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The potential of using Visual Problem Appraisal as a trigger for conflict transformation;
A case of Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe

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Dedication

To Stanley and Natasha, I cherish you always.

Abstract

Conflicts have been taking place in Zimbabwe since the colonial period, even after independence but they have increased over the past decade since the inception of the Fast Track Land redistribution exercise. These conflicts have remained latent over the years due to their sensitive nature in relation to political implications. Conflict hampers agricultural development and consequently food security. As such it becomes important for development institutions to consider addressing these conflicts. An investigation into the discourses surrounding land based conflicts in Matabeleland South in public spaces, through the immersion methodology was conducted by the researcher for 2 weeks. This entailed undercover observations by the researcher in public spaces such as markets, public buses, community gatherings and political rallies, with minimum interference by the researcher. The study went on to investigate the potential of using an analogy to trigger discussion on conflict transformation, with the aim of initiating a conflict transformation process in Matabeleland South province, in a series of 3 workshops. All the workshops were held at Matopos Research Institute and were facilitated by the researcher. An assistant facilitator was appointed to help with the logistics whilst an observer was also appointed to capture the stakeholders' perceptions. Filmed interviews, under the Visual Problem Appraisal series, which were produced in neighbouring KwaZulu Natal (KZN), South Africa, were used as an analogy. The KZN case depicted various conflict and rural livelihoods issues, which stakeholders made reference to, as a point of departure to talk about their own conflicts. The working hypothesis by the researcher was that since these two areas have a lot in common; such as historical land inequalities between the white minority and black majority, HIV/AIDS issues, gender inequalities, food insecurity among other rural livelihood issues, the KZN case could serve as a good analogy for Matabeleland South. At the end, workshop participants evaluated the strength of the methodology. Follow-up interviews were made after each workshop with selected informants, to get their perceptions on the analogy, as a validation tool from workshop findings. Results indicated that generally people in Matabeleland South do not talk about land based conflicts in public, especially the elderly. A few, who did, opted to express their selves metaphorically or in sayings. Conversely, a few youths under observation spoke more plainly about how the land based conflicts have affected food security in the country. These findings confirmed the need for rural development institutes to create a platform for people to talk openly about conflicts, which is an important step in initiating conflict transformation processes. Results from the second phase of the study, the VPA workshops, indicated that the analogy indeed triggered stakeholders to talk about their own situations, and they also confessed that they would otherwise have not talked about, if it were not for the inspiration they got from the cases presented in the VPA package. Overall, results from the 3 workshops conducted showed that 80% of the participants regarded the VPA analogy to be a useful tool in triggering discussion on sensitive matters, 18% had mixed feelings about the methodology while 2% of participants felt the VPA methodology is not a useful platform to initiate discussion on sensitive issues. Key informants confirmed in follow-up interviews that the VPA methodology remains useful as an analogy for Matabeleland South conflicts, but users have to first understand its modalities. The study concluded that use of an analogy was suitable in triggering conflict transformation discussions in situations where it was difficult for people to talk about conflicts due to associated negative implications. Non-agricultural activity on distributed land was highlighted to be one of the main perpetrators of land conflicts. Insecure land tenure also came out as an inhibitor to agricultural development, a condition which predisposes the area to more food insecurity, consequently leading to more conflicts.

Key words: Land based conflicts, discourse, conflict transformation, analogy, Zimbabwe

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List of abbreviations

ANC   African National Congress

CAMPFIRE   Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources

COMESA   Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

DR&SS   Department of Research and Specialist Services

EU   European Union

FAO   Food and Agricultural Organisation

FTLRP   Fast Track Land Reform Program

GAM   (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* or Free Aceh Movement)

GoZ   Government of Zimbabwe

HIV/AIDS   Human immuno-deficiency virus/ Acquired immune deficiency syndrome

KZN   KwaZulu Natal

MAMID   Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and irrigation Development

MRI   Matopos Research Institute

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation

VPA   © Visual Problem Appraisal

Chapter 1 Introduction

Among the major causes of food insecurity and poverty in many African countries are conflicts. Famines in recent times are almost always associated with conflict, either directly or indirectly (DeRose *et al*, 1998). Conflicts are also a common risk factor to livelihoods as they result in culturally polarised societies and weak institutions. This fosters civil strife and war (Food and Agricultural Organisation, 2002). More so; Alinovi (2007) asserts that local institutions, both formal and informal, have a critical role to play in conflict and food security. The absence and malfunctioning of these institutions consequently yield to impeded development among other undesirable effects.

The fast track land reform programme which began in year 2000, led to various social, political, and economic conflicts in Zimbabwe. As a result, the country faced food insecurity and a lot of migration occurred in search of livelihood options. The programme has aggravated poverty levels and inequality measures also worsened sharply during this period (Kinsey, 2009). These conflicts have not been addressed by development institutions because of their fragility in relation to political implications. Basset and Crummey (1993) supported this notion when he reported that some politicians have invoked land policies for partisan advantages. An analogy may have the potential to be used as a trigger for discussion on conflict transformation in Zimbabwe.

Analogies are logical arguments, serving the purpose of signifying similarities between two issues. Unlike metaphors, analogies may include literal similarities while metaphors are always non-literal (Gavetti, 2011). Analogies help provide insight by comparing issues less well known with those which are familiar. They can also be used as a platform to talk about issues that are otherwise not talked about because of their sensitive nature or when feelings are likely to be quite powerful or when opinions are varied. Analogies are a useful tool, not only for research, but also for brainstorming and analysing social processes. They encourage discovery of solutions and opportunities that may otherwise be unrealized when faced with problems or other situations through projection of inferences. Generally, analogies play an important role in creative thinking and problem solving and change processes (Gavetti, 2011; Gavetti, Levinthal & Rivkin, 2005).

South Africa and Zimbabwe are neighbouring countries and they share several similarities in relation to land reform, gender issues, poverty and food insecurity and HIV/AIDS epidemic. An example is the fact that both countries suffered land inequalities with 13% of the population of South Africa (whites) owning 87% of the land before independence (African National Congress, 2012), a case which is strikingly comparable with Zimbabwe's situation where white, large-scale commercial farmers (> 1% of the population) occupied 45 percent of all agricultural land before independence (Shaw, 2003). As such, methods and approaches to put land based conflict on the agenda in South Africa, might be able to trigger to make things discussable in Zimbabwe. One such methodology is Visual problem Appraisal (VPA) which was produced in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa from 2011 to 2012.

Visual Problem Appraisal is a film-based methodology for analysis and social learning, which is produced and used in settings of complex problems and the quest for sustainable rural development (Witteveen, Enserink and Lie, 2009). Narratives which were filmed in KwaZulu Natal (KZN) captured such complexities. These narratives captured in the films depict various socio-economic and political issues. The underlying working hypothesis of this study was that the films can be used as an analogy to discuss sensitive issues in Matabeleland South. Similarly, the expectation was that the films would provide a unique opportunity to begin challenging the politicised discourse and putting land-based conflicts on the agenda.

It is against this background that the study sought to investigate how effective these films can be, in triggering a conflict transformation process. The study is limited to the perceptions of stakeholders in Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe in relation to the land conflict as well as the potential for conflict transformation. The study is mainly rooted in Lederach's (2003) interpretation of conflict transformation which reflects a deep understanding of the nature of conflict itself. The study further explores the relevance of using analogies is addressing social complexities.

1.1 Justification

During or after a conflict, affected people often resort to 'sweeping issues under the carpet' in order to move on (Billikopf, 2009). However this mode of action may be disastrous in the long run as negative sentiments often 'turn inward' and conflicts may surge again. Talking issues over is one of the most important strategies in ensuring conflict transformation. However, direct confrontation may be difficult especially when conflict involves fragile actors and issues. This is the case with the fast track land reform program (FTLRP) based conflicts in Zimbabwe. Use of an analogy can be employed in order to talk about these issues and map the way forward. This involves use of a comparable scenario to initiate discussion. In this regard, interviews produced in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, which is comparable to Matabeleland South situation can be used as a basis for dialogue as it captured various comparable conflictive issues and social issues.

Considerable research work has been done on the post-independence history of Zimbabwe's land reform and has been extensively documented (Moyo, 1995, 1999, 2000; Moyo *et al*, 2009; Zikhali, 2008). However, much of the publications tend to be overtly negative and focus on short term, ad-hoc and anecdotal evidence of the nature of land acquisitions, land allocations, beneficiaries, land tenure and the use of land. Similarly publications have dwelled on historical perspectives without envisioning the future. As such there is comparatively little operationally relevant literature on conflict transformation in relation to the land reform based conflicts. This research therefore seeks to investigate the potential of conflict transformation, to the decade long conflict.

Conflict transformation is very fundamental for development institutions. As such, institutions should strive to have an understanding of the environment that they operate in including conflict dynamics. Conflicts directly affect stability of food security. Over and above the food stability dimension, conflicts are common risk factors to livelihoods as they result in culturally polarised societies and weak institutions. This necessitates institutions, both formal and informal, to have a critical role to play in conflict transformation and food security issues. Absence and/ malfunctioning of these institutions yields undesirable effects. As such, it becomes important for Matopos research institute, situated in Matabeleland South region of Zimbabwe, which is geared towards serving the region in terms of agricultural technologies, to have a stake in conflict and conflict transformation processes in the region. Matopos research work is grounded in the needs of the people in the Matabeleland South region such that what concerns the local people becomes the institute's concern as well. Therefore the institute's structures and functions should correspond efficiently to these social predicaments.

It is against this background that this study therefore seeks to investigate the potential of initiating conflict transformation through use of an analogy. The study will capture the perceptions of stakeholders in Matabeleland south, in terms of the land based conflicts and possibility of conflict transformation. The study will not focus on economic implications of the land reform programme, but focus will be on the possibility of instigating conflict

transformation and social inclusion through use of an analogy, in this instance, Visual Problem appraisal methodology which was designed to stimulate social analysis in multi stakeholder situations.

1.2 Objective and research questions of the study

The objective of this study is to investigate the discourses associated with land conflicts in Matabeleland South. It further investigates the potential of the VPA methodology as an analogy in triggering conflict transformation in Matabeleland South. The effectiveness of using an analogy in instigating conflict transformation is also explored.

Following on from the objective, the research questions were formulated as follows, with two main questions and several sub questions:

1. What discourse on land based conflict is used by people in Matabeleland South in public spaces?
   - What language do people use regarding land based conflicts?

   - What perceptions do people have regarding conflict transformation?

   - Which conflict transformation aspects are explicitly and implicitly identified by people in Matabeleland South?

2. How do stakeholders in Matabeleland South relate to the case of KwaZulu Natal (KZN) as presented in the VPA package?

   - How do the stakeholders in Matabeleland South region perceive the case of KZN?

   - Which conflict transformation aspects are explicitly and implicitly identified by the stakeholders?

   - How do the stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of an analogy as a platform to trigger discussion on sensitive issues?

1.4 Significance of study

This study intends to investigate options to initiate conflict transformation process to the long term conflict that occurred in Zimbabwe as a result of the deep land inequalities and divisions that existed between the white minority and the black majority people, leading to the inception of the fast track land reform programme. Recommendations will be made based on the perceptions of different key stakeholders under the study. The research is expected to build on the growing body of knowledge around land issues in Zimbabwe, with a focus on conflict transformation, through use of an analogy from KZN as a point of departure. These findings are expected to be used in appropriate policy recommendations designed to increase conflict transformation and peace building. Findings are also expected to be culminated into recommendations which may be used in drafting of conflict transformation strategies at organisational level or even the country at large. More research on conflict transformation and peace building is expected to be triggered.

Finally, this study is also of interest to the continuous developers and the growing community of users and of the VPA methodology, as new insights in the potential of the VPA packages for triggering discussions, learning and change might inspire new uses and new users of the methodology.

1.5 Thesis outline

In chapter 2, the study focuses on the literature review. Concepts of conflict intervention are explored. A special focus is paid to conflict transformation and its corresponding aspects; context, structure, actor, issue and personal transformations. The chapter also attempts to position the study on 'where we are now' and 'where we want to be' in terms of conflict transformation. The study continues to outline the land reform in Zimbabwe from the time the country gained its Independence in 1980 to the era of the FTLRP in 2000 to 2002. The study reviews the different stages of the land reform program and pays particular attention to the consequent conflicts. Use of VPA, serving as an analogy to the study, is also explored.

Chapter 3 explores the methodologies employed in the study. It starts by outlining the organisational context of the host institution, its mission and why the organisation should pay attention to conflict. Details of the methods used are further explored, that is the modalities of the ethnography study, the details of the workshops as well as the follow-up interviews. The summary of the research framework is presented and ethical considerations conclude the chapter.

Chapter 4 presentation the findings and the analysis from the 3 strategies carried out. Findings first indicate perceptions by the participants, followed by the researcher's interpretation. Secondary literature is referred to for validation of the findings, where applicable. Results are classified in the various sub-aspects of conflict transformation, as presented in chapter 2.

The final chapter 5 presents the conclusion to the study. It aims at attending to the objectives as well as the research questions of the study. It constitutes a summary of the findings and provides recommendations on conflict transformation as well as the use of analogies in social processes.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Understanding Conflict

Conflict is usually defined in terms of violence (behaviour) or hostility (attitudes). In other instances, it can be defined in terms of incompatibility or differences in issue position (Swanström and Weissmann, 2005). It is more than a mere disagreement. It is a situation where people perceive threats such as physical, emotional, power or status to their well-being. Notably, Burton (1997), distinguished between disputes about negotiable interests that can be settled by compromise, and more deep-seated conflicts that involve human needs and can only be resolved by removing underlying causes.

Conflict is not only destructive; it can serve as an opportunity to promote social inclusion by increasing connectors, and at the same time reducing the dividers between conflicting parties. As such, it is important to focus on commonalities to identify win-win solutions (Leeuwis, 2004). Conflicts are a unique opportunity for growth when resolved amicably. Trust can be built after realisation that relationships can survive challenges and disagreements. However, people wrongly tend to assume that one party has to win and the other party lose and that such differences can only be solved competitively.

Conflict is a normal part of organizations of systems. It can provide opportunities for growth through improved understanding and insight. Therefore understanding that conflict transformation can be a tool for development is fundamental. Organisations working in conflict zones can consider capitalising on the existing connectors amongst the conflicting parties to promote peace and enhance development. However, the tendency to view conflict as a negative experience caused by abnormally difficult circumstances, coupled by perceiving limited options and finite resources impedes conflict intervention. Similarly, the tendency to be too quick to conclude that a conflict has no possible mutually acceptable solution also impedes peace building.

Talking about conflicts is an important step in increasing opportunities of social inclusion. It has to be clearly understood that talking problems through may not be easy. Confronting issues may require acceptance to bear ridicule or rejection that may be accompanied. It also entails admittance that the parties may have contributed to the conflict and requires willingness to change. It is therefore necessary to deal with conflicts accordingly to enhance development. Many options exist in addressing conflicts, or conflict intervention, including conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

Conflict Intervention

Dealing with conflict or *conflict intervention* in this study will be defined according to Swanström and Weissmann (2005), as a change from destructive to constructive interaction between the conflicting parties. It has generally been used as a generic term to cover the whole range of positive conflict handling. There are different ways of conflict intervention according to Reimann (2004) and Miall (2007); these include, conflict management conflict transformation and conflict resolution. These terms suggest an increasing magnitude of scope of action with regards to intervention. *Conflict management* implies regulating and containing conflict in a constructive manner, without necessarily ending it, as the theory suggests that conflicts are ineradicable. *Conflict resolution* is a more comprehensive term which implies that the deep-rooted sources of conflict are addressed, although the term *resolution* itself carries a connotation that conflict is bad, and must be stopped. *Conflict transformation* on the other hand goes significantly beyond resolution as it entails a complete overhaul of the conflict. Below, is a table adapted from Lederach (2003) which seeks to clarify the conflict transformation concept, by distinguishing it from the conflict resolution

concept. These two concepts have been widely confused, unlike conflict management which is a stand-alone concept.

Table 1 Comparison between conflict resolution and conflict transformation

	Resolution perspective	Conflict Transformation perspective
The key question	How do we end something not desired?	How to end something destructive and build something desired?
The focus	It is content-centred	It is relationship-centred
The purpose	To achieve an agreement and solution to the issues creating the crisis	To promote constructive change processes, inclusive of but not limited to immediate solutions
The development of process	It is embedded and built around the immediacy of the relationship where the presenting problems appear	It is entered with responding to symptoms and engaging the systems within which relationships are embedded
Time frame	Short term	Mid to long term
View of conflict	It envisions the need to de-escalate conflict processes	It envisions conflict as a dynamic of ebb (conflict de-escalation to pursue constructive change) and flow (conflict escalation to pursue constructive change)

Source: Lederach, 2003, p.24

Theorists argue that present-day conflicts require more than the reframing of positions and the identification of win-win solutions. The conflict transformation concept implies a deep transformation in the institutions and discourses that reproduce violence, as well as in the conflict parties themselves and their relationships (Reimann, 2004). It is deeply rooted in relationships. This study will focus on conflict transformation. The land based conflicts currently being faced in Zimbabwe are best tackled by Zimbabwean people. It is important to understand the root causes of the current challenges and map the way forward, not necessarily through the intervention of an outsider, which is also a strong attribute of the theory, as opposed to the other schools of thought. In Lederach's words:

> Conflict transformation must actively envision, include, respect and promote the human and cultural resources from within a given setting. This involves a new set of lenses through which we do not primarily see the setting and the people in it as 'the problem' and the outsider as 'the answer'. Rather, we understand the long-term goal of transformation as validating and building on people and resources within the setting (Lederach, 1995 p.212).

Although conflicts can be dealt with at whatever stage, it is better to deal with them early as well as address the underlying causes. As shown in the diagram below, the lower spectrum of dealing with conflict usually work but are characterised by resurgence of conflict as the underlying causes are usually not addressed. Arbitration is conventional method normally used in court proceedings. However, it usually leaves bitter memories as one party is often forced into apologising to the other. As the spectrum of conflict goes higher, there is an increased possibility of the level of participation. This allows for deeper engagements and deeper handling of conflicts. This study will focus on the high spectrum of conflict handling. The aim is to move from the lower spectrums of conflict suppression currently being experienced in Zimbabwe as supported by Kinsey (2004), who stated that the government for long appeared not to regard the land issue as potentially conflict-inducing, to highest spectrum of conflict handling mechanisms, that is, conflict transformation.

Figure 1 Spectrum of conflict handling mechanism
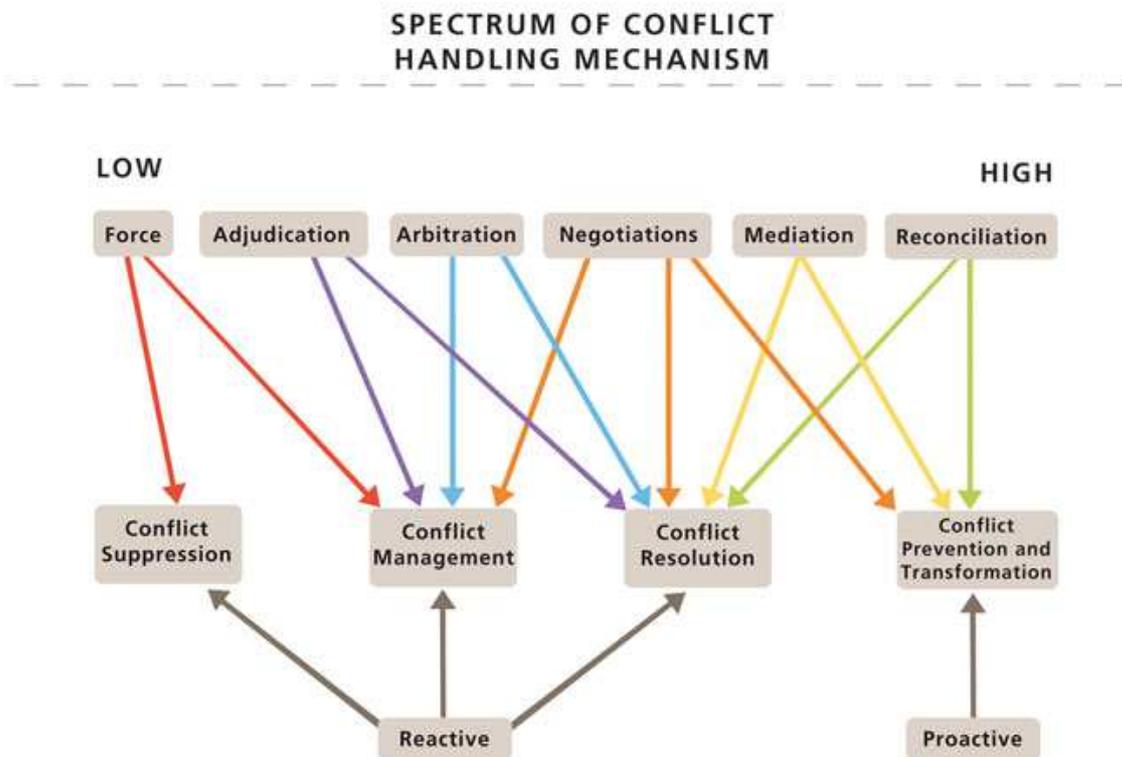
Source: Hogg and Vaughan, 2002. p. 610

Conflict transformation

Conflict transformation, as stated earlier, is one way of dealing with conflict. In this study, the conflict transformation will be defined as a complex process of constructively changing relationships, attitudes, behaviours, interests and discourses in conflict settings (Miall, 2004; Lederach, 2003; Väyrynen, 1991). Importantly, it also addresses underlying structures, cultures and institutions that encourage and sustain violent political and social conflict. In short, it is a comprehensive approach that attempts to unravel and understand the underlying conditions that led to conflict. In short, it can be defined as the capacity to envision conflict as having potential for constructive change. Conflict transformation is useful to Zimbabwe's current situation of conflicts and food insecurity as it has the potential to address these 'wicked problems.'

In order to have an in-depth understanding of Conflict transformation, different aspects have been distinguished. These include context, structure, actor, issue and personal transformations. The diagram below illustrates the concept of conflict intervention; and clearly identifies the intervention which this study will look at, and the corresponding aspects of conflict transformation.

Figure 2 Conceptual framework of conflict management
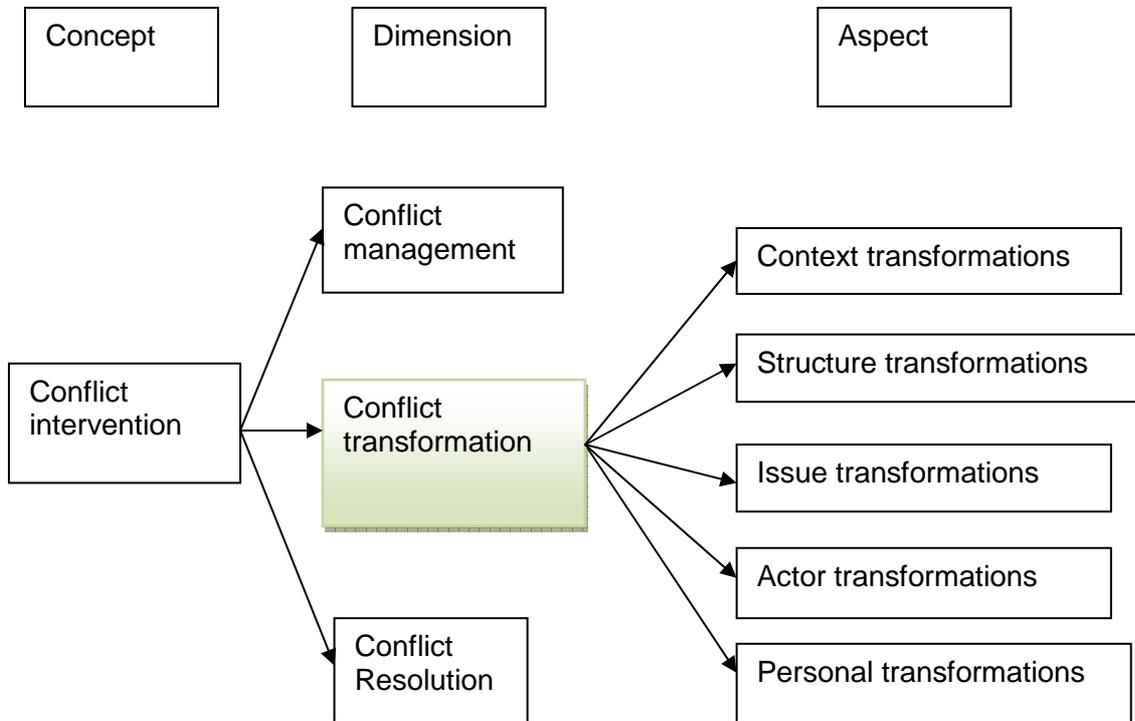
Source: Miall, 2007, p.10. Modified by author

Different aspects of conflict transformation usually take place at different times of the conflict. They tend to be sequential but do not always follow a linear pattern. As such, context and structural changes tend to take place over a longer timescale, while actor and issue transformations tend to take place over mid to long scale. With regards to scale, context transformations and issue transformations tend to be influenced by the wider regional and global context; actor and issue transformations are influenced by the national context while personal transformations usually happen at community and individual level (Ramsbotham, Miall and Woodhouse, 2011).

Context transformations deal with challenging the meaning and perceptions of conflict itself, particularly the respective attitudes and understandings of specific actors towards one another, according to Miall, 2007. They change the discourse through which the conflict is understood. Whereas context transformations deal with discourses, structure transformations deal with adjusting the prevailing structure of relationships (Sujatmiko, 2012). They also entail the surrounding social and political forms and institutions that determine these relationships. They may also denote a change in the existing social structure. Structure transformations are frequently nested in larger structures in the context (Sujatmiko, 2012).

Actor transformations on the other hand are concerned with modifying actors' goals and their approach to the conflict (Hattotuwa, 2004). They may also imply the emergence of new actors or change in existing actors (Väyrynen, 1991). Actor transformations may be internal, meaning change in the goals and priorities of the involved parties that directly impact upon the transformation process or external, meaning addition or subtraction of actors in the conflict (Sardar, 2008). Usually actor transformations do not denote individuals, but fixed institutions or organizations of material interests and mental formations, not only influenced by the wider context in which they operate, but also influence the environment consciously. Actors combine sub-groups and constituencies with a range of interests and share common interest, purpose, or shared fate, which is usually constructed by leaders. The actors have a sense of identity, which create the oneness which enables the group to act. A strong component of this 'actor-ness' is the collective willingness to pursue agreed goals (Miall, 2007).

Issue transformations involve redefining the issues that are central to the conflict in question as well as reformulating the position of key actors on those very issues. (Sujatmiko, 2012; Miall, 2001). They entail a change in the way in which the parties relate. These transformations shape relations in the long run.

Personal transformations on the other hand deal with individual or a small groups' willingness to change their perceptions over the conflict. Conciliatory gestures by leaders contribute as a driving force towards such transformations (Bloomfield, Fischer and Schmelzle, 2006).

The table below shows the different dimensions of conflict transformations, their attributes and corresponding examples.

Table 2 Conflict transformation: A multi dimensional task

Type	Attributes and Examples
Context transformations	Change in the international or regional environment around the conflict. -Aceh peace Agreement (2005)[1].
Structure transformations	Change in the local or national environment through adjusting structural relationships, power distributions and socio-economic conditions that perpetuate the conflict. -Steve Biko's Black Consciousness movement[2].
Actor transformations	Modifying and/ changing actors' goals and their approach to pursuing these goals. -Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for Mediterranean partners (EUROMED)/ Barcelona Process[3].
Issue transformation	Redefining issues that are central to the prevailing conflict, and reformulating the position of key parties on those contested issues. -Changes in the identity system of Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda[4].
Personal transformations	Changes of heart or perspectives within individual leaders or small groups with decision-making power -Ban lifting by former South African President, F W de Clerk[5].

Source: Miall, 2004, p.10. Modified by author

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[1] Accepting the Peace agreement entailed that the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) leaders in Sweden had to alter their image as a peaceful organisation. Similarly the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) supported territorial of Indonesia (Sujatmiko, 2012).

[2] Steve Biko raised awareness of the power of the poor people in the townships in South Africa, and the Anti-Apartheid Movement assisted to press the case for dis-investment by foreign-owned businesses well before the end of the apartheid era (Miall, 2004).

[3] EUROMED, formerly known as Barcelona peace process, is an association formed as an EU initiative. The association allow former conflicting countries to come together and address areas developmental such as economy, environment, energy, health, migration and culture. Available at: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/external_relations/relations_with_third_countries/mediterranean_partner_countries/r15001_en.htm

[4] Human rights watch (1999). Available at: http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1999/rwanda/

[5] Former South African President, F W de Clerk lifted a ban black political organisations leading to Mandela's release after spending 27 years in prison (Bertelsmann, 2004).

2.2 Land reform

The land reform in Zimbabwe officially started in 1979 with the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement, in a bid to distribute land more equitably between the black majority and the white minority (Shaw, 2003). The white, large-scale commercial farmers (less than 1 percent of the population) occupied 45 percent of all agricultural land, of which 75 percent was found in the most agriculturally productive areas (Shaw, 2003). The move therefore was to resolve the almost century old conflict as the country had been colonized and ruled from 1890 to 1979 (Kinsey, 2004). Other reasons for the exercise included provision of opportunities for war victims and landless, reduction of population pressure in the communal lands as well as expansion of production as more people were expected to venture into agricultural production.

The table below shows a summary of the events that took place since the inception of the land reform program in Zimbabwe, with the corresponding dates.

Table 3 Land redistribution events since Zimbabwe's independence

Date	Events
1979/80	Lancaster House Agreement. Matched funding for voluntary sales only. Compensation: full market price, exchangeable to foreign currency
1983	Stalling of the land reform and resettlement programme (LRRP)
1991	Amended constitution, allowing compulsory acquisition of land with minimum compensation or right to appeal
1992	Land Acquisition Act. The right of the government to acquire land by Compulsion
1997	Decision to implement the 1992 Act and undertake compulsory purchase of Land
1998 (Sept)	International Conference held. Donor support pledged for voluntary sales only. Various means of support: loans, grant, etc
1998 (Nov)	Compulsory acquisition orders issued. Dispossessed farmers to be compensated ('fair market-value'). Donor condemnation. IMF responds by delaying loan
2000 (May)	Amendment to the constitution and the 1992 Act, permitting compulsory acquisition of land without compensation
2000 (July)	FTLR programme started: land repossessed without compensation

Source: Neil, 2003, p. 707

The pace of the reform program was slow as the reform was based on willing buyer willing seller basis from 1980 to 1997. The fast-track land reform program (FTLRP) took precedence from 2000 with the primary objective of accelerating both land acquisition and redistribution. As a result, the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) appointed a commission to look into the drafting of a new constitution which warranted that the GoZ would no longer be obliged to pay compensation for acquiring land except for infrastructural improvements. This new constitution meant that displacement could be done without adequate compensation as the former colonial power ceased to support the exercise. However, this exercise resulted not only in land conflict but also an international uproar which left the country facing food insecurity, a country which previously produced surplus grain for export and this earned the country a title of breadbasket Southern Africa (Moyo, 2004).

Although it is unarguable that land reform is an essential part of a post-colonial government, the way the FTLRP was conducted in Zimbabwe gave rise to conflict. It is also undeniable that the land reform issues were used politically, in the same approach that they were used politically during the colonial era. As such, the FTLRP was used politically as a basis for building a power base (Matondi and Dekker, 2011). The situation was worsened by the fact that land issues remained latent over years. Maposa *et al* (2010) supported this notion when they reported that the land redistribution exercise remained a latent conflict; as it dominated the political agenda since 1980 although no explicit structural signs were evident. In this instance, the interpretation of conflict as 'a clash of antithetical interests and values' by Berghof Foundation (2012, p.10), clearly applies. Some authors however argue that the program addressed, to a greater extent, the country's 'worrisome legacy of historic injustice, social and racial inequities and also broadened the base of economic participation' (Moyo, 2004).

People who directly depended on working on commercial farms as a source of livelihood were faced with severe food insecurity. National food security was threatened due to the fact that experienced commercial farmers were replaced by less experienced ones who were geared towards subsistence production. This was worsened due to the constraints faced by public extension agencies which made them unable to meet the increased demand for extension services. Cases were reported, where people who seized commercial farms did not have agricultural skills to utilise the land, and this led to absentee land holders and fallow lands. In addition, when commercial farms were seized, the farm workers were evicted off the land as well, leaving very few farms in actual production. This perpetuated rampant food insecurity throughout the country and a lot of conflicts arose, as was already established Kinsey (2004; Moyo 2000).

Conflicts have also arisen as the land tenure, post the FTLRP era, remains uncertain and an emotive issue that polarises opinion. Resettled households have endured years of tenure uncertainty and this hampers productivity and consequently agricultural development.

2.3 The potential of VPA as a methodology in Social Learning Processes

Videos have been widely used in the field of medicine to depict reality in instances where it is necessary to expose students to scenarios they would not otherwise have the opportunity to see, such as medical procedures (White 2007). Similarly in social sciences, videos, including VPA, have been successfully been used in educational settings. Videos can also be a useful tool in dealing with social processes. However, to deal with the complexity of rural development, standardised processes are usually inadequate. Each issue and context requires different solutions. Different stakeholders therefore need to engage in sharing of knowledge and perspectives, manage conflicts and create mutual understanding and have shared goals. To attain this, mediation is vital. Unless the marginalised groups are reached out to, critical views may remain unheard. In order to address these limitations, visual aids can be used. This is supported by Lie and Mandler (2009), who stated that video production is a powerful medium that can be produced at low cost and yet has the potential to reach mass audiences. Visual Problem Appraisal (VPA) is one such a video production which can be used in rural development. VPA is a film-based methodology for analysis and social learning, which is produced and used in settings of complex problems and sustainable rural development. It deals with interdisciplinary and interactive approaches on issues like food security, land rights governance, environmental, water issues among other issues. As such, VPA can be a method to address such complex issues. It is rooted in participatory approaches such as participatory rural appraisal and participatory learning and action (Witteveen and Lie, 2012). It consists of documentaries and filmed portraits which depict various social scenarios.

VPA learning empowers with skills, knowledge and attitudes to staff dealing with society. The training of VPA is participatory, interactive and competence based. The skills acquired from scoping, stakeholder consultation, and selection enhances capacity to link research, theory and practice in investigation for problem identification, analysis and conflict transformation for a better and equitable society. Depending on time, groups of learners or users and the intentions of the facilitators, this may culminate into an action plan used for multi-stakeholder meetings, intervention designing, agenda setting, lobbying and policy influence.

VPA incorporates the livelihood framework which was postulated by Chambers and Conway (1991) which is gender sensitive. To this effect gender issues are articulated and mainstreamed in the problem analysis, identification and proposed interventions. VPA offers 'users' including students, researchers, policy makers and development professionals involved in interactive change processes among other concerned stakeholders, a 'mediated' encounter with small scale and commercial farmers, fishermen, a miner, a community health worker, a migrant worker, a landscape painter, people living with HIV/AIDS, policy makers and other actors through a series of filmed interviews. It empowers them with appreciating reflexivity when critically analysing dynamics in livelihoods, gender, and how to interact with society with a no harm outcome.

To date, four VPA packages have been produced namely in Guyana, Surinam and French Guyana – "Rice from the Guyana's" produced in 1996, in India – "Kerala's Coast" produced in 2003, in Ghana, Tanzania, Zambia – "AIDS and Rural Development in Sub-Saharan Africa" produced in 2008 and in South Africa – "Rural Livelihoods in KwaZulu-Natal" produced in 2012[6]. More VPA productions are anticipated. This study made use of the Rural Livelihoods in KwaZulu Natal case. Narratives filmed in KwaZulu Natal, in addition, captured the stories of the otherwise 'overlooked' stakeholders such as the elderly, the poor, the sick and other marginalised stakeholders. These narratives depicted various socio-economic and

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[6] see www.visualproblemappraisal.org

political issues. VPA KZN comprises of 2 documentaries, 28 filmed interviews and accompanying graphic material. The 28 filmed narratives give audiences a chance to explore the complex and conflictive arenas of rural livelihoods in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. These films also have the potential to be used in other areas, which share similarities with cases in KZN, such as Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Study Area

The study was carried out in Matabeleland South region, Zimbabwe. It is one of the 10 provinces in Zimbabwe. It forms one of the gateways into South Africa. It has an area of around 55,000 km² (out of 390,000 km² of the whole country) and a population of approximately 650,000. Gwanda is the capital of the province. The predominant language spoken is Ndebele, which originated from the Zulu language, which is widely spoken in KwaZulu Natal. This can act as an added advantage in understanding the videos, especially those which were recorded in the native language.

Matabeleland South lies in one of the hottest and driest regions in the country. The predominant agricultural activity is livestock production. Due to the extensive nature of livestock production, the region forms one of the provinces with the largest agricultural land per head. The region is also popular for wildlife as it houses one of the country's popular national parks called Matobo national park.

Figure 3 Map of Zimbabwe showing the study area
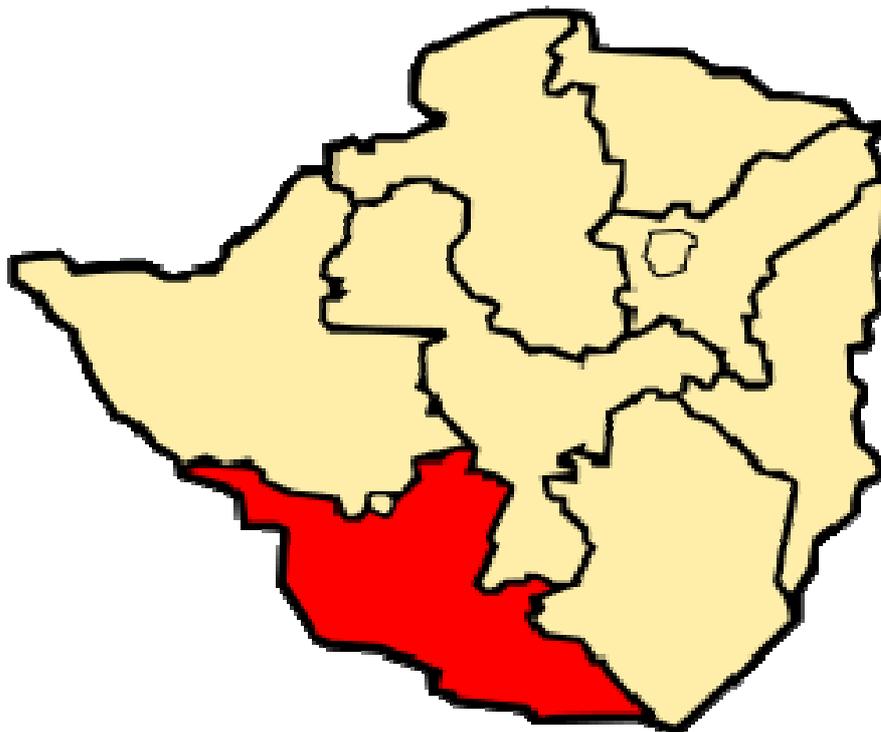
Source: Wikipedia, 2013

3.2 Organizational Context

Matopos Research Institute (MRI) is the largest of four livestock research institutites in the Department of Research and Specialist Services (DR&SS) under the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and irrigation Development (MAMID). It was established in 1903.The work of the institute is primarily concerned with extensive and semi-intensive land use in an environment where rainfall is low to medium and highly variable. As such, research is directed towards developing technologies for sustainable crop and livestock production, within a semi-arid environment.

The mission of MRI is to provide and promote innovative research based technologies, knowledge and information for an improved livestock and crop productivity for attainment of food security. MRI does not only develop technologies for sustainable livestock production but also promotes appropriate agricultural technologies, offer support and extension services and farmer training. Research is demand driven research and this implies that any negative forces in the communities affect the institution as well. Unless communities are socially stable, research technologies, especially concerned with livestock production are unlikely to be adopted by farmers as they tend to be long term. It is therefore important for MRI to pay attention to conflict.

Since livestock production usually requires large pieces of land, the institute is directly affected if clientele have land disputes. The institute also depends on other producers for breeding stock and other services hence it becomes useful for the institute to pay particular attention to conflict transformation, especially pertaining to land in the region.

3.3 Strategy, sampling procedure and sample size

The type of research was mostly qualitative. It combined descriptive, explorative and evaluative aspects. The main approach was using an analogy to trigger discussions on conflict transformation. The data used was based on literature, and empirical data. Methods for data collection included, but not limited to ethnography study of members at community level, workshops with different stakeholders as well as follow-up interviews with selected informants.

The ethnography study entailed a random selection of people in public spaces, and undercover observations were made by the researcher. The researcher was listening to conversations on the bus, on markets and also attended community gatherings and political rallies, and was focusing on discourse on land conflicts. Discourse is not merely a language; it is actually a social practice which culminates into stereotypes and prejudices. As such, informal everyday communications are more important than professional interference. From discourses, *common truths* were established and this data served as background data for the next phase of the study. The corresponding body language was also observed. The researcher mostly did not interfere with the people under observations except for a few instances where the researcher engaged in conversation. This research strategy is especially suited for gathering data when studying complex or more or less subconscious processes, process of power and control, communication patterns and conflicts (Verschuren and Doorewaard, 2010).

For the second phase of the study, audiences were systemically sampled to get an unbiased representation. The audiences were drawn from various development institutes in Matabeleland south including universities, NGOs, farmer organisations, extension services and individual farmers. The 3 workshops consisted of 20, 15 and 14 participants (excluding the researcher and a co facilitator) respectively. The first workshop was carried out with MRI staff only while the other 2 workshops were carried out with external stakeholders.

Follow up interviews were done with strategically selected informants to get a representatives from academia, government departments, NGOs, politicians and farmers in order to get as diverse opinions as possible. Selected participants were interviewed a day after the workshop for validation purposes. The summary of the participants of all the activities is illustrated below:

Table 4 Constitution of participants

Method of Data Collection	Organisation	Number of Participants
Ethnography study	The general public in Matabeleland South region	Undefined
Workshop 1	MRI technicians	20
Workshop 2 and 3 (Combined)	Commercial Farmers	2
	Communal Farmers	4
	MRI technicians	2
	Agritex Extension officers	2
	LSU University Lecturers	2
	NUST University Lecturers	1
	ICRISAT officers	2
	Veterinary Department	2
	Councillors	1
	Traditional leaders	1
	ORAP officers	1
	EMA officers	1
	National Parks personnel	1
	NADF	2
	Students (on attachment at MRI)	5
Follow-up interviews after the workshops	MRI technicians	1
	LSU University lecturer	1
	Councillor	1
	Communal farmer	1
	ICRISAT officer	1
	EMA officer	1

3.5 Data collection and analysis

A study of literature was undertaken based on the theories of conflict intervention. These include conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation. Literature search was also done to get background information on the fast track land reform programme in Zimbabwe. Background information on VPA was explored similarly.

To obtain empirical data, a preliminary ethnographic study was carried out in the peri-urban community in Matabeleland South. The key purpose of the ethnographic study was to investigate the discourses associated with land based conflicts, and how ordinary Zimbabweans in Matabeleland South, perceive the conflicts. The researcher spent a period of 2 weeks observing the language that people in Matabeleland South use with regard to land based conflict and conflict transformation, culminating into discourses. Undercover observations were made in public spaces such as markets, public buses, community gatherings and political rallies (see annex 1 for checklist). Private visits were not regarded in the study. The researcher mostly did not interact with the people under observation although periodically, the researcher would engage in conservations, for purposes of further probing.

The second phase involved conducting of workshops. Participants were drawn from the from Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development; Ministry of Environment, NGOs working in the area, local Universities, students, politicians, farmer organisations and farmers (newly resettled and displaced) and former commercial farm workers. Participants were first trained on the modalities of use of VPA which was facilitated by the researcher, after which, they watched different pre-recorded interviews in groups of fours for the first workshop and groups of threes for the subsequent workshops. Each group watched one pre-recorded interview which captured conflicts, livelihood and other developmental issues. After watching interviews, in a plenary session, each group presented their summary of the interview, and also gave a reflection of their interview using flip charts; with guidance from a checklist provided (See annex 2). When all the individual groups had presented their reflections, plenary discussions were held with guidance from a checklist (See annex 3). The session was facilitated by the researcher. To end the plenary session, an appraisal of the methodology was done.

Two assistants were appointed by the researcher as 'observers' to capture the discussions and make observations on gestures and body language for comprehensive understanding individual perceptions (See annex 4 for examples). Each session ran for one day from 08.30am to 16.30 pm. The sessions were spread in three weeks to allow ample time for logistical arrangements.

At the end of each training session, follow-up interviews were made with selected representatives to get individual perceptions on the use of an analogy to trigger discussions on conflict transformation. (see annex 5 for detailed questions), Interviews served the purpose of an in-depth investigation on the extent of usefulness of the VPA methodology in triggering conflict transformation as well as its usefulness in other social processes such as policy formulation and development consultancy. These results also aided in the validation of results obtained from the plenary discussions.

Data collected was qualitatively analysed through defined criteria, that is, they were classified as being context transformations (which deal with the society in conflict and the wider international and regional level), structure transformations (which focus on the entire structure of relationships and power distribution, issue transformations (which deal with reformulations of positions), actor transformations (which look at internal changes) and/or personal transformations (which involve perceptions at individual or small group level). Discourses were also analysed in the same way. The potential of VPA KZN as an effective analogy for Matabeleland South was also evaluated. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made for the host institution and Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development as well as related institutions. The research framework used is summarised in the illustration below[7]:

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[7] See annex 6 for the actual time of activities.

Figure 4 Research framework
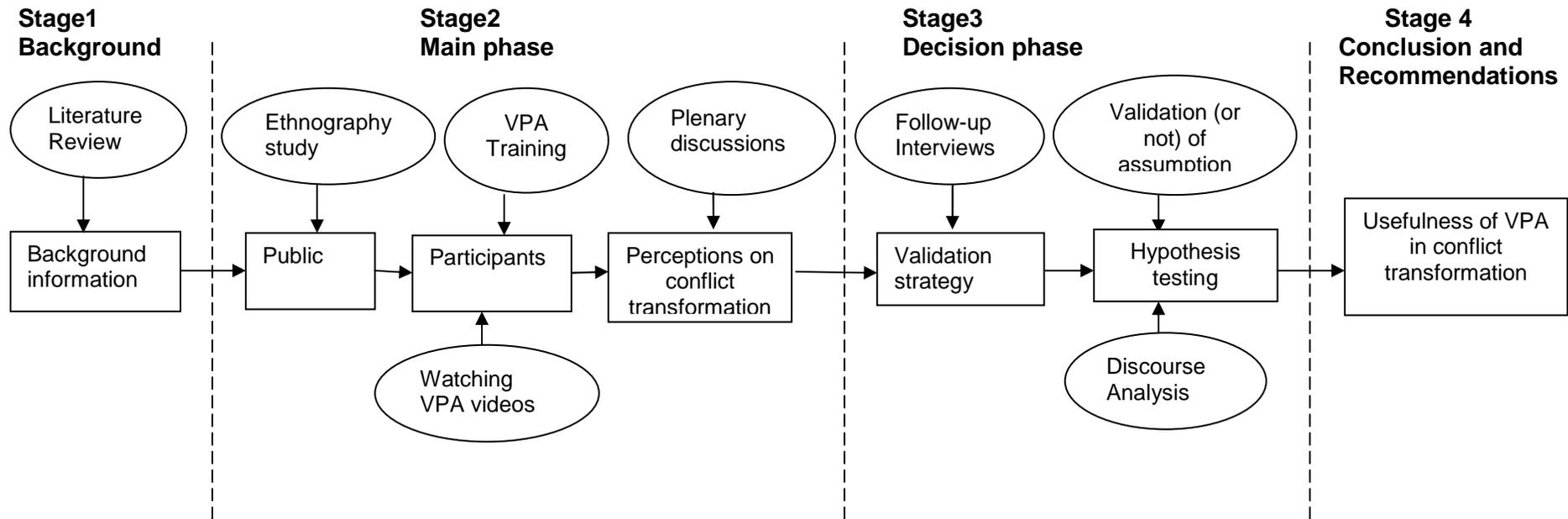
Source: Author

3.5 Ethical considerations and limitations of the study

Names of participants were not captured in the study for confidentiality reasons. Consent was first sought from the participants and adequate information was provided on the objectives of the study. No media personnel were allowed to capture workshop proceedings. Participants were informed that all data generated was purely for academic purposes only.

The study was carried out around the time when the country was having its presidential elections. Respondents could have left out important factors pertaining to conflict transformation due to fear of possible victimization and political implications.

Another limitation was that the study was qualitative in nature and findings may not be sufficiently generalized due to the limited number of participants involved.

Chapter 4 Results and Analysis

4.1 Ethnography study

Discourses around the land based conflicts in Matabeleland South

The first phase of empirical data collection involved a 2 week ethnographic study, or an immersion period where the researcher observed the language used by ordinary people of Matabeleland South in relation to land based conflict transformation. Observations were made by the researcher in the peri-urban public spaces with the aid of a checklist.

Firstly, the researcher noted that the mood was generally sombre with a lot of people avoiding to speak sensitive issues in public as the country was anticipating elections. Although a few individuals, generally the youth, spoke plainly on their views on the land based conflicts, most individuals resorted to expressing their selves in sayings[8]. The researcher noted that the saying, *son of the soil*, popularly used. The term is used to distinguish a Zimbabwean from a foreigner, vividly gives a picture on how people in Matabeleland, or even the whole country at large value land as a resource. The researcher interpreted the terminology to carry a connotation that people in Matabeleland South believe that land should be owned by black people.

Secondly, statements such as, "may God intervene in the Zimbabwean situation" or "It shall be well if God wills" commonly referred to by people were interpreted by the researcher as an indication that people in Matabeleland south long for the current situation of conflict resulting to food insecurity to change. However, they believe that an external influence can transform the situation. The researcher also attributes this thinking to the fact that it is difficult for people to act as the issue is politically fragile.

Again, the researcher noted that as people speak, they associate land conflicts with politics, even other conflicts involving natural resources such as minerals and water resources. This makes it difficult for people to openly talk about these conflicts for fear of being negatively implicated. As such conflict transformation both a 'fuzzy reality' to tackle in the area. This is because of the complexities surrounding the subject. An attempt to tackle land based conflicts is likely to be interpreted by stakeholders as a political (party) initiative.

The researcher also noted that most findings were recorded from observations done at the main market. The researcher interpreted this finding to be as a result of the direct link between agricultural produce and land issues. Further findings were identified as specific aspects of conflict transformations and explored below:

Context transformation

This transformation was widely identified by the researcher during political rallies where the term 'sanctions' was constantly referred by orators as a major contributor to the crisis and the associated conflicts the country is currently facing. This finding corresponds with what Mbanje and Mahuku (2011) reported. They iterated the negative effect of sanctions when they reported that the former United Nations Secretary General, Annan, highlighted that sanctions imposed by the EU on some elites are a blunt instrument which hurts large numbers of people who are not their primary targets.

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[8] Sayings or proverbs were in the local language, the original meaning may be lost during translation.

Structure transformations

Issues pertaining to structure transformations, which deal with changes in power distributions, did not come out explicitly during the immersion period. The researcher attributed this finding to the fact that people in public spaces preferred not to talk about power issues as the country was anticipating, council, parliamentary as well as presidential harmonised elections.

Issue Transformations

As has been established, issue transformations deal with reformulations of positions around the conflict. The elderly citizens generally perceived that for land based conflicts to be addressed, land does not necessarily need to be redistributed, however, those individuals who currently have the land should make it productive so that the country can become food secure. One elderly citizen[9] under observation also supported this notion through the saying "A hungry man is an angry man". NATO, in their article 'A hungry man is an angry man' supported the notion that food insecurity poses a high risk of instability.

The youths[10] tended to be more open and their perceptions were different from the perceptions of the elderly. One interesting observation made by the researcher was of a young man travelling with a colleague on a public bus. He iterated that he has noted with concern that local butcheries have inconsistent supply of beef and dairy products, which include fresh and sour milk. He also said that the market place, which is the main vegetable market place, is faced with fluctuating supplies of fresh farm produce such as tomatoes, cabbages, onions, spinach, potatoes, and fruits among other produce. He said if it were not for produce from the neighbouring South Africa, then the situation would be worse. He said that farms which are located along the region towards the nearby city, Bulawayo, have remained fallow for relatively long periods with very little agricultural activity taking place. He perceived that giving land back to the former white commercial farmers would address the land based conflicts and food insecurity the country is facing. The researcher found this notion to be unusual compared to the fact that many other young people upheld the owning of land by black people as evidenced by the saying son of the soil.

Actor transformations

No comments or discussions were observed or heard that could be classified as actor transformations by the researcher. This might be because was not asking any leading questions, to probe people to speak about these transformations. The researcher interpreted this finding to be one limitations of the ethnography methodology. As such it is important to use this methodology in combination with another methodology to get a more balanced data set.

Personal transformations

A remarkable observation which was made by the researcher during a community gathering was that when issues pertaining to the crisis situation the country is experiencing, were raised, people (women) whom were sitting within the reach of the researcher were mumbling and acting as if it was not their concern. The researcher linked this behaviour to personal transformations and interpreted that the people in Matabeleland south tend to 'Other' personal transformations. There are tendencies that if need be for personal transformations,

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[9] According to the researcher; an elderly citizen is a person estimated to be around 60 years and above.
[10] A youth is a person with an estimated age of 30 years and below.

then 'Other' people have to transform, implying that they do not take an active responsibility in conflict transformation. This notion is supported by Jensen (2011) who stated that the *othering* concept is a way of identity formation. There is a general tendency to blame the 'system'. Again the researcher made an observation that people isolate themselves from land based conflicts and associate these conflicts with politicians.

4.2 VPA Workshops

In the second phase of the study, 3 VPA workshops were organized. The first workshop was held with MRI staff members while the subsequent workshops were held with different stakeholders. The following results we recorded:

Stakeholders' perceptions on the VPA KZN case

From the VPA interviews[11], narratives by Zamo Mchumu, who at the time of recording was the acting senior general manager Food Security and Rural Development, of the DAE & RD, in Pietermaritzburg, sparked an intense comparative discussion on the manner in which the land reform was conducted in the 2 countries. He spoke at length about the land reform program in South Africa. He highlighted that land redistribution in South Africa was based on a 'willing buyer-willing seller' basis. Participants recognized that this was the same case with Zimbabwe before the FTLRP; however after the inception of the FTLRP, land was ceased from white farmers with or without their consent. This discussion was a positive indication of the usefulness of the analogy as participants spoke about their own land reform problem, which is usually a 'taboo' for people to evaluate. This also forms a stepping stone into the conflict transformation process, as conflict transformation entails understanding the underlying cause of the conflict in question.

Zamo went on to talk about distribution of land under conservation. He indicated that local people in South Africa had the choice to lease out their land to professional hunters, and benefit from the proceeds. This was also found to be a comparable scenario with the CAMPFIRE project in Zimbabwe, where the local people surrounding game reserves benefit from their resources. The objectives of the project include awareness campaigns for local people to conserve fragile ecosystems, to curb conflict between agricultural development and wildlife management, to increase income for locals, to improve nutrition by making game readily accessible to the local population among other management and sustainability issues as noted by Frost and Bond (2007). These findings came out in the third workshop, and elaborations of the CAMPFIRE project were given by the councillor.

Another point of discussion raised by Zamo was that in South Africa, state land was also considered for land redistribution. Participants in the first workshop noted that, in Zimbabwe, the land reform program primarily targeted private owned land. This finding was also interpreted by the researcher to be a positive indication of the suitability of the South African VPA to be an effective analogy as it stimulated participants to ponder about their own situation. Participants who had limited knowledge acknowledged that the workshop did not only make them think about their own conflict transformation, but they also learnt more facts about the land reform programs, of both South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The narratives by a white sugarcane farmer, Haydn Perceival, based in Gingindlovu, in the Central area of Kwazulu Natal, highlighted that distribution of land to people who came from different areas, and did not know the area well, has disadvantages. He also cited that the new people would have no networks thus hindering productivity. Stakeholders in

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[11] See Annex 7 for interview details

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Matabeleland South also related to this predicament where new farmers who were given land from other areas did not have information about the area and this consequently led to farmers venturing in the wrong farming enterprises. For instance, some participants reported that in areas they were coming from, some new farmers ventured into maize production, which is not viable in Matabeleland South due to the low rainfall the area receives, instead of livestock production. Farming goes beyond land ownership. It also entails business planning, financial management, marketing issues amongst other networks. Such testimonials were interpreted by the researcher as a stepping stone for stakeholders look into such anomalies.

Another white sugarcane farmer, Konrad Römer hailed the same sentiments as Elphas Hlatshwayo, a retired farm labourer and Rodney Khumalo, a pig farm manager in a repossessed farm, that land is being taken away from capable producers and being given to people who do not have adequate farming skills, rendering the land unproductive. To this effect, stakeholders in Matabeleland south related well. An example was cited, of a former commercial farmer, who was running a successful Tuli stud herd[7], however his farm was repossessed under the FTLRP and the new owner ventured into horticultural production. Because the area was a low rainfall area, the enterprise was not viable. At the time of the workshop, the extension officer who reported the case confirmed that the farm is currently non-productive, a situation which is contributing towards the country's food insecurity status. The opening up of participants was interpreted as an important step in conflict transformation, as the process starts when actors agree that there is a crisis, according to Sardar (2008). He stated that personal transformations are the building blocks for regional or national transformations (actor and structure transformations).

Walter Bekhitemba Ndlovu, a beef producer narrated his ordeal of landlessness. He was operating his enterprise on leased land and explained how it threatens plans on expansion. To this effect, stakeholders in Matabeleland related to the case as they felt that those people who are capable of producing are not getting land from the government, while land is 'snatched' by politicians who do not make the land productive. Several practical examples where cited by participants, of 'deserted' farms. Walter also highlighted how he mostly depended on a white commercial farmer for advice on running his enterprise. All stakeholders felt that the government should provide adequate extension services to farmers to avoid overdependence on private services. However, stakeholders felt that the extension service being provided in Matabeleland South, is more efficient compared to the situation which was portrayed by Walter in the recorded interview. The researcher interprets it as a way forward to conflict transformation. By using the analogy, stakeholders can appreciate their current state of affairs, and make amends accordingly, where necessary.

Interviews by Khetiwe Gumbi, an extension officer, highlighted the complexity of the land tenure as land in the rural areas is owned by the chiefs. Stakeholders (smallholder farmers) in the final workshop identified with this challenge as it is the same with communal land in Matabeleland South, where chiefs are the custodians of the land. It was also mentioned that in such instances, numerous conflicts have arisen, as the system is susceptible to corruption. They further elaborated how the insecure land tenure contribute to their reluctance in making infrastructural developments as there are possibilities that they can be asked to move. Such opinions by the participants are comparable to the views of Shumba (2001), who reported that communal land tenure system is a disincentive to long term investment in agriculture. He went on to say that as insecure land tenure impedes development because people are unlikely to make infrastructural developments.

From the 3 workshops carried out, most participants related very well with the conflictive issues raised in the VPA KwaZulu Natal, as was hypothesised by the research. The analogy

served as a platform for participants to talk about their own situations. Below is a picture[12] of a participant reflecting on the issues stakeholders related to, from the VPA, KZN case.

Figure 5 Workshop participant presenting findings on watched video

Photo: Author

From all the discussions which were based on the selected narratives, the researcher classified the views of participants in various aspects of conflict transformation namely context, structure, issue, actor and personal transformations. Classification was based on the attributes of each of the sub aspects as defined earlier. In instances where issues qualified to be in more than one class, the researcher weighted the issues, and classified the transformations where they were stronger. As such, transformations were classified as follows:

Context transformations

It was highlighted by the majority of the participants, in all the 3 workshops, that the international community should change their perception of the country's land reform program for transformation to be possible. One participant in the second workshop contributed that
if sanctions that the country is currently under are lifted, the face of the conflict would change, and this was unanimously backed by other participants. This also coincided with what Hove (2012) noted when he reported that the country for long has not been getting international support like before and this has escalated conflict in the country. He said that before the advent of the fast Track Land Reform Program, the international donor community contributed immensely towards increased food production in the country but this was cut after the land reform program. To this effect, international donor communities such as the

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[12] See annex 8 for more workshop pictures

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Commonwealth and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and European Union were explicitly identified by participants as international institutes which have imposed trade restrictions to the country, thereby worsening conflicts in the country. In the same line of thought, Sujatmiko (2012) exemplifies the usefulness of this notion when he stated that a change in the perceptions of the international community towards Aceh conflict, Indonesia, contributed towards the success of the peace building process. Similarly, the context for the Northern Ireland conflict changed significantly with the development of the European Union (EU), which held out the hope that the old border might lose its significance; it was people who were divided, not territory (Miall, 2007).

Structure transformations

From both the first and second workshops, some participants highlighted that for the land based conflicts to be transformed, the structure of land as a political domain should be changed and become a more administrative domain. They believed that if natural resources continue to be a political domain, they will remain prone to political gimmicks and chances that the rightful owners will get the resources will be very limited. Participants further highlighted that if land issues remain politically *sacred,* it will be difficult for individuals to contest if they feel that land is being misused. Most participants agreed with this notion. The researcher also noted that no structure transformations were referred to, in terms of individual political parties, in all the 3 workshops.

Issue transformations

Most participants, in all the 3 workshops (although the relation was strongest in the first workshop) identified with issue transformations. They felt that these transformations do not only relate to the conflicting parties, even external parties may influence these transformations. This is because they realised that the real issue behind land conflicts, is production. Beyond land ownership is production, which all rural institutes represented felt is the most important aspect. Examples of fallow lands were intermittently referred to, indicating that land distributing land alone is not enough; production aspects should equally be addressed. Displaced farmers themselves also felt that production is more important that land ownership. Examples of similar or related cases have been widely documented by several authors (Matondi and Dekker, 2011; Zikhali, 2008; Kinsey, 2004; Moyo, 2000).

Actor transformations

Actor transformations remained relatively uncharted as participants in all the three workshops felt that their calibre was low with reference to tackling actor transformations of the land based conflicts. However upon probing by the researcher, most participants expressed that actors may need to be changed, if it addresses productivity issues. They admitted that as long as agricultural land owners do not produce, actor transformations may be necessary. There was consensus in the plenary discussions in the first and second workshops that provision of efficient support services such as agricultural extension, veterinary services as well as financial support services is a more important initiative to ensure that new land owners make the land productive than replacing land owners themselves. In the last workshop, participants felt that more attention should be paid to land-use planning as currently people are misusing land. They said that this would imply that the ministry of lands and rural resettlement, together with the rural district council become important actors in curbing land based conflicts.

Personal transformations

Personal transformations were one aspect which came out to be explicitly necessary for the land based conflicts which the country is currently facing. One participant in the second workshop, who is a lecturer in a local tertiary institute and also a farmer, admitted that although many people associate personal transformations with the 'causers' of the conflict, there is still a need for individuals to approach conflicts with an *eye* of understanding the reason why the opposing parties did what they did. In this way, all the parties will have an understanding of why their opponents did what they did, thus unravelling the root cause of the conflict. In addition, it also eliminates stereotyping and prejudices that fuel conflicts. To this, other participants nodded in agreement. When the underlying cause of the conflict is understood, transforming the face of the conflict will be more feasible and effective. This notion is supported by Miall (2004) and Sardar (2008) who stated that changing the personality or the attitude towards the conflict is fundamental in the peace building process. Overall, as a point of action, most participants in the same workshop took it upon their shoulders to start the transformation process in their own domains, such that in the long run, the full conflict transformation and peace building process may be accomplished.

4.3 The potential of VPA KZN triggering conflict transformation

VPA was found to be a powerful tool in triggering people to talk about sensitive issues. This was evident in all the workshops where participants opened up and spoke about the conflicts they are facing. Most participants in all the 3 workshops testified that the reason they chose not to talk about land conflicts was fear of political implications, since land is a highly political issue.

A small-holder farmer in the second workshop spoke about a conflict they are facing with the National Parks for grazing land. National Parks is seizing their cattle if they stray into the park and charging US$10, which the farmer felt is unfair since he claimed that the land belonged to their ancestors. Upon probing by the researcher, the farmer admitted that the conflict is still pending. In his own words the farmer said, "The conflict with the National Parks is not yet over, it is high time the conflict be dealt with." The representative from national parks responded by highlighting that the move was intended for sustainability purposes. This quote by the farmer is interpreted by the researcher as a cue to show that some individuals do desire conflict transformation, in situations where there has been a long stalemate. On the other hand, the response by the national parks signified the complexities around land conflicts, as one 'good' move by one actor may negatively affect the next actor. This is supported by Witteveen and Lie (2012) who stated that suggested solutions to wicked problem are often contradictory. A probable solution to one stakeholder could be seen as a worsening factor to another.

Another participant, who was also a communal farmer, shared the same sentiments and spoke of a separate conflict he is facing as a result of land redistribution. He indicated that newly resettled farmers set snares in order to trap wild animals, however, these snares end up trapping and killing their cattle. Such a scenario presents a classic example of the complexities of the land reform program, which were unforeseen. To this effect, participants felt that National Parks should give surrounding people the chance to hunt for game meat, so that they do not do it stealthily, as it causes more harm. Again the researcher interpreted this example as evidence to show that land issues are a multifaceted and stakeholders should be involved at every stage, to curb conflicts.

In other examples cited, the scramble for land has drawn up more conflicts between miners and farmers as most miners have political affiliations and farmers found it difficult to voice out their concerns, thus farmers took the platform to speak out. They   highlighted that

miners burn grass to clear land for mining purposes, while the grass burned is a useful source of their animals to graze. They further opened up to say that the miners practice open pit mining and do not fence off the pits, and their livestock fall in the pits and die, hampering production. This example made the researcher realise that she had left out an important stakeholder; miners to be part of the workshops, in order for stakeholders to understand why miners do what they do. It also shows the importance of employing a multi-stakeholder approach.

In addition to land based conflicts, most participants identified with resource based conflicts which were raised in VPA KZN videos. For instance, in one community there is a single tractor to serve the whole community but only the well known/vocal farmers get the chance to use it timeously; depriving the rest of the other farmers, which is a strikingly similar case with farmers in Mahlabathini area, Matabeleland South Province. The researcher interpreted the opening up of stakeholders as an important step to conflict transformation as supported by Yankelovich (1999) in his book, The Magic of Dialogue.

Another attribute which was hailed by the participants was that the methodology is cost effective. One follow-up informant hailed VPA methodology, "Although the initial cost of recording may be high, acquiring a VPA kit is affordable, more so, it can be used for a lifetime". Similarly participants were happy with the quality of production, which gives it more authenticity and credibility.

"I have never been to KZN, but the introductory film made me feel like I have been there," was an exclamation given by a participant, who went on to commend the methodology as a *vigorous* tool to engage communities to think about conflict transformation.

During the first follow up interviews, key informants indicated that one of the VPA strength is that it is recorded and there is no researchers' influence on the interviewee. However they raised concern over the methodology with regard to bias in terms of selection of interviewees. Questions were raised on the criteria used on selection of interviewees. Also, most VPA interviewees tend to portray a solemn side of their livelihoods in what informants interpreted as anticipation for support. This coincided with what some extension workers had reported that some farmers first want to know why they are being interviewed so that they would answer accordingly. If they anticipate any funding they would portray a gloomy picture of their situation, which may not be a true reflection of the real situation. Informants also felt that there is a high likelihood that VPA interviewees might not also have included more pertinent issues because of fear of victimisation.

As the name implies, some users felt that the methodology is meant for users to visualise various livelihood problems, however the methodology tends to fall short on 'visualising' the problems, as highlighted by several informants, but rather bulk of the video is focused on interviewees talking about their problems. This makes the users 'listen' to the problem more, rather than visualising the problem. To this effect, the informants suggested that in future productions, it would be more effective to capture the problem, to allow users to visualise the problem, and make use of voice over for elaborations.

Although the methodology was found to be a useful tool in triggering sensitive discussions, participants felt that the methodology is more effective if users have background information about the area. The tool would therefore serve as a validation tool or proof of information that is known prior to the use of the methodology.

Another weakness noted by the interviewed participants was that although KZN and Matabeleland have similarities they also have differences with regards to agricultural production. KZN lies in a coastal region; therefore it naturally receives more water than

Matabeleland South, which is semi arid. As such, there are more agricultural options in KZN, for example; fisheries, banana and sugar plantations, which are not viable in Matabeleland South. This made participants unable to relate some of the issues to their own situation.

Most participants highlighted the fact that users could neither ask their own questions, nor probe further to get clarifications as VPA interviews were pre-recorded rendered the methodology weaker. This finding is synonymous with findings by Witteveen et al (2010) in related studies.

Use of an analogy may be risky and cause more harm than good if the analogy captures the real issue that need to be dealt with in a negative connotation. For instance, in an interview by Zamo, in his concluding remarks, he said, "In spite of the pace that we have experienced. So now what government has to do is to find ways of fast tracking buying of land although we don't want to lend ourselves into the neighbour's situation". ('the neighbour' being Zimbabwe). The researcher had anticipated a negative reaction from the audience, but albeit, this remark did not stir any strong feelings. The researcher also interpreted this to the fact that groups may have missed this statement because it was said at the end of the particular interview which was almost an hour long, by which time participants may have lost concentration, or not even watched it up to that point.

Overall, the aggregate data showed that 39 participants felt that the situation in KZN as portrayed in the VPA is applicable to Matabeleland south as an analogy to discuss conflict transformation. However, 9 participants still felt unsure and the researcher attributes these mixed feelings to the fact that the methodology seemed 'sophisticated' to them. In addition, the researcher felt that the mixed feelings could be contributed by the long process of the methodology itself, from kick start phase to scoping phase, to watching of interviews, which could be hectic for participants who are not used to long hours in workshops. Only 1 participant, who is in the academia, perceived that the VPA KZN cannot be used as an effective analogy to the Matabeleland South due to the many differences the countries have, such as climatic conditions, differences in viability of agricultural enterprises and overall economic performance of the two countries. The researcher felt that if participants had been exposed to the methodology for longer, and understood the tool better, results could have been different. The distribution of participants' perceptions towards the methodology; expressed as percentages, based on findings from all the workshops, is illustrated below:

Figure 6 Opinions on usefulness of VPA as an analogy
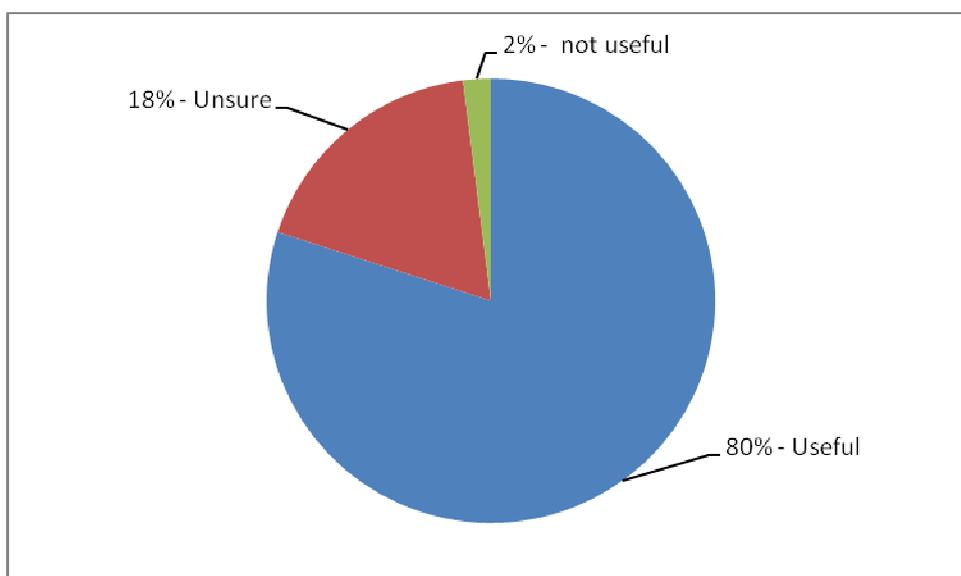
In summary, a Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of VPA as analogy was carried out based on the stakeholders' perceptions and researcher's interpretations.

Table 5 SWOT analysis of VPA KZN as an analogy to Matabeleland South

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Cost effective • High quality production • Vigorous tool (stimulates discussion) • High relation of captured issues with users • No influence of researcher	• Long methodology • Problems are not visible, problem are rather narrated. • Need for IT equipment for methodology to be used (e.g. DVD players, computers) • Some videos are a bit inaudible as interviewees did not articulate well • Inability to ask own questions and probe further on issues raised
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Useful as a validation tool of assumptions • Serves as proof or evidence of raised issues • Gives users new experiences • Multi stakeholder nature also encourages users to adopt a multi stakeholder approach	• Prone to derailment when used as a stir for conflict transformation • Seasonal biases likely as VPA was shot in one season(e.g. weather extremes may influence results) • May cause more harm if issues to be addressed are captured negatively on the VPA films • Credibility of the issues raised in the VPA films questionable

4.4 Ethnography versus workshops

Although it is difficult to explicitly compare the results from the ethnography study and the workshops, due to the differences in the nature of methodologies the studies were conducted, results were generally comparable; firstly both studies showed that people in Matabeleland South generally do not talk about land based conflicts in public. This fear was confirmed to be fear of political implications, during the workshops.

Secondly results from both studies; pertaining to context transformations; showed that people believe that a lift on the sanctions by international institutions such as commonwealth and European Union would relieve the effects of the conflicts currently being felt.

Thirdly both studies revealed that production issues are the core concern in the land conflict, beyond land ownership. As such, development institutes in the area should thrive to contribute towards agricultural development.

However, discussions on both structure transformations and actor transformations came out stronger in the workshops than in the ethnography. The researcher attributed this difference to the fact that in the case of workshops, people were triggered by the analogy and set to discuss issues. The other reason was that unlike the workshops, the ethnography phase had limited opportunities for the researcher to ask leading questions, or to probe when people brought up discussion on the issues in question.

Chapter 5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The ethnography study revealed that people in Matabeleland South region find it difficult to openly talk about the land based conflicts being faced. Some people resorted to speaking in metaphors while other people avoid the subject. Observations also revealed that people hardly talk about conflict transformation. The researcher identified that implicit reference was made to context and issue transformations while structure and actor transformations did come out in the ethnography study. Personal transformations were barely highlighted by individuals, they only came out by inference as people felt that the conflict is of a high calibre and 'others' were responsible for the transformation process. Results of the ethnography study therefore confirmed the importance of creating platforms for initiating discussion on conflict transformation.

During the series of workshops, the VPA KZN package was regarded by most participants to be an effective analogy as it triggered discussions and other processes, geared towards conflict transformation. VPA KZN captured land based conflicts which stakeholders in Matabeleland South were familiar with and were inspired to talk the way forward for their own situations. Most participants agreed that they had a stake in the conflict as it affected them directly or indirectly. References to context transformations and structure transformations, which are influenced by the wider national, regional and international situations were explicitly identified as participants intermittently made reference to 'sanctions' contributing to worsening of the situation in Zimbabwe. Issue transformations did not come out explicitly in the workshop discussions as participants preferred to "other" these transformations. They were associated with political parties and individual leaders. Personal transformations were explicitly highlighted although they were strongest in circumstances where references were made to non land based conflicts such as conflicts at workplaces.

The study also revealed that redistribution of land to new owners who do not use the land appropriately, or even not use the land at all undermines the effort of land re-distribution. It also hampers conflict transformation as food insecurity is the main perpetrator of land conflict. Those who do not have land are bound to contest that they could have used the land more effectively, if given the opportunity to own land.

The research concluded that the use of an analogy was suitable in triggering conflict transformation in situations where it was difficult for people to talk about conflicts due to anticipated negative implications. This forms a promising start to further explore how the methodology could be used in supporting other conflict transformation interventions.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are directed to the host institution, MRI and the host ministry; Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development as well as other development institutes. These recommendations may be integrated in policies at individual, organisational or even at national level:

- MRI and other development institutes in the area should consider doing more research work on conflict transformation as land conflicts cannot be divorced from agricultural performance.
- To foster conflict transformation in Matabeleland South, development institutes should offer advice to newly resettled farmers in order to make the land given to them more productive. This is because the study established food insecurity to be a contributing factor towards perpetuation land based conflicts. The new land owners should also produce according to the recommended land use patterns for maximisation of production as altering land use hampers production.
- Land based conflict transformation is a multi stakeholder matter and any attempt to address such issues should be done in the presence of concerned stakeholders, for transformation to be meaningful.
- Participatory approaches should be employed during future agricultural land distributions, so that capable people get agricultural land.

The following recommendations were made for further research:

- It is not enough to trigger conflict transformation, more explorative research is therefore needed to investigate usefulness of the VPA methodology in fostering a full conflict transformation process.
- This research focused on land based conflicts and fell short in addressing conflict transformation with regards to tribal and ethnic conflicts, conflicts over other natural resources (apart from land) as well as other social conflicts.
- Special attention needs to be given to the gendered roles in conflict transformation as the study did not pay attention to gender issues.
- Land based conflict transformation remains incomplete unless production issues are addressed. Future research in conflict transformation should strive to integrate technical (production) and social aspects.

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List of annexes

1. Checklist of ethnographic study

- How does conflict influence people's day to day living?

- Do people speak about conflict and conflict transformation in public?

- What language (discourse) in terms of conflict transformation do people use around land based conflicts?

- Do people envision the possibility of conflict transformation?

2. Checklist for reflection of videos

Group_____   **Interview Number**_____

1. What rural livelihood issues are raised in the video?

2. How do you relate with any of the issues raised?

3. Are there any conflictive issues raised in the video?

4. What can be done to address the conflicts raised?

5. How applicable are the proposed solution in your own area?

3. Checklist questions for plenary discussions

The following questions (but not limited to these) will be used for the discussions:

- How do you and your organization understand conflict transformation?

- How does conflict impact on livelihoods (assets, social relationships and food security)?

- What gaps exist in terms of addressing conflict transformation in the region?

- How important is it to discuss issues which pertain to conflict transformation?

- What is the role of stakeholders in conflict transformation? (response to be written down on pieces of paper)

- What issues did you want to say out, but because of their sensitivity, you chose to hold them back?

- In what way has VPA KZN made you talk about issues that you might otherwise have or have not said?

- How effective is VPA methodology in triggering discussion on conflict transformation?

4. Examples of notes taken during workshops
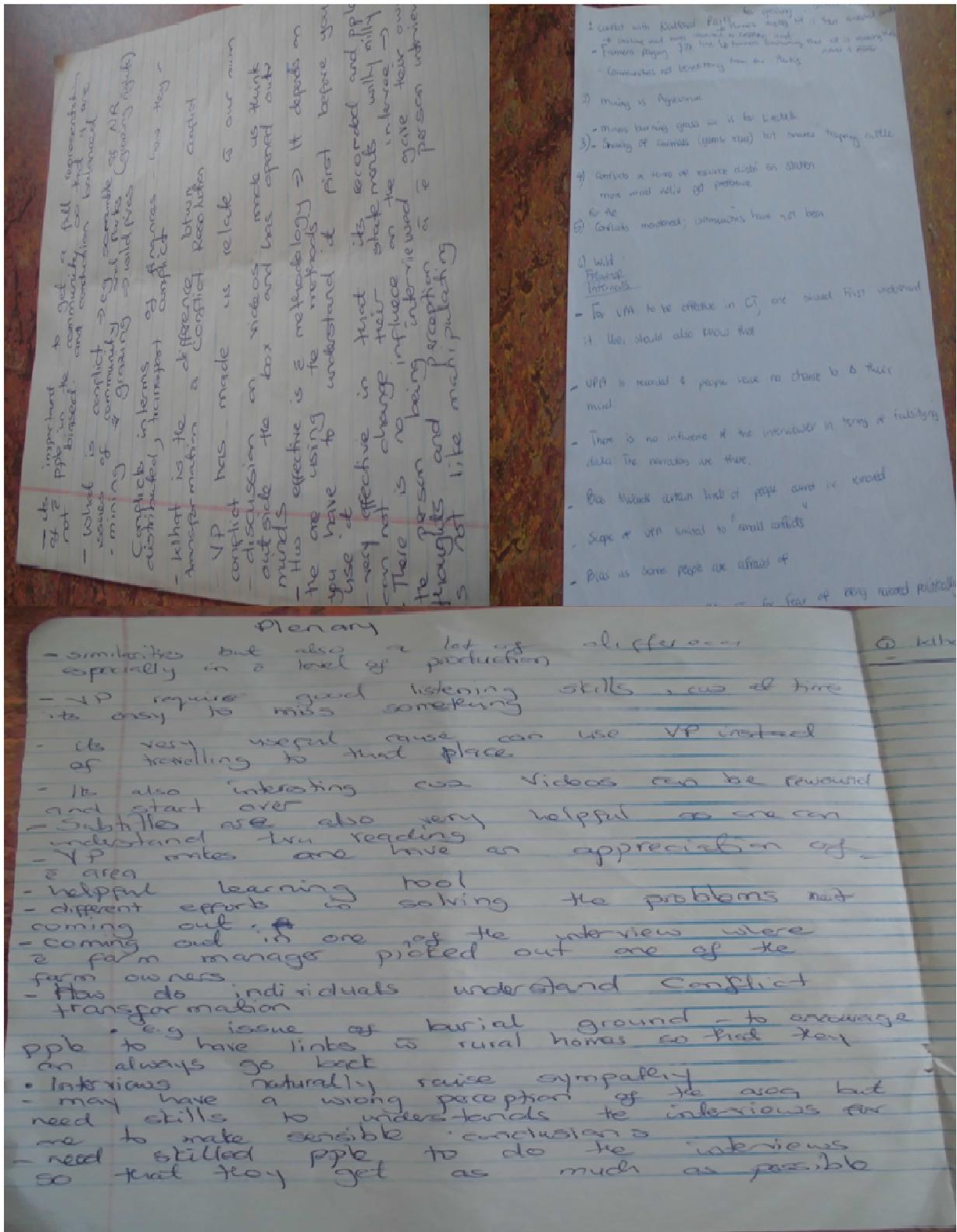
5. Checklist of follow-up interviews

- How effective is use of analogies in social processes?

- How effective do you think the VPA KZN methodology is as an analogy to Matabeleland South region?

- What need to be changed, maintained, or improved to enhance VPA as a methodology in fostering conflict transformation?

6. Research Schedule

Activity	Time
Developing the concept	May
Project Planning	June
(Pre Data collection)Ethnographic research	July
Main data collection	August
Data analysis and report writing	September

7. Summary of 'Interviews'/Narratives from VPA KwaZulu Natal

From the 28 DVDs recorded in KwaZulu Natal, around 10 DVDs which focused on land inequalities, land reform and land based conflicts among other livelihood issues were selected. The following are summaries from the selected DVDs:

From the narratives, most respondents agree that the land reform exercise is complex and in the short term may lead to food insecurity; however this does not imply that in the long term, land reform does not have benefits. In the likely event that conflicts occur as a result of land redistribution, ways of transforming the conflicts should be employed. Most narrators do agree that conflicts have arisen due to the land reform programme in South Africa.

The narratives by Zamo Mchumu, an employee in the department of Agriculture, environmental Affairs and rural development highlighted that the land reform programme began in 1994, when the country gained independence. Before independence, 83% of the land was owned by white farmers. Three programs were used in land reform namely tenure reform, redistribution and restitution. Under the tenure reform, state land was distributed to the landless. Under the redistribution exercise, private owners of land were selling on willing buyer- willing seller basis. However, the pace has been slow as white landowners were not willing to give up their land. The prices of land were also deterrent as they were beyond the reach of many. Under the restitution programme, native people who were given land, opted for money instead of land, and this meant that the objectives of the restitution program were not met. On the other hand, the same people re-claim land from the government when they spend all the money given. Overall, the narrator agrees that the land reform program in South Africa is still a long way to go as at the time of shooting of the film in (2011), only 6% of the targeted 30% was successfully redistributed. He further highlighted that landlessness was the main reason which led to development of shanty towns around cities. It is also the cause of poor health especially among HIV/AIDS infected people as they do not have

sufficient food as required by the lifestyle they are supposed to lead. He also blames poor nutrition to have contributed towards his small stature.

Narratives by a sugarcane white farmer, Haydn Perceival, based in Gingindlovu, in the Central area of Kwazulu Natal highlighted that distribution of land to people who came from different areas, and did not know the area well, has disadvantages. He cited that the new people would have no networks thus hindering productivity. He also highlighted labour enforcement laws such as minimum labour laws is affecting farmer-employer social relationships to more business oriented relationships at the expense of the employees. He also cited that the abolishment of child labour as disadvantaging the employees' children as they used to get their own money which improved their livelihoods.

Elphas Hlatswayo, a retired farm labourer who lives in Zungwini, North of the Vryheid blames the apartheid era for the few cattle that he has as cattle numbers were regulated. He highlighted that he is not willing to move from the place he is staying because of graves in his compound. Furthermore, he cited that freedom from apartheid brought an end the cessation of land repossession from black people by the white minority. However, he also admitted that white farmers utilise land more efficiently than their black counterparts.

Albert Modi, a professor in a local university highlighted that historically, people in Zululand were more food secure. People became food insecure with the coming of white farmers and ended up as labourers to the white farmers. He also mentioned that owning of land by politicians who do not have farming backgrounds, is unproductive. He was saddened by the fact that more and more people are migrating to towns leaving less and less people to produce food. He also iterated how inefficient it is for smallholder farmers in the rural area to produce sugarcane, which they cannot produce efficiently, at the expense of direct food crops such as maize and beans. He also dejects the fact that farmers who own land now rely on money, yet they should rely on their own produce, to earn their livings.

Narratives by a pig manager, Rodney Phelelani Khumalo, running a farm which was given to a group of natives who happen to be former employees on that farm, highlighted that the new owners, who were former labourers did not understand how the business is run. They thought that as new owners, they were not supposed to work anymore on the farm. He therefore iterated that the ministry of lands should consider training people first on agricultural production before land is distributed to them. However he was optimistic that they would change their attitude since an agency was working with the new owners on running piggery farming as a business.

Narratives by a sugarcane farmer, Konrad Römer, who lives in Mtubatuba, on the Umfolozi plains highlighted that politicians are now taking over the land, rather than farmers. He perceived the land reform program having more negative impacts than benefits.

Narratives by Walter Bekithemba Ndlovu highlighted how he stated his enterprise small, with only 2 cattle, but at the time of the shooting, he had many cattle. He explained the challenges he faces in his business such as diseases and landless. He also highlighted the support he gets from a white friend, Mr Dion in running his enterprise. He also explained how many of his friends are now joining the cattle industry.

Mbuyiseni Kubheka, a former mine worker, who now earns his living by doing piece jobs, narrated that life has been difficult for him due to closure of the mine. His also narrated his ordeal of how he left his family compound due to family quarrels. He lives in a shack and he sends remittances to his children and sisters the little he makes from the piece jobs.

Khetiwe Gumbi, an agricultural extension worker in the department of Agriculture, in Vryheid narrated on how the ministry is embarking on a program to upgrade subsistence or *emerging* farmers to commercial farmers. She also narrated on the group of women who are into horticulture production that she is working with. The group, through their office applied for land under the traditional land tenure. She also highlighted some challenges they are facing including water shortages and access to markets. She concluded by saying that she also wishes to own her own piece of land and farm.

Narratives by Celumusa langa, who is into small scale horticultural and poultry production highlighted many different livelihood options her family depends on such as agriculture, mat weaving, social grants as well as buying and selling petty goods. She also explained how water shortages affect production. Finally she spoke about a co-operative, which she is a member and she serves as a secretary. She also highlighted how agriculture is a male domain, but women like her, are slowly penetrating the agricultural business.

8. Photo gallery