. Every morning soldiers were inspected by their Company Sergeant Majors (CSM). On Mondays it was the main parade inspected by the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM). At Brigade level the Brigade Sergeant Major (BSM) was responsible for different inspection days. During such parades, soldiers experienced a lot of repression and constraints. On parades the Regimental Sergeant Major or Company Sergeant Major would just say: "We have civilians in combat around us, those who support MDC." The notion of "civilians in combat" is a metaphor in the military which demeans other soldiers. It is a label for those who were seen as not properly trained, in this case those who were perceived as MDC supporters were viewed

as civilians dressed in army uniforms. It was at such parades where the CSM and BSM invoked charges and threats to use the military's draconian laws. Soldiers who were found to have an undone button, to be unshaven, messed-up army fatigues or unpolished patrol boots were punished, for example with two days extra guard duty. The punishment was not fixed, but was very subjective, determined by the parade commander i.e. CSM, RSM and BSM. He or she may decide to impose minimal punishment like ten press-ups while some gave harsh punishment - like digging a six-feet pit in a day.

Apart from soldiers being punished, parades were also used as spaces of political mobilisation. *Toyi-toying* (the stamping of feet and spontaneous chanting of slogans and political songs) in the barracks and being drilled in a quick and slow march became the order of the day. Political indoctrination was publicly declared without questioning. ZANU PF slogans were openly chanted during parades. Slogans such as *masoja pamberi nemusangano* (soldiers ahead with ZANU-PF) became part of everyday language enforced by the commanders on parades. Parades became sites where the opposition political party, the MDC and its leader Morgan Tsvangirai were demeaned as soldiers' wives. Whisky Papa emphasised that:

> I was falsely accused of being an MDC because I was absent for two days. They created a story about me. This brigadier incriminated me. I was arraigned before him and I was dealt with unfairly by him. I was demoted from Staff Sergeant to Corporal. That very day I was put on guard duties at the main gate from 2am to 4am. I wrote to the Directorate Legal Service (DLS) for the redress of the wrong, citing the corrupt element of the commander. The Major who assisted me was arrested and put behind bars for ten days. As for me, everyone could see that I was headed for prison. The Brigadier would do anything to ensure that he made my life very uncomfortable; I had no intention of deserting. I had challenged the brigadier. (Whisky Papa)

Whisky Papa was demoted in rank. From my experience in the army an absence for two days does not warrant demotion of rank. Instead the charge (and punishment) involves a misdemeanour and usually involves extra guard duties. Because of the unfairness of the charge brought against him, Whisky Papa decided to resign. However, his decision to resign was turned down. Whisky Papa was always being punished by officers linked to the Brigadier and he finally deserted.

> So I asked to go on leave, they denied me. They began putting me always under arrest. I was always being arrested. No, no, no I would be arrested by the Brigade Sergeant Major (BSM), I was always under arrest. (Whisky Papa)

When arrested in the barracks, soldiers were subjected to heavy punishment popularly known as *chitigu* in Chishona language. Punishment was meant to 'correct' those who behaved in an undesirable manner. Physically a soldier under arrest was ordered to roll and crawl in the muddy and watered ground, all in the name of discipline. The idea of confining 'undisciplined' soldiers reveals constant surveillance. Soldiers who asked to be transferred to battalions closer to their home had their requests turned down. Bravo Kilo requested a posting to 4 Brigade, which was closer to his rural area. His request was dismissed on political grounds. The Administrative Officer explained to him: "You want to go and support your new MDC Member of Parliament."

The barracks were conceptualised as a political enclosure in which soldiers were coerced to behave and act in a certain prescribed "patriotic" manner. Routine everyday military activities were structured by politicised military discipline. This discipline was at its most extreme during the period of political crisis in Zimbabwe. The barracks became a containment zone for disciplining and punishing soldiers, especially those who were

suspected MDC supporters. As with politics among the civilians, labels such as

mupanduki (traitor) came to be commonly used for soldiers. In situations where soldiers

became political targets in the army barracks, they would find it hard to continue serving.

Whisky Papa:

> The Brigadier gave the military police specific orders to arrest me upon
> sight. Before I left the country I told them (immediate commanders) that I
> would fight back. I used to tell the officers, gentlemen I am going but be
> careful, we are going to fight. I used to tell them that, no, I am not going to
> go and keep quiet. I am going to fight back because of what you have done
> to me. You have destroyed me. My life has been destroyed over politics,
> over a system that has gone haywire. So that's how things ended up and I
> ended up here. (Whisky Papa)

For Whisky Papa, politics in the barracks was central in his explanation of his

victimisation. He described his life as "being destroyed over politics". What is interesting

is that as a soldier Whisky Papa, believed in fighting to repossess what he had lost, even

though he did not fight back as he had stated he would. Whisky Papa left the army as a

disappointed soldier. In his explanation, he was left with only one piece of torn

underwear (see quote below).

> I realised that I am in trouble and then that's how I ended up here in South
> Africa. Leaving behind 21 years of military service, 21 years of everything
> that I worked for. Twenty one years of working of which I only have one
> thing that is remaining for everything that I worked for. I have got torn
> underwear, underwear...underwear. Torn military underwear. Now it's an
> old one, but I am still keeping it because that's the only thing that is
> remaining of all that I worked for. I am still keeping it because that's what I
> have gained from my career [laughing], all other things I lost. I used to own
> expensive things, I loved expensive things but I lost everything, everything.
> I owned a small farm. I lost all of that too. (Whisky Papa)

Whisky Papa's torn underwear above has a figurative representation. The underwear is

his 'flag'; it is the sign by which he juxtaposes his service in the army to post-combat life.

The underwear is the visible mark of his being, a mark borne by violence aimed at him in

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the barracks. It represents 21 years of service in the army, all torn up. The underwear's torn condition represents violence in the barracks. While being torn represents readiness to be thrown away, it instead retains its value as a symbol. The underwear symbolizes how Whisky Papa suffered. It is a representation and symbol of pain and loss; of dignity, identity, class and the loss of wealth due to persecution and victimization in the army. In this case the underwear reproduces the past in the present. This is what Fontein (2009: 432) refers to as 'ambivalent agency' that act as 'extensions' of violence, but also as 'unconscious' objects, which provoke violence.

The torn underwear is *of* and *about* the past. It is torn but is given life in the present. The torn underwear continues to imbue immediacy of experiences for Whisky Papa. For Fontein (2009: 431) this represents an 'affective presence'. It is a past pain which is in the here and now. On the other hand, there is social and emotional attachment to the torn underwear. There is continuity in the relationship between Papa Whisky and the underwear. Its meaning is localised and metamorphosed i.e. its physical representation of a cloth has been transformed to represent violence.

Though Whisky Papa can no longer wear it, he has invested emotion in the underwear and he sees the torn garment as mediation of the violence he was exposed to in the past and the 'freedom' which he gained by leaving all he had except for it, to serve as a reminder of where he came from and where he is. For Durkheim (1973:172) symbols do not only constrain us, but can also be a force on which our strength relies.

5.5. Conclusion

The testimonies above reveal how the army created particular military subjects in the barracks through harassment and punishment. I argue that the politicisation of the Zimbabwe National Army forced deserters to understand that ZANU-PF and President Robert Mugabe practiced the politics of intolerance against its own soldiers. The former soldiers were now perceived as members of the opposition political party, the MDC. The mass desertion of soldiers in post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis as well as the resignation of a relatively small group is a clear testimony which revealed that the army had shifted from the professional mandate it seemed to uphold initially; the mandate of refraining from politics. Drawing on the deserters' stories, and even the stories of those who resigned, the pervasiveness of violence within the army barracks reinforces the partisan role of the army Generals. The chapter has presented the soldiers' experiences of victimisation, harassment and punishment as 'politics' in the barracks. Such practices of punishment and harassment contributed to mass desertion and resignation of soldiers and forced many to seek refuge in neighbouring countries.

The politicisation of the army in Zimbabwe was highly influenced by the changing political landscape in which *Mafikizolo* soldiers were allegedly labelled and linked to the MDC. Those not conforming to the ZANU PF way of serving the army were harassed. What is interesting is how the army continued to use the guerrilla war mentality (that of perceiving other soldiers as sell-outs) and tools, to punish and discipline *Mafikizolo* soldiers. Demotion of soldiers from their ranks was one such strategy which the army continued to use during political violence in Zimbabwe. However, the argument here is

not that such violent practices were not there in the barracks before the year 2000, but that the political crisis invoked political victimisation which targeted a particular generation of soldiers within the army.

In the following chapter I examine the habitus of soldiers who now lived in self-imposed exile in Johannesburg, South Africa. The main finding is that even though these men had left the army they strongly express a military habitus and they emphasise their 'soldierlyness'. They are proud of their military experience, which distinguishes them from civilians, and look down upon civilian migrants from Zimbabwe. Some of the military virtues they see as defining them are strength, courage, endurance and the inherent qualities of a soldier whose apogee is attainable only in military training and war. Their experiences before and after leaving the army and the context of exile they are living differentiates the former Zimbabwean from many other (former) combatants around the world who managed to different extents to outlive and unmake their habituated forms of military identity and regenerate other forms of identity in the civilian world once they deserted or resigned.

CHAPTER 6: The military habitus: Continuity of military subjectivity

6.1. Introduction

> Soldiers cannot become civilians, unless you are not well trained. A military man trains every day, there is no way I can allow a civilian to beat me because I am a military man and he is a woman. I have to find a way to deal with a civilian. I have an advantage because I have trained as a soldier which a civilian failed to do because he is a woman. When I plan my fight I win. Why? I fight to kill a civilian because I want him to feel the pressure in my mind. Because I have the determination which I was taught during training, I shine in everything I do. It is about the input I put in the fight. If I do it, I do it 100%. If it is prostitution I will do it 100%. All stupid things I will push 100%. If you fight me, I can even stab you because I am trained to defeat. (Oscar Papa)

Oscar Papa is one of the participants whose experiences contribute much to this chapter, which examines why and how former soldiers from Zimbabwe living in self-imposed exile remained attached to (in effect embedded in) their military past. The view of Oscar Papa, as expressed in the quote above, is similar to that of many other Zimbabwean former soldiers I spoke to who are now living in South Africa. Even though Oscar Papa is in reality a civilian in South Africa, he still views, understands, presents and defines himself in relation to his military past. He always draws from his previous military training and experience: he states that he has the strength of mind, fortitude, full commitment and the determination to fight. Because of his military experience and skills, he distinguishes himself from what he sees as "soft" effeminate civilian men. Oscar Papa reveals that his sense of being a 'military man' is deeply embedded in his body and psyche. The quote also illustrates how the military in general socialises and indoctrinates male recruits to become 'warriors' whose civilian identity is seen as a liability in the army and thus exorcised. Their training is meant to physically and emotionally enable

them to overcome different obstacles in a world they always see as a potential terrain of conflict (Woodward, 2000). Like all soldiers, Oscar Papa says that he was trained to be aggressive, to "push 100%". Thus soldiers reveal they were trained to push themselves to the maximum and always go beyond normal limits because they are not 'normal' folk, they are soldiers. He (Oscar Papa) distances himself from civilians; they are the 'other' to him - even in post-combat life.

In this chapter, I allow Oscar Papa and other research participants to speak in more detail about their state which they view and term as life in 'exile'. The research participants illuminate what it means to remain 'soldiers' even after their departure from the army and how they do it. What I want to emphasise here is that, for my participants, being stuck in their past military lives should be understood within these former soldiers' context: that of desertion or reluctantly resigning from and subsequently migrating to live in a self-imposed exile. These are men who joined the military with the intention of serving for at least 25 years and/ or up to 50 years of age (according to the Defence Act chapter 11:02), However, because of politics within the barracks (see chapter 5), they were forced to resign and/ or desert prematurely from the military. Thus their lives in exile continue to be dominated by their military past. As Jolly (1996) emphasised, being in and living peacefully with civilians does not make former soldiers civilians. Thus in this chapter, I analyse how and why they cling to their military past, i.e. the years of military life, a large part of which was spent in war zones (in Mozambique and DRC) outside Zimbabwe (see chapter, 3). They also subsequently had to live within the context of political violence inside the country where they were both perpetrators and victims.

Below I first discuss how these former soldiers were made in the military. Then I focus on how and why former soldiers cling to their military past. Although the participants never referred to a military 'habitus' *per se*, their insistence on a continued soldierly habitus or the endurance of a military habitus led me to explore the notion of habitus and field as propounded by (Bourdieu, 1990). Insight into the way soldiers were 'made' may help me understand the endurance of a military habitus outside the army and the participants' inability to completely discard their military past in post-army life. In contrast to many other former soldiers who succeed in leaving behind their military past (Griffith, 2009; Lomsky-Feder et al., 2008; Vest, 2012), the men in my study did not even try to do this. The findings I present in this chapter demonstrate that my participants do everything they can to maintain their military past in current everyday practice and through embracing and celebrating their military way of life.
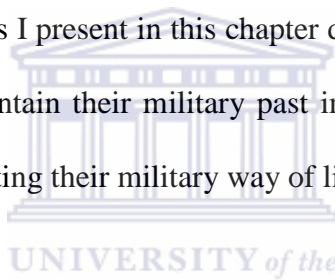
The participants appeared to be nostalgic about the time they were soldiers, even when they were deployed in war zones. For them their soldierly habitus is not only constructed, it is deeply rooted in their personal history in the army, former experiences of combat and military training. Thus the majority of my participants viewed the military past as defining their social, economic and political world. Below I explore their perspectives on the way they were 'made' as soldiers, their soldiering (their determination, holding on as 'soldiers' etc.) and how it was being sustained in post-combat life. In this regard, understanding how such a military past is developed and deployed by former soldiers is useful for my study.

6.2. The making of a soldier: Inculcating habitus

I found Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus useful to gain an understanding of how the military past is understood and reinforced in a particular 'field', in my case that of exile or involuntary migration characterized by social, economic and political contestations. For Bourdieu (1990), habitus is a set of dispositions that incline individuals to act, think and respond in certain ways. Bourdieu (1991) argues that the dispositions generate practices which are neither consciously nor unconsciously coordinated. The dispositions, which constitute the habitus, are 'inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable' (Bourdieu, 1991:13).

Inculcation of dispositions is a process that occurs by virtue of particular kinds of training and learning and the latter becomes 'the knowledge' carried over time from one context to the next. The knowledge gained through training is structured as it reflects the person's background. Structured dispositions are durable as they are embedded in a person's body and mind and they endure through a person's life history. Lastly, they are generative and transposable as they can generate a multiplicity of practices in different contexts. Since the body is imbued with dispositions Bourdieu speaks of 'bodily' or 'corporeal hexis' by which he means an individual's embodied deportment, that is, the specific ways an individual walks, talks, and feels in most contexts.

Thus the ways in which my individual participants, for instance, dress, shave and care for their bodies, as well as carry their bodies in a particular context, explains the durability of the military dispositions in a social context where former soldiers like many other

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migrants, struggle in everyday life. The habitus acquired during military training helps

my research participants to substantiate and defend their military past in the present

context, that of self-imposed exile. The habitus gives meaning to the history of the

soldiers and mediates their past with their current situation as soldiers living in exile. It

also serves the purpose of overcoming another type of war and combat of a non-military

nature that of being a migrant and living in exile and enduring socially and economically.

Another way in which to make sense of the insistence of my participants on 'being

soldiers' is through understanding military training which is at the core of 'making' a

soldier. As Strachan notes:

> Training…has five fundamental functions over and above that of imparting
> the basic grammar of military service. Firstly, it counters boredom.
> Secondly, it distinguishes the soldier from the civilian and so generates
> professional pride. Thirdly, it can create unit cohesion. Fourthly, training is
> a means by which soldiers can assimilate new tactical thinking to the point
> where it becomes instinctive in its application. Fifthly, and finally, training
> teaches men to kill. It sets out to overcome the civilising effects of
> peacetime norms and to defy the most obvious commandment of all
> (Strachan, 2006: 216-217)

The idea of 'instinctive' accentuates and underscores a particular habitus, i.e. how former

soldiers struggle to shrug off the military past. From the excerpt above it is apparent that

the army and the civilian environment are represented as two different terrains with

different norms. These two are presented as things that cannot co-exist. When men are

initiated into the army they must adjust to military life, obey a hierarchy of command and

live in a self-contained social world (Brotz and Wilson, 1946:371). From day one,

recruits are directed into activities that slowly transform them into soldiers (Barret, 1996).

For Winslow (2007) army rituals range from small routines such as saluting to the complex ceremonies of drills.

The military as an organisation is akin to what Foucault (1977:25) refers to as 'a system of subjection.' Entering into it is a 'leaving-off' and 'taking-on' (Goffman, 1961: 20) of civilian and soldier way of life. Even though in some cases married soldiers live with their families, they are subject to military cantonment/camp rules and their lives remain militarised. A military organisation is not like any other organisation where men walk in, work and then leave to go home. In a military organisation men are trained to work and in particular to fit in and live in such an organisational setting and life. For Goffman (1961) the military is a typical example of a total institution. In his definition, an organisation like the military is a place of residence and work where individuals, separated from the wider society, live an enclosed and formally administered round of life. The specific characteristics which define the military are evident in Goffman's understanding of total institutions; all activities are conducted in the same place and under the same single command. This happens on the parade square where all drills are specifically conducted in a squared space. Again, all daily activities are conducted in the company of others. In the military recruits are trained in platoons and companies - consisting of 35 and 105 men. Activities are coordinated in groups where the collective is encouraged. Daily activities are tightly scheduled with the whole sequence administered by command to fulfil the organisational goals. In the military this is represented by a hierarchy of rank and file. Thus the singular objective of the military is to make soldiers. This is what Strachan (2006) refers to as imparting military culture. In her analysis on how the

government prepares women to fight in war, the military plays a pivotal role in the construction of patriarchy because of its focus on combat (Encloe, 1988 & 2000). Similarly the military manipulates certain ideas of what constitutes femininity and masculinity to accomplish its primary objectives (see Sasson-Levy, 2002; Encloe, 1988 & 2000). The military creates social cohesion in which soldiers submit themselves to the group. By so doing the soldier views the group as more important than himself (see Winslow, 1994; Ben-Ari, 2006; Sasson-Levy, 2002; Nesbit and Reingold, 2011). In order to successfully build social capital soldiers are submitted to a constraining environment with rigid rules and regulations. Identity is re-written through the depersonalisation and de-individuation in which the individual recruit is stripped of all previous self-definition (Braswell and Kushner, 2010).
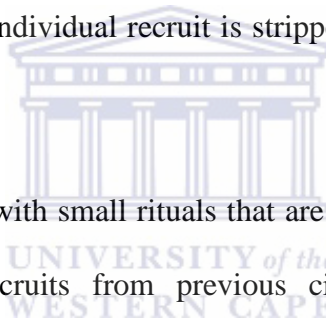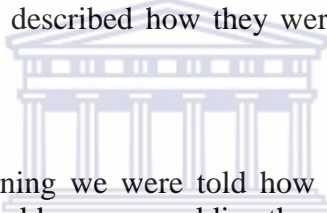
Military training is associated with small rituals that are effective in controlling recruits. Such practices disconnect recruits from previous civilian identities. Violent drill instructors enable soldiers to learn a cult of toughness and masculinity traditionally associated with making a soldier out of a civilian (Barrett, 2001). The initiation into the military means that soldiers discard their civilian life and adopt military behaviour in which norms and values are ascribed to the new adopted way of life. There is a cutting-off of past civilian life (Zurcher, 1967). Thus being a soldier is associated with not quitting in the face of hardships and challenges. Recruit soldiers are exposed to unfamiliar situations which strip away their previous way of life in order to adopt a military one (Barrett, 2001). Military training has been described as 'socialisation under pressure' (Hockey, 1986:23). Under these extreme conditions new techniques, skills and

specific ways of communicating are learned (Wolpert, 2000). Before joining the military, civilians will be guided by freedom of choice which cannot be tolerated in the army (Zurcher, 1967). Soldiers who do not take orders become the targets of gendered insults being called 'pussies', 'weenies' and 'wimps' by the instructors (Lande, 2007; Woodward, 2000). Thus at the end of military training soldiers become expendables, ready to risk their lives (Braswell and Kushner, 2010) but also welded into a single entity where each supports his fellows.

To become soldiers recruits are inculcated into a 'cult' of legitimate violence while being harassed by drill instructors. Barrett (2001) argues that military training is a deliberate effort to shape soldiers to become 'professionals of violence' a practice which is celebrated in the army. The world of the infantryman in particular is overwhelmingly physical and this corporeality is impressed upon him from the first days of basic training. His role is presented by instructors as that of 'closing with and destroying the enemy' (Hockey, 2002:154). Military instructors indoctrinate a 'spirit' of war into trainees to change the way they think and to act as soldiers (Marlantes, 2011:12-13). Soldiers are transformed into 'mentally tough' beings that are able to suppress emotions (Gibson, 2010). Similarly, Strachan (2006) emphasised that training is also psychological: fear is normalised. In their field of combat, soldiers access symbolic and material resources which reinforce a warlike being (Hinojosa, 2010). They suffer physical and psychological pain and social deprivation (Hockey, 2002:158; Hawkins, 2001) and, through enforced discipline during training, a particular embodiment is forged.

Even though military training is a past experience it is still central to the narratives of my participants. The research participants discuss the ways in which they carry this military knowledge and embodiment into their current lives. They spoke about 'soldiering' (holding on, determination, pressing on, etc.) as part of their everyday practices in South Africa; defining who and what they are. As indicated the making of a soldier comes about through military conditioning (Barrett, 1996; Griffith, 2011; Higate, 2001; Woodward, 2000) and is ingrained during the transformation from civilian to soldier (Lande, 2007; Winslow, 2007). Being a soldier was forged through the experience of training, barrack life and war. The study participants represented it as a deep-seated state of being which endures forever. Alpha Romeo described how they were transformed from civilians to soldiers.

> On the first day of training we were told how to dress properly as a soldier. The instructor told us as a soldier the shirt should always be inside the pants and then you close the button of the denim [trouser]. The trouser should also be inside the military patrol boots, and the boots must be always well polished and glittering. We were not allowed to sleep; we sang liberation songs till morning. In the morning Physical Training Instructors (PTIs) would whistle and we would be on another parade to go for a morning road run for 20 kilometres. The instructor would count us and call the register to check if anyone was absent; we would all be punished till the absent recruit came back. If he returned he would get his own heavy punishment. In the afternoon we go for another pre-lunch road run, carrying wooden logs on our shoulders. I still remember that it was raining and I caught a cold. I went to the army clinic, my body temperature was 39 but the doctors said, 'if we admit you, they will ask you to go back home and you will lose your job', I went back to the barracks and hid under my bed, when I joined others later in the day, I was heavily beaten. After a day, the cold disappeared. (Alpha Romeo)

The former soldiers were part of and participated in the military training. The military world employs certain symbols, songs, physical training and a soldier's particular rigid

dress code as ways of making and moulding soldiers. Punishing those who do not conform requires whipping soldiers into line and shape. There is a military way of doing things. Military songs with lyrics such as 'soldiers are running across the country, waging war, while women are sitting in the comfort of the home' *(masoja mberere mberere nenyika vachirwa hondo, vakadzi vakagarika zvavo mudzimba)* demean civilian men as effeminate carers for children and the home, while 'real' men are the soldiers, i.e. active, protecting the country and waging war. Such songs not only 'make' the soldier they also motivate them in times of hardship during military training and during armed conflict.

For my participants to be 'made' their civilian characteristics had to be 'removed' and replaced by military values. Oscar Papa emphasized that:

> For you to be a military man you have to remove the civilian jacket I have thrown away that jacket; you discard it, it's not worth it… you cannot take it again, taking the vomit… you cannot become a civilian if you were a real military man, unless you were trained and taught politics, which removes the syllabus of a real soldier and substitutes that with politics. (Oscar Papa)

Through military training, the former civilian status is broken down and a new 'world view' is produced by constant exposure to violent drills and military norms' (Nesbit and Reingold, 2011:67). Oscar Papa uses phrases such as "thrown away that jacket" and words like "vomit" to refer to how he 'discarded' civilian life and became a 'real' military man in preparation for armed conflict and war. His view of civilian life is also regarded as disgusting (vomit) and something that was unpleasant and undesirable to one. Through the military rituals such as singing military songs, putting on combat fatigues,

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doing drills, parades and excessive physical training a new, fit and disciplined being was embraced (Lande, 2007). Civilian life is 'discarded' and obliterated.

For Oscar Papa, 'removing', 'throwing' and 'vomit' engender and 'organise[s] practices, as well as representations' (Bourdieu, 1990: 53). Such language, for example of 'removing', implies that on entering the military much which is 'familiar' is no longer valid but replaced with what is at first unfamiliar and uncertain (Hale, 2008:312). Through intensive training soldiers are immersed in new terrains that inscribe new values and beliefs (Higate, 2001; Nesbit and Reingold, 2011; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009; Woodward, 2000). Bravo Charlie gave an analogy of civilian life as an evil spirit that has to be exorcized. Military instructors are represented as akin to priests who 'exorcise' civilian life. This has implications in post-combat life. Thus there was no reverse exorcism to retain the civilian life in them because the soldierly life had been inscribed in and had become consciously and unconsciously instinctive. The soldiers were let free into the public domain with absolutely nothing changed. However, the idea here is not to say that soldiers do not have a sense of agency rather they productively draw on their military past. Thus the ways in which they deserted meant that they could not access any way of dealing with who they were or where they were headed. They soldiered out of the army: desertion in itself is risky and warrants a court-martial offence. Thus they used that soldierly-ness to escape further victimisation, reinforcing their military habitus.

6.3. Maintaining soldierliness: Reproduction of military past in the present

My participants indicated that leaving the army did not mean that they could be turned back into civilians. Having deserted or succeeding in grudgingly terminating their

contracts they felt compelled to maintain and protect their military past. What the study participants revealed is that their soldierly habitus is not temporal, but it is a lasting state-of-being fostered by the ways in which it was produced, i.e. through military ethos and practices that were inculcated into them. My participants view themselves as reluctantly journeying into new non-military circumstances while simultaneously staying 'conditioned' within soldierly-ness, forever. Alpha Romeo, who joined the Army as a cadet and resigned as a captain, gave an account of how the training instilled his skill to take control, and be in command:

> I was conditioned to be able to lead troops in war and peace time. Commanding is an indoctrinated attribute and a legacy that I will die with so what I am now is just a true commander who has managed the transition from commanding troops to commanding civilians. I am an adult who has a keen eye on what goes on around him and most of the time I understand situations differently from normal people. As I move, I move as a military man, when I speak, I speak as a military man, my whole body is military and, like I said, commanding of troops was drilled into me. It's now part of my blood system, just give me a combat uniform and troops, and the rest will just come oozing. (Alpha Romeo)

Alpha Romeo intimates that, in the army, certain values and traditions were cemented in, and consequently his 'whole body is military', irrespective of where he finds himself. The military past in him is celebrated and seen as a 'legacy he will die with'. As a former platoon commander he ordered and was obeyed by troops. In post-combat life he continues to see himself as 'the commander'. This habitus 'ensures the active presence of past experiences in the form of schemes of perception and action' (Bourdieu, 1990:54). Thus for Alpha Romeo taking control is a necessity to be carried beyond life in the barracks into a civilian setting. According to Lande (2007) the 'military habitus' endures after military life. It becomes a tool through which status and authority is retained. In this

study the participants almost always positioned themselves in relation to what they learned and experienced in the army. Accordingly, being military is ineluctably part of Alpha Romeo's 'blood system'. It is a military attitude and a particular perception of the world around him which has become ingrained.

What is evident from the extract above is that once the soldier is 'made' there is no going back to the civilian way of thinking and doing things. Alpha Romeo's use of the words 'conditioned' and 'indoctrinated' indicates that it is hard to undo the being of a soldier. 'Conditioned' also intimates that soldiers are created in specific ways that continue to define them in their current lives. For Bourdieu (1990:54), 'the conditionings…generate and organise practices and representations…' Alpha Romeo apparently finds it impossible to break with his past. This is because being a soldier is his 'whole body', it has been "drilled into him…and (is) part of his blood". In this way the participants often stressed that they were continuously maintaining their past in their present lives. Similarly I found that the soldierly discipline, which was instilled in the barracks, was internalised and maintained through continuous self-monitoring. By understanding and representing civilians as an 'other' study participants reinforced and celebrated their own self-discipline. For Oscar Papa:

> I have got military discipline, a civilian has no discipline. So as such, we are two different people to start off with. Our way of talking, our way of thinking, is totally different. I am conditioned in a military way of thinking and a civilian is conditioned in his own natural thinking… I have a national organisation's training in my head. I am moulded into a certain way of doing things to the extent that when it comes to being a civilian and as much as I wish to be like this other person, this is oil and water, [so] we cannot mix (Oscar Papa).

Oscar Papa and other participants have been conditioned and 'moulded' not only to always be disciplined but also to have a particular mind-set. They are unlike civilians who they perceive as disorderly and 'natural' somewhat unformed in thought and being. In later life, 'enfolding these differences, however, is an atmosphere which affects almost every soldier at one time or another' (Brotz and Wilson, 1946:371). Indeed the participants cannot be civilians anymore. Alpha Romeo emphasised:

> Don't call me a civilian; I am a soldier in exile. How do you classify say someone like me who endured the training? Am I a civilian or a soldier? I have earned this; I didn't go and sit on the desk to be awarded a military certificate. I trained, I don't want to be a civilian, I have passed that stage (Alpha Romeo).

There is also a kind of clinging-on to their 'profession' because this is the only skill they have. They refuse to give up because once this happens then they have no profession to talk about, thus soldiering is a special skill; a specialisation that defines them. Alpha Romeo represents being a soldier as a valued status that has been earned and which he is not prepared to leave behind. My participants view themselves as shaped and 'made' through and according to a specific military model, they cannot be 'mixed' into civilian life anymore. What is apparent from the two excerpts above is that the process of becoming soldiers 'cut off' our participants from the civilian 'social world'. In this regard Alpha Romeo sees himself as no different from other soldiers still serving in Zimbabwe. For Alpha Romeo:

> I am a soldier number one and number 100 and I am not different from a soldier I left in the barracks, there is nothing new that happened to soldiers in Zimbabwe to make them different from me. I am always with soldiers. (Alpha Romeo)

According to Bourdieu (1990:54) this refers to 'a present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation'. The act of comparing himself with other soldiers who are still in service and of relying on his continuous connection and even companionship with other former soldiers, affirms the military past of Alpha Romeo.

As indicated by Charlie Delta being a soldier is not only constructed, it is his 'legacy', and it is an 'engraved' part of his daily life. In this regard Bourdieu's (1990:54) notion of dispositions makes it possible to explore habitus as 'the principles of continuity difficult to account for and explain in relation to extrinsic values'. Thus the military way of walking, talking, thinking and even dressing is represented as a practice which constitutes the former soldiers' current lives. Practice here refers to the way the soldiers speak, move, deliberate and network as former soldiers. The being becomes a 'category of practice' (cf. Brubaker and Cooper 2000). The practical world (that of always 'being' a soldier) is represented as 'a system of cognitive structures' in which the way of life of Charlie Delta and Alpha Romeo are determined by the habitus itself (Bourdieu, 1990:53). It is the 'military habitus' that continues to dominate their lives (Lande, 2007). Thus 'being' a soldier in a post-combat environment involves a composite of all the dispositions that make a soldier. It is the often taken-for-granted everyday practices that constitute being a soldier. Such dispositions do not end after army life, but are constantly practiced and perpetuated in life after the military.

The participants are soldiers always, even 'in exile', it is 'number one and number 100', they have 'military' brains and 'specific way(s) of doing things', 'military' bodies and they 'ooze' a soldierly way of being. This is what Bourdieu (1990:56) calls 'embodied

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history, internalised as a second nature…is the active presence of the whole past'. For instance, when asked to narrate their life histories the study participants all began with being soldiers, because it had become the most important aspect of their own biographies, i.e. the 'turning-moments' (Denzin, 1989) in their lives, from which they began to re-tell their stories.

Drawing on Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus, the participants in my study are arguably habituated to soldier-ing – I use the verb in its present continuous tense to emphasise how participants consciously and unconsciously draw on dispositions that constitute the essence of being a soldier. The gait, appearance, language used, potential capacity to do violence, etc., are perceived and understood by others as inherent in soldiers (even former soldiers), but for the participants it is at once deeply subjective, ingrained and definitive. 'The habitus has a relationship with the social world in which it is constituted and its functions are motivated by structures' (Bourdieu, 1990:52). It is not only about the ways in which our participants see themselves as soldiers, but also the ways in which they think about themselves and the social, economic and political spaces in which they belong.

Reflecting on soldiers' everyday practices, Charlie Kilo, who was trained as a paratrooper gives an account of a typical day of a soldier in 'exile'.

> When I sleep I am always alert, I am on guard… I am a soldier; I don't sleep like a civilian… I dream of myself in combat, so I am a soldier every time whether I am asleep or…moving in town or…in the company of other soldiers or at work. Even my girlfriend knows … that she is living with a soldier in the house (Charlie Kilo).

What Charlie Kilo is referring to Bourdieu (1990:52) calls 'incorporated products of historical practice', i.e. what was learned in the past manifests in the present as a way of life. Like Oscar Papa, Charlie Kilo continues to live a soldier's life, being a soldier *is* his life, that is, Charlie Kilo has specific ways of being and such dispositions either manifest as material or symbolic products. The everyday soldiering practice is presented in all facets of Charlie Kilo's life: that is, what happens when he is sleeping, when he is in town, out drinking with other soldiers, at work and with his girlfriend. All these practices represent habitus, 'which is constituted in practice and is always oriented toward practical functions' (Bourdieu, 1990:52). In his narratives Charlie Kilo tells a story that is soldierly: his narrative selectively talks about himself and other soldiers. He momentarily mentions his girlfriend and then goes back again to talk about other soldiers, his comrades, who are representative of his military world.
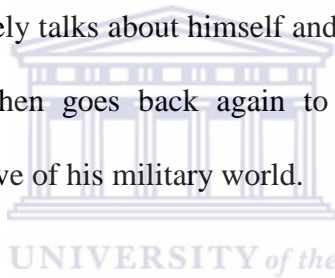
The following section engages with the embodiment of being a soldier and how it is carried in later life. *Kushingirira* literally means 'holding on' and combined with comradeship this represents soldierhood. I selected these specific themes because they speak to the attributes of military habitus. While I understand that civilians can have some of these characteristics, soldiers are trained to always maintain such states-of-being.

6.4. Practices of soldiering in exile

The study participants celebrated their military past, and they maintained it as a social, psychological and emotional resource in 'exile'. It is from their military past that they draw the social status of being a soldier. In doing so, they position and present

themselves as men with a capacity to deny social, economic, emotional and political pain. They can still conquer as soldiers even when they engage in non-military wars and combat. Soldiering is represented as retaining the being of a soldier, which includes 'holding on' and maintaining soldierly comradeship.
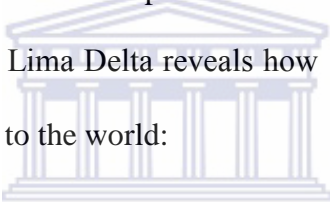
6.4.1. *Kushingirira*: holding on

Kushingirira is a Shona concept which connotes perseverance through adversity, courageous suffering, enduring hardship for a just cause (Moore, 2005). Its roots can be traced from the Shona verb *shinga* which means 'be courageous'. I draw the term from my participants' stories in which they not only speak of, but apply *kushingirira* as 'soldiers in exile'. The related term in Ndebele is *ukuqinisela*. For Whisky Papa *kushingirira* is 'a way of maintaining a momentum of sustained suffering with the hope that maybe something will come out of it'. When elaborating *kushingirira*, Whisky Papa gave an analogy of a married woman who only stays in a frustrating marriage because of her children (*yikucekezela njengomfazi ohlezi emendweni ongekho mnandi)*. In such situations, hope sustains them, propels them forward and ensures that they do not give-up, he says.

Kushingirira suggests holding on is to survive. Soldiers' *kushingirira* was instilled in them through military training and became an embedded practice in their lives. They were constantly expected not to throw in the towel or give up when faced with challenges or adversity. When the participants 'do' *kushingirira* in the present they consciously and unconsciously draw from their past military training and experiences.

A common response to questions about the men's lives in South Africa was, 'I am a soldier, I persevere (*ndinoshingirira*), I am not a civilian'. *Kushingirira* connotes a life world, lived experience and a particular view of life, i.e. life as not easy. 'Holding-on' is embedded in military language and constantly reinforced through expressions such as *shinga comrade* (persevere comrade) and songs such as like *nyika ino ndeyeropa* (this country came after shedding blood). *Kushingirira* is a notion that soldiers mobilize throughout their entire service. During war it means they have to endure and conquer difficulties and hardship.

Kushingirira is contextualized within the particular military histories of these men and mobilised in their current lives. Lima Delta reveals how 'holding-on' is embedded in his everyday practice and approach to the world:
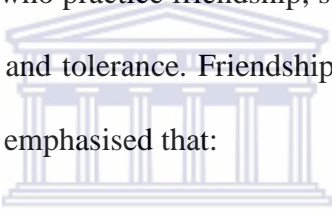
> I can say *kushingirira* was the main thing that we were being taught… to prepare us for future purposes… I go through situations that need me to use my strength, which need me to endure. I can face tough situations that a common human being cannot go through. (Lima Delta)

Kushingirira is not only about soldiers; civilians have and practice it as well. However, the ways in which former soldiers practice *kushingirira* is not similar to that of civilians. For former soldiers *kushingirira* is drawn from particular military practices which have been experienced though-out their service. Thus soldiers are trained to *shingirira*. In a way the Army explicitly reinforces endurance or 'hanging on'. In this regard Alpha Romeo, for instance, presented his war experiences as a testimony of *kushingirira.* There is a materiality and symbolic value in *kushingirira*. In its material form it acts as a social, psychological and emotional resource on which study participants constantly draw.

Symbolically, it represents courage, being able to conquer difficult and unfamiliar terrains as well as the capacity to hold on despite discomfort, pain or suffering. The latter are represented as temporal; the goal of overcoming it drives soldiers to *shingirira*.

6.4.2. Comradeship and trust

Although habitus is individual it also represents a shared socialisation and a particular, current context. My participants survive exile by drawing on their own culturally informed (by the military) view of the world. The study participants often referred to themselves as 'men of honour' or as 'having honour', a value which distinguishes them from civilians. Unlike civilians who practice friendship, soldiers believe in comradeship - which applies more to equality and tolerance. Friendship is deeply civilian in nature for our participants. Whisky Tango emphasised that:

> The thing with friendship is a difficult one because we were not taught friendship at all, but comradeship. I don't have a civilian friend at all because of that. The thing is they remember us as we were once (civilians) so we understand them but they can't understand us (Whisky Tango).

Unlike friendship, comradeship is characterised by the participants' military histories and is continued in their present lives. According to Hynes (2001), comradeship is accidental since, in the Army, those you see as comrades are not necessarily chosen by you. Instead they become your compatriots as the result of a process of selection by the institution, such as being picked for deployment according to force numbers or alphabetical order. Under such circumstances comrades are inevitably different from each other and they do not share a common past. This is contrary to civilian life where friendship is guided by choice, shared interest and such. In war and peace soldiers spend virtually all their time

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being together during deployment and in the barracks. They share boredom, hardships, sickness and even danger and live in very close and continued proximity to each other; thus they become socially intimate in the end. A soldier spends more time with his comrades than he can do with his wife, and 'most marriages do not come to that' (Hynes: 2001.9). Lima Delta emphasised how they were taught to be united:

> I am telling you we were trained to be united, they taught us unity and that went a long way because when you are in the war zone, sometimes when a fellow soldier is shot you cannot leave him, you have to carry him but if you are not trained to, if they don't instil that unity in you, you cannot perform those things. (Lima Delta)

The excerpt indicates that comradeship does not come about as friendship does; it is rather 'instilled' by military instructors, to prepare soldiers for war and survival. The need to be able to completely rely on each other becomes a potential life-saving reality during armed combat and is continuously sustained and reinforced. Thus under strenuous circumstances soldiers have no choice but to depend on one another in order to survive. In this regard the military, in sharp contrast to civilian life, places great emphasis on the active establishment of a high degree of social solidarity (Arkin and Dobrofsky, 1978:158). The resultant camaraderie constitutes 'team work' and tends to be preserved in post-combat life. Harris (2006) notes that in many circumstances long-term allegiances develop, networks and forms of comradeship are established, where ex-combatants work together to support each other. For my participants, adrift in 'exile', comradeship 'becomes the focus of their love and loyalty.' (Hynes, 2001: 9).

6.5. Conclusion

The chapter has engaged with the question of why it is difficult for my participants, all former soldiers, to return to being civilians in post-combat life and why the men in my study deliberately chose not to do so. The men's emphasise on their military past is not as similar to the time when they were still soldiers in the barracks in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwean barracks and war, the uniform, the gun, everyday military routines (like parade and drills) and the physical structures, war terrain accentuated and reinforced soldiering. By drawing on their military past, they maintain a social distance from civilians even while they are in a civilian setting. These men position themselves as a separate and distinct group with a specific experience that cannot be understood by civilians. However, from these men's stories it is apparent that hanging onto their military habitus can also be viewed and understood in two ways. Firstly, it is a resource in a context of self-imposed difficult exile. Yet secondly such networks and camaraderie exclude civilians and can result in the marginalisation of these former soldiers from other productive social networks in the civilian setting.

In South Africa they cling to their military past to remake their lives in exile. Maintaining their soldierly habitus in South Africa makes it possible for them to gain control over situations they face. They perceive themselves not as economic migrants or political expatriates; they are soldiers in 'exile'. They share a history and similar training; they recognise the soldier in each other. Unlike civilians they maintain a strong sense of comradeship, they can hold on, despite hardships. They draw on networks of comrades to survive and on their former training and habituated soldierly-ness to find and get

employment, for example in private security firms. Their comrades furthermore function as a network of people who assist each other and enable them to celebrate their past and to deal with their combat experiences, as well as to deal with their lost status and authority as soldiers in a world they feel they do not belong to.

While the participants try to retain and strengthen the characteristics of soldiers, they find themselves in a different country and context, outside the army and outside the barracks. Nonetheless in South Africa the participants take the time and invest in the maintenance and strengthening of themselves and each other as quintessential soldiers. Clinging to their military past is also influenced by the way in which they left the army where their careers were shattered by what they considered as 'politics in the barracks', thus being soldiers is the only thing they are left with in an exile context.

In the next chapter I explore the concept of military identity. While scholarship on military identity centres on the fluid nature of identity, I argue that we can also understand it as deeply embodied and often expressed through 'bodily dispositions'. Thus for my participants, military identity functions at a discursive level.

Chapter 7: Military identities: embodied practices

7.1. Introduction

> But once they become members of the armed forces, people tend to partially define themselves by their military experience and remember their service far more vividly than they recall any commercial company they work for or other professional pursuits they engage in. (Franke, 1999: xi)

The excerpt above intimates that soldiering is remembered vividly and may for many be permanently understood as *the* germane part of who they are even in post-military life. This is somewhat different from much scholarly writing which represents military identities as a phase that can, with effort, be overcome in civilian life (Griffith, 2009; Higate, 2001; Lomsky-Feder et al. 2008; Vest, 2012). One reason for the persistence of military identity is that through basic training, the military 'makes' men by inculcating certain habits, values and attitudes that transform them into soldiers (cf. chapter 6, 6.2). While military identity refers to the ways in which soldiers are identified, habitus constitute certain dispositions-characteristics and personalities which define a soldier (see also Chapter 6, 6.2). Thus the ways in which soldiers acquire skills and are drilled, prepared and subsequently use their training, can affect their perceptions, values, and even their future roles and functions in post-military life. It is this transformation from civilian to soldier that makes not only disciplined bodies, but also creates disciplined minds. Such characteristics constitute what it means to be a soldier in- and outside a military camp or barracks. My participants construct themselves as military men, even in a civilian setting in South Africa. Locally, people do not necessarily recognize them as such because they are not wearing the signifiers anymore – the uniforms, armour etc. At the same time military identity can arguably be understood as not only constructed, but

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also as a kind of habitus that is deeply embodied and generative of the social world and bodily dispositions internalized through military socialization. In this chapter, I reveal how military identities 'function' at the discursive level, i.e. the manner in which my study participants think of themselves as former soldiers in a context of exile. Below, I first present the discussions around the concept of identity and later in the chapter I turn to military identity.

7.2. The conceptualisation of identity

Writing on and about identity is a never-ending story. The concept bears a multivalent, even contradictory theoretical burden (Sökefeld, 2001). The fluid nature of identity and what constitutes it is open to debate. While the concept of identity is useful as a 'category of analysis', it has increasingly come under criticism (Brubaker, 2012b). Identity has been imbued with so many different meanings that, according to some scholars, it has almost ceased to be meaningful in academic writing (see Brubaker, 2012a; Sökefeld, 2001; Handler, 1994; Soederberg and Wedellsborg, 2009). According to Brubaker and Cooper (2000), when identity is understood in a 'strong' (essentialist) sense it can become loaded with meaning. When it is interpreted in a 'weak' sense (constructivist) identity becomes ambiguous and can lose all meaning (see Brubaker and Cooper, ibid; Sökefeld, 2001).

Following this line of thinking, Sökefeld (2001) questions the general applicability of the concept of identity as a category of analysis. For him, identity has lost its specific contours in academic and 'real' life. It seems too equivocal and torn between 'hard' and 'soft' meanings: essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers that are meant to

enhance social analysis (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000). This dualism of "hard"/essentialist and "soft"/constructivist understandings of identity is at the core of the concept and its problematics for my own study.

Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argue that constructivist arguments tend to soften the term (identity) and acquit it of the charge of essentialism. Thus they say by stipulating that identities are constructed, multiple and fluid, we are left without a rationale for talking about identities. We are also ill-equipped to examine the hard dynamics and essentialist claims of contemporary identity politics. In their argument, Brubaker and Cooper emphasise that because identity seems to be everywhere, it has lost its analytical power. However, such criticism of the concept of identity does not render it useless, rather it leads me to understand identity as embodied as well (see McNay, 1999).

Dominant theories of identity tend to analyse it as a process of symbolic identification without considering its mediation in embodied practice (McNay 1999: 98). In order to understand the dynamics of identity in relation to my study participants, I draw on the 'embodiment of identity' which has developed out of Bourdieu's concepts of 'habitus' and 'field' (Bourdieu, 1993; McNay, 1999; Reay, 2004). The habitus is 'an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted' (Bourdieu 1977: 95). Habitus are transposable dispositions which generate and organise practices in a given 'field' (see chapter 6, 6.2). Thus my participants' *habitus* reveal their military past: the way they perceive themselves as different from civilians (see also chapter 6, 6.2). The field is 'a structured space of positions in which positions and interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or

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capital' (Bourdieu 1991:14). Being in exile is a field in which my participants deploy their military past: consciously and unconsciously. Social practice, for Bourdieu, is the outcome of the interface between the habitus and a specific field (Bourdieu 1991; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). However, Bourdieu (1991) notes that the habitus can function in a field other than the one that produced it. My participants see themselves as being in 'exile', forced to live in a foreign country because of political circumstances. Because habitus is generative, durable and transposable, its perpetuation in the situation of being in 'exile' helps make sense of the perseverance of relatively entrenched military identities in such a post-army life situation. For Adams (2006) habitus is not only about how we think about the world around us, but it also involves the 'bodily system of dispositions' we bring to the 'field': the angle of the head, a way of walking, ways of sitting, subjective experiences etc. Therefore ignoring the deeply embodied aspects that constitute these militarised participants will leave one with an incomplete understanding of how they define and understand themselves. The notion of embodiment is central to my understanding of military identity as a durable but not immutable norm. The ways in which they define themselves is understood in a specific field of exile. According to Bourdieu (1993) habitus, which is inculcated over a long period, becomes a 'second sense' or 'second nature' which can last throughout an individual's life (see chapter 6, 6.2). As Alpha Romeo indicated:

> I work for and with civilians, but I am not a civilian. They always want to criticize others.The way civilians think is different from me; civilians are not submissive, they want equality, but we know command of power. But for civilians, even if the boss is a woman they want to challenge, they don't have discipline. But we were trained to have it, and we carry it along, it is in us as soldiers. (Alpha Romeo)

The construction of themselves as trained soldiers and thus as different from civilians, is a social discourse that the study participants used in everyday settings to make sense of daily life in exile. By representing and understanding 'civilians' as unfamiliar with military practices (unlike themselves as former soldiers), my participants construct themselves as apart and as trained men. Knowing the "command of power" defines them as different from their civilian counterparts. This is what Bourdieu (1993:5) refers to as a 'practical sense', that is, it inclines agents to act in specific ways, but not in conscious obedience of rules: rather it is a set of dispositions that generate practices and perceptions. This does not negate my participants' 'strategic calculation' (see Bourdieu, 1993) as former soldiers in a context of exile. Their former socialisation in the military as well as their context of being in 'exile', has to be understood as a 'field' according to Bourdieu (1990). The barracks, as well as the situation of exile, are fields where habitus is inculcated and constituted. As actors (within those fields) they occupy positions determined both by their resources and also by the structural relations between themselves and 'Other' people (see McNay, 2004). In exile the embodied military is reified and reproduced. As Sierra Tango argues:

> I don't want people around me to know that I was a soldier but they can know that I have a different training than them. They know because I am focused and determined in whatever I do. If I have a task, I do it as expected. Being a soldier is in me. I don't need to wear combat uniform again to be a soldier, but the way I approach others, reveals who I am. Remember here we are in exile, you don't need to go around the streets telling people that: look here, I am a soldier. (Sierra Tango)

In the extract above, Sierra Tango presents his habitus, for example being "determined and focused" as deeply embedded, while his (soldierly) practices are reproduced in personal deportment in the 'exile field'. Even though Sierra Tango is not in the military

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anymore, in a sense the 'field'-being in exile, defines what he does and his way of doing it in a soldierly manner (see Adams, 2006). In order to analyse the issue of a 'habituated practice' - without falling into the determinism of objectivist analysis - Bourdieu (1993:6) used the idea of 'field' to reveal and understand that social relations are defined by social situations. Bourdieu's notion of the 'field' 'provides a more differentiated analysis of the social context in which the reflexive transformation of identity unfolds' (McNay, 1999:95). Habitus emerges from a particular field. Thus, while accoutrements, such as uniforms and guns help to define soldiers during service time, in post-army life social practices become important. These include individual situations and positions that are central in understanding and unpacking how former soldiers in my study who now lives in uncertain contexts, choose to define themselves. In such contexts, military identity is no longer defined by distinct army symbols (guns and combat uniforms) but it is actively determined by individuals through the deployment of 'practices of the self' (Foucault, 1977:29). Thus military habitus is generative as it informs the actions in a field of 'exile'. This is reflected by Lima Delta who argues:

> You know if you are trained as a soldier, it doesn't matter what you do later in your life, that life of a soldier is the most memorable one and it revolves around your head. Whatever, you do, you do it in a soldierly manner, you see everything in military way, and you respond like a soldier. (Lima Delta)

But the question remains, why is it that these former soldiers hang onto their military past? While it is a productive identity, Alpha Bravo reveals the ways in which he was 'made' to desert the army and why he still sees himself as a soldier.

> There is a long way for me to be a civilian. Remember I did not choose to leave the military, rather I was pushed out then I deserted the military unwillingly. (Alpha Bravo)

While current ideas about identity have a great deal to do with an understanding of agency, I argue that, for these former soldiers in a different country, agency is more constrained, especially since they are also mostly deserters who hope and wish to be able to eventually return to the military service in Zimbabwe. Although the literature indicates (Langa & Eagle, 2008; Lomsky-Feder et al., 2008; Vest, 2012) that soldiers (who are employed or deployed as such) can and do shift their identity in civilian settings, the social reality in South Africa affects and constrains those possibilities for the study participants. Accordingly, in line with Bourdieu (1993), their agency to move between identities can be viewed as functioning within wider structures of limitation of which the soldiers are not necessarily aware. This is because the military inculcates particular practices that are both consciously and unconsciously produced. As Bravo Charlie emphasised; "I have been a military journalist, but even now when I write stories, I write like a soldier." In certain moments when Bravo Charlie works for and with civilians, for example as a journalist he nevertheless "works like a soldier." In such encounters Bravo Charlie may be constructed as, and even represents himself as a journalist, but it does not mean that he leaves his military disposition behind. Instead, these former soldiers emphasised that they still retain their military embodiment through the way they present themselves and act. Oscar Papa notes that,

> I can't spend a day without thinking about the army, it just flashes in my mind. *Usanyeperwe hazviperi zvechisoja* (Don't be fooled, being a soldier will not end). It is in our blood. (Oscar Papa)

Leaving the military as army deserters qualifies as a major transition, because it disrupts existing relations and routines, replacing them with uncertainty and new routines in exile (see also DiRamio et al., 2008). Thus it will be an analytical misrepresentation to insist

that my participants have made a complete transition from military to civilian life, or that their military identities are open and shifting. What is interesting to note is that in a context of exile which is a field according to Bourdieu (1990) - my participants take on different social and economic positions, but these are mostly informed and influenced by their military dispositions. Victor Yankee indicated:

> I can be a truck driver, but I drive like and as a soldier even if I am not in the army any more. Even if you take me to a presidential palace, I still behave like a soldier, you may not see and I may not realise that is what I am doing, but I will be doing it that way. (Victor Yankee)

Drawing from the excerpt above, military habitus is a practice which dominates other potential identity formations, e.g. as truck driver or journalist. However, such identities do interact for my participants, their military dispositions interface with those of the workplace of civilians (working for and with civilians and being civilians themselves now). In such interactions their militarized identity dominates all the others. Following this, for a given individual or collective actor(s) there may be a plurality of identities, yet such a plurality is a source of contradiction in both self-representation and social action (Grossberg, 1996; Jenkins, 1996; Robins, 1996; Walker, 2010). But for my participants, their military past fashion all other identities.

Despite criticism of the use of identity, Jenkins (2008:9) argues that 'identity' and 'identification' are still essential concepts if we are to understand the human world. In essence, identity emerges from persistent efforts to seek control in immediate and uncertain surroundings (White et al, 2007). Through such an understanding people achieve an association with others and also a differentiation from the 'Other'. Identity denotes sameness in solidarity and shared dispositions (Calhoun, 1994). Castells (1997)

questions how, why, by whom and from what identities are created. A response is provided by White et al (2007:195), who argue that 'distinct identities are triggered by disjunctions in social interaction or disruptions in the environment'. In some respects, or under particular circumstances, identities can be used to access certain resources in different contexts. Following this, Kabeer (2002) argues that how people define themselves and how they are defined by others is critical to their ability to act as agents, including their ability to participate in political action to press for and claim their rights. This is apparent for my participants in the formation of the Affected Military Men of Zimbabwe Association (AMMOZA), which is a representation of military socialities in exile.

> This AMMOZA is for us soldiers, it speaks to us about what we want to achieve. It identifies us as a group of military men in exile. We know where we started as soldiers and we know where we are going. We have the same story, the same training and the same future as soldiers. Not even money can take away this soldier-hood; it is in us (Whisky Papa).

The excerpt above reveals 'repertoires of identifications' (Jenkins (2004:7)) among my participants and the ways in which they are produced through group formation that are military in nature. For Grossberg (1996) there is some intrinsic and essential content to the construction of any identity, which is defined by either a common origin, or common structure of experience, or both. Having been trained in the military and deployed in the same war and working in the same barracks, the men in this study forged particular military identity that are all drawn from their past. White et al (2007:192) further argues that struggles against existing constructions of a particular identity take the form of contesting negative images with positive ones. Thus while the media and public perception about former soldiers links them with crime and violence, (Harris, 2006) my

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participants insist that they have remained disciplined, able to follow instructions, and have retained focus etc. In this regard Jenkins (2004) see identity as a blurred but indispensable concept and define it as an actor's experience of a category, tie, role, network, group or organisation coupled with a public representation of that experience.

Thus, drawing from Brubaker and Cooper (2000), identity is seen as both a category of practice and a category of analysis. Consequently it is important to distinguish between the two categories of analysis and of practice. While the former refers to the classifications that scholars use in writing about identity, categories of practice refer to the language and meanings people attach to experiences in everyday social and political life (see also Brubaker, 2012b). This will allow me to adopt a critical and self-reflexive stance towards the categories my participants use. My participants define themselves in certain ways that fit as a category of practice. Accordingly, what they do to and with each other, as well as civilians, is a way of classifying themselves in a particular 'field' of exile and is imbued with social and economic power. For example, Sierra Tango emphasised that "every day when I cry, I cry like a soldier, when I smile, I smile like a soldier." Such a representation is a category of practice, it is how they are able to make sense of their lives and draw from their previous lived experiences of war and the barracks. It also defines their past and present life experiences.

Given the above, 'military identity' is clearly both a category of analysis and a category of practice. As a category of practice it involves embodied experience. At the same time, as Hall (1996:4) argues, identities arise from the 'narrativisation of the self' within a particular 'field'. For my participants social life is pervasively storied, they are always

telling stories about themselves (within culturally available repertoires of stories) and this helps them to form and maintain their particularly military identity. Thus, if we use the term in social science, we have to give it a specific analytical meaning, otherwise we risk simply conflating the analytic category with the practical category. Thus I argue that what defines these former soldiers is how they perceive themselves rather than what we think they are. The ways in which soldiers were 'made', produces military identity, and in the case of the study participants enables them to reproduce it. Below I reveal the processes in which military identity is forged and maintained.

7.3. Formation and reproduction of military identity

In much of the literature, military identity is represented as central to understanding soldiers. The military is the primary institution for the construction of military identities. These are facilitated through the inculcation of organisational values during training (Barrett, 2001; Lande, 2007; Woodward, 2000). Jolly (1996) emphasises that in order to understand former soldiers we have to appreciate the process which underpins military training. There is a concerted effort by the military to forge a particular identity which is soldierly in nature. For Zurcher (1967) military training disorientates and re-orientates recruits.

Research on military training reveals that the military milieu cordons off recruits from civilian life and incorporates them into a soldierly world (Barrett, 2001). Recruits learn about appearance and obedience and how to inculcate and display rules pertaining to and exhibiting aggression and courage in the face of risk. 'Being' a soldier accordingly involves physicality, but also mentality (Gibson, 2010). Thus Green et al (2010)

emphasises that military socialisation is also a process of acquiring a highly masculine identity. For Higate (2002) such military identity is drawn from institutional practices in which the structure is prioritised over individual agency. Thus identities are structured by societal institutions and organisations of which individuals are a part (Castells, 1997). Braswell and Kushner (2012) argue that military training not only moulds individuals into one unit but (re)produces an individual who is potentially willing to sacrifice his life, in order to preserve the interests of the group.

Through military training, military identity can be understood as a structure of social practice, one which can be reproduced within historical situations through daily actions (Bourdieu, 1990; Connell, 2001; Foucault, 1977; Goffman, 1961). Identity construction takes place in a context marked by power relations, between individuals and institutions and between individuals themselves (see Foucault, 1977; Goffman, 1961).The military is a typical dominant institution in that it rationalises its domination over soldiers. Military identities come into existence as soldiers act out what they have embodied and they are actively re-produced using the resources and strategies available in a given military context (Hockey, 2002; Higate, 2000; Lande, 2007). Military uniforms, guns, barracks and other institutional arrangements forge military identities (Foucault, 1977; Goffman, 1961; Hockey, 2002; Woodward, 2000). It is within such institutions where the military provide soldiers with resources (guns, uniforms, military structures etc.) that they maintain and rebuild new identities in order to redefine their position and status in society. In addition, Ugolini (2010) emphasises that military uniforms and accoutrements play a pivotal role in transforming raw recruits into soldiers and in instilling a sense of

separation from civilians. Similarly, Bourne (1999) notes that, when recruited into the army, donning a military uniform marks an exit from civilian life, habits and identities, and entry into a particular niche in the hierarchical organisation of order and command. Military identity is produced in the barracks where soldiers are 'manufactured' (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). Recruits do not just become soldiers in uniform; rather the uniform becomes part of their body (Woodward, 2000). Their physical bodies become militant and hardened and ready to respond to challenges (Barrett, 1996).

The relationship between soldiers and the military as an institution forges a military identity (Foucault, 1977). The skills and competencies that trained soldiers possess are formative of individual military identities (King, 2006:510; Woodward and Jenkings, 2011:260). In reproducing such an identity, a soldier or former soldier draws on particular symbolic, historic and ideological resources. Weapons, especially guns, are analysed by authors as extensions of soldierly identity, it defines them (Mankayi, 2008:34; Woodward and Jenkings, 2012). Being a soldier is celebrated as having 'expert knowledge' and abilities and this constitutes soldiers' (identities) as autonomous subjects within their unit (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). Such skills are constitutive acts through which military identities are invoked and performed and are the basis of what it means to be a soldier (Woodward and Jenkings, 2011). Soldierly skills, including being physically fit, having a particular bearing, being dependable, having the ability to weigh facts and to make quick decisions when necessary, being decisive, possessing the ability to use firearms, to conduct surveillance and do observation, and above all to survive and endure, are seen by soldiers and scholars as markers of military identity. More so, the

possession and performance of such skills are perceived in the literature as fundamental in identifying the soldier. Military identities have a particular materiality to them in that they are embodied and expressed not only through trained bodies and weapons, but also displaying the skilled ability to correctly handle and use such tools.

In their findings on what constitutes military identity Woodward and Jenkings (2011:258) note that 'the possession and performance of military skills are fundamental to claims of military identity'. Following this, military identity can be understood through soldiers' subjectivities and lived experiences (Higate, 2000; Hockey, 2002; Lande, 2007; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). Thus, this conceptualization of military identity as embodied is also useful for my study: Charlie Delta gives a detailed explanation of what the notion of military identity conveys to him.

> Military identity is not an official term but it is there. It comes because of two things. First, the conduct of day-to-day life as a soldier. When it gets in your blood you end up having an identity in the way you talk (*zvikapinda muropa unopedzisira wavane identity yekutaura*), even in the way you dress (*mapfekero*) and the way you walk (*kana kufamba chaiko*). Secondly, if you have fought in war (*kana wakamboenda kuhondo*), it is difficult to just erase those memories so you end up (*unopedzisira*) with (*wavane*) that identity engraved within you for life. (Charlie Delta)

Unlike the current understanding of identities as fluid, the embodied practice of identity denotes how the former soldiers in my study also understand the social world through 'bodily dispositions' (see Bourdieu, 1993). Drawing from Woodward and Jenkings (2011:252) military identity, 'is a locally emergent phenomenon, constituted by members' concepts of their own identity'. Charlie Delta was one of the few participants in my study who gave such a detailed answer to my question on former soldiers' understanding of the meaning of military identity. Charlie Delta's response may be

because he was a lieutenant, a platoon commander, and that he reflected on his experiences in war. The majority of the other participants argued that 'identity' had something to do with the 'life of soldiers'. Similarly, one of my participants, Alpha Romeo, emphasised that "just because you leave the military, doesn't mean every bit of the military has left you."

In their life histories all the former soldiers mentioned physical and psychological issues and conditioning as well as memories of warfare similar to those of Charlie Delta. They argued that irrespective of the fact that they were no longer in the Zimbabwe Army, their military identities somehow remained with them, even in South Africa. For them, military identity was embodied and encompassed in the way they thought, what they did, how they moved or responded, how and what they remembered. It constituted their everyday practice.
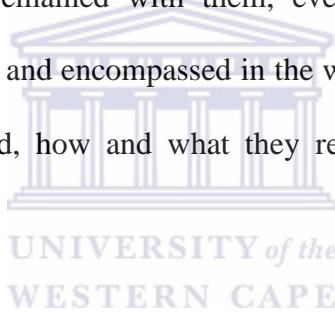
As indicated in the introduction, this understanding of military identity as articulated above by Charlie Delta, contrasts with much of the literature on military identities, which argues that former soldiers can and do change their identities when they return to civilian life (Griffith, 2009; Higate, 2001; Lomsky-Feder et al. 2008; Vest, 2012). Thus, according to some of the literature soldiers can, for example, be transformed back into civilians. Nonetheless, Jolly (1996) emphasises that, in situations where ex-soldiers find employment and work with civilians, this does not necessarily mean that they have been successfully integrated. Among my participants this was apparently the case. Much of the

literature on military identities does not scrutinise the deep-seated militarised embodied practice that remains within former soldiers in post-combat and post-Army life.

While this study is not about soldiers who return to their own communities but about those who have migrated to another country it is interesting to consider the ways in which the findings of this research intersect with, and divert from, findings of studies concerning other groups of former soldiers. Vest (2012), for instance, observed in his study of military reservists in the USA, that these soldiers juggled between military and civilian life. Similarly, Lomsky-Feder et al (2008) employed the notion of 'trans-migrants' to argue that Israeli Reserve soldiers belonged to both civilian life and reserve units. In relation to American Reserve forces, Griffith (2009) found that social identity shifted within the reservists; a military identity was adopted and outside it the men took on their civilian identities. Nonetheless, when soldiers re-entered civilian life there were always tensions between their military and civilian identities (Higate, 2001).

Military identity constitutes a military subjectivity. Focusing on subjectivity, socially and historically, helps us to explore the ways in which individuals understand their past, which continues in the present (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). The subjective 'self' is understood as embedded in a broader lived experience. In their study of the military identities of serving and former British soldiers, Woodward and Jenkings (2011:264) emphasised that 'doing' rather than 'being' was the key to understanding military identities. From an interpretive approach military identities are seen as 'constituted and expressed, always in the process of becoming, shaped by time and space and positioned within networks of differential power relations' (Woodward and Jenkings, ibid: 255).

While I agree that 'doing' helps us to understand military identities, I argue that 'being' is of equal importance in defining military identities, particularly when and where former soldiers draw on it to make sense of and deal with their realities in a field (Chapter 6, 6.2) of constraint. Of importance for me is also the military traits (beliefs, feelings and behaviour) that are both consciously and unconsciously embodied and reproduced in soldiers' lives and which endure in the participants' post-military and post-combat lives. Thus the persistence of military identity arose pertinently in my own research.

There is a particular spatiality to military identity which refers not just to physical spaces, the being-in-place of the individual, but also to the ways in which such identities are both geographically constituted and expressed (ibid: 262). Some military identities can be forged in war while others are produced in peace time. Therefore, if former soldiers with combat experience find themselves in a country other than their own, for example in South Africa, how and why do they practice their soldierly identities? The response is twofold. They reproduce it ideologically by clinging to a particular kind of subjectivity - which is that of a soldier - by, for example, seeing civilians as an 'Other'. This becomes a subjective practice, the "100% way of doing things" (see chapter 6, 1.1). Secondly, they form a 'unit' or become a community (of 'soldiers') within a community of involuntary migrants and they can tap into both.

Even though current literature on military identities coheres around skills, expertise and the competencies representative of trained soldiers who are in the army (Woodward and Jenkings, 2011:253), my understanding goes further to include the continuation of a military habitus, i.e. the endurance of the military practice that remains engraved in the

soldiers in their post-army life. For the participants in my study it is their particular practice in everyday (civilian) life that distinguishes soldiers from civilians. As 'soldiers', even outside the military, the research participants perceived and experienced themselves as physically superior when compared to civilians (Hinojosa, 2010). However, it should be emphasised that arguing that ex-soldiers carry with them particular identities does not necessarily mean that they cannot work for and with civilians; rather my point is that their identities remain deeply embodied. Thus, as Alpha Romeo relates, unlike civilians who may emphasise 'equality', but who cannot easily follow commands etc, even in civilian life a former soldier behaves, thinks and responds like a soldier. This is a practice inscribed in and by the military, which endures outside the army.

The apparent persistence of a military identity for the study participants can be understood with reference to the work of Segal (1986). He describes the military as a 'greedy institution' which forces men to adhere to its practices. It fosters a 'military culture' (Lande, 2007) which is infused through military training. Military 'cultures' are distinctive and 'stubborn' with a particular emphasis on order, discipline and command (Winslow et al 2003). While civilians may possess attributes that are similar to those of soldiers, for French (2005) what distinguishes civilian and military identities is that soldiers are trained to understand self-respect and discipline as the central tenets of military operations. Discipline is also a category of self-presentation that defines soldiers. Military discipline 'encompasses the total individual conformity to a prescribed role, including one's behaviour, attitudes, values and beliefs' (Arkin and Dobrofsky, 1978:158). For Hale (2008:315), discipline affects the way in which military men

perceive themselves. In the military discipline is enforced and it is extreme during basic military training (Hockey, 2002). Conforming to the prescribed rules of conduct is the focal point for change within the military process of indoctrination. It follows that military identity is also constructed in a field of unequal power relations (see Foucault, 1977; Goffman, 1961) where commanders dominate junior soldiers. The objective is to shape a total person into a disciplined cog within the military machine (Arkin and Dobrofsky, 1978). Discipline is 'internalised' as is the case for instance with incarcerated prisoners (Foucault, 1977:195).

The emphasis on discipline is to 'make' soldiers understand why, when and how to kill. As Samuel Huntington (1957) observed during the Cold War, military professionals differ from members of other professions in that they are specialists in the 'management of violence'. Consistent with Huntington a Weberian perspective argues that the military are legitimated to use force (see Torpey, 2002). Training transforms the ways in which soldiers think and thereby makes them effective killers (Marlantes, 2011:11). In many cases military identities are directly linked to violence (Gear, 2005, Harris, 2006; Hoffman, 2011).Thus the potential and readiness to 'legally' use violence defines soldiers. Similarly Woodward (2000) intimates that the ability and willingness to kill and overcome enemies constitutes military identity and is valued as a professional ethos. Such military identities hold and use legitimated means of violence to oppress and sustain their domination. For Talbot (2012), soldiers' identity is fashioned to kill rather than to murder in that they kill for a purpose, for a greater cause, rather than for personal gain. Killing is approached in a highly disciplined manner, as soldiers must learn to take

certain lives and to exclude others, and they kill at certain times for certain reasons (French 2005:3). Thus violence is a way of claiming and asserting military identity within the military (and sometimes outside it). As Brittan (2001) argues, military identity is the ideology that justifies domination over a weaker group. All of these traits are evident in most soldiers (Enloe, 1988; Sasson-Levy, 2002; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009; Woodward and Jenkings 2012) and many studies accentuate these characteristics as the core of military identity. In the case of my participants, their military identity is perpetuated in civilian settings in South Africa: e.g. where security companies often employ former soldiers. They also take on many of the roles and responsibilities of policing, patrolling at night in combat-like outfits and bearing firearms (see Cock, 1995).

A recurring narrative or theme in literature on the military identity involves the pervasive emphasis on notions of valour and audacity, institutionalised rites of passage, idealization of combat or 'warrior-ness' and hyper-masculinity, all of which Luts (2009:24-25) refers to as 'the military normal'. The military is dominated by masculine characteristics such as bravery, aggression, reluctance to complain and heroism (Barrett, 1996; Mankayi, 2010; Woodward, 2000). The military have a particular way of carrying out these activities (see Lande, 2007) which distinguishes them from other organisations, even though they have many elements in common with other organisations/institutions. It creates soldiers who subscribe to a particular notion of identity, which is masculine (Gill, 1997, Mankayi, 2010; Woodward, 2000). The aim of the military is to instil courage and to assert a dignified sense of masculinity (Mazrui, 1998; Gill, 1997). For Gill (1997) the military conjoins maleness with citizenship. It follows that in a situation where military

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identities are compared to those of civilians, military attributes are highly emphasised (Woodward and Jenkings, 2011:258). In my study, as in others, the military past continues to define soldiers when they leave the military barracks.

7.4. Military practice: continuity of the past

To what extent such 'inscribed' identities can be abandoned in post-barracks life, when soldiers leave their duties to take up a civilian life is a matter for debate in the case of the research participants. Alpha Bravo was adamant about what constitutes his military practice in a context of exile.

> I think like a soldier. I am not a civilian. I am a military man. I cannot think like a civilian. Even now the way I am talking to you, I am a soldier. (Alpha Bravo)

Some debates on veterans have questioned what might constitute the 'successful' veteran, i.e. one who has left the army and returned to civilian life (Dandeker et al, 2004). According to Dandeker, the successful re-integration of veterans into civilian communities involves the ability to form and participate in social networks outside armed services, which some former service personnel find problematic (Dandeker et al. 2006). Many go on to lead stable productive lives – but many do not, and there are disproportionately high levels of alcohol and drug abuse, homelessness, and criminality amongst veterans in the United Kingdom, for instance (see also Higate, 2000). Yet, some are quite 'successful', even if their lives do not accord with the norm of a stable job, housing etc., precisely because of their military training. To put it another way, military personnel are trained to live under rough and arduous conditions, so they are often quite 'successful' – even as homeless persons or rough-sleepers. Thus military training

endures for a long time after the last bugle has sounded. In my conversation with Professor Rachel Woodward[34] she reflected on her colleagues with a military background -what they do, and how they do it:

> Just anecdotally, and I am sure you see the same thing, I notice in friends and colleagues with a military background sometimes quite interesting attributes (which they are fully aware of) reflecting a military background – ranging from an ability to map-read and orientate oneself, through to very mundane things like being able to use an iron to press clothes, to shine shoes, etc. (personal conversation with Woodward, 2012).

Similarly, in relation to British former soldiers, Walker (2010:171) argues that 'most leavers have easily described themselves as soldiers and when they do so they tend to draw on an imagined or explicit sense of difference from civilians'. For him, army leavers distinguish themselves through the way they dress and speak (see Walker, 2010: 172) (see also my participants in chapter 6.3). These traits are drawn from an institutionalised life in the military. Thus Ricoeur (1992) argues that, over the course of life, these internalised military traits are solidified and become sedimented into a 'character'. In a study of homeless British ex-servicemen, Higate (2000: 244) found that the military 'disposes a number of its former members to masculinised identity largely irreconcilable with a rapidly changing civilian environment.' A study by Jolly (1996) among British former soldiers revealed that the majority of the 62 ex-servicemen in the survey found it difficult to shrug off their past military identities. In this regard Jolly (1996) argues that for former soldiers finding employment is not synonymous with the

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[34] Professor Rachel Woodward is based at Newcastle University and has published several books and articles on the British military. She has published an illuminating article in the Sociology [British Sociological Association] Journal in 2011 on military identities titled: *Military identities in the situated accounts of British military personnel*. Her research and contribution can be viewed at http://research.ncl.ac.uk/military-research/

end of difficulty, or even transition into civilian life. This is similar to Yanos' (2004) study on United States Air Force officers who, even five years after leaving the military barracks, continued to present a "military self" and struggled to embrace a civilian identity. Thus Walker (2010) argues that exiting from the military entails much more than discharge from a total institution, or retirement from the military: it has to involve a distinct transition into civilian life. For Higate (2001) the long-term effect of military service persists in later life. In an extensive study of 8195 British service personnel, who were deployed in the Gulf war (1990–91), and Bosnia (1992–97), Iversen et al (2005) found that the majority struggled to move away from their military and often traumatic past. It follows that the transition from military to civilian life is a multifaceted and complicated process (Dandeker et al., 2003) and not a simple shift in identities.

The discussion above highlights the extent to which military identities are constituted and expressed within and outside the military. Below I discuss how the Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) programme has ironically 'fixed' an ex-combatant identity by targeting them for welfare and integration into civilian life.

7.5. DDR: Re-affirming (ex-) combatant identities in Africa.

In post-colonial Africa, DDR programmes have to some extent failed to achieve the desired objectives of integrating ex-combatants in civilian life. (see Kriger, 2006; Kingma, 1995& 1997; Clark, 1995; Dzinesa, 2008; Gear, 2005; Kriger, 2003; Kingma, 2000a). In terms of understanding the persistence of their identities I argue that DDR peace initiatives operate not to enable new forms of identification associated with a democratic citizenry, but ironically to fix and re-affirm (ex-) combatant identities. There

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are several reasons for this conundrum. One lies in the dominant understanding that underpins DDR initiatives, namely that the subject of DDR is the ex-combatant as individual or as collective. In the first place this misses the ways in which families and communities, inured to many years of political and criminal violence, are themselves the source of on-going hyper-vigilance and aggression, and often look to and place expectations on ex-combatants to provide forms of protection and defence that require a willingness to deploy violence. Secondly, in the context of precarious socio-economic circumstances, a combatant identity provides an important source of comfort and self-affirmation, especially where the memorialisation practices of the state valorise the armed struggle in particular ways and for specific political ends. Further, because eligibility for the benefits and opportunities provided by DDR initiatives depends on the status of being an ex-combatant, this has the effect of conserving rather than dissolving this identity. This is often reinforced by the fact that ex-combatants have organized themselves into associations as a way of strengthening their bargaining power (Dzinesa, 2008; Gear, 2005, Kigma, 2003). Thus the memory of violence and war is not something to be left behind; it rather acts as an on-going source of potential economic and social capital.

Even though DDR programmes are failing to bring about the much needed transformation of ex-combatants (who are sometimes perceived as a menace to the society) into civilians, they are at least a starting point in the transitions from war to peace. Notwithstanding DDR programmes being a peace-building strategy only focus on soldiers who have left the army and this does not cover all eventualities. In other words, it focuses only on formally demobilised/ honourably discharged soldiers (Dzinesa, 2008;

Gear, 2005; Kriger, 2003; Kingma, 2000a), but shows little concern for army deserters, whatever the motive. Currently, much of the literature focuses on soldiers who were honourably discharged from the army or demobilized and who can at least (in theory) access a pension, some kind of material benefit or tool kit for demobilization (cf. Higate, 2000; Dandeker et al. 2006; Subedi, 2014; Dzinesa, 2008; Mashike; 2004; Kingma, 2000a). Some are even recognized and honoured with prestigious pensions and medals (cf. Mhanda, 2011; Kriger, 2003; Chitiyo, 2000). Many of these soldiers can and are expected to return to their communities. This has helped to reduce potential violence in local settings, because many of these soldiers ultimately remain accountable to the state for the continuation of their benefits (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998; Musemwa, 1995; Rupiya, 1995).

While existing theories of former soldiers, especially in African countries, often interpret them through the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) approach, i.e. as ex-soldiers who can be helped to integrate back into their communities (Grundmann, 1997; Kriger, 2006; Kigma, 1995& 1997; Clark, 1995; Musemwa, 1995 Ozerdem, 2002; Walter, 1999), I argue that such approaches are complex and do not cover all categories of former soldiers. The DDR programmes fall short in questioning soldierly subjectivities - especially in relation to soldiers who deserted from the army. A focus on the army deserters' reproduction of militarised identities can contribute to existing DDR approaches, which are exclusively informed by formal processes in understanding soldiers in the aftermath of war (cf. van der Merwe & Lamb, 2009; Knight, 2004; Kingma, 2000a; Humphreys, 2007).

Nonetheless, despite evidence that South Africa has become a destination for many former soldiers, the only current knowledge of ex-combatants in South Africa relates only to South African ex-combatants (Harris, 2006; Gear, 2005). In South Africa, research on ex-combatants and the different ways in which they reproduce military identities has focused exclusively on former guerrillas who were members of Umkonto weSizwe (MK), Self Defence Units (SDU's), and Azania People's Liberation Army (APLA) (Dzinesa, 2008; Harris, 2006; Gear, 2005; Langa & Eagle, 2008; Mashike, 2004). The situation is similar in other countries such as Guinea-Bissau (Vigh, 2006), Mozambique (Alden, 2002), Liberia (Willibald, 2006), and Namibia (Metsola, 2006), where scholastic surveys on ex-combatants has intensely focused on those who return to their former communities. The focus of this study is on a category of deserters and a handful who were reluctantly compelled to resign, and live in exile. Mass army desertions have been reported in several African countries, including Uganda (Ojore & Naulele, 2014). In Eritrea deserters are reported to have gone into exile to Ethiopia (Sudan Tribune, 2013). Similarly, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Muggah, 2004) and in Zimbabwe (cf. Chitiyo, 2009; Alexander, 1998) desertions have been reported. While there are media reports on mass desertion of soldiers in post-colonial African countries, no research has focused on the lives of these army deserters, and in particular on the ways in which their identities remain militarised in countries in which they settle, even if temporarily.

7.6. Conclusion

While much of the current literature on military identity centres on its possible fluidity, I have argued that it is important to understand that military identities are also deeply embodied through bodily dispositions. Following this, the 'field' helps us to understand the ways in which military habitus is produced and defined in relation to others around these former soldiers who live in the same 'field'. Even though they no longer wear combat uniforms, the participants in this study, define themselves by what they do and how they do it. I have also argued that although my study participants work for and with civilians, this does not make them civilians. Rather military dispositions continue to dominate and inform the ways in which my participants think, talk and act. The reproduction of such dispositions is both a conscious and unconscious practice which is soldierly in nature. All these are a continuity of military practice outside the barracks.

In the next chapter I explore the ways in which the former soldiers represent, refashion and maintain their militarily-trained body. Although not exclusively, the military trained body manifests in the skills of using guns, and constitutes a central resource for the survival of former soldiers in contexts of desertion, exile and high levels of violence. Furthermore, as I argue here, these skills are productive and the result of specific forms of sociability. Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus and Foucault's (1977) notion of the disciplined body help to understand the processes where the body is productively invested in survival, as well as in the reproduction of the former soldiers' identity. Their bodies are not seen here as essentially different from that of other migrants, but unlike ordinary civilians, these soldiers in exile have been specifically trained to fight in combat.

CHAPTER 8: Knowledge and skills of the gun: Retaining 'military trained bodies'

8.1. Introduction

> We are trained in guns, we know of no other way of living except that of using the gun; we don't know anything else. That's why you see that most of the time you find that we are being involved in jobs such as security. If you are a gunman, your mind is conditioned for war. I always think of the gun. (Sierra Delta)

Like many former soldiers living in South Africa, Sierra Delta talks about the skills of knowing the gun. The knowledge of using the gun is presented as an exceptional skill which is embedded in his mind and body.

This chapter explores the ways in which the former soldiers in this study represent, refashion and maintain their militarily produced (trained) body. I argue that the trained military body is a central resource for survival in civilian life: former soldiers use their bodies as a form of capital in contexts of desertion and exile. Furthermore, as I contend here, the maintenance of the 'militarily' conditioned and trained body is pivotal in former soldiers' retaining their military past as soldiers in exile. The chapter begins by providing information on how the former soldiers were 'made' through military training. The theoretical framework used for this purpose is shaped by Bourdieu's (1990) concept of habitus and Foucault's (1977) notion of the disciplined body. They help me understand processes where the body is productively invested towards survival as well as the reproduction of the soldiers' military past. In the next section I attend to the specific circumstances under which these former soldiers' bodies were 'made' (cf. Chapter 6, 6.2).

I discuss this in relation to other literature on the production of soldiering (cf. Chapter 6, 6.2).

8.2. Transforming the civilian into a soldier

'Once trained, a soldier could not be permitted to die. If he dies it has to be in a battle, as a soldier, not because of an illness' (Foucault, 1980:145).

Military institutions play a primary role in shaping an 'ideal' soldier. Higate (2000:97) notes that 'the training of combat troops is oriented at producing high levels of physical fitness and strength'. Drawing from my military knowledge and own experience, in military barracks, a soldier who is physically weak is easily said to be malingering. Being physically (or mentally) unwell is a condition which is at odds with the 'ideal' soldier: somebody who is tough and fit for combat duties. Weak soldiers are demeaned and tough soldiers' are valorised.
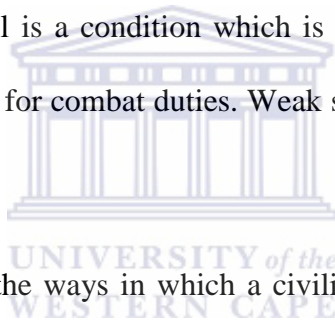
Much has been written about the ways in which a civilian is transformed into a soldier through training and discipline in the military (Barrett, 1996; Hockey, 2002; Lande, 2007). I explore military training processes to reveal the ways in which civilians are transformed, most importantly, to elucidate how this learning and very particular conditioning remains after the military life and why the former soldiers in this study invest in retaining their military bodies. In particular, this chapter explores how military training prepares a soldier for the knowledge of the gun. This last aspect is perhaps less obvious.

Soldiers are not born, but made. They are fashioned through their training in specific ways for specific ends (Woodward, 2000). Oscar Papa talked about the process of

becoming a soldier in ChiShona: *patraining munhu 'anobikwa' nemainstructors kusvika aibva* (during training a person is 'cooked' by the military instructors until he is a real soldier*). My experience of military training reveals that a soldier undergoing training has to show that he/she can carry on in the face of hurdles. One can be soaked to the skin, but perseveres to make it with other recruits. Even under adverse weather conditions i.e. coldness or heat, a soldier has to prove that he can still think and function and is able to respond without panic. One has to fight off fatigue even when every muscle is screaming for rest. Woodward (2000:646), notes that, 'military training is the acquisition and development of a collection of physical and mental attributes required in order to undertake the tasks necessary for waging war'.

Although other attributes such as mental toughness (Gibson, 2010) and personal characteristics are important, great emphasis is placed on selecting individuals capable of tackling the high physical demands of military activity. Like other armies around the world, potential recruits in the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) must demonstrate their physical fitness by first running 10 kilometres in 40 minutes. The candidate must weigh between 57kgs-70kgs, be at least 1.7metres tall, must have a good medical history and also pass the medical examination administered by an Army Medical Officer. Shilling (2007) states that aspiring soldiers often experience hard training conditions, such as: exposure to scorching heat and biting cold, blistered feet, aching limbs, stress, fear, exhaustion. The endurance of their bodies is part of the process of acquiring new skills and capacities to become soldiers. This is part of socialization into the military and a process of obliterating the civilian and reconstructing him as a soldier.

'Making' the military trained body does not happen overnight. As Woodward (1998) states, the act of getting dressed in a military uniform does not make someone a soldier. Yet, as Ballinger (1992) argues, even the uniform, and wearing it for the first time, marks the beginning of the transformation from a civilian to a soldier. Sierra Tango remembers what it meant to put on a military uniform for the first time:

> I regretted why I got dressed in the uniform because the training 'drama' started when we were given the uniform on the official opening day. (Sierra Tango)

Military training is also meant to confuse recruits: the impossible becomes possible and their individual characteristics are purposely devalued. "When instructors are giving you the uniforms, they don't ask your size, if you wear size 3 they will give you size 8" (Sierra Tango). In becoming a soldier, recruits are taught to focus less on their individual bodies and to focus more on how to be part of a collective body. Military instructors make a recruit's body fit within the army by enforcing military activities during training. The recruit's body has to conform to military standards: being fit all the time and ready for stand-by and deployment.

The narratives of two former soldiers, that highlight these issues in detail, are presented in the next section. The two narratives were selected because of their richness and the fact that they resonate with many of the other stories collected. The stories reveal the ways in which former soldiers have been trained, as well as how and why they have maintained their trained bodies, and skills with guns, outside of the army. While the abilities related to guns are explicitly used in the security industry, former soldiers who work as street vendors and truck drivers stated that they still maintain their military skills. Indeed some

of the participants, who work as street vendors, emphasized that they practice *camouflage* and *concealment,* a military tactic, of 'seeing without being seen': it enables them to evade and survive any harassment from the Municipal Police since they are asked to produce permits to be vendors. They note that their skills also allow them to manoeuvre and to protect themselves from violence and the police in Johannesburg.

8.3. Whisky Yankee

Whisky Yankee, nicknamed the 'Superintendent,' because of the nature of his job, is a security guard in South Africa. He was born in 1976 in a rural village in Zimbabwe. Since his parents could not take care of him, he grew up with his grandmother and completed secondary school ordinary level (equivalent to grade 10 in South Africa). He joined the army in January 1999. He trained at Border Camp located in Nyanga district in the Eastern part of Zimbabwe. In July of the same year he was deployed in the DRC. He spent two and half years in the DRC war -before the Zimbabwean army withdrew in 2002. Whisky Yankee did an advanced 'Small Arms Course' at Mbalabala barracks in Zimbabwe, where he learned specialised skills in weapon/gun handling. He speaks about military courses as the only qualifications he has. He remembers his first day of military training: 'The day I joined the army, the instructor said',

> Welcome to St. Idiot secondary school, the school of stupids. The headmaster did not go to school and his name is Mr. Dull, but he is going to train you and mould you into a soldier forever and even if you die your spirit will remain that of a soldier, a soldier will never die. (Whisky Yankee)

Those words of the military instructor changed Whisky Yankee's way of thinking. He says:

> I was forced to think within the military, to be military. My body changed, I became tough and it became a body of war. (Whisky Yankee)

The body is seen as a transformed body: from a 'civilian body' to a "body of war". Whisky' Yankee believes his body has been re-made for specific purposes: that of war. Whisky Yankee emphasised that his greatest expertise relates to the use of guns and military tactics; "the knowledge about the gun is the only knowledge that I had acquired". He also participated in the inter-brigade snipers' [shooting] competition in which he was in the top five across all brigades. Whisky Yankee was deployed in different areas in Zimbabwe during the 2005 parliamentary elections. At the time, their call of duty was to maintain peace. In the same year he decided to desert from the army after the Officer Commanding (OC) turned down his request to go for a non-military course at an institute of higher education. Whisky Yankee notes that the OC said "I was trained to serve the country not my personal goals". Whisky Yankee decided to desert from the army and came to South Africa in the beginning of 2006. He compares his current situation to the time he was in the army. He notes that:

> When I wore my patrol boots and my combat uniform, put my beret on, I could feel it. It was like I was born a soldier. Everyone in the street would fix their eyes on me. Some showed fear, others respect; but now in Johannesburg, if I am not at my work place with a gun, if I am just strolling down Jeppe street here, no one gives a damn, that's why I like the gun, it makes me a man, it reminds me of my past. (Whisky Yankee)

Drawing from the excerpt above, "patrol boots", "combat uniform", "beret" and the "gun" are of the military. According to Piras (2007), these are symbols of military life, imbued with meanings clearly understandable to soldiers. They are constitutive of the soldier as they help in learning the skills of how to use the gun. As reflected in the story above, the

gun is a strong symbol of power, as well as of masculinity (cf. Mankayi, 2008). Whisky

Yankee is currently employed as a 'doorman'-cum-security guard at a club in the central

business district of Johannesburg. He has worked there for seven years. This job enables

him to make use of what he knows best. He was given a gun by the owner of the bar.

Whisky Yankee's task is to search customers entering and exiting the bar. He mainly

searches for weapons, such as knives, sharp objects and guns. The bar customers refer to

him as 'superintendent' because of his ability to maintain order with people who come to

the bar. Whisky Yankee's knowledge, military skills and experience of 'close quarter

battles' (where a soldier is required to fight an enemy using a bayonet) have also enabled

him to 'combat' events of violence at his workplace.

While Whisky Yankee perceives and represents himself as a well-trained soldier, he

dismisses the South African Police Service as 'trigger happy' people in their response to

crime. Here my participant uses 'trigger happy' in military sense, as a gun handling

technique and shooting practice in war. Thus in the military, a 'trigger happy' person

holds a rifle and engages it on automatic without properly aiming at a target – it is an

uncontrolled movement of the gun. In a war situation a trigger happy soldier scares away

the enemy without injuring them. For Whisky Yankee:

> The police here are just moving bodies with guns. If I want to take these
> guns it doesn't take time, they don't know how to move around with a
> gun, they are passive. When you are on an operation you have to be
> very alert, you can't be holding a gun like you are holding a cooking
> stick, a gun is a gun. When I was in military training I was told that a
> gun is an iron, when I am holding it, my body should not be shaken.
> This is different from what I see and find here, for example, when the
> police are shopping in Checkers store, Pick n Pay [supermarkets] and
> eating at restaurants. When you have a gun you don't cough, smile and
> fidget around. Look here (showing me where he keeps his gun), I hold

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my gun like an iron. Every moment I take with me my gun at work, I don't greet anyone: even the people I know. If I have a gun, everyone is an enemy to me. If I am confronted by a situation which requires me to shoot, I aim properly at the target. I don't shoot to scare away people; I shoot to kill, that's what I was trained to do. You know how we were trained; when you shoot you don't breathe so as to aim properly. I understand all the four marksmanship[35] principles of shooting. I didn't go to university, but this is my degree, I have graduated in guns, and it is my field: that's why you see me here, I am employed for that. My body is 'bulletproof'; I know how to skirmish, crawl, take cover and attack. I am not a civilian; I know how to respond if anyone throws a grenade here. I have been teaching my boss the effective use of the gun; I have taught him the four marksmanship principles, I am a senior lecturer. (Whisky Yank)

The excerpt above talks of the body which has not just internalised past military skills, but one which is imbued with military 'discipline' to effectively use the gun and respond to situations related to combat. The body is viewed metaphorically as 'bullet proof' because it is not civilian, but conditioned for war. 'In crossing the threshold between civilian and soldier, the body does not only take on new meanings as a weapon and protective armor, but it is lived differently and changes its form' (Lande, 2007:96). However, in post-Army life, it is not only about the possession of skills but an application of those skills which is specific to the military, so even if the skills may be generic and held by civilians, their application is not (Woodward and Jenkings, 2011:259). The possession of military skills such as marksmanship, surveillance, alertness and patrolling skills constitute military habitus (Woodward and Jenkings, 2011:258). In addition, Higate (2000) reveals that, such traits dominate the lives of soldiers in post-combat life. The notion of being 'well-trained', includes the ability to use the body to skirmish, crawl and attack and, as Whisky Yankee describes above, is used to create and re-claim space in the

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[35] Marksmanship principles mean the procedures that are followed by soldiers to hit what they aim (target) at with their rifle.

security sector. He berates the knowledge and 'gun-related expertise' of the South African Police who are, in turn, demeaned as weak and passive. South African police knowledge of 'gun handling' is reduced to *holding a cooking stick,* a clear metaphoric reference to domestic activity performed by women in the kitchen. The 'proper' soldierly body is firm and flexible but is also emptied of its everyday gestures and actions, for example, you can't cough; you can't smile when holding a gun. Whisky Yankee projects himself as a well-trained soldier who holds a gun "like an iron". This is the opposite of the deportment of, for example the South African Police Service (SAPS), who "smile and fidget" around with their weapons. He described the police as "moving bodies with weapons", meaning that by displaying guns they make civilians obey them, even though they know that they cannot actually use the guns, except in an emergency. Whisky Yankee views himself as better trained in gun handling than the South African police, and defines his body in contrast to the bodies of the South African Police.

> A soldier is a man who is trained to handle guns, to do gun things. For more than ten years in the army, I slept with a gun as my pillow, how can I ever forget it? You give me an AK now and blindfold me, I will use it. Right now, blindfold me, I will operate it. Even when I become an old man like this (imitating the way an old man walks) I will still be able to operate it because I am proudly a military man, we are not civilians, we are still soldiers, even if you look at how physically fit we are, we wake up every morning running because we still believe that a soldier is physically fit. So, can you now tell me that I cannot operate that gun, can you now give me the uniform... what can stop me when I was trained to use it and it's like this pen, I'm using it today, even if I don't use it for the next 10 years I will still be able to hold it and use it because it's now part of my life (Whisky Yankee)

Like many of my participants, Whisky Yankee reveals how the knowledge and skills of using the gun was internalised into his body and being. He uses the imagery of a 'pillow' and 'pen' to describe how comfortable he is with the gun. The knowledge of how to

operate a gun has become instinctive for him. He also relates the use of the gun to being physically fit. Thus it is not only about having the gun in its physicality, but the knowledge of operating the gun reproduces a 'bodily soldier'. Whisky Yankee remembers the four marksmanship principles which he was taught during training:

> I was taught four marksmanship principles to achieve high standard shooting: firstly the gun must be hold firmly without even breathing so that it can be well supported, secondly the gun must point naturally where you want to shoot, I mean the target you want to shoot, thirdly is very technical, i.e. your sight must be aligned from the notch, the top of the pin at the tip-point of the barrel of the gun up to the centre bottom of the white patch i.e. if it is during training when we were aiming at the middle of clip boards with a white mark at the middle. But if it's a human being standing, you aim at the chest. Then fourthly and lastly, the shot must be released without any disturbance, not even breathing. (Whisky Yankee)

As seen above, the training builds a close relationship between bodies and weapons; a body which holds a gun, tough and ready to shoot. In this regard Lande (2007:99) notes that when shooting, 'breathing anchors the soldier's body in the military world'. In the military, the correct positioning of the body enhances a perfect shot, which is executed naturally. The most advisable position for a good shot is prone. The gun will be well-supported by the lying body: the chest and shoulders anchoring on the ground. Mankayi (2008) and Woodward (2008) argue that soldiers perceive the gun as an extension of their body, and this is confirmed by Whisky Yankee, for whom the gun and its use significantly defines a soldier and his body. The gun is seen as part of the body, but of specifically trained bodies, so that in situations where the gun is held, the body has to be masculine but relaxed. Lande (2007:102) argues that 'producing a soldier who handles a rifle well, involves creating bodily sensitivity'. The gun produces a soldier by making the body compatible with the weapon and its handling. Thus the gun also represents a soldier.

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Following this, I argue that, in the absence of the gun, the embodied knowledge of using it, still remains part of what 'makes' a soldierly body. The 'bodily knowledge' and corporeality of handling and using a gun in a disciplined way had been internalized and incorporated into the body. It becomes a criterion that makes somebody a proper soldier. In the next section I will let another participant speak about how he acquired this knowledge and more importantly, how gun handling had become embedded in his military body.

8.4. Alpha Romeo

Alpha Romeo was born in 1978. He joined the Officers cadet in 1999 at the Military Academy in Gweru city in Zimbabwe. He trained as a cadet officer for 18 months; he regards it as 'beyond human experience'. Alpha Romeo remembers the 600kg log which eight cadets including himself had to carry on their shoulders for road runs. The log was called the 'Black Sabbath' – every day cadets had to polish it with black shoe polish and shine it. After the first three months of training Alpha Romeo's body had adjusted to this harsh routine. On pass-out parade in July 2000 he was commissioned - with the rank of second lieutenant - by President Robert Mugabe. Alpha Romeo was then deployed in the DRC war where he commanded a platoon.[36] He left the army in 2008 as a captain.[37] Alpha Romeo came to South Africa in 2009. He had no prior contact with anyone in South Africa. When I asked him how he had planned to survive without knowing anyone or making any previous arrangements for his relocation, he replied: "If a civilian can come here, what can stop a soldier". His first job was as a security guard at a brothel. He

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[36] Group of 35 soldiers deployed under the command of a lieutenant.

[37] An army captain commands a company of soldiers of around hundred and five troops.

later changed to what he called 'security consultancy' i.e. waiting to be hired by private business owners. Currently Alpha Romeo is employed as a bodyguard by an Indian business couple.

Alpha Romeo emphasised that he started working as a bodyguard during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. According to him, "those who have been deployed in war stand a better chance of finding employment". In Alpha Romeo's view, his military background is suitable for his position as a bodyguard for the Indian business couple. Alpha Romeo is very fit and regularly goes to the gym. Alpha Romeo notes that:

> Indians look at how big you are and then the skills also. They will ask you everything which is closely linked to [being a] bodyguard and issues of convoy protection and security in general. If you satisfy them, then you get hired on a contract basis. They will also ask you to assess a possible threat and ask you the kind of gun that is suitable for the situation. However, above all security and military skills, for one to be hired as a bodyguard, the body plays a major role. (Alpha Romeo)

Having a physically imposing and trained body, coupled with military skills, is a resource to access 'bodyguard' work. Such a combination helps us to understand how the body contributes to the construction of certain social identities suited to certain work spaces.

> There is nothing different in the bodyguard work that I am doing now, what I used to do in the military is almost the same. I employ the same tactics; in most cases I do reconnaissance and surveillance of the area to which I will be escorting the Indians. I may patrol the road that I normally use when I am escorting them. I don't just escort but I do all the necessary security details before any escort. You know if you escort people like you are herding cows then you lack the skills. The patrol helps me to counter the 'enemy'. I don't have to risk my clients, they trust me and I know I am doing my best. I don't use the same route when I am escorting, today I use this one and tomorrow that one, and if you see me in that road don't ever think you will see me in the same day again. I keep on changing my tactics every day. (Alpha Romeo)

While Alpha Romeo works for an Indian couple who are civilians, I argue that working for civilians does not make him a civilian too (see also Jolly, 1996). Rather, I am interested in how he reproduces his military skills in executing his bodyguard duties. What is interesting is how Alpha Romeo views the bodyguard work as synonymous with being a soldier. It is the skills of patrolling and reconnaissance which makes him believe the two, bodyguard and military, are the same. The excerpt above highlights the endurance of the military body and the ways in which such corporeality has become the being of my participants. In a context of exile where the struggle for resources is intense, Alpha Romeo positions his skills as unique and desirable.

In a context of exile, the military body fits in a particular field where it is required, that of escorting the Indian businessman. I argue that a military, trained and skilled body is a major source of status and resource for survival for these former soldiers living in exile. Demilitarising is synonymous with stripping these former soldiers of their 'being'. It is their military body that gives meaning to their present life, as much as their lived experiences. Nonetheless, the ability to utilise the military body is not unique to these former soldiers: other groups, such as gangs, can use more or less the same skills, especially in relation to weapons. Yet, the difference is that military bodily-ness and corporeality is embedded through legitimated forms of institutionalised bodily training in a particular time in history. Groups such as gangs do not emphasise physical and mental fitness. In addition the military body is self-disciplined. I argue that these former soldiers are 'making' a living by utilising the enduring capacities of their military trained bodies

and the persistence of military subjectivities. In addition, the legacies of the military, which are themselves soldierly, strengthen their identities.

Contrary to on-going scholarly debates (Gear 2002 & 2005; Harris, 2006) about the continuity of military identities in post-combat life as a source of violence, this group of former soldiers in exile has maintained their moral commitment and discipline in terms of not misusing their skills with weapons to engage in robbery or other acts of violence. My participants emphasised this as a principle for a well-trained soldier. Whisky Yankee indicated that having 'knowledge of the gun' involves knowing when and how to use or not use it. The skill with guns remains part of their lives as former soldiers and there is moral value attached to it. The ways in which military trained bodies can be used, are fluid and situational, they can be lethal or beneficial to both the community and the individual soldier. Hoffman (2011: 40) notes that 'it is the postcolonial condition in which one learns to productively deploy identities that are not only lethal but also life-giving'.

The lives of many of these former soldiers in Johannesburg are constantly exposed to violence, in a city where crime rates are high. In this context protection and the security of business men/woman becomes a high-demand commodity. By providing protection to others the former soldiers bodies become a source of survival; the survival of others and their own. It is likely that in less violent communities, the skills of former soldiers might not be in high demand.

The narratives above show how the body has been trained and the way in which military skills have become embodied. I have tried to analyse and discuss how certain forms of

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disciplining the body may become sources of defining the former soldiers. Habitus (Bourdieu, 1990), as a set of dispositions reproduced over time, is essential to understand how the military body is maintained and re-used over time. As emphasized by Hockey (2002), this bodily knowledge became habitual and ingrained, for instance in the ways in which Alpha Romeo employs surveillance tactics in his bodyguard duties and Whisky Yankee's alertness in gun handling and use. Again Foucault's (1977) work on 'internalisation' is applicable in describing how gun skills are internalised and embedded. Bourdieu's notion of the reproduction of the habitus and the generative practices are useful here as 'a present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by its reactivation in similarly structured practices, these practices are generative' (Bourdieu, 1990:54).

The former soldiers embody a particular 'bodily hexis' (Bourdieu, 1991), that of a soldier. It may be a fallacy to expect former soldiers who spent a number of years fighting to leave behind what they learnt in their entire military life. Ultimately what emerges from these narratives is the productive dimension of the military trained body. The concept of 'disciplined bodies' as used by Foucault (1977) entails that bodies can be utilised differently in a given context over time. When applying Foucault's (1977) notion of 'docile bodies' a paradox emerges. On the one hand, these are bodies trained to endure and resist i.e. active bodies and at the same time, these bodies are 'docile bodies' in that they submit to the conditions in South Africa and accept power structures such as Whisky Yankee's new 'commanders' being the Indian couple. Through this submission and 'docility' the 'soldiers' are re-shaped productively in exile. The military skills are

embedded in their bodies and this enables these ex- soldiers to manoeuvre skilfully and reinvest their bodies for survival in the informal and often violent interstices of the host society.

Debates on war veterans have questioned what constitutes the 'successful' veteran (Higate, 2000). My study participants reveal a range of attributes, which they are fully aware of, which reflect a military background. These range from certain ways of doing things, such as body orientation, and surveillance. The practice of very mundane acts like being able to hold the gun and walking upright like soldiers makes my participants believe that they are very much distinct from the South African Police Service.

The military proficiency, as reflected in the 'skilful and trained body', can be viewed as a form of embodied 'capital' that the former soldiers possess. Hockey (2002:163) refers to this as 'bodily capital'. Drawing from Bourdieu (1990), this capital is threefold: economic, cultural and symbolic. This is revealed by my participants whose being in the army and using the gun was their professional career, i.e. a way of earning a living (economic capital). This was entrenched through being a soldier, which meant understanding how and when to use force.

The above elements of restraint are for my participants absolutely essential in marking them as soldiers. They distance themselves from the common understanding of a soldier as someone with limited skill and insatiable appetite for violence. Whisky Yankee echoes this in his comparison to "trigger-happy" SAPS officers. In doing so he inverts the lower status of his being-in-exile and his current position as a common migrant to locate himself

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as better-off in terms of his embodied capital of 'proper knowledge' pertaining to the use of the gun. Ultimately the former soldier's being is not only about the military body but, it is also about their military subjectivities as 'soldiers'.

As I have argued, there is continuity in the use of the military embodied knowledge of the gun in a productive way, which is material and subjective at the same time. 'Exiled' soldiers retain military skills outside the military environment, in the competitive and violent inner-city. As Landau (2006); Landau and Haupt (2007) Muzondidya (2010) and Worby et al. (2008) indicate, migrants and locals are engaged in competing idioms of belonging, inclusion and exclusion. These former soldiers use knowledge of the gun to assert their space in Johannesburg. In a migrant city such as Johannesburg, military skills (the ability to use a gun, conduct surveillance etc) should not only be viewed as lethal but also as productive and related to specific subjectivities and materiality, which are geared towards survival.
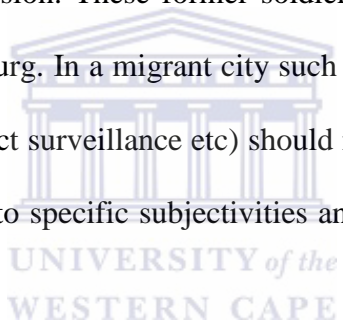
8.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated how former soldiers' military bodies were made and why a group of former soldiers are interested in investing in, retaining and maintaining 'knowledge of the gun' in exile. I have argued that military skills internalised during military training became an embodied practice that endured. I have contended that the discussion around demilitarization has not attended sufficiently to the difficulties and contra-productivity of demilitarizing. Thus military skills are an embodied practice and to demilitarise former soldiers, means to strip the former soldier of part of his 'being'. While persistent, the militarily disciplined body is also an adaptive body able to change

according to the context it is in. I have argued that military skills are contextually framed. The fluidity of the skills has been demonstrated by showing how these skills are acceptable, needed and forged in contexts of institutional training and war. These same skills are seen as dangerous outside the military institutions. I have explored how former soldiers define their moral codes with respect to the use of guns outside the military institution, and stressed the importance of reflecting on the productive nature of the military skills. Former soldiers use these skills for their material survival in contexts where security and protection are valuable commodities such as in Johannesburg. Subjectively, the holding on to the identity of soldiers allows them to retain their sense of self-worth. It is through being 'soldiers' that they self-actualise as members of a community of experience, in practices that I have called here '*soldiering',* the act of remembering and sharing memories of their military past, and the institutional orders they were all once part of.
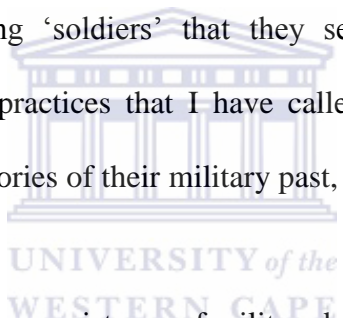
In the next chapter I focus on the persistence of military bonding as a significant aspect of former soldiers' lives. By bonding I mean the formation of groups by former soldiers, the social and economic ties that they form and maintain. These ties are historical, in which the past is constantly shared and maintained. The chapter explores why this bonding is important for these men and what they do to uphold it. A major finding is that the men formed a 'military unit', albeit in exile, to manage their past, to maintain a sense of dignity and to lobby for political amnesty from the Zimbabwean government.

CHAPTER 9: Bonding among army deserters in exile

9.1. Introduction

> I realised that I have to be brave enough and start talking to other military men as a military man. I would go and talk to each military man and say, how did you come from home, what happened, are you happy about this, and then you find that the person is not happy. He is living under difficult conditions. He is not used to his type of life. He didn't want to leave the army. He joined the army with his full heart towards protecting the country but along the line things went wrong and then he found himself caught in some two warring parties. So I would talk and talk to them until this group of men, we agreed that, no, gentlemen, let us rather die on our feet than suffer on our knees, let us go public because if we don't go public about, ah, our plight, no one will know about us. When there is a change of government you cannot go to any new government and say, hey, we are military men, we got affected like this, they will not be ready to listen to you. When people are feeding they don't want to be disturbed, better start talking now before they start go sitting on the table. So that is our issue, let us raise our own awareness, let us avoid uniting with the civilians. We also communicate through our group on the internet. We have a way of communicating, like birds of the same feather flock together and so that's exactly how things are. So that's what motivated us to be brave enough to form this AMMOZA. It was not an easy thing because operating without financial backing, you find that others are in Tembisa, others are in Cape Town, and others are wherever. When I see another soldier going to Cape Town, I say to him, comrade, when you reach Cape Town, please start organising military men there, and this is what we are doing here. (Whisky Papa)

The excerpt above reveals how and why soldiers mobilised in order to initiate and maintain a social and political bond which is particularly military in nature. It is important to emphasize that, the idea of 'maintaining military bonds' does not imply that the same kind of bonds were maintained from the army barracks, rather what I am saying here is that, the 'practice of bonding' in the military was transposed into a context of exile. The idea of 'going and talking to each other' is representative of shared hardship as well as the importance of a collective past over that of an individual history. For these men, their need of an amnesty is the important reason for their collectivity. Their bond is

not only about their past but also about its value. Thus the formation of a soldiers' bond signifies a shared embodied military experience. They continue to network as a group; now reunited as the Affected Military Men of Zimbabwe Association (AMMOZA).

The formation of AMMOZA is both social and political. It is social in the sense that it is a space in which pain, suffering and laughter is shared: of the past and present and what the future ahead may or may not hold for them. It is also political because army deserters use AMMOZA to lobby for political amnesty, an issue which they had been trying to campaign for with the Zimbabwe government. For the army deserters there is no reason why they should wait for the MDC to be in power (if they are going to be), rather like any other exile Zimbabwean eager to go back home without arrest, these men are in need of their 'freedom' in Zimbabwe. Thus it is not a question of whether the army deserters are working for the demise of ZANU-PF while supporting the MDC, but it is about their freedom as men who had been affected by politics in the barracks (see chapter 5).

Thus in their meetings they also talk about their plight and their desire to go back to Zimbabwe. Being in exile binds the former soldiers together. At the time of doing this research, the chairman of AMMOZA asserts that there has been no infiltration of AMMOZA by intelligence officers from Zimbabwe. They exclude civilians because they do not want to be infiltrated. Even the military intelligence has not been able to infiltrate this AMMOZA group because army deserters have a way of verifying them. The question this chapter addresses is what this military bond means to them, what they do to keep it alive, and how it supports them in their daily existence and their struggle to

survive and to live a meaningful life. The former soldiers maintain their bonds through the use of an internet platform. I will explore the use of the internet group space in greater detail drawing from what Baines (1995:10) called the 'camaraderie of cyberspace'. In addition, the men presented here use their 'military language' which they perceive as their specific way of communicating. While there is no particular definition of military language, its meaning can be very contextual. Military language is a kind of military idiom. If it is translated into everyday language, it loses meaning. In its original, it only makes sense among soldiers. An example of this is when a soldier says: "I am zeroing" which means "a soldier is relaxing". It is a kind of language that creates a bond. For my participants having a particular language is a metaphor of power and authority, seeing themselves as different from other migrants whom they regard as civilians. I argue that the formation and sustenance of this military bond is determined by deserters' situation of being enemies of the state and hoping to secure amnesty.
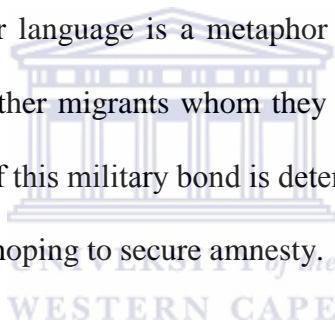
9.2. Military bonding

There is nothing more important in the army than the feeling of being part of the large combat group. However, being part of a military unit does not just come by chance; it is forged through resistance (see, chapter, 6.4.2). This is what I call here a 'military spirit' that gets indoctrinated through harassing by military instructors during military training. According to Harrison and Laliberte (1994) the military inculcates a 'willing spirit', which is mutual commitment that counters boredom. The bond is made possible because military life emphasises living separately from civilians: wearing a distinct uniform, having a barracks hospital, shops and club, facilitates closeness among soldiers. For

Winslow (1994) individual effort is suppressed and invested into the group. How military bonding emanates and what it does, is summed-up by one Canadian soldier's words cited in Harrison and Laliberte (1994:28):

> You have a bond. You have a bond that's so thick that it is unbelievable!...It's the pull, it's the team, the work as a team, the team spirit! I don't think that ever leaves a guy. That is exactly what basic training is supposed to do. It is supposed to weed out those who aren't willing to work that way...And that's the whole motivation that when somebody says we want you to do something then you'll do it. You will do it because of the team, for the team, with the team and because the team has the same focus.

Bonding is perceived as the spirit embedded within an individual soldier for the collective. What is interesting here is that a soldier lives for the team. The team becomes the focal point in combat. This kind of bonding if anything intensifies in post-combat life partly because of nostalgia, including wistful bonding in the aftermath of 'active' military life and reminiscing on the days that have passed (cf. Baines, 1995; 2008).

Having a bond with other soldiers is about love, loyalty and true dedication (see chapter 6.5.2). The bond between soldiers is one that will never cease. As Dowling (2011) emphasises, it is an unbreakable bond. It is difficult for this kind of bond to be recreated, because it is not just about the experience of war, but the many intense hours of training and preparation that comprises a soldier's life. Bonding captures the emotion of the experience, draws you into the scene, and makes you feel like another soldier is your blood-brother and leaving other soldiers behind for example on the battlefield is heart-rending.

9.3. Maintaining military bonds

Even though I opted for a life history approach, in many cases the former soldiers talked primarily about their past military experiences and how they finally left the barracks to seek refuge in South Africa. They had a common story to tell and re-tell about these past events. When speaking about their wartime experiences, they represented themselves as heroes. They also emphasized their efforts to re-establish or maintain military ties when they differentiate themselves from civilians. One of the reasons to regroup and form a bond was to lobby for amnesty in Zimbabwe. They emphasised their willingness to be reinstated in the army once they had been granted the amnesty they longed for. Below I present in more detail the different issues that emerged from the men's stories, which represent a bond in exile.
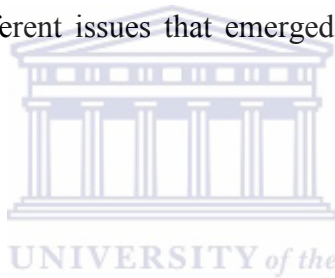
9.3.1. A community in exile

The majority of my respondents like other army deserters from Zimbabwe; work and live in Johannesburg as security guards, hotel chefs, street vendors and truck drivers. A few are self-employed. A small number of the men live with their wives and children. Some share a room with other soldiers or live with close friends or relatives from Zimbabwe. Apart from their living environment, the men form a 'community in exile' by virtue of their shared experiences and their interest/ activities in AMMOZA. Some know each other from their military training and subsequent deployment in the 1998 DRC war. Others were posted to the same battalion after training in different groupings. What they have in common now is that they are all migrants in South Africa. Their shared past experiences in war zones enable them to understand each other's lives and bind them

together. They can be seen as constituting a 'community of experience' to use Vigh's (2006:18) concept, 'they share specific ordeals, praxis, perspectives and positions within a given terrain and thus sharing certain points or spheres of reference'.

The group in my study associated and networked as soldiers, and meetings were often held at members' houses. They bonded by virtue of their military ties and addressed each other by their previous ranks in the army. In spite of the hardships endured in war and after, they seemed to miss army life. Even while working as civilians in Johannesburg, they continued to view themselves as 'soldiers in exile'. Yet they do not openly share their 'soldiering' with civilians. By soldiering I refer to an in-group practice, that of assuming an identity, bonds and way of seeing the world as soldiers, which they share amongst themselves either when they meet, when speaking over their mobile phones or when chatting on Facebook. The socialities of soldiering are strongly emphasized in the stories they shared, and their social interactions were constructed in their stories of war.

Bonds are also re-enacted in exile to comfort each other in times of need. In those socialities they draw from the war situation where they mutually protected and saved each other. Oscar Papa emphasised that, "from the first day in the army we were taught to unite like buttocks [bums], you know when you sit they [bums] sit together and they are equal". Thus the use of a bodily metaphor [bums] by Oscar Papa represents how these bonds are humanised and valued. It reveals how such bonds are accorded a life, lived and maintained in the present. Remembering and holding on to these life events brings the awareness that their present bond is the result of deep bodily and knowledge connections

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–they once were like 'one body'-which was vital for survival in times of war. The entirety of what they knew and still know is about being soldiers.

The former soldiers not only speak to each other about their past but share daily experiences and events in the here-and-now. They also speak about their vision of the future. The way they engage with each other in their interaction makes them also a 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1998; Wenger, 2000). Based on their past experiences and visions for the future, the men have mobilised to form an association with the ultimate aim of presenting their case for amnesty to the Zimbabwean government, which should enable them to return to Zimbabwe. Whisky Papa who started the association, said:

> Upon coming to South Africa I started mobilising soldiers, organising military men, uniting military men, until they formed the Affected Military Men of Zimbabwe Association (AMMOZA). (Whisky Papa)

Coming together in an association was seen by the men as a first stage in dealing with their desertion-related problems. While talking to each other the men shared social resources and created an atmosphere of social intimacy amongst them. The talking and sharing in such an atmosphere helped them to regain the dignity they had by virtue of being victimised (Richters, 2010), and their social intimacy was strengthened by sharing drinks together.

The former soldiers' present relationship is both symbolic and material. Theirs is a companionship historically inculcated in war-time experiences. Because the men continue to deeply trust each other and to 'hang-out' together, they strongly believe in

and constantly reinforce the need to maintain the ethos of being soldiers. Accordingly, being a soldier is not only an individual matter but a collective one. It is experienced as being in the company of other trained men and being part of a group of like-minded peers. The men place emphasis on teamwork to achieve a collective goal, a strategy commonly used in the military. The underlying idea is that it is social cohesion that keeps the unit going (Ben-Ari and Sion, 2005).

Outside of their association former soldiers also look out for each other. Because they have trained in using camouflage and concealing themselves, they consciously do so in public spaces, including drinking places. As Delta Charlie said,

> If I go into a pub I look for a chair and sit isolated to view the people in the pub. I will be looking for military men to check which people have been in the army. What I will be doing, I will be checking the way they move, drink and talk. If I am convinced by my observation, because I don't go wrong, I will ask you what your force number was. He would reply, hey, who are you? I will tell him I was at so-and-so brigade. I cannot sit with you here and not see that you are a military man. Even if you have a conversation with a soldier he will be referring to his experiences, like a medical doctor more often than not he always refers to penicillin and antibiotics, a teacher thinks about his chalks. (Delta Charlie)

Here being a soldier is reinforced through self-presentation and action, which are both seen as skills for a well-trained soldier. The former means that soldiers have particular ways of presenting themselves that can be understood by other soldiers. The participants accordingly act in specific ways that they conceive as soldierly. Observing and looking-out for other soldiers in public spaces expresses being part of a collective, as well as sensitivity to the participants' being different from other people. The desire to physically reach out to and be alert to the presence of other soldiers reinforces the need and efforts

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of participants to build and maintain their social networks. Such social networks exclude civilian migrants from soldier groups. It is in their 'in-group' that the participants share their military experience.

9.3.2. Communicating through internet groups

It has increasingly become popular in a way that people who knew each other before can form groups on Facebook, or chat via email and WhatsApp. Elsewhere in the world American navy soldiers have formed the Military Quotes community group on Facebook and at the time of writing this chapter, their group tallied 21, 019 former soldiers engaged in conversations, with 115, 569 likes. They perceived themselves as a community as engraved in their group motto. On Facebook they reminisce about the past and present military experience: "when the pin is pulled, Mr Grenade is not our friend". It follows that having a camaraderie group on internet is not unique for the group I studied, but I was interested in how they see past their differences due to the shared suffering (in war and in the barracks) that brings these former soldiers together. For my participants, their group is on Whats App and it was named after their company at military training: E-coy.

In trying to understand why former soldiers form and engage with each other in internet groups, and what kind of stories they share, I draw from Baines (1995) idea of 'camaraderie of cyberspace'. For Baines (1995:10) former soldier groups on internet represent a network of sites to exchange memories and a platform for advice which he (Baines, ibid) called 'cyber-communities'. Because army deserters fear to be tracked down and spied on, WhatsApp group proves to be a safe space. This is seemingly different for Baines (1998:10) who questioned: 'why should former South African

Defence Forces (SADF) national servicemen have gravitated to the internet in order to share their stories? Is it a form of contesting invisibility?' In my study the army deserters' choice to be on a cross-platform mobile messaging network (WhatsApp) was both emotional and political. It was emotional in the sense that the stories they shared were about disillusionment with their military past. It was also political because army deserters related their premature exit from the army to politics in the barracks (cf. chapter, 5). I therefore argue that this 'camaraderie of cyber space' can also be referred to as 'militarised cyber space'. This draws on what constitutes these spaces: everything is about military life. Even the social life of the former soldiers was framed and understood from a military perspective.

While Baines (1998) argues that 'camaraderie of cyberspace' replaces bonding in public spaces such as drinking in pubs, I suggest that cyberspace reinforces the existence of the former soldiers association. It does encourage other former soldiers to be part of an already existing and functioning association. It makes the association of former soldiers (in this case AMMOZA) better known, thereby adding numbers. We need to understand that not all the issues that former soldiers had could be discussed when members physically met; hence the existence of internet groups made it possible for the group to continue discussions beyond physical meetings. Also, what it was not possible to discuss on the internet could be shared when meeting in physical spaces, and the two spaces reinforced each other. The past could not be shared with civilian migrants for fear of possible retaliation or revenge.

9.3.3. Soldiers as opposed to civilians

Communities of practice exist with social and political boundaries that determine who is included and who is excluded. The former soldiers' position themselves specifically in opposition to civilians (cf. Chapter 6, 6.3). They see themselves as a unique group (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009), in which each member has experiences and memories that are particular to soldiers. It implies for them that no people other than former soldiers can join their association (AMMOZA). As expressed by Bravo Charlie:

> So as such we said 'No, gentlemen, let us now form our own organisation that is totally military, no civilian, no policeman, no what, because the policeman, he has got his own, ah, way of being dealt with'. (Bravo Charlie)

By perceiving civilians and other categories of migrants as people with a different social and political status (cf. Chapter, 6, 6.3), the former soldiers reinforced the boundaries of their group as a 'community of experience' (cf. Vigh, 2006) and practice. While they do occasionally tap into the networks of civilian migrants, they differentiate themselves as people with different kinds of problems. Charlie Romeo spoke about his motivation to join the association (AMMOZA) that, as he said, had been 'formed by soldiers for soldiers,' as follows:

> The motivation was that we realised that unlike the civilians, teachers, nurses and everyone, those people had their problems, it's not like ours. Ours is totally military. So I helped to form AMMOZA. (Charlie Romeo)

According to Harrison and Laliberte (1994:21), soldiers 'often feel misunderstood by civilians, and so they tend to stick together- a development that is not at all unintended'.

In this study I found that the way they were socialized as military men informed the way in which the participants thought of themselves as a separate group:

> I told the civilians from the Zimbabwe Exiles Forum who asked us to join their group because, as they said, 'you guys, you are doing something different from everyone: 'Yes we are doing something different because we are very different from you. We are soldiers with military agendas.' When one is talking in our group, all other soldiers will be listening, but civilians they just interject each other. (Charlie Romeo)

The idea of that former soldiers should have their own association was also driven and shaped by these men being marginalized by civilian migrants and even human rights organizations. According to Papa Oscar, "you find that most organisations, they concentrate on the civilian aspect, even marginalizing the military man". For soldiers, civilian associations are for civilians and deal with problems that are civilian in nature (Chapter 6, 6.3). The former soldiers note that they are wanted by the state for desertion, unlike civilians. Civilians do not really understand or empathise with them.

The perceptions the former soldiers have of civilians and their attitudes towards civilians have been instilled in them through the military ideology and training that determined their military lives and life view (Brotz, and Wilson, 1946). Also, in their lives in exile the men define civilians as 'the other' in a way that Bourdieu (1990) would call symbolic domination. This is illustrated in what India Papa said:

> Let us avoid uniting with the civilians because these people, they suffer from being infiltrated by intelligence people; they suffer from having issues that are totally different and alien to ours; because as military men we have never paraded with the civilians. You will find that civilians parade all by themselves, and mostly remain by themselves, so why should now we be parading with the civilians, we have nothing in common, our problems are totally different. We are a unique group, a totally unique

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group that requires a very specific attention, which is totally directed to people like us. (India Papa)

India Papa uses the words "infiltrated" to depict civilian "weakness" and the civilian "inability" to detect and deal with an "enemy", unlike soldiers. This is an illustration of the tactics used by former soldiers to set themselves apart from civilians by comparing the skills and perceived qualities of soldiers to those of civilians (Hinojosa, 2010). Our participants attributed to themselves the ability to 'sniff out' intelligence officers (from Zimbabwe) who were suspected of spying among migrants and among their organisations in South Africa. The possibility of being infiltrated by such 'spies', is represented as a civilian 'problem' since soldiers were trained in counter-intelligence.

In all their narratives participants situate themselves as different from civilians (Higate, 2000) and they explicitly try to maintain this distinction (Chapter, 7, 7.2). They regard their problems as military in nature, while civilian problems are seen as rooted in civilian experience. Civilians are viewed as unable to comprehend soldiers' past experiences (Higate, 2001). Such a distinction between soldiers in exile and civilians strengthens already existing ideological differences, such as perceiving themselves as radically different from civilians. It also fosters a particular kind of identity that is military in nature (Chapter 7, 7.2). The experiences of suffering similar ordeals in conflict zones create a space of commonality. India Papa emphasizes how they spend time together:

> I don't drink beer with civilians; you know I spend my leisure time with other soldiers. I am not comfortable if I spend my time with civilians. What do we talk about? I am a soldier. (India Papa)

My participants even find it difficult to work with 'civilians', as Papa Juliet explains in relation to his first day of work at a construction company in Johannesburg.

> I could not understand working with a civilian. I felt I was being used. I never expected in my life that I would ever work with a civilian and doing the same thing together with the civilian. My mind was never civilian. I find it difficult to adjust up to today. I am comfortable moving in the company of military men. With them you can find me joking. I can even leave my beer with the military men because I trust that they can't poison me. With them I am home and dry. I know they are my men. (Papa Juliet)

Working in the 'civilian sector' is presented as an individualistic and disorganised way of working while, in an army, soldiers depending upon operating as a collective. The trust and necessity of soldiers to depend on each other originates from training and war when they have to provide cover for each other and must try to ensure that no man is left behind, alive or dead. This practice and its related sentiments continued into the post-combat period. The way in which soldiers act as a collective, in their opinion, sets them apart from civilians.
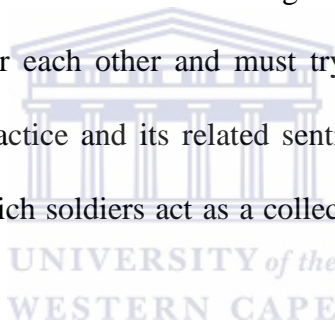
My participants consciously reproduced and maintained their military-ness through their language, jokes and humour among themselves. Tango Papa emphasised that:

> I don't want jokes from civilians, I become angry. I want jokes from military men. If a civilian jokes about my job I can kill him because you are touching at the heart of my life. I can justify it. A military man if he jokes, he has his own way of joking. There is no coward in the army. (Tango Papa)

Jokes are perceived as shared practices within their group. The expression of shared military experiences through jokes and humour bring about solidarity and asserts boundaries between participants and the 'other' (Beni-Ari and Sion, 2005; Meyer, 1997).

Tango Papa indicates that the participants, for example, reaffirm their past in their current lives and perpetuate a military culture that constitutes them as soldiers. In the barracks jokes and humour act as a form of release from the tedium that marks the daily lives of soldiers (Beni-Ari and Sion, 2005).

The deserters in my study valued what they learnt in the army and perceived themselves as competent and able to lead civilians in all walks of life. Alpha Romeo emphasised:

> If I get a job I will lose that job because I don't want to be told what to do by a civilian. I don't think a civilian can teach me to do that and that. I believe he is not mentally capable of commanding a soldier. To me, it's like a civilian is saying you are my person. A civilian's power is a power of a woman. I don't accept civilian power. (Alpha Romeo)

In the above quote Alpha Romeo positions himself as a soldier - and civilians as not capable of doing what soldiers can do. My participants' former training in the use of weapons reinforces their understanding of themselves as different from civilians. As Papa Whisky said "We are trained in guns. We don't know anything else."

9.4. Belonging to the state: 'Special' citizens

Apart from having participated in different wars (see chapter, 3, 3.2) and seeing themselves as soldiers for life, my participants viewed themselves as the "only true Zimbabweans". As Oscar Papa says "I only salute the Zimbabwean flag. I pledged my military service in and outside Zimbabwe." Like many soldiers around the world (Woodward, 2008), there is a connection between military service and citizenship that forms an attachment and a right to belong to the state. The feeling of belonging to Zimbabwe fosters a collective bond among these former soldiers. What they did for

Zimbabwe (being deployed in war) and how they fought in war (chapter 3, 3.2) forges a specific bond in post-combat times, because it is a bond drawn from a shared history. In seeing themselves as a special group, the participants represented themselves as good and disciplined citizens. For Tango Papa:

> I make sure lines are drawn, so that you know you are talking to a person who carries the country, the national flag on his shoulder; that you are talking to a person who has distinguished himself in a certain area. Even though I deserted the army, I still owe my salute to a democratic Zimbabwean flag and when I salute, the Zimbabwean flag salutes back. No one will take away this soldier in me. (Tango Papa)

For Tango Papa, being a soldier is his life. It is something that exists within him. He draws a boundary between himself and civilians and represents other migrants as people who do not belong to Zimbabwe in the same way as he does. The former soldiers believe that, unlike soldiers, other migrants do not show and feel the strong type of patriotism and allegiance to Zimbabwe as a country or a nation in the way demonstrated by Tango Papa. For my participants the flag in its materiality represented the State that they were sworn to defend.

Many of my participants expressed nostalgia for the army and for their country. For example, Charlie Whisky said "My body is here but my mind is in Zimbabwe, I am still in the military, I am still a soldier". Alpha Romeo also explained:

> I always think about my days in uniform because not a day goes by without using my military training somewhere in my life. According to me, those days in uniform were the best days of my life. They shaped what I am today. (Alpha Romeo)

They see themselves as soldiers who are only waiting to return to Zimbabwe- where they hope to be reinstated in the army, once the political situation changes. They are ready to fight to achieve what they wish for. Charlie Romeo said:

> Personally ... [pause] I'm sorry to say this, but I could have gone to any length if there were people ready to assist. I could have gone over to any type of fighting, any type of fighting: because my life had been destroyed over politics. (Charlie Romeo)

Being a soldier is closely associated with fighting, and they believed that their grievances and concerns were not being attended to by the government. Hence, fighting was the ultimate and alternative solution to their predicament. Fighting for change imbued their testimonies, and it constituted the soldiers as fighters.

The army trains soldiers to be professionals in violence (Barret, 1996). As Hockey (2002) argues, 'fighting practices are initially demanded by the military instructors and subsequently maintained by the soldiers themselves' (Hockey, 2002: 156). For Alpha Bravo fighting was the only way in which he might possibly be able to retain what he had lost: his career. It seemed that the idea of fighting the government was born out of frustration and the 'situation' (Alexander, 1998) of being in exile.

9.5. Conclusion

I have focused on why and how army deserters maintained or regenerated military bonds in exile. The disruption of their military careers raised their desire to maintain the bonds forged in combat life during the wars they took part in and back at the barracks. They did this through establishing and maintaining contact with each other and literally looking for others of their 'kind' in public spaces. Initially the network was just to connect with each

other but it later became a strong military-like bond in which the deserters lobbied the government of Zimbabwe for political amnesty. In such social and political bonds, the former soldiers respected each other's former ranks in the army. Such bonds symbolized their representation of their past military experiences. Rebuilding and maintaining military bonds required personal and collective effort. Most importantly, the bonds were established by viewing themselves as a 'special' group with unique problems, and special ways of dealing with them, which were different from civilians.

My participants believe that they are the 'true' citizens who have sacrificed their lives in war. This is reinforced by seeing themselves as having a military language that they use to mock and berate civilians. Doing so reaffirms their past bonds in their present context. All aspects of their military past can be considered to be resources that reinvigorate their military bonds. To the former soldiers, the military world was more important than the civilian world. The most important concern for my participants was to be granted amnesty and go home without being prosecuted. To meet their needs, regional and international political organisations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) attempted to assist army deserters to get amnesty and subsequently help in their reintegration into Zimbabwean society. In doing so, they would become part of the processes of national reconciliation and nation-building. At that time however, the Zimbabwean government continued to harass army deserters, arrest them and indefinitely detain them. I suggest that Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes should not avoid fragile political environments or be tailored only for soldiers who had ended their

military service in an honorable way. Instead they should be extended to meet the needs of army deserters and thereby contribute to lasting peace and security in post-colonial Africa.

In the next chapter I turn to the ways in which these men searched for healing. I argue that despite their journeying between two different spaces to deal with their past memories of war and political violence, they cannot find a lasting solution in exile. Instead they emphasize that they need to be granted amnesty in order for their bad dreams to end.

CHAPTER 10: Between remorse and nostalgia: Haunting memories of war, and the search for healing

10.1. Introduction

> No, I believe the counselling session can help. It can help because I believe that the more you talk about it, the more it's been taken out of your chest. But the thing is, it's like I've got some also fellow, ah, soldiers, ah, former soldiers, so sometimes I believe the time when we stand together discussing about these things, laughing and whatever, ah, I feel relieved so I think that, you know, by engaging those sessions because sometimes, you know, ah, I would like to engage in a certain counselling with somebody who knows the, the background of the military, the military background, you understand because if it can be just any, any particular person I don't think it would help because when, when you'll be busy counselling me I would be considering that I would be observing that, ah, no, these things, no, he doesn't know because you have never been part of it, you understand? So you just need someone here who's got the full knowledge of, ah, the military thing then I think, um, we, we would be speaking the same language, I can put it that way because, ah, in military there is a certain, some certain terms which are being used, the language is being used and, um, I would be, I would appreciate if I can discuss with that, with, ah, with someone who have got a military background. (Bravo Sierra)

The story of Bravo Sierra represents the process of journeying between different spaces of healing of former soldiers' past painful military experiences as both perpetrators and victims of the war in the DRC and Mozambique and subsequently to their involvement in the political violence in Zimbabwe. The journeying between spaces of healing represents the ways in which the former soldiers respond to their present life in exile. Such a response is one which is a result of dissatisfaction and in some cases distrust of facilitators in those institutions for example the secular counseling sessions in which non-military counselors are demeaned for their lack of military background. In this case, sharing of their past experiences and dreams within their soldierly group is celebrated as an ideal space where there is a common understanding of their suffering. In this chapter I

focus on former soldiers who participate in two different but complementary spaces of healing: the Pentecostal churches and former soldiers' own support group. The chapter explores the complementarities and contradictions between these two spaces in the way they enable the men to deal with their painful memories of the past.

The choice by former soldiers to partake in their own support group (association) helps them to build an emotional support group which enhances social and political proximity to each other which was not wholly possible in the church. However, many of them revealed that it was not enough to meet in the support group and talk about their past. Instead the former soldiers resort to visiting and participating in Pentecostal churches to deal with what they considered as spiritual problems such as nightmares. Their choice to visit and participate in the church was possible because they had a previous experience as members of the Pentecostal churches while in the Army, even in war (see chapter 3, 3.6). An emphasis is given: participating in Pentecostal churches does not mean that they were successful integrated into civilian life. They journeyed between two spaces. However, as will be discussed in this chapter, none of the spaces chosen by the former soldiers to deal with their past heinous recollections can successfully combat their disturbing wartime memories which manifest in their dreams.The chapter examines the men's need for support and healing as well as their efforts at achieving some form of dealing with their past. I focus on healing work that takes place in two different social spaces: military camaraderie created in the political organization of the Affected Military Men of Zimbabwe Association (AMMOZA) and Pentecostal churches in Johannesburg. Specifically I look at the work of the 'health and wealth' gospel of the Pentecostal church

(Maxwell, 1998; Meyer, 1998; Tankink, 2007). In the next two sections I focus on the main issues that trouble these men and subsequently on the strategies they use to survive life in exile and to deal with their past in their everyday life. I end by examining why their search for support is experienced as incomplete and what would be needed for a more comprehensive approach to deal with the nightmares the men suffer from.

In writing this chapter, I selected ten former soldiers from my sample of 44 men who participated in both Pentecostal churches and the Affected Military Men of Zimbabwe Association (AMMOZA). Since I participated in both these spaces it was easy for me to identify former soldiers who did the same. All 44 former soldiers experience the recurrence of bad dreams - *hope dzakaipa* in Chishona and *amaphupho amabi* in IsiNdebele. They have nightmares about the war and post-war periods of violence in Zimbabwe. Their nightmares speak about their conflicting feelings and questions of justification and remorse for their past activities in the army.

10.2. Fear in everyday life in exile

The fear the former soldiers experience in the present is twofold. Firstly they fear being tracked down by Zimbabwe's military police and military intelligence units. They suspect that operatives of these units are operating in South Africa in civilian guise. Secondly, they fear that civilian migrants from Zimbabwe may take revenge for what the soldiers did to their families and countrymen. These fears result in them being very reluctant to disclose their past as soldiers' publicly. They fear to be seen as enemies and to be rejected. For Charlie Sierra:

People always think we are killers and we were the ones who were responsible for their coming to South Africa, especially Zimbabweans who do not realize that we were also suffering from the same government. (Charlie Sierra).

Hiding their combat experiences from other migrants helps the men to feel protected and live safely among civilian migrants. The example of Alpha Bravo demonstrates that the men's identities are not static. They tactically choose which military past to disclose when and where; however they choose when and where to say publicly "I was a soldier". In this way former soldiers protect and prevent themselves from being loathed or even harmed by others. Like for instance, India Papa says, "I don't always tell the police that I was a soldier because they think we are criminals".

Even though these former soldiers hold on to their past in private spaces often in a nostalgic way, they feel at the same time betrayed by the army. The contradictory ways in which the past is remembered and appropriated contributes to their anguish in the aftermath of their military life. On the one hand, the men celebrate that life as heroic. On the other hand, they see their past military life as one full of victimization which forced them into exile (cf. Chapter 5). Charlie Sierra says, remembering when he once had power and authority; "even now, if I think about it I feel like I am not important any more. The army has killed me". Others feel regret about the time spent in the military. Like Charlie Mike says, "I have wasted my time in the army".

10.3. Juggling justification and remorse

Most of the men justify killing during the war, forcing women into sex and attacking civilians in Zimbabwe as legitimate. For them, they were duty-bound to kill and beat; it

was an order. The men do not make a clear distinction between what they did in war and what they did in the context of the political violence in their own country. While in war they killed and forced women into sex; as part of the political violence in Zimbabwe, they beat and harassed the local populace. All the actions are seen as the 'duty-call' of soldiers that determined how they executed their tasks. They do not blame themselves, but the politicians and the war situations which they view as limiting their choices pertaining to the execution of their duties. However, they also struggle to come to terms with their past military actions, particularly at night. In daylight they glorify their military past in their own group whilst at night their past experiences assail them in nightmares. The people they killed and women they forced into sex (Chapter 3, 3.7) confront them in their dreams. The men feel that they are haunted by evil spirits in the night when they sleep - where those they killed or abused are now seeking revenge.

The war created another order in terms of what was allowed, justified and lawful, very different from the code of conduct in their pre-military life. The men struggle today with how to incorporate the darker side of their military past in their everyday lives. In war, soldiers are in charge and they become the law. As Charlie Sierra says, "there is no law in war". Soldiers do what they can to deal with being in a state of war. Papa Whisky argues: "when you are in conflict, stress comes into play and the only way of relieving stress is through indulgences that give relief. Sex is one of them" (cf. Chapter 3, 3.7). This statement is aimed at justifying what they did during the war. Alpha Bravo mentions that, in Angola for example, women were attracted to soldiers' money and therefore sex with them was per definition sex by consent. He emphasized:

> In a conflict situation a woman expects you to have money. …. by the time you approach her she has already fallen in love with you, you know how women are like. Where there is money, women see the money before they see the person with that money. It was through mutual agreement. Because we were not holding any guns, we were not dressed in uniform, we were purely in our civilian clothing and they voluntarily presented themselves to us. (Alpha Bravo)

Considering the imbalance of power between that of a soldier wielding a gun and ordinary civilian women, such consent can, however, be questioned. The "agreement" to have sex is made under duress. In some cases the participants reveal that soldiers would give a woman a packet of biscuits and have sex with her for a whole month. Women would expect that another packet of food would come and during that period of expectation they would be having sex with the soldiers. It is doubtful that this would be the case r under normal circumstances. As Alpha Bravo said,

> Bring them a packet of biscuit or something like that; it's a big thing, something that you cannot do here in South Africa. Here you cannot give somebody a packet of biscuits and screw that person. But in a conflict that packet of biscuits can allow you to screw that person for a month, one year. They will be still waiting for another packet to come. (Alpha Bravo)

Here Alpha Bravo grapples with the idea of consent during the war by reflecting on the abnormal circumstances in which one can give a woman a packet of biscuits in exchange for sex for a month (cf. Chapter 3, 3.7). As this excerpt shows, within the context of war some soldiers may justify their positions without an understanding of the wrongs they commit. All is done in the pretext of war.

However, the men's narratives were ambiguous and sometimes they spoke about forcing women into sex (cf. Chapter 3, 3.7). They justified this coercion by demanding sex in exchange for food as payment for their involvement in a war that was not theirs. Whether

women were married or not, they never had the opposition of the husbands, because the soldiers were the authority. As Charlie Sierra said vehemently,

> I was supposed to use the Congolese women because I was fighting a Congolese war. There is no rape in war. These women are for us if it is during war. (Charlie Sierra)

Women were forced into sex and kept in a situation akin to sex slaves at times (cf. Chapter 3, 3.7). Charlie Sierra describes how he did not mind that the women may have felt when he satisfied his sexual needs for an entire night. For Charlie Sierra, women became wives of soldiers. In some cases soldiers exchanged women among each other during the war. This contributed to the creation of social bonds and cohesion among soldiers in war. In their narratives one of the men in the group used the analogy of 'kit-exchange'[38] to explain how they shared women for sex in their deployments.

In addition to forcing women into sex in the DRC War - actions which the men now regret - the former soldiers talked about attacking and killing civilians in Zimbabwe. They justify the use of force by explaining that they were given orders by their commanders to do so or that it was important for the national project - a project that they now see as a ZANU-PF Project - to repress civilians and keep them under control. In some cases soldiers were deployed in the cities during the night so that the journalists from the private media would not be able to see what was exactly happening and report on it. Soldiers' targeted constituencies where ZANU-PF had lost to the MDC, the

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[38] Kit in the army is generally referred to by soldiers as the whole combat uniform dressing, including patrol boots, denim or a combat-jacket. Kit-exchange refers to the exchange or replacement of a worn-out combat uniform for a new one in either the quartermaster stores in the barracks or in the deployment in war. When there were no new combat-uniform in the quartermaster stores, soldiers would sometimes ask their fellow comrades who have extra combat-uniform to share that with them.

opposition political party of Morgan Tsvangirai. They would beat civilians in clubs and bottle stores. In a situation where they beat civilians, they were granted between fourteen and twenty-one days off. Nonetheless, some of the former soldiers now express remorse towards the beating of civilians during their tour of duty as soldiers. Papa Oscar says:

> I still remember it was in 2000, ah, around September because we finished our training in 2000 in July then, ah, September there, there was, ah, like a mass strike or so in the, around the cities of, ah, all the cities of Zimbabwe. So we were called to be on duty and to go out and, ah, cool down the situation. But it was not only cool down. Actually it was beating up the people, really...Ah, man, it was very bad because we were, ah, mostly we were targeting them during, in the evening when they would be at, in the clubs, in the shebeens, in the, jah, those, um, in, um, and would just close the door and, um, beating them and kicking them, cutting them, some of them even using the butt of, ah, of our rifles. So, ah, because the thing is like people, they were striking and, ah, saying that actually, we don't have money, we need government and certain things, so the mind that we were given is that, no, these guys, no, they are holding their meetings in the evening so we have to distract their meetings, so in a way it was a political thing, a political agenda, you understand but we, you know, just because we didn't know anything, we just being forced to do that, to obey because actually in the military if they say jump you don't say, you don't have to say why but you have to say how high so, jah, we were just supposed to follow any instruction and any order. (Papa Oscar)

The army is presented as an institution which coerces and constrains the behaviour and operation of the individual soldier. Papa Oscar emphasizes how the army employed them to use violence: "we were just being forced to do that, to obey". The language of obeying is used here to reveal how soldiers were given orders by their commanders to perpetrate violence against civilians, which they say they could not refuse. For Papa Oscar it was not his own choice. It was the army that turned the soldiers into perpetrators of political violence. The army made the soldiers use violence against civilians during their duties. From a Weberian perspective, the modern state uses violence to govern (cf. Tilly 1985;

Torpey, 1997). The work in peace time is similar to the work during war; all is represented as doing what a soldier is supposed to do. Charlie Mike's account also resonates with many of the other former soldiers' stories:

> Yes we have been beating civilians, there was no way we could refuse to beat civilians because that was the work which was there, and in the army you work with order. But it was no good to beat civilians. However, if you didn't beat them you would be labelled an MDC. Especially us junior soldiers, you would find yourself in a difficult position. (Charlie Mike)

While the men still justify that all they did in Zimbabwe as part of the duties enforced on soldiers and remember their military past in war with pride, most of them now realise that there is a dark side to their past engagements as soldiers. It has become a daily struggle in their post-combat life. In particular, their dreams at night make them realize the wrongs of their past deeds. The dreams make them feel uneasy about the past. The realisation also comes after they have been to church where such violence is understood and represented an act of evil against their fellow men.

10.4. When memories become nightmares

The men revealed that they are tormented by bad dreams. Those who have deserted continue to be hunted in their dreams by the military police and military intelligence. They suffer from these disturbing dreams with agony. They see themselves in combat uniform and fighting in wars. They dream about killing and seeing dead people in war and about beating up people in Zimbabwe.

Whisky Papa expressed how the war turned him into a legitimate murderer geared to eliminate the rebels. He said: "in Mozambique my hands really got tainted by innocent

blood". Whisky Papa remembers the ambush in which they killed civilians in Mozambique (cf. Chapter 3, 3.4). In this section I do not talk about the war in detail but I am interested in how the former soldiers express regret. He describes the killing civilians in war time ambush as a 'disaster'. Whisky Papa reiterated that, "it was a political war, we were sent by politicians to kill". However, maybe as a way to cope with the guilt, he transfers the blame to the politicians. Yet underlying his account of the events there are doubts about the rightness of his own behaviour.

The men also dream about the women they had sex with as soldiers (cf. Chapter 3, 3.7). Sometimes these women chase them all night and torment the men in their dreams. Some of the men think these women have bewitched them causing them to have *umnyama* (meaning darkness or bad luck). The former soldiers do not feel remorse about the way they used women as they justify what they did as part of the logic of war. However what they find disturbing is what they perceive are the spirits of these women haunting them.

The men commonly identify the start of their bad dreams during the period they had surrendered their guns to the armoury (arms stores) in the army barracks. For the majority, the bad dreams became more intense after they had deserted and or resigned from the army. For Whisky Papa:

> No, no those things began affecting me the moment I returned my gun to the armory. When I was now out without a gun that is when I began having those things and from then on those things they have been affecting me. I started having nightmares when I came from Angola up to this present day…. When I went back home I was having nightmares. Even my sister used to have problems. Because of me she would wake me up in the middle of the night. I am still having nightmares. I mean my nightmares started in Angola and have never stopped. (Whisky Papa)

From my understanding, the reasons why Whisky Papa experiences nightmares after leaving the army could be firstly that when they were in the army they were not vulnerable to a threat of being harmed by civilians, police or army. Secondly, when they were in the army they were not aware what being a civilian meant and now they are experiencing the same violence that they carried and inflicted on civilians. Thirdly, being in the army and everything they did was part of the code of conduct of the army. It was seen as right and they believed what the state told them. However, now because they are no longer in the army, 'right' means different things. Fourthly, the gun came with power and assurances of security. That's why they speak of nightmares starting when they returned guns to the armoury. This shows how the army was a resource for them but now they are living in fear like civilians lived in fear of them.

Charlie Papa experiences bad dreams two or three times a week. Sometimes they continue every night without end. As Whisky Papa notes "I have been a soldier, I have been persecuted in the barracks; I dream soldiers and what I did in war". Knowing that they are likely to experience bad dreams during the night, some of the men fear going to sleep as they know they are going for a tough night. Alpha Romeo even avoids sleeping at night he works at night and sleeps during the day.

While dreaming about seeing oneself patrolling in uniform and fighting in the war perpetuates their identity as soldiers, the men experience these dreams nevertheless as perturbing. The men who deserted the army dream about being haunted by the military police and military intelligence. As India Papa said:

> Sometimes I dream about the war, like I am in a war situation again. Sometimes I will be dreaming about being in the military camp and sometimes being chased by the military police. (India Papa)

Those who fear being arrested during the day are always chased in their dreams. For Papa Whisky, being hunted and chased away by the military police remains an invisible wound. When asked whether they always share their dream experiences with pastors, the former soldiers indicated that sometimes they endure the dreams on their own and do not seek the assistance of the church, viewing the experience as normal. For all of them sharing their dreams with other former soldiers is considered as relieving precisely because only other soldiers can understand what they go through.

10.5. The healing work of Pentecostal churches: Redeeming the past

The Pentecostal churches which these men attended, practice exorcism of so-called 'evil spirits'. According to Ackerman (1981: 95),

> The human body is conceived of as a permeable receptacle of spiritual forces, both demonic and divine. The penetration of a body by these forces results in either negative or positive possession states.

Three of the men were already members of the Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe while seven have joined the church in Johannesburg. Alpha Bravo, who was a member of the church already in the DRC, recalls how he used to constantly pray for his survival in the war (see chapter, 3.6). Pentecostal churches in Johannesburg have tried to assist these men to understand their negative feelings about their past involvement in the war and come to terms with it. The men who do go to church only disclose their past to the pastors, who pray and comfort them about the wrongs done during the war. These men fear that if they are open about their past, people would want to know whether they had

killed in war, an issue which they do not want to discuss with everyone. Alpha Bravo emphasised that:

> I will only speak to the pastor. He usually prays for me so that those evil spirits of the people I have killed in war would not keep on coming to me. The pastor always tells me that war was there even in the bible, that it is not a new thing to have soldiers on this earth. So the pastor helps me to understand my dreams. He comforts me and prays for me. He told me that I should always wake up at midnight to pray in order to destroy this devil; because that is the time he would be at work. I tell you comrade, this thing of praying at midnight, it works. So almost every midnight I make sure I pray being convinced that God always helps me in those prayers. So I feel relieved because he (the pastor) speaks to my mind, he addresses the things that keeps troubling me. (Alpha Bravo)

The men are careful in choosing which pastors to tell their story to, or not. Similarly for Bravo Alpha:

> No, I've never, like, ah, disclosed it to the people, to the, to the current pastor but the, the former pastor, the other pastor that I was with, ah, I think 2006, seven, eight and nine, ah, he knows that I was a soldier. I don't normally want to identify myself as a former soldier or as a soldier. (Bravo Alpha)

Disclosure is presented as enhancing social and spiritual relationships in the church. Alpha Bravo, for example, emphasizes that he has revealed his innermost experiences, those of being a soldier, to pastors who he thinks can help him to pray. Pastors in turn are able to appreciate what a former soldier has gone through as well as their future in the form of prophesies. The Pentecostal church believers consider this to be a sign of 'spiritual intervention'. (cf. Hunt 2000:76). Oscar Papa was guided by a prophetic church in Zimbabwe in his journey to South Africa and when he was in South Africa another prophecy helped him to find a new job. While the issue of prophecy is open to debate in scholarly writing, Oscar Papa believed in such religious practices.

The church has interpreted the men's nightmares as the result of evil spirits. The men need the churches to undo the harm of these evil spirits. Those who resigned and could not find jobs went to church where their problems were interpreted as emanating from witchcraft either in Zimbabwe or the DRC. Charlie Delta notes:

> I was told that there were two evil spirits following me in my life. The first spirit was the spirit of war in the DRC. The prophet said I had done all the wrong in the war like sleeping with women and that those women I was sleeping with invoked some spirits which are tormenting my life now because these women were not happy. (Charlie Delta)

In the church the pastor is the main agent of morality. As this excerpt demonstrates, the pastor informed the men that what they did in the war was wrong. The narrative of the church and the experiences of *hope dzakaipa* which can be literally translated as *bad dreams* led the former soldiers to believe that what they did was wrong. Pastors encouraged them to ask for forgiveness from God, and requested that they confess all their sins in order to be forgiven by God. Healing, as proposed by Pentecostal churches, goes hand in hand with the promise of financial (material) prosperity, which directly touches on the needs of migrants, including the former soldiers as well as other social groups (Maxwell, 1998). As Charlie Sierra described it, poverty was seen as a sign of the presence of the devil in ones' life.

> The pastor told me someone had bewitched me when I came back from DRC and that those evil spirits were following me in South Africa. The pastor said if nothing was going to be done by the church then I would die poor here in South Africa or will go back home because of frustration. The church has transformed my life from a violent warrior to a prayer warrior. (Charlie Sierra)

Prayers and fasting are practiced among church members in their everyday confrontation with evil forces, including those associated with war times. The pastors in Pentecostal churches use the language of battles when they speak of the need to destroy the devil responsible for the events in their past lives. In their prayers the men literally fight the devil. Papa Whisky shared his experience, of how the pastor told him to be a 'prayer-warrior' rather than a 'war-warrior'. He says: "I was told to pray without ceasing as Apostle Paul did in the bible and I am no longer experiencing bad dreams as before". Praying in church against disturbing dreams often helped to stave off bad dreams for about two days, after which the dreams would return.

Even though the church does not offer complete healing, it has become a space where the former soldiers find relief for their stress. For India Papa the only way in which he feels a bit of relief is in church.
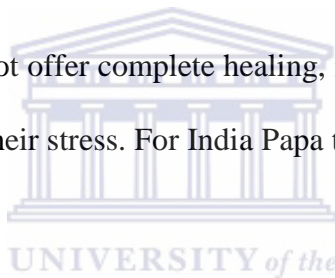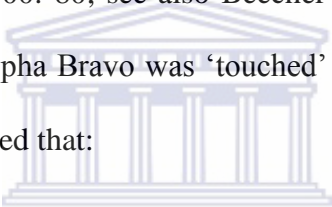
> I became a very devout Christian because prayer became my tool. The prayer relieved me a lot because of what I have suffered in the military. You know when I pray here I feel better, but you need to keep on praying because if you stop praying the stress will come again. Even those dreams that keep on troubling me, when I pray I don't really experience them the way I do if I don't pray. Prayer is my key. (India Papa)

Apart from praying in the church, some of the men pray individually in their 'homes'. Thus India Papa who states: "I always pray before I sleep and God helps me in these terrible dreams" Charlie Alpha, who deserted the army, indicated that the church has helped him in reducing the frequency of his bad dreams. He has participated in cleansing rituals including wiping his body with a cloth that has been prayed for, and also praying and fasting.

> So what I do first is that I fast and pray. Believe me, if I fast for at least one day, I won't experience the dream for two to three weeks. But after those two weeks I will start again to see the dead people and people chasing me in my dream. These people really trouble me. (Charlie Alpha)

Similarly, Charlie Sierra was helped by a ritual of cleansing which consisted of wiping his body with a cloth that had been prayed for. The cloth has symbolic and material power, and as such, it contributes to the effectiveness of the act of cleansing. Members of Pentecostal churches generally refer to a sermon as *the word*. The 'word' or 'words of knowledge' comprise a divinely inspired message delivered by a preacher or healer often general enough to make sense to people's lives, and appeal to a 'whole variety of type of distress and sickness' (Hunt 2000: 80; see also Beecher 1973; Stolz 2009). It was after the pastor had preached that Alpha Bravo was 'touched' by 'the word'. He notes that in his sermon, the pastor emphasised that:

> Life becomes difficult because you are not sensitive. Some people think they can make it without the pastor. But you must commit yourself to the church. It touched me because the pastor was speaking into my life. Then I said to myself, I want to be born again. (Alpha Bravo)

Pastors put emphasis on the need for a close relationship with the church - to which Alpha Bravo adheres. This means that there is a need to be committed if one is to be helped. It is a commitment of the soul and mind, and a rejoinder to refrain from sin, as indicated above by Alpha Bravo. In this process of moving closer to the church, Alpha Bravo felt the need to be born again. The commitment to the church is marked by the ritual of baptism through which the individual becomes born again. This is seen as a precondition to be healed in the faith of God and ultimately to be saved.

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Pentecostal churches also emphasize the importance of the biblical teachings and of an in-depth understanding of those teachings. What Charlie Mike learned in church is that, "in the bible there were also soldiers, we don't know if they killed anybody or used women…." In other words, soldiers reflect, based on the biblical texts, that their past experiences in war and involvement in political violence are not unique. The bible gives the men convincing evidence that what they are going through has been a story told by many others before them. However, at the end of the day God delivered them to live a normal life like any other person who has not experienced war. As I have indicated, identifying the problem caused by some external force, such as being bewitched by vengeful women and the spirit of the war is common among these former soldiers. The existences of spiritual entities that bewitch an individual are in line with existing Pentecostal churches beliefs and also traditional African discourses (Maxwell, 1998). As the pastors help the men to understand their predicaments within the discourse of the devil, the blame is shifted from the individual to the devil. This way of reframing the past helps them to cope with feelings of guilt and remorse. The problem therefore resides outside the men and is not part of an intra-psychic conflict but an external issue. This perspective helps the former soldiers deal with their situations, and they repent, as it is easier to cope with the idea that they have been used by the devil than having the personal responsibility of the wrongs thing they did in the war placed squarely on them. The church asserts that the men should forget the past in order to embrace the future. This is a common Pentecostal practice and orientation associated with being born again and living a new life (Meyer 1998).

After conversations with pastors and having embarked on identifying the actions of the devil in their lives, some of the men view what they did in war as evil: they think differently now about what they did during the war.

10. 6. The healing work of the support group: Re-affirming the past

The formation of support groups by former soldiers/combatants is not a new phenomenon. I understand that this social practice among former soldiers is not entirely a uniquely Zimbabwean one, but it has occurred elsewhere around the world. There are many former soldiers' clubs and veterans' associations all over the world. However, the difference is that for exiled Zimbabwean soldiers, their shared experiences cannot be revealed to outsiders or made public; they operate within an invisible space created by and for these former soldiers. In post-apartheid South Africa many of the members of *Umkonto we Sizwe* (MK) - an armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC) - and the Azania People's Liberation Army (APLA) formed their own support groups at community and national level (Gear 2002; Gear 2005; Lodge 1995). The situation was similar in Zimbabwe where the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) - an armed wing of the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Fund (ZANU-PF) led by President Robert Mugabe, continues to use their past experiences to lobby for political and economic rights (Kriger 2006). In Zimbabwe, war veterans have also formed their own groups and my participants who formed the Affected Military Men of Zimbabwe Association accentuated that it had become a space of healing.

While the initial objective of the group was only to lobby for their rights to return to Zimbabwe without being prosecuted, the space of camaraderie has become the only space

where those who killed during the war can talk of such experiences. Alpha Bravo, who fought in the Mozambique and DRC wars and was deployed in peace keeping in Angola, says, "It's difficult to talk to everyone… that I killed during the war, I only talk with my fellow comrades". Most of the men's war memories are viewed as disturbing when they come in dreams, but when they are shared within the group of comrades it brings laughter. Highlighting the centrality of laughter and humour, Heath (2012:15) notes that 'research has found humour to be more than just funny stories, puns, or physical pranks; it is a complex, multifunction…skill that can, if properly applied, reduce stress…' Among the soldiers humour is explicitly a representation of their past experiences. Charlie Mike teased India Papa by saying: "India Papa, here it's now different, we are no longer in war, and don't romance your girlfriend like you are holding an AK." The joke was shared after India Papa had told his story about having a problem with his girlfriend after he was told by her that he is not romantic. India Papa responded to Charlie Mike with the joke: "the problem is you were used to beautiful women in the DRC war, now you are after the cheap ugly ones here".

Joking is not as natural or spontaneous as it may be presented. As Bolton (2009) stated, joking tells a hidden story about the individual or group. Similarly, Plester (2009:585) notes that 'fun, though enjoyable, is not necessarily funny'. In many cases people use jokes to express ideas they might be criticized for if it was expressed otherwise. The joking gives them the space to deny they were serious. The way in which the joke is told brings laughter. For former soldiers jokes represent re-affirmation of a soldier's masculine being. Humour theorists claim that 'what makes humour funny is the

juxtaposition of incongruities and the recognition of contradiction and incoherence' (Jo Hatch and Ehrlich, 1993:518). The analogy of the AK 47 is used to depict the ways in which soldiers lack romance in their involvement with their current girlfriends. While there is truth in the joke, the shared history and context and the way in which the joke is told brings the laughter of military memories to the group. Tracy et al. (2006) emphasise that sharing jokes may be affected by generational differences, background and cultures: the men presented here are drawn together by their military past. While jokes can be a source of happiness and conflict among people who share them, the former soldiers all enjoyed the 'joking moments', which helped them transcend their current predicaments.

Sion and Ben-Ari (2009) studied Israeli military reserves and found out that humour allows a release from the boredom and repetition of daily experiences such as drills, parade inspection and sentry duties. According to Collinson (1988), jokes are able to deal with anxieties, by 'letting off steam'. Military life is structured in a way in which soldiers are always in groups. This gives soldiers time to share jokes, to 'take away' or 'rub-off' difficult moments. Even when jokes ridicule another person, soldiers make fun of it. Freud (1979) makes a distinction between jokes that are 'innocent' and those which are 'aimed' In the case of the former soldiers, the jokes, innocent or aimed, are utilized to deal with their current context and infuse some light-heartedness into their situations. Where they are shared within the group, jokes boost morale in situations of boredom. Even when the joke is aimed at someone or something; it reinvigorates group morale.

10.7. Healing or containment?

The chapter revealed how the two spaces with different kinds of support for the former soldiers offer seemingly contradictory results which the soldiers nevertheless try to integrate in rebuilding their lives. The spaces in which they search for healing are the Pentecostal churches and their own social space of comradeship and camaraderie which also takes an institutional form as a political organization (AMMOZA). Their past is constructed and understood differently within these different spaces. In church the men feel remorse about the past while in the camaraderie that same past is celebrated and even missed. Similarly, Hynes (1999) notes that there are two beings of a soldier: the one who was in war and the one in the aftermath. Many years after the war, the men presented here now realise that what they were doing in the course of their duties was wrong.

Through participation in both spaces, the intensity of the dreams is reduced. Vysma (2011) argues that the dream is not a re-experience, but a 'category of experience'. Thus because the dream is a category of experience in which the here and now interacts with the memory of what has happened, the telling of the dream to others consolidates the identity by linking the past and the present into a social (re-) connection. The men continue to seek healing in many ways but have come to a point where they have accepted the dreams and the pain that goes with them as an experience which is the result of their past involvement in war and political violence.

In order to understand the experiences of these soldiers and their 'being' and participating in both the church and the camaraderie group, I use the concept of 'transmigrants' as defined by Lomsky-Feder et al. (2008). The concept of 'transmigrants' can be defined

and understood differently in different contexts: Lomsky-Feder et al. (2008) studied the position of the military reserve forces in Israel and argues that that these forces were *hybrids* or *amalgams*. They were both soldiers and civilians, they are inside the military system yet outside it, they have lived and understand both spheres and, as continual migrants, they journey between the military and civilian spheres (cf. Vest, 2012). This concept can be used to refer to 'performative' identities: the men in my study carry and present themselves as civilian migrants in the church to other church members and become former soldiers in their own camaraderie group. This conceptualization can be used to illuminate the ways in which exiled soldiers view their participation in the church and the limitations of this participation. They are inside the church and also outside it; they journey within the sphere of the church and try to overcome the limitations of the camaraderie space. By moving between these two spaces, past identities are dealt with in different ways. Baines (2008) and Gibson (2010) show that the ex-conscripts in South Africa who fought in the Bush War also found their own healing spaces outside institutionalised spaces. Like the men in our study these ex-conscripts created their own 'safe spaces' for sharing painful memories.

Through hiding their past war and so-called violent identities (Gear, 2002 & 2005; Harris, 2006), the men deal with their experiences and current feelings of fear and distrust. Hiding their military past as a way of coping is normalised among the former soldiers. While many studies on Pentecostalism (Hunt, 2010; Jones; 2012; McGovern, 2012; Meyer, 1998; Núñez, (forthcoming); Tankink, 2007; Van Dijk, 1997) talk about the ability of Pentecostalism to forge a sense of belonging and to create social bonds, the fear

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and distrust among our protagonists inhibit them from becoming a full part of the family of migrants in Pentecostal churches. Even if they speak the language of the Pentecostal church where members refer to each other as brothers and sisters, in reality they do not feel that way as they do not share their past with the other migrants. They selectively choose from their biography what can be shared and what should be kept secret.

While Meyer (1998) notes that the role of Pentecostal churches is to help people to have a 'complete break with the past', it seems that healing is only temporary for these men. Past war and military experiences are difficult to break from. Similarly, Tankink (2007) describes the temporal effects of praying in the erasing of war memories among Pentecostal church members in Uganda. For the former soldiers the church remains a 'temporal space' where they are unable to openly share their painful war memories. Their past can neither be part of their testimonies or social interactions within the church. The question then is why these men continue participating in church. The response as stipulated above is that it at least offers them a temporary respite. Again the sharing of jokes and humour in the camaraderie space compensates somewhat for what the men lack in churches.

Despite the partial and temporary healing they get from the church, the men remain troubled by the fear of being caught by the military police and military intelligence; a fear that particularly manifests itself in their dreams. In addition, soldiers remain distrustful of the civilian migrants around them. I argue that fear shows how they are human after all, although they claim that they are better than civilians (cf. chapter 6 and 7). Fear shows how former soldiers in spite of their claims are vulnerable outside the army. Being

outside the barracks impacts on how they deal with this fear. Thus while they claim they cannot be led by a civilian (cf. chapter 8), they subject themselves to pastors because of fear and their limited choices of how to deal with nightmares. But of course this search for help is influenced by consideration of healing. As long as this fear and distrust is there, the pathway to healing is thwarted (cf. Tankink 2007:225). For healing to be effective for the majority of the exiled soldiers it should hinge on social, economic, psychological and political issues. The former soldiers, particularly those who deserted, strongly believe that the only way to deal with their invisible wounds is for the government of Zimbabwe to grant them amnesty so that they can return to Zimbabwe without prosecution or a military court-martial upon their return.

Pentecostal churches have the capacity to help at a spiritual level. Healing in the political sphere requires the work of the state, civil society, human rights groups and regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC). The deserters' need for amnesty is one that can only be met by the government of Zimbabwe. The latter would have some positive impact on healing, by ensuring that both the economic and political situation in Zimbabwe improves.

10.8. Conclusion

This chapter explored the ways in which former Zimbabwean soldiers in exile in South Africa continue to be haunted by past memories of war and political violence both as perpetrators and victims. Paying particular attention to how these men respond to their suffering, the chapter focused on two contradictory spaces: camaraderie and the church in

which these men tried to find healing. The healing they experience in the spaces of Pentecostal churches and the camaraderie group is experienced by these men as partial and temporal. This chapter revealed the difficulties of getting a complete healing, while there are unresolved political conflicts in their home countries and they are still being hunted by the state. The suffering of being haunted contributed much to the incompleteness of healing in both spaces. What is lacking are the preconditions needed for a more sustainable healing. The main precondition for these men, especially those who deserted, is to be granted political amnesty. Amnesty, they strongly believe, will pave a definite way for meeting other needs such as being reunited with their families, compensation and recognition for their participation in war and a pension for their service. Amnesty could help in the process leading to a more sustainable decrease of the bad memories that haunt the former soldiers than is possible in their present situation, living in exile. However, it seems to me that more is needed to support former soldiers in their struggle to come to terms with issues of morality, including in particular, the issue of guilt that haunts them in their dreams and issues of transmigration between the sphere of post-combat civilian life and the sphere of military life the men want to preserve. I argue here that a comprehensive approach to healing is needed; an approach that cannot be attained in a situation of exile.

In the next and final chapter I present concluding remarks on the ways in which army deserters can be understood. Even though this study covers a small sample, I do believe that their experiences are quite representative of Zimbabwe army deserters and those who

terminate their contracts with the army, and that it provides an overview to help understand such a group.

CHAPTER 11: Conclusion

This study of former combatants, army deserters and those few who succeeded in ending their contracts who live in self-imposed exile reveals several issues in their past and post-military life that has not been covered in the literature on former combatants elsewhere (cf. Lande, 2007; Mhanda, 2011; Woodward and Jenkings, 2011;Vencovsky, 2006; Vest, 2012). Contrary to the perception of Zimbabwean soldiers as perpetrators of political violence (Alexander, 2003; Muzondidya, 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Raftopoulos, 2009; Sachikonye, 2011; Worby, 2003), this study shows how those who joined the Zimbabwe National Army in post-independence Zimbabwe became victims of the Mugabe regime they served. My participants indicated that they did not join the army as members of any political party; this was in stark contrast to guerillas whose motive was political and part of the struggle to overthrow the previous regime of Ian Smith (see Alexander, 1998; Alexander & McGregor, 2004; Mhanda, 2011; Chung, 2006). Thus in post-independence Zimbabwe my participants thought they had joined a professional army. However, their expectations were dashed, both on the battlefield and in the barracks. To add to this, their own commanders victimised them if they were suspected of supporting the opposition political party, the MDC. They were punished with no or little consideration of their record as loyal soldiers. As noted, their reasons for desertion or the termination of their contracts was ultimately political: it was driven mostly by the politics inside and outside the barracks. While deployed in Mozambique and the DRC, they considered the actions of their commanders to be unprofessional (cf. chapter 3). This was in stark contrast to their expectations when joining; they expected the army to be a-political. They also expected the army to feed, clothe and equip them in a professional

manner. Although my participants were disappointed, what was striking is how they expressed and clung to their 'soldierly identities' in self-imposed exile. I have also argued that for my participants working for and with civilians (and sometimes attending Pentecostal church services) do not mean that they have been successfully integrated in civilian life.

Many of the existing texts about former soldiers take the difficulties of demilitarising the military mind in post-combat life for granted (Cilliers, 1995; Dzinesa, 2008; Gear, 2005 & 2002; Harris, 2006, Jaremey, 2004; Kingma, 2000a, Subedi, 2014). Some accounts fail to acknowledge that military training, as well as the context in which former soldiers return to civilian life, can reinforce a particular military subjectivity. The soldier 'made', is difficult to unmake. I argue that it is possibly easier to transform a civilian into a combatant than to re-transform a combatant into a civilian. It is difficult for former soldiers because the source of their identity is inspired by their past and their minds remain militarised.

My study on army deserters, and a few who managed to resign, reveals that the militarised mind is reinforced not only by former soldiers' (individual and collective subjectivities) but also by the context of exile which necessitates the utilisation of their deeply embedded military skills. I have responded to the question of why it is so difficult for my participants, all former soldiers, to return to being a civilian in their post-combat life, as well as why the men in my study deliberately chose not to do so. In post-combat life many former soldiers are expected to leave behind what they had learned and experienced in battle and in military formations. Yet, to do so seems impractical for my

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participants in their everyday lives in exile. Being in exile involves living in a terrain where they are faced by situations that demand the use of military tactics such as reconnaissance and patrol in security-related jobs, tactics acquired during military training and in war. Even though the group of former soldiers who participated in my study lived in civilian communities, their minds, bodies and ways of life continued to be militarised.

Demilitarization is usually perceived as a national and collective administrative process which former combatants are supposed to go through upon entering civilian life and does not particularly focus on individual combatants – which would seek to understand their subjective thoughts and everyday life experiences. The most critical objective of demilitarisation is commonly seen as removing the legitimacy of the use of violence, and the values that underpin it. Thus, in Gear's argument (2002), demilitarization involves the uprooting of ideologies that value and underpins the use of violence. In its broadest sense, the demilitarization process is perceived as one that moves beyond demobilisation and is designed to achieve a successful integration of ex-combatants into civilian life.

My argument is informed by other scholarly thinking about issues of demobilisation and demilitarisation (Alden, 2002; Cilliers, 1995; Clark, 1995; Cock, 2005; Dzinesa, 2008; Gear, 2005; Jaremey, 2004; Mashike, 2000; Kingma, 2000a; Subedi, 2014); however, it goes beyond this literature. Demilitarising the mind not only concerns undoing military training (which is difficult for my study participants) (cf. chapter, 6; chapter 7; chapter 8, chapter 9), it is also about undoing military skills. Military training transforms civilians into potential combatants and legitimises the use of violence as a natural and viable

means to counter difficult situations. Thus, soldiers are indoctrinated in order to mould them into ideal fighters. They are trained to become professionals in using arms, to protect the country, identify the enemy and kill 'the bugger'. It is not realistic to expect that all this 'soldiering' can be left in the barracks. Instead, as my research shows, the militarised body of my respondents is both consciously and unconsciously reproduced, well beyond national borders. I argue that it is not just particular kinds of bodies that are made through military training, but also particular kinds of subjectivity. My participants are physically disciplined and they have all sorts of techniques and habits inscribed into their bodies (embodied knowledge), but they are also constructed to think in certain ways. Their knowledge, their minds, are trained and disciplined. Their former training, in a sense, defies the mind/body distinction. My thesis indicates that a soldierly body-of-combat is difficult to discard because it is an embedded body that has been 'made' for specific purposes i.e. for battle. I argue that, through military training, ex-soldiers do have corporeal capacities, which they themselves understand, construct and utilise in the particular context that they find themselves in – i.e. of desertion and migration.

While the understanding of former soldiers has been premised on the view that their return to the use of threat, crime or use of guns can be explained by the lack of economic opportunities and their ultimate ability to utilise the military skills they have (Cock, 2001; Dzinesa, 2008; Harris, 2006; Mashike, 2004), there is a need also to go beyond this argument. I argue that we should not only concentrate on the idea of demilitarising former soldiers, but also actively try to perceive the former soldiers' subjectivity and military skills as a resource. Borrowing from Bourdieu's (1990) conceptualisation,

soldiers' skills are an enduring part of post-combat life. In my argument, the knowledge of using the gun (and the trained military body and mindset) is the only 'capital' some former soldiers possess in their struggle to survive in a violent society, and 'the mentality of the gun' is unavoidable. Sierra Tango refers to the gun as an alternative strategy to survive: "the only thing I know is the gun" (cf. Chapter 9, 9.1). Considering that my participants are former soldiers, who reside in an often-unwelcoming South Africa, holding on to their past military knowledge, training and experience positions them well within a competitive market economy. The gun remains a point of reference to sustain their lives. The fact that they do not have the gun does not necessarily mean that the gun is out of their minds. Instead they re-invoke the gun when it suits them to do so, where possession of the gun was normal. It is what I call the 'fantasisation of the gun'. In fact, former soldiers have an understanding of the positive side of the skills of using the gun; it pays. I refer to this as the 'gun-syndrome', which has contaminated the lives of many of the former soldiers in post-colonial Africa.

Their soldierly-ness continues to be reproduced in different ways in post-combat life. Thus their military identities include the renewal of military bonds and the continuation of a perception of themselves as soldiers, while others (including migrants from Zimbabwe) are dismissed as civilians. Because my participants left the army prematurely before their normal 20 years of service expired, for them the reproduction of military bonds is a symbol of pride about a past military life they once lived. Bonds created in exile show loyalty to the group. Above all, such military bonds represent a legacy of the army. These ex-soldiers miss army life, or at the least the camaraderie (socialities) of

soldiering. Military bonding is not particular to Zimbabwe; after all, there are clubs for old soldiers all over the world. But, in the case of my respondents, much of this relates to the intense shared experiences in, for instance, the DRC. Experiences that are hard to share with people who were not there. Not only are these ex-soldiers doing something with the enduring capacity of their military bodies, and with their enduring military subjectivities, they are also drawing on the (military) legacy of close social ties and forms of sociality that are hard to re-create in civilian life.

The continuation of military bonds outside the barracks/army helps them to retain a source of status which they had lost by deserting or resigning from the army. In a context of exile, recognition does not come from the state but from the group of other former soldiers and the nostalgic stories they can share. Their daily interaction as a group is facilitated by such war experiences, which defines and positions them in migrant communities. Their military past remains 'deployed' they can mobilise each other to collectively deal with the challenges they face as a group. Thus, I have argued that military identity is also embodied and is expressed through 'bodily disposition: the way they think, talk and interact with others in and outside their work/residence spaces. My thesis has also engaged with scholarly writing (Harris, 2006; Hoffman, 2011; Jaremey, 2004; Subedi, 2014; Vencovsky, 2006) which tends to assume that the persistence of military identities among ex-combatants is a source of future violence. In contrast, I have emphasised in my argument that such a military identity is also a resource with which to earn a living. Viewing military identity as only potentially violent obscures the fact that

the participants' military past is also productive in the community where they live, e.g. when they are employed by private security companies.

While the continuation of military identities in post-combat life can be seen as a current catchphrase for thinking about postcolonial violence, the question here is how we expect former soldiers to leave behind their military past when they continue to be marginalised by governments and migrant communities -which are often characterised by violence yet simultaneously find their knowledge and skills useful? Harris (2006) asks what the best way could be for such military identities to become demilitarised. For her, 'the challenge is how to demilitarise such masculinity by alternative, positive role models for men in peace-time' (Harris 2006:3 9). I argue that while former soldiers' military identity continues to exist in post-combat life, it is difficult to demilitarise a military past forged in hardship and sharpened through military socialisation and which may benefit society if used productively. To borrow the idea of 'entitlement' from Sen (1992), the continuation of military identity can be used as a form of an entitlement, i.e. who gets what and why. My participants perceive themselves as a special group of soldiers affected by politics in Zimbabwe, needing special attention from both the Zimbabwean and South African governments. Currently, former soldiers benefit from being employed in the security sector, a form of work they perceive as reserved for ex-soldiers. I have argued that such entitlement attached to the military past encourages former soldiers to cling to their military skills.

Subjectively, holding on to the identity of soldiers allows my respondents to retain a sense of self-worth. It is through being 'soldiers' that they self-actualise as members of a

'community of experience' (Vigh, 2006), in practices that I have called here *soldiering,* the act of remembering and sharing memories of their military past and the institutional structures of which they were once part. Thus, military skills are an embodied identity. To demilitarize a former soldier means to strip him of part of his being.

While my study participants try to maintain a soldierly being, they find themselves in a different country and context, outside the army and outside the barracks. Nonetheless, in exile in South Africa, the former soldiers take time to invest in the maintenance and strengthening of themselves and each other as 'soldiers in exile'. Clinging to their past military identity is also influenced by the way in which they left the army; their careers shattered by unfair 'politics in the barracks'. For my participants being soldiers is the only thing they are left with in an exile context. Thus, using my participants as a point of reference, one can use this case to extend it to other African former soldiers to enhance intervention. In particular army deserters military skills can be integrated to benefit them as individuals and at a more collective level, for their entire communities to achieve a lasting peace in post-colonial Africa.

How does one heal the military past of former combatants? For my participants they are yet to be granted political amnesty. Hence, any healing opportunity falls short of their attaining relief. I argue that as long as the military experiences continue to haunt former soldiers, issues of healing and thinking about leaving behind their past will continue to elude them.

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