

Chapter 10

Principles of Reconciliation

1. Introduction

The previous two chapters sketched a picture of wide disparities in parties' views about appropriate reconciliation strategies. This chapter analyses the underlying reasons for the contentiousness of the intervention strategies for reconciliation employed by the TRC.

The underlying principles that are believed to be the causes of these divisions are identified and their links to the various stakeholder divisions are examined. The key principle that is examined in this analysis is the locus of the reconciliation initiative (top-down versus bottom-up). The chapter thus explores the validity of the hypothesis that top-down and bottom-up approaches (what is now referred to as a principle) underlie much of the tension between the TRC and community stakeholders who support these respective principles.

Along with this hypothesis that was deductively developed from the theory and review of reconciliation practices, other reconciliation principles are inductively identified and analyzed: the main factor bringing about reconciliation (structure versus agency), the basic nature of a “reconciled” society (unification versus autonomy), the

central form of relationship in a “reconciled” society (community versus coexistence), and the best way of pursuing social change (harmony versus confrontation). These principles are examined against the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2 - the three dimensions of reconciliation - to assess the utility of this framework.

2. Competing Principles of Reconciliation: The Conceptual Framework

In developing a clearer map of the various perspectives that shape the contentious terrain of community reconciliation, the analysis will begin by looking at the various lines of tension or cleavages that distinguish different strategic viewpoints. These are broad principles that provide continuums along which individual viewpoints can be located. These distinctions provide insights into deeper conceptual differences that are often expressed in terms of strategic differences among the respondents. The methodology chapter (Chapter 7) provides a more detailed explanation of these principles. To briefly recap the analytical framework presented in Chapter 7, the following diagram presents the linkages between strategies, principles and ideological frames:

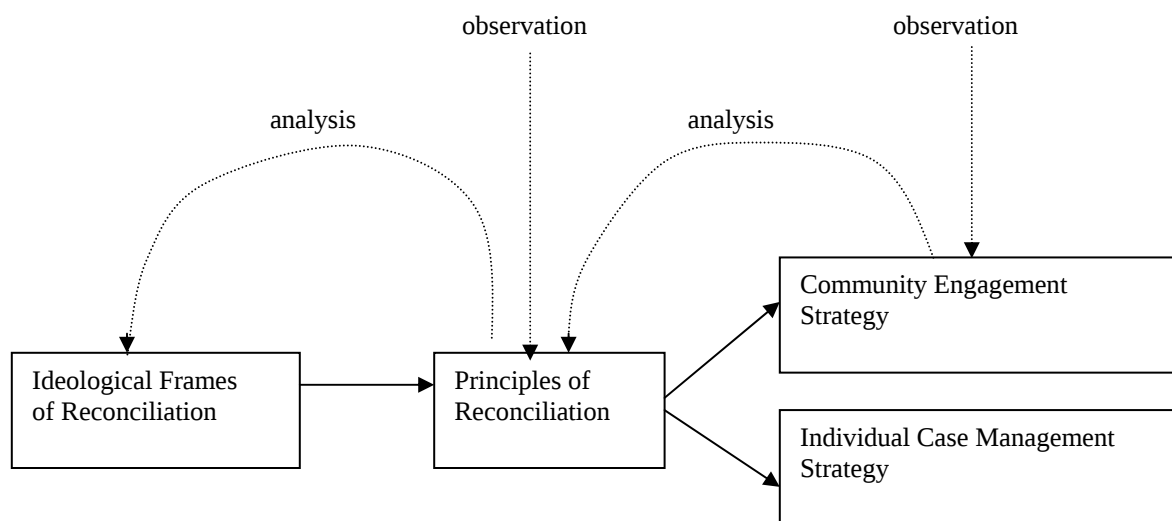


Figure 7.1. Construction and Analysis of Ideological Frames and Principles

The most visible level of the three aspects of the analysis (strategies, principles and ideological frames) was the strategies that were identified and discussed in the previous two chapters. These were the positions that people hold on how something should be (or should have been) done. It looks at what the TRC did (or did not do) in the two communities that caused some people to question the logic, purpose or sincerity of the process.

From this first descriptive overview, the principles that appear to underlie these competing interpretations and priorities now need to be identified and teased out in more detail. These principles are in part directly observable (using the explanations by the respondents for their strategies and their underlying goals, values or needs), and partially

abstracted from their strategic positions. The third level of abstraction is the identification of different ideological perspectives which inform these principled positions. This level of abstraction links the different perspectives on reconciliation to broader world views regarding the re-establishment of social order. These ideological frames are explored in the next chapter.

3. Principles of Reconciliation Identified in the Data

The first principle to be examined is that of the locus of reconciliation initiatives (top-down versus bottom-up approaches to reconciliation). The subsequent four principles are additional lines of division inductively identified in the data. The various principles of reconciliation identified as underlying the parties positions on strategic contentions were:

- a) The locus of reconciliation initiative (Top-down versus Bottom-up)
- b) The main factor bringing about reconciliation (Structure versus Agency)
- c) The basic nature of a “reconciled” society (Unification versus Autonomy)
- d) The central form of relationship in a “reconciled” society (Community versus Coexistence)
- e) The best way of pursuing social change (Harmony versus Confrontation)

The following section examines these principled divisions in relation to the empirical data presented in the previous two chapters. It explores commonalities and differences within and between the various interviewee categories.

a) The Locus of Reconciliation Initiative (Top-down versus Bottom-up)

The fundamental division here is between those who see reconciliation as something that is built from the bottom-up, or from the top-down.

The bottom-up approach is one that sees society more as the sum of the parts, or in terms of a healthy society requiring healthy individual members. On the one hand this approach is viewed in terms of the psychological health of individuals and improved interpersonal relations among community members. Healthy (reconciled) relations are seen as arising from restoring the psychological health of individual members of society and a healthy network of interpersonal relations. On the other hand, the building blocks of society are seen as communities. The construction of vibrant communities is seen as the primary focus or starting point of any reconciliation process.

The top-down model is characterized by a perception of local dynamics lacking significant autonomy. For local dynamics to change, national intervention must first be done. This will then filter down, or create the conditions (and incentives) within which local actors can pursue reconciliation processes.

The top-down model of reconciliation was only supported by a significant number of respondents among the TRC staff. All the other categories of respondents leaned heavily in favor of a bottom-up approach, with the partial exception perhaps of IFP leaders who saw local community dynamics being shaped in a top-down manner. TRC staff were quite evenly split between those who viewed reconciliation in these two ways.

i) Top-Down

The top-down model was favored by some TRC staff for a number of reasons. A central justification or reason was the necessity for quick results and broad impact.

Reconciliation is NOT individual reconciliation. This is an ideological or religious paradigm which is not viable as a channel for major impact.

[TRC]

Linked to the question of limited resources and maximizing impact is a central component of the top-down approach: the identification of the need for the development of a macro narrative that will help community members gain a clearer understanding of the events that shaped the conflict in their communities.

The TRC is not able to go into every single case and every community. It simply does not have the time and resources. We can only highlight key issues and thus throw some light on other more minor cases. Addressing these key issues will signal the way forward. [TRC]

A second argument is that top-down approaches are needed because of the political nature of the reconciliation 'mandate' and the nature of local political dynamics.

National reconciliation involves mainly the political parties, moving towards a broad understanding of the past . This is the main focus of the TRC - particularly Tutu's role. [TRC]

Local communities have not been able to take an individual stand on the TRC. They have been guided by their political parties who have painted the TRC in political terms. They thus see the TRC as a game to give blacks the moral high ground. There was initially the hope (within the TRC) to get broad white participation through the NP which still represents most Afrikaners. [TRC]

Rather than simply an analysis of the political dynamics of individual community, the skepticism of change from below is also reflective of a broader understanding of significant social change as something that has to be driven at the national level.

The individual level was highly punted at some stage, but now it has been dropped. Addressing things at the community level would be to view society according to the old paradigm (race). It is thus a non starter. At the national level we can approach things in terms of integrative systemic form. We can develop knowledge of how it (past conflicts) developed, why people behaved the way they did. It could lead to greater acceptance..... National reconciliation requires national organizations or individuals with national standing to reframe the political picture and act on it. It requires statesmanship from politicians. This can happen at community level, but not if the dynamics are around race. The concept of

community is closely linked to that of race. This makes it very problematic. [TRC]

The TRC can not be expected to achieve much in terms of reconciliation at the interpersonal level. Attempts have been made to bring victims and perpetrators together. These are mainly just symbolic processes.

Extensive efforts go into it with very little results. It is not natural - only through great effort, and only with TRC prodding does it happen. It is not organic. For example the Trust Feed case.¹ It was seen as plastic by all the parties. This symbolism of reconciliation means little. It appears forced. [TRC]

In addition to the focus on national-level reconciliation, this top-down approach is also often found in relation to the interaction between local leaders and their communities, the view being that leadership has to initiate and carry a reconciliation process (often in the face of resistance from their supporters).

According to a TRC staff member:

¹ A police Station Commander led an attack on a house in a local community, thinking that ANC members were in the house. The people in the house were however having a religious meeting. Twelve people were killed. The Station Commander was granted amnesty, but then met with the community to apologize and offer to make reparations.

Human rights violations also have been sufficiently stigmatized at a political level to deter parties from repeating this course. At community level there is a more delicate link. It depends on skills, maturity and sophistication of community leaders, because these would determine how they handle the danger of vengeance. People can very easily take things into their own hands or mobilize community anger. It is then up to local leaders - local government, church and civic leaders to manage the situation, and to convince people to talk rather than fight. [TRC]

In a similar vein community members (most notably from the IFP) stated:

Leaders should make submissions on behalf of their followers. They can promote forgiveness. Confession and forgiveness should be in a mass meeting. Leaders should make statements to the media. They should tell about the past and explain what happened. They should mandate the grassroots to change the way they think. [K, L, IFP]

The leaders are committed to reconciliation. The problem is at the grassroots level. We need to encourage the culture of ubuntu in people's minds. This means to see a person as a human being with rights, not as an IFP or ANC member. Indunas (traditional leaders) can play an important part in encouraging this among their followers. [K, L, IFP]

Friendship is different from reconciliation. The big leaders must come and make peace. Once leaders show the way it is easier for the community. The community people are still waiting for the political leaders. [K, L, IFP]

There needs to be a joint rally. Leaders should tell the people what happened - decide on the way forward. They must tell people they must forget about the past. They must shake hands and say they are sorry. It should not be an individual process - just in one big meeting. [K, EC, IFP]

While many TRC staff were sympathetic to bottom-up approaches to reconciliation, the TRC engagement with individuals and communities was (as identified in the previous chapters) characterized by an absence of consultations with key local stakeholders (in favor of reliance on the main political parties), a lack of sustained interaction with the community (in favor of a high-profile one-off event), a disregard for local community concerns (in favor of the utilization of local events to build and reinforce a national narrative of the political conflict), and a lack of services to individual victims (alongside public recognition of victims' suffering and nobility).

Many in the TRC took affront at the suggestion that their community hearings were conducted in a top-down manner. They argued that the basic underlying philosophy of the TRC was that of a victim-centered process, and the emphasis (time and resources) of the TRC on community hearings indicated a commitment to community-level

engagement. The fact that the TRC took community and victim engagement seriously does not, however, mean that they were responsive to the needs of these actors. The way in which this engagement was experienced by victims and communities more broadly was, in fact, as a one-way process. It was seen as the TRC using communities and victims as sources of information and as vehicles to implement its goals at a national level. Rather than being given information, insights, control or skills by the TRC's intervention, the stakeholders felt that their role had been to assist the TRC without receiving much in return.

The TRC did, however, manage to portray itself very effectively as a community-centered and victim-centered process in the public mind. The times that they engaged in more intensive community intervention and victim-perpetrator mediation, or where they were able to address individual victims needs immediately, they managed to draw extensive media coverage of these successes. Respondents in the two communities studied (as well as many people in other communities and individuals involved in sectoral hearings interviewed by the author) felt that their community (or their area of work) was not given equal treatment by the TRC. From what the people saw in the media, they felt that the TRC had done so much for everybody else, but that it had neglected their community.

ii) Bottom-Up

A number of TRC staff expressed views favoring a bottom-up approach, often while expressing their regret for the many constraints that limited their ability to implement such an approach.

The Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee views the psycho-social support as essential to the reconciliation process, but the TRC can only coordinate and consolidate existing initiatives. We focus on capacity building and encouraging communities to take ownership. We try to providing such support across the political spectrum and recognize everybody's needs, irrespective of political affiliation (even needs of perpetrators). This recognition will also contribute towards reconciliation.

[TRC]

A whole spectrum of interdependent levels were recognized by TRC staff:

The different levels are absolutely interdependent. They should be approached in a sequential manner: we need to build from bottom-up - intra-personal, inter-personal, local, and then national. But one can also have top-down through modeling of reconciliation attitudes, for example Tutu and Mandela. But generally the politicians are not setting the tone.

[TRC]

Psychological healing is seen by many of the TRC respondents as the key component that determines (or defines) reconciliation:

At the intra-level there has to be reconciliation between personal and broader experience. It is the psychological equivalent of re-integration.

[TRC]

If we take the analogy of the wound that has to be opened up to clean out the sepsis seriously, we must ask whether this has been sufficiently dealt with. Before reconciliation there must be a pre-reconciliation phase that focuses on cleaning the wounds. [TRC]

Interpersonal relationships are also seen as one key element by some within the TRC:

Individual reconciliation is probably the deepest level of reconciliation. It involves forgiveness and acceptance of the other person. It can not be imposed or preached. We can only hope it happens. [TRC]

As argued in Chapter 5, the mandate of the TRC gave priority to addressing certain concerns, and the restricted time and resources ultimately gave the TRC little scope to effectively give much substance to its ideals of victim and community-centered processes (even to the extent that there was agreement to pursue these). The structure of the TRC also marginalized many of the victim-centered staff within the Reparations and

Rehabilitation Committee that ultimately played a limited role in influencing the focus of the TRC.

The strongest advocates of a community-centered process were the political leaders. Both those who felt excluded from the process (mainly non-ANC leaders) as well as those who had a more direct involvement, felt that the TRC should have taken their community's concerns more seriously, and should have done more to address the local reconciliation needs in a way that respected their particular conditions.

Among community leaders the concern with bottom-up processes was centered around the need to address local community dynamics. The perception was that reconciliation is something that people relate to in concrete terms in relation to local conflict events and people.

National reconciliation is not possible without local. Presently they are attempting to build from the top-down. This will not succeed. It must be dealt with first in terms of real issues where people cooperate on concrete concerns. This needs to be supported at national level, but not controlled from there. [D, L, NP]

Local leaders have a key role in peace initiatives. Provincial and national leaders are not trusted. They are not directly affected or hurt by conflict. They have to build relationships at the level where they operate. [K, L, IFP]

Rather than viewed in abstract terms and in relation to national policy processes, institutional transformation was understood in terms of concrete observable changes and local personalities. Issues such as the relationship between the community and the police still evolve around individual members of the police service:

The TRC has a role in exposing those elements involved in past abuses. People in the community should stand up and point them out. I don't know of any who have applied for amnesty. The police will no longer close ranks to protect each other. There is now a feeling of each one for himself. People have identified individuals, but this must be done publicly. By identifying those responsible we will help clear the name of other police. There should not be just a blanket blame of all police for what happened. [K, L, ANC]

The TRC was perceived by community members as not showing sufficient interest in local dynamics. They saw the TRC as being concerned mainly with the national conflict dynamics rather than being interested to learn about local experiences.

The reconciliation process must be regional/local. A process that is national creates problems: There is a lack of sufficient interest in the local

events. Local people do not think their stories are seen as relevant. [K, EC, IFP]

Among leaders in Duduza who were concerned that internal divisions were a serious issue in the party and the community, there was a feeling that the TRC was not concerned with this dimension of reconciliation:

Reconciliation in Duduza has nothing to do with race. The conflict only directly involved blacks, but the TRC is not interested in this. They would rather spend their resources investigating the role of whites and the NP. [D, L]

The TRC was also seen as not giving local people enough time, information, feedback or space to make an input.

The TRC did not listen to all victims at the public hearing. It is biased towards higher profile cases. People want Mandela to come give recognition for those who died for the struggle. We needed to have local people taking statements, and locals to decide which people should give public testimony. It is mainly a question of lack of local grounding. [D, L]]

The TRC failed to reach real victims. Reconciliation is not about important individuals, but the common people need to reconcile.

Prominent people were approached to make statements. Thousands of people who still have birdshot pellets lodged in their skins abound in Duduza. Maybe I do not understand the workings of the TRC. [D, L]

I hope that TRC will still come to Thokoza. It should provide people with the opportunity to speak up. On the ground nothing has yet happened.

Only at the top has the amnesty process been implemented. [K, L, ANC]

Until such time when someone comes to Duduza and impartially, without discrimination, interviews victims and survivors of apartheid ills independently of biased learned input from local politicians, people themselves will come out with the solution. People themselves will prescribe the formula for their own reconciliation. [D, L]

Those directly involved in the fighting should be the ones who reconcile.

Reconciliation should not be left in the hands of leaders. [K, EC, ANC]

Victims felt strongly that they were not properly consulted about the hearing, and the TRC should have spent a lot more time educating them about the process of the hearing and about the work of the TRC more generally, facilitating statement collecting,

keeping them updated about developments in their cases, and ultimately addressing their individual concerns regarding reparations and truth. These concerns were also echoed by NGO staff:

The TRC's approach to reconciliation is very vague. It does not have a coherent vision of where it is taking people. It lacks an organized strategy to reach out to communities and involve them. Victims do not know what to expect and they are absent from any participation in the policy process. The TRC has a very poor communication strategy. It only involves NGOs immediately before a hearing and then there is no follow-up. There is no clear engagement strategy of linking with organizations to provide assistance. [NGO]

The TRC does not ask Khulumani's input on policies. The TRC uses Khulumani assistance to victims as demonstration of what they are providing. They mainly just use Khulumani when it suits them. [NGO]

Some community members also held the view that there is more flexibility among local politicians than at the national level. This space allows greater maneuverability around promoting reconciliation.

If TRC does not come, a public hearing can be held by other organizations. Such a local initiative could get support from both sides.

People are ready to tell their stories. The local IFP may well be supportive - they are not in concert with the national IFP who called for the disbandment of the TRC. [K, L, ANC]

National leaders have different agenda from the local leaders. Local leaders would have been willing to participate more than national leaders in the TRC. Particular local circumstances creates particular opportunities. [K, EC, IFP]

Reconciliation should be a local process. The people directly involved should be sitting down together. Leaders use the local people for their purposes. People should take it on themselves and not be manipulated. National leaders are not in touch with the people on the ground. They are not responsive to their needs and only come when there is killing. Local people develop a distrust in them. [K, EC, ANC]

Where community members argued for the need for a localized process to deal with reconciliation in their community, NGO staff interviewed were also very outspoken about the need for processes that builds from the bottom-up as a matter of principle. They were skeptical of attempts to promote social change that did not build from the bottom-up.

New learning can not simply be filtered down by the leaders. It can not be a top-down process. [NGO]

The lack of tolerance is largely due to illiteracy. It is easy for elected leaders to interact with one another. They are more exposed to other party's points of view. They have developed a greater tolerance than the rest of the community. They realize though that people have to learn through experience. It can not come through instruction from leaders. [NGO]

The national level can only launch a process, but implementation needs to occur at local level. The superstructure can not impose reconciliation for sake of their own interests. The process needs to be motivated and run from bellow. The community level needs to take control. The TRC has not involved local communities in taking ownership. The local community has to decide what they want from the process and develop its own destination. The top structures need to support local community in their initiatives. [NGO]

Interpersonal work is needed to initiate the process. We should focus on deep changes in small groups rather than superficial changes in large groups. [NGO]

They were very critical of the TRC's lack of local consultation and their prioritization of high profile cases:

People see the TRC as a mechanism that is more responsive to top leadership, and not concerned with community people. For example the Seremane case²: he made a statement in June and was then called to a hearing in July. He was taken more seriously because he is a big shot. Others now feel that their statements were never looked at, simply put aside. One also only hear stories of big shot victims whose cases are properly investigated. [NGO]

The TRC does not do a good job of investigating individual cases. Because they are understaffed they prioritize high-profile cases and those of ordinary people are not taken seriously. [NGO]

b) The Main Factor Bringing about Reconciliation (Structure versus Agency)

The division here is essentially about whether reconciliation is something that has to be promoted, facilitated, and actively pursued, or whether it is something that results from changes in more fundamental social structures (particularly economic, political and demographic). While some respondents argued for both processes, many argued strongly for a focus on one or the other.

² Joe Seremane was a prominent political figure in South Africa. His brother was accused of being a spy and then executed in an ANC camp in Angola without a receiving a proper trial.

This distinction relates to the basis of the broad conceptual model employed by this study. Based largely on the ideas presented by Galtung (1995), the study takes for granted that reconciliation is something that has to be addressed in its own right, rather than assuming that addressing issues of structural change and development would automatically lead to an improvement in relationship among parties (see Chapter 2). Some respondents, however, did take the view that reconciliation is essentially a product of structural change.

The structural model (that sees social relations as being determined by structural changes at the socio-economic and political level) can on the one hand be seen within a Marxist framework where the economic framework and the distribution of wealth determines the relationship between the role-players. Some, however, see this structural, deterministic model more as politically driven and influenced by demographic changes.

Rather than stated in absolute terms the structuralist argument is usually that the work of a body such as the TRC should be viewed within a context of development and institutional transformation, and that the main burden and focus should be on the contribution that can be made towards these more substantive processes which ultimately determine the scope for reconciliation. Rather than seeing the TRC as directly facilitating reconciliation, this perspective argues that the TRC can create awareness of the suffering arising from social inequality and thus contribute to greater public commitment to policies which address these problems.

The structuralist model is one that is closely linked to a top-down approach to reconciliation because it sees changes in relationships as requiring serious redistribution of resources and power. Such shifts are generally viewed as arising from the intervention of higher levels of political leadership. While there is this link between the two principles, some respondents did feel that these resource allocations should be guided by local needs and involve local community empowerment.

i) Structuralist Model

The structuralist orientation was particularly strong among certain respondents within the TRC, and to a lesser extent among respondents in the community leader and ex-combatant categories.

The central element for many TRC staff was correcting the economic and power disparity among the different groups.

Reconciliation means acknowledgment of the fact of needing political reconciliation. It means that the racial division of power and disempowerment should be recognized in order to restore dignity. It has no meaning if people have no vote. [TRC]

When people have access to the economy and education and see an improvement in their lives, then reconciliation will take place. [TRC]

It (the TRC's Final Report) should indicate the extent and depth of the transformation that still needs to occur. It should, for example, show the broad demographics of who was affected and how much suffering occurred. It should act as a spur to bodies and processes such as the Reconstruction and Development Program and Land Commission. [TRC]

There are two broad positions on reconciliation within the TRC. Firstly, reconciliation as a religious concept. The second is reconciliation as part of debate about transformation and socio-economic changes. Unless people can start seeing meaningful changes in housing, schools, job opportunities we will always be three steps behind in reconciliation process. People will always ask - what has changed? Even if reparations provide financial compensation, people will still want to see broader material changes. How can they have dignity if they have not worked for 10 or 20 years? [TRC]

The other structural approach focuses on the dynamics of the political process - deal-making, expediency and demographic changes will naturally lead towards reconciled relationships.

Reconciliation in South Africa will happen in the long term. It is a natural process. It is just too ridiculous for it not to happen. Similarly to people

having realized that apartheid was a ludicrous system. Reconciliation will happen through natural progression. The changes through demographic and political necessity are inevitable now that the system that dislocated people's lives (artificially) has been removed. The TRC starts this process by revealing what happened, why it happened and making recommendation regarding prevention, but ultimately political expediency and basic decency will bring about reconciliation. [TRC]

Reconciliation means that the previous antagonists can be running the country together. At the more practical level, reconciliation is a question of political expediency. [TRC]

Some among the community leadership also took a similar deterministic view of reconciliation - something that will flow from the logic of a changed political context. The various teams on the political playing field (and their inter-party alliances) are seen as something that is simply reshuffled depending on the changing context.

There is a parallel with the Anglo-Boer War: Afrikaners and British are now reconciled. This happened through the changing political context. We now have common goals. Similarly with coloureds: Afrikaners and coloureds have been brought together by the changing political context. [D, L, NP]

For many of the leaders the structural conditions were seen as pre-conditions rather than determinants of reconciliation. The choice of structure over agency is seen more as a question of sequence of issues to address. The priority is seen as addressing the material conditions/needs first.

A major issue is to redesign the infrastructure. The hostels should be destroyed (not converted) and replaced by houses. The hostel structure is too conducive to military and criminal conduct. Other relationship building projects are doomed to failure if these issues are not addressed. Adversaries working together only addresses symptoms. It smoothes over the problems. [K, L, ANC]

For victims to reconcile, they are mainly interested in compensation, especially the most impoverished victims. Reconciliation is equated with compensation if poverty is blamed on victimization. [D, L, ANC]

Among the ex-combatants their distrust of the political structures is also reflected in them blaming the structures (or their existence) for the conflict. Changing the political framework is seen as a recipe for changing social relations.

I don't think talking will help much. Maybe what we need is for one party just to be banned - either one (IFP or ANC). It will overcome divisions if we all belonging to one party. [K, EC, ANC]

Political leadership will always keep people divided. Political allegiance will always be stronger than community membership. Before conflict we were one community. This did not prevent conflict however. [K, EC, ANC]

Some also saw the physical conditions as constraining or shaping the way people frame their options when it comes to fighting.

We must remove demarcations that arose during conflict. But more than that is needed. We must improve physical conditions. The hostel conditions of overcrowding and single sex accommodation affects the way they think. If people have their families present they would not get so easily involved in the fighting. [K, EC, ANC]

The structuralist model sees reconciliation as either a consequence of structural intervention (mainly redistributing power and wealth) or as a political process that will eventually lead to some form of equilibrium. From those at community level, there is

also, however, the view that political party processes (competition) and interference in local dynamics should be eliminated.

For those implicated (or who fear that they might be implicated) in human rights abuses, a process of relationship building is probably quite threatening. While ex-combatants do not reject the idea of rebuilding community relationships, they are much more comfortable interacting with the ex-combatants (rather than the victims) of the other side. Ex-combatants are also the ones often targeted as beneficiaries of/participants in development projects (for various strategic reasons) and thus see it as a process that is likely to meet their direct interests. They have more to gain from looking at the future, rather than self-critically examine their own responsibility for the past.

Community leaders (especially those in government) are also more focused on material changes. The pressure on them is to produce visible improvements for a broad cross-section of their communities, while relational issues are likely to focus too much attention on their personal involvement in past abuses. Votes come from visible outputs, not from making your enemy more palatable to your supporters.

TRC staff have been under pressure to address national questions. They do not feel capable of engaging in the micro management of relationships within communities, and thus have to remain focused on the bigger picture. The main hope for community reconciliation that many of them see lies in the knock-on effects of changes that they can bring about through their impact on the national political scene.

ii) Agency Model

The view that reconciliation is a natural consequence of changing political and economic conditions is, however, strongly opposed by many of the interviewees. A view favoring more of an agency model was particularly strong among NGOs, victims, and certain respondents among the TRC and leadership group. Victims also strongly supported the need for intervention that addressed relationship-building directly. These respondents' views favored interventions aimed specifically at promoting dialogue and facilitating direct exchange - the agency model of relationship building. While not implying that this would negate the need for structural change, it sees reconciliation as something that does need to be addressed in its own right.

There are numerous examples of this view. There is, however, less agreement on what type of intervention is required in this model. Views range from the need for education programs, dialogue processes to religious type interventions such as contrition, confession and forgiveness. They all see relationships as something that requires active intervention (whether development and structural change occurs or not).

TRC staff views regarding the need for an agency approach particularly comes out strongly when they look at the way forward - what should happen after the TRC. These views are not constrained by the (sometimes legalistically restricted) question of how to interpret their mandate.

Racism is not something that will just work itself out. Active programs need to be developed. Teachers must have skills to deal with prejudice.

This requires resources, courses at all levels: pre-school to university.

[TRC]

We need mechanisms that allow people to move from personal positions that the past induces (e.g., the anger of Hani's wife). Central in this mechanism should be enabling people to dialogue. Creating the space to deal with the past is the first step. A second step is taking them beyond this position. [TRC]

The TRC staff appear strongly divided between structure and agency approaches. This is reflected in their conflicting opinions on whether reconciliation is in fact part of their mandate or not, and whether they should simply be building the foundation for reconciliation as opposed to engaging in reconciliation work.

NGO and church organization staff interviewed were, by their nature, agency-approach oriented. The fact that they defined themselves as working on reconciliation (rather than development and institutional transformation) made them candidates to be interviewed.

In our attempts to promote reconciliation the goal is to bring about dialogue, to start to get people talking about peace and reconciliation. We focus on sensitive issues that are difficult to discuss otherwise. We learn

to accept one another, not just raise awareness but to take the dialogue forward. [NGO]

The TRC has mainly focused on the political and social transformation aspects of reconciliation because it has been a mainly political struggle. The spiritual, psychological and cultural aspects of reconciliation still need to be addressed. [NGO]

For some the relationship building process is in fact the intervention which will stimulate or enable society to address development needs:

Reconciliation is not about preventing conflict. It means looking at how much energy we spend at not building a new society. Reconciliation redirects energy towards building a common purpose. [NGO]

Victims express a need for some intervention that will change their relationships with perpetrators. While they see material needs as one element that will reduce their suffering and anger, they express an interest in direct ways of rebuilding relationships. Compensation (from the state) for the suffering means a lot, but it does not change the way they relate to the perpetrator.

Community leaders are probably most ambiguous about the role of structure and agency. They feel the pressure of demands for physical development most strongly, and

tend to prioritize this, but most still recognize that such development is unlikely to bring any lasting peace by itself.

People should get the opportunity to talk and explain their actions. People in Thokoza need to talk to each other and shake hands. Then the politicians can also meet at the higher levels. [K, L, IFP]

c) The Basic Nature of a “Reconciled” Society (Unification versus Autonomy)

This dimension refers to the ultimate goal - what a reconciled society would consist of. Unification sees this goal as a common political identity. Autonomy sees the reconciliation goal as improved relationships between semi-autonomous protected identity groups.

The unification model sees a need for the divisions between (identity) groups to be eradicated or replaced by a superimposed uniform identity. The main form of allegiance should be to the over-arching nation and a new consensus on national values. The main barrier is seen as the existence of strong identification with sub-national identities. The autonomy model sees national allegiance as a form of partnership. The main allegiance is to “your own people”, those who share your culture, history and/or race. According to this approach, cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships among different groups is what characterizes a reconciled society.

The only two groups who saw these as central issues in defining reconciliation were the TRC and community leaders. Other interviewee categories did not raise substantial concerns with this dimension of reconciliation. Support for both positions

came from different groups within the TRC, while community leaders were divided essentially along ANC (unification) versus IFP and NP (autonomy) lines.

This again reflects a linkage between this principle and that of top-down versus bottom-up reconciliation. Rather than the two poles of the debate around unification versus autonomy being linked to the top-down and bottom-up poles, the level of concern about the principle of unification versus autonomy shows a concern for national questions of identity and the construction of party-political discourse. Understanding local conflict and local reconciliation in relation to these abstract political concerns removes the capacity of local actors to significantly effect reconciliation. The broad markers of identity are generally seen as being mediated by national political actors and national socio-economic and demographic variables. This is seen as affecting the terrain within which local actors can only have limited autonomy to shape events.

i) Unification

Rather than giving it real substance as a goal to pursue, proponents of unification in the TRC present it as a goal defined more by its opposite (racial and identity politics) which characterized the old order. It is thus something that has to be moved away from, towards a nationhood that remains only vaguely defined.

Reconciliation is an inclusive sense of nationhood. It means to identify with the whole organism, to bridge the gap between the old and new order.

There is a need for the acknowledgment of the organism as a web of individuals and their activities. [TRC]

We can't reconcile without respecting identity but reconciliation also means moving towards political affiliation based on ideology and not identity. [TRC]

The main reconciliation process is political. Racial and ethnic based political parties need to be broken down. This will happen through coalitions that intersect racial boundaries. [TRC]

Community leaders spoke of this ideal of unification in relation to both racial and ethnic divisions:

When we were deeply involved in the struggle (for liberation) we saw it as a nation-building revolution. The goal was to ensure the creation of a common culture and community. We wanted to overcome the divisions that exist in society. [D, L, ANC]

We need to recognize the legitimacy of each other, and accept each other as part of a unified whole. The ANC fights for this, but the NP and PAC reject this common community. [D, L]

We need to see each other as people. We will do this through building a non-racial South Africa. [D, L]

Some NGO staff also spoke strongly of the ideal of non-racialism:

Reconciliation means a melting pot. We have to be one though abolishing our racial identities. [NGO]

ii) Autonomy

While the unification approach is about breaking down barriers, the second is essentially about good fences making good neighbors. Some TRC staff particularly emphasized the need for increased tolerance of differences. National Party leadership took this a step further in seeing the protection of differences as the basis for peaceful coexistence.

TRC staff seem to support the autonomy principle more as a first step or a more realistic option to be pursued. While some view unification as an ideal situation to strive towards, they acknowledge that they may have to settle for less.

The first prize would be an identity as a rainbow nation. But having lived in other societies I realize how difficult this is. [TRC]

The connections between two opposing parties are starting to emerge.

This involves a paradigm shift from images of right and wrong to an understanding of different perspectives. This is what reconciliation is

essentially about - a process whereby two sides come to realize that they have to live together. ... the first step is peaceful cohabitation. [TRC]

A more sophisticated (post-modern) interpretation of this approach is one that looks at coexistence within a framework of value systems rather than identity groups. It is thus a view that attempts to overcome the dichotomy of unification versus autonomy.

“Reconciliation is about developing the capacity to coexist. It means to allow space for others (as opposed to sharing the same stand and platform). It is equatable with tolerance. It is about the ability of value systems to coexist (NOT for blacks and whites to coexist). The problem needs to be reframed as different value systems that must be accommodated. This will lead to the disappearance of old lines of division. [TRC]

White community leaders have a fairly blunt approach to the issue, though. While those with strong ethnic identification indicate a strong commitment to improved relations among groups, they have little faith in (and much distrust of) approaches that attempt to move them away from this source of security and privilege:

We must work together on mutual concerns, and not interfere in each other’s communities. Different cultural groups will always mix with their

own people. Group formation around language and culture is natural. All that needs to be done is to improve the trust amongst different groups. [D, L, NP]

Reconciliation does not mean that Afrikaners should change their identity. It is a question of how we deal with the issue as Afrikaners. How do we survive and find a place in the new political setup. We need to be recognized in terms of being Afrikaners. ... The NP is moving towards becoming a coalition of Afrikaners and other identity groups. It is natural for a group's identity to have political expression. Politics is about identity groups not ideology. Each group has its central values that can be shared with others in a coalition. Group identity is central and should be respected by all parties. A group's identity can change but this is a very long process. [D, L, NP]

We must bring things into the open. It is very important in promoting contact and understanding among race groups. For example, white children previously did not grow up among other race groups, don't understand them and are thus racist. [D, L, NP]

d) The Central Form of Relationship in a "Reconciled" Society (Communal versus Contractual Bonds)

This dimension refers to the nature of the bonds that are required in society. Social bonds are seen as either arising from deep positive affect and sense of connectedness, or

from the anticipation of benefits to oneself. The extent to which these different aspects of social bonding should be promoted was subject to debate among respondents.

On the communal end of the spectrum is a belief that people have to view each other in a positive manner - they must have a sense of empathy, and be altruistically inspired. On the contractual side, the view is that society is not dependent on anything more than neutral relationships. People can live in peace while they are motivated simply by pursuing their own self-interest. Cooperation results from the anticipated mutual benefits that it holds for both parties. The basis of the cooperative social relationships is seen as dependent contractual rather than a “brotherly” bonds. Productive social relations are seen as arising from people co-existing in a mutually beneficial manner rather than from cooperation motivated by affective bonds.

Respondents from all categories were generally in favor of communal bonds being established among previous enemies. Individuals within each category did, however, express skepticism about the feasibility of this endeavor in the context of the violent conflict of the past. Some felt that a useful first step would be to simply promote an acceptance of co-existence or to recognize mutual self-interest in stopping the violence. Victims, ex-combatants and NGO staff were probably the strongest supporters of the principle of communal bonds.

i) Communal Bonds (Ubuntu)

The aspiration for a sense of brotherhood appears common among most respondents. While generally idealistically inspired by a vision of “brotherhood”, some are less optimistic about achieving this in practice.

“Ubuntu”, a Zulu word describing the sense of connectedness among people where altruistic motives guide mutual interaction, was commonly inferred by respondents when describing the cultural basis for communal bonds. Ubuntu embodies the notion that human nature is fundamentally social - our humanity is expressed through our interdependence with others.

Within the TRC, the religious beliefs were a strong influence on view about social bonds:

There are different levels of reconciliation - I have become more realistic and less starry eyed. At the one end of the continuum: live with one another and accept one another. At the other end: open our hearts to one another and develop real trust. [TRC]

Truth is a necessary but not sufficient condition for reconciliation. You also need a change of heart - an unconditional desire for reconciliation.
[TRC]

NGO and church organizations also have strong idealistic strands and feel strongly about promoting a deeper level of social change:

Reconciliation means recognizing our common humanity. It is the same as “ubuntu.” Faith engages people in terms of these deeper commonalities

that are linked to one's heart and conscience. The spiritual aspect of reconciliation is central. The faith community is the only one that can make an ever-lasting impression in this regard. The government can not do this. They can recognize our role and support our work. Bonhoeffer pointed out that faith groups are the custodians of reconciliation and peace. Only they can ultimately make it happen. [NGO]

We need to build a process that will revive people's conscience. People who have committed atrocities are scared to reveal what they did. They should be conscience driven to unburden themselves and thus revive their humanity. [NGO]

Telling stories in Khulumani groups containing community members also helps a lot. Talking in a group makes you feel you have returned to your motherland - you are at home. [NGO]

Even among some of the more hardened political leaders, the deeper ideal of building reconciliation through appealing to individuals' conscience is still strong:

Reconciliation is about changing a man's heart. If not, it will just remain as something in the sky. At the innermost level a person must say from the heart that they are sorry. To bring about reconciliation in Nigel, one

has to change the heart of most of the people. The TRC can not do this because it is impossible for them to judge the honesty of people applying for amnesty. [D, L, ANC]

Victims generally had a very strong sense of needing to rebuild a relationship of brotherhood with their adversaries. Simply losing their anger and desire for revenge is not enough. The conflict was experienced as a dehumanizing process that affected all those involved. They express a need to rebuild a sense of common humanity and connectedness.

Reconciliation is about re-connecting relationships and rebuilding trust. I can not stay in a community where there is no trust. Talking to others makes one feel less alone - regain the sense of community. [K, V]

Before the violence I had friends who lived in the hostel. We are no longer friends. I never go to the hostel and they don't come here. I don't trust the IFP enough to go there. I am too scared to visit. I don't know when I will see them again. I don't feel good about it. I lost some good friends. One day we will be friends again. The relationships are slowly being rebuilt. There is new hope now. [K, V]

The hostel dwellers are afraid of being in the location after dark. I used to work with them and be friends. We have not renewed the friendships. When we see each other in the street, we greet and pass on. This is not as it should be. [K, V]

Ex-combatants echo this desire for reconnecting with people from whom they feel separated.

Reconciliation means accepting and understanding each other, being able to mix freely. If we do not get to do things together we will not get to know what they are like inside. [K, EC, ANC]

I want to see people marry each other - that will be a good thing. My friends go to other areas - nothing happens to them. I am enthusiastic in my heart. [K, EC, IFP]

On the mountain (Wilderness Therapy Trail) you are no longer IFP or ANC. It is a different world - we are all one family. [K, EC, ANC]

ii) Contract

The contract model is upheld by those who have lowered their expectations. For some it is a first step that they want to help build. For others it is the only realistic basis for a

more long-term peace. The term co-existence was often used as an alternative or precursory goal that should be pursued.

Among TRC staff it is reflected by the broad support for reconciliation based on a new legal culture - protecting human rights. Rather than relying on the lack of animosity among people, the basis for peace is seen as the rules that protect people from abuse. If people see these rules as serving their own interests as well, they will appreciate their necessity.

What is important to me is that children do not experience the same prejudices that we did. This requires that a human rights culture protects them. [TRC]

NGO staff also recognized that people will restrain their actions because they understand the implications of further conflict for the rest of their community. Their personal desires are overruled by the interests of others who would be affected. Behavior is subjected to rational choices regarding the consequences of one's actions.

Reconciliation means coming to terms with what has happened. Victims often say that they are willing to forgive the perpetrator. Many of them, however, do it for the sake of country. It does not come from deep down. The example that Mandela set in forgiving his perpetrators is seen as

something that other feel they should follow. They do it because they believe it is necessary to end the fighting. [NGO]

Revenge will not happen. People are not looking for revenge. They are happy to give the responsibility over to the state. They are tired of fighting. They don't want to renew the cycle of violence. Victims often say "God is there," implying that he will (ultimately) take care of justice. [NGO]

Some victims also express a similar belief in subjecting their own desires to the good of the community.

I know one of the people who killed my brother. When I [went into] the hostel I recognized him (he did not see me). Previously I would have tried to kill him. Now I won't. I have a responsibility - we are community builders. It would destroy the things that have taken so much time to reconstruct. Revenge would put things back to square one, and then if I was arrested it would create more conflict as my SDU comrades tried to defend me. [K, EC, ANC]

Some victims have simply resigned themselves to what appears a more realistic basis for cooperation:

I just want to get on with my life. ... Some whites are not interested in reconciliation. They don't trust blacks, but they need us and we need them. [D, V]

For white community leaders, the building of a partnership across racial lines was the ideal form of reconciliation. The basis for this partnership was a common vision, a new value system and a relationship of trust.

We have to find each other, to construct a commonly accepted value system, to develop a system in which we can listen to each other and meet each other halfway. We have to build a relationship where we can compete against the rest of the world in the world system. [D, L, NP]

Reconciliation means building trust among different groups that have been antagonistic towards each other as a result of events in past. It means to develop bonds of mutual support. [D, L, NP]

e) The Best Way of Pursuing Social Change (Harmony versus Confrontation)

These are competing principles for addressing conflict. Rather than distinguishing between desired outcomes (as the ubuntu-contract dimension does), this dimension relates to the way that change is achieved. While ubuntu may be seen as closely linked to

harmony, the goal of ubuntu may, according to some viewpoints, be pursued in a way that initially intensifies the conflict.

The harmony model is essentially one in which there is a stronger focus on attempts to build consensus, or to look for the underlying social good that over-rides individual differences. Change is something that is seen as achieved through empathy, understanding, a willingness to forgive or to subject ones own interests to the greater good of the community.

The confrontation model views conflict as something that is unavoidable and whose expression should be encouraged. Positive change is seen as only possible through confrontation. People will not change willingly - you have to push them. Change is painful.

It was mainly a minority among TRC staff and a majority of community leaders who supported the harmony approach. Some respondents appear to feel that a more empathetic approach was essential in promoting a change in mindset, while others simply saw the potential for conflict as too risky (particularly in Katorus). Confrontation is the dominant approach of the TRC. It also has some supporters among other groupings (mainly victims and ANC aligned leaders). A number of TRC staff seemed to have undergone a shift in their approach, from harmony to confrontation.

i) Harmony

Some in the TRC favored an approach that does not seek to place blame and cause emotional confrontations. Change is seen as coming from a gradual process of understanding and sympathetic engagement in a safe space.

I differ from most of my colleagues in that I feel that the TRC is presently laying a foundation with no regard for what will be built on it. They address these issues compartmentally - not within a frame of restorative justice. This leads to greater divisions than those that existed before. For example, when they talk about uncovering the truth there is an attempt to pin criminal liability, to find out who did what and nail the bastards. They do not treat uncovering the truth purely as a step in the context of the reconciliation process. The TRC approaches justice in terms of retribution. [TRC]

The goal of the TRC is to understand why conflict happened, to build an appreciation of different perspectives and experiences. It is about helping those who are privileged to appreciate what apartheid meant for others. [TRC]

The political parties have not gone far enough in showing remorse, but it is very difficult for a political party to be self critical. People need emotional space to contemplate the past. They need a peaceful place, but people feel too insecure. They feel threatened by their differences. [TRC]

Community leaders felt that reconciliation could be encouraged by promoting a new mindset among victims - one that is more open to forgiveness.

The TRC plays a major role in changing the mindset of victims.

Previously victims were not willing to reconcile, they were still bearing grudges. Now it has assisted them in revealing the truth, and encouraged them to forgive and forget. [D, L]

The danger of sweeping up emotions is strongly emphasized by those who feel threatened by continued or increased venting of anger. The danger of re-igniting conflict is emphasized:

The way in which truth is being revealed is creating deeper divisions. It is being done for the media - turned into sensationalist frenzy. Doing it privately would be more useful for reconciliation. ... I am astounded by revelations on TV and have sympathy for the victims, but how does this contribute to reconciliation? [D, L, NP]

It is good thing for secrets to be revealed, for example the location of bodies. But the past must be forgotten. Victims who identify perpetrators could be targeted, and perpetrators could become targets of revenge. This is a definite possibility. [K, L, IFP]

The only place for emotional expression is where it can subsequently be dissipated in an atmosphere of forgiveness, or where it can be effectively contained.

The TRC has been a good thing in that it has facilitated a catharsis - everybody cries in front of a sympathetic audience. This creates a climate for forgiveness. The telling of stories relieves people's emotional pain and promotes peace and reconciliation in the community. [D, L, NP]

Putting things in the past and forgetting about the past is a repeated theme.

We need to put things in the past. We should not dig up the past. We must come together and make peace. We should not remind people of the past. People should be called together and the leaders should commit themselves to peace. ... The leaders should explain the past to the community. Many people did not know why they were fighting. Some of it was criminal. People need to be called together by the leaders. People should come together to pray in memory of those who died. This will help them to forget. Reparations to victims will also help them to forget. [K, L, IFP]

A reconciliation process must reveal the past but that make sure that we leave the past behind. The past is the past. We must be forward looking - see what we can do about the future. Now we are simply creating hatred by dwelling on the past. [K, L, IFP]

I do not feel strongly that the NP should show remorse. The political parties are just trying to score points. This does not assist reconciliation. Let us forget about the past and chart the way forward together. [D, L, ANC]

Where victims support a harmony model, they do it for very practical reasons, mainly fear.

It is dangerous to tell your story. People may come after me. Public story telling is okay if it is done in such a way that shows that you are not doing it to hit back at the perpetrator. [K, V]

Ex-combatants show strong support for a harmony approach. Confrontation, for them, means becoming the target. They would much rather stay in the background. They also have a perception of protracted political instability that could easily lead to violence in the future. They want to avoid this at all costs. They fear revenge, they fear

exposure and the consequent loss of status, and they fear being drawn back into their role as combatants.

Truth and then reconciliation (as a second step) is dangerous. For example, there was a battle in which a person mistakenly shot a comrade. He told his story to a Kangaroo Court and there was a pretense of reconciliation, but three months later we found him dead. [K, EC, ANC]

Amnesty is wrong because, if you apply, the victim may still not want to forgive you. The victims' emotions will be raised if they know who the perpetrator is. It will thus create new tensions between you and the victim. The victim may also decide to take revenge. It will not help people forget about the past. People will get angry and hurt again. [K, EC, ANC]

ii) Confrontation

While TRC staff refer to initial attempts at drawing parties into a voluntary exchange, they appear to have reached a point where they lost faith in these more conciliatory approaches, and opted instead for confrontation. Other respondents see confrontation as embodying the logic of politics - the arena within which they see themselves performing.

At one level truth is absolutely essential for reconciliation. If the TRC does its job and reveals the truth, it will increase the level of anger. The

goal is that people will reconcile with truth (this should be part of a definition of reconciliation). [TRC]

In dealing with past violations we can not compromise openness, despite the danger of vengeance. Concealment is even more dangerous and insidious. [TRC]

Revealing the truth is a necessary but not sufficient condition for reconciliation. For reconciliation to happen, the privileged and apathetic must acknowledge the truth, as opposed to saying let us forget and carry on. We may have to brace ourselves for acrimony in response to our final report. It will not necessarily contribute to reconciliation. [TRC]

It is necessary for the TRC to force the participation of political parties. We would not get their cooperation any other way. It is similar to confrontational therapy. We are still in the first session. The patient is not even on the couch yet. [TRC]

Forced participation may seem like a contradiction if you look at it from the parties' perspective, but it will only work if you push them to come clean. It is a difficult balancing act. Their obstruction of the process is simply a matter of fear of exposure. They are attempting to project

themselves as not being systematic perpetrators of human rights abuses.

[TRC]

Given the nature of politics, forced participation by political parties in a reconciliation process is not a contradiction in terms. Reconciliation is a political trade-off. Parties need to be pushed into trading. They only trade if there is a possible reward. [TRC]

I don't care any more. I am not worried about offending and alienating people. I am infuriated by the re-victimization that has occurred due to their arrogance. The oppressed are being forced to apologize for their anger. There is such a lack of remorse and humility. The arrogance of these people is astounding. Who the hell are they - don't they know they got off lightly. They can't see the suffering they caused or appreciate the reasons for people's anger. What keeps me going is the idea that we can build a better society and ensure that it never happens again. I myself suffered as a result of their policies. Now to be asked (along with others who suffered) to be impartial and not to judge is an obscenity. These people have not changed their consciousness. They just become immediately defensive. The central issue is the fundamental denial of rights, not so much the subsequent dynamics of violations (by both sides). [TRC]

We can not deny that there may be aspects of a witch hunt within our work. We demand that people plead guilty and then we demand that they do it voluntarily. Putting people on the spot can not be done in a diplomatic way. We South Africans are incredibly arrogant. [TRC]

Some TRC staff see confrontation as part of the process of healing. Emotions may be uncomfortable to deal with, but venting is part of the process of healing.

It is not a cozy concept. There must be room for anger, frustration and ugly scenes. But there is no room in the TRC created for this, because its concept of reconciliation is too flowery religious. [TRC]

The reconciliation process should not be about jumping in to calm people down. The victim-perpetrator animosity is part of the process. People should be given the opportunities to reconcile - not forced. [TRC]

NGO staff feel that reconciliation must be based on a clear exploration of underlying issues. Giving expression to these may in fact worsen the conflict in the short term, but is the only basis for sustainable peace.

For reconciliation at community level it is important to develop public knowledge. Revealing truth, however, can lead to worse conflict, but it is the only way to reconciliation. [NGO]

Some community leaders are willing to deal with the confrontations that still lie dormant. They also fear the consequences of letting sleeping dogs lie.

I don't think revenge is likely to happen much, but it could have been different if more information was revealed. This would have required greater intervention to overcome the tension produced by the truth. Ultimately this would have been better than what we have now. [D, L]

You can not have reconciliation if there are hidden skeletons. You must first unlock the cupboard and air dirty linen. Truth is an absolute prerequisite, even though it may have negative consequences. [D, L, ANC]

While some victims still fear revenge, they are willing to take the risk of confrontation:

Some are afraid of vengeance if they speak out, but truth must come out.
[K, V]

Victims are also ready to take a confrontational approach when their voices are again not being heard.

It (Khulumani) also has an important role in lobbying the TRC and government. I would be willing to join a march to the TRC offices to express my dissatisfaction. [K, V]

4. Stakeholder Divisions around Principles

Rather than simply being divided around specific strategic concerns, there appears to be consistent principled divisions among various stakeholders. When the broad patterns identified in the stakeholder positions on the above principles are noted as in the following diagram, some general patterns can be observed:

Table 10.1: Stakeholder Divisions over Principles

STAKEHOLDERS

	Victims	Ex-Combts	IFP Leaders	NP Leaders	ANC Leaders	TRC
Locus of Reconciliation Initiative	Bottom-Up	Bottom-Up	Top-Down & Bottom-Up	Top-Down & Bottom-Up	Bottom-Up	Top-Down & Bottom-Up
Main Factor Bringing about Reconciliation	Agency	Structure	Agency & Structure	Agency & Structure	Agency & Structure	Agency & Structure
Basic Nature of Reconciled			Autonomy	Autonomy	Unification	Unification & Autonomy

Society						
Form of Relationship in Reconciled Society	Community	Community	Community	Contract	Community	Community & Contract
Best Way of Pursuing Social Change		Harmony	Harmony	Harmony	Confrontatn	Harmony & Confrontatn

Firstly, in relation to the positions of specific stakeholders: The TRC appears to be divided on each and every issue. This, in some ways, reflects the differing internal positions of people with different political persuasions, different professional backgrounds and different roles within the TRC body. It also reflects their attempts to juggle a range of different functions and expectations, and probably their lack of consistency or absence of a clear vision of what they were trying to achieve. For each division between the dominant TRC line and a stakeholder group, there was a corresponding conflict over principle within the TRC.

Victims and ex-combatants were the only ones who seemed somewhat internally consistent in their viewpoints. This may be related to clearer issues of direct self-interest served by the reconciliation process (and shape thereof), while other stakeholder groups were confronted with the need to balance personal self-interest with the needs of various constituencies or clients.

Victims' views on reconciliation seem most closely shared by ANC-aligned leaders (official party leaders and community leaders who are ANC aligned). The similarity with ANC leaders is in some ways not surprising, considering that the victims

were largely ANC aligned, and the leaders saw themselves as representing these victims.³

Political differences are clearly indicated by the diagram. These are mainly between ANC-aligned leaders and non-ANC leaders (Autonomy versus Unification; Confrontation versus Harmony), but the divisions in views regarding what essentially binds a society (Ubuntu versus Contract) appears to be a racial or cultural divide (NP versus ANC/IFP).

One conclusion that can be drawn from these observations is that the TRC's strategic differences with the various community stakeholders (as identified in Chapters 8 and 9) are caused largely by structural factors rather than being a result of the competing individual viewpoints of reconciliation. The TRC staff held varying individual positions, but their overall strategies were ultimately determined by their mandate and structural relation to the political milieu. Given more autonomy over their work, and greater resources to pursue different agendas, they may have come up with different strategies.

5. Linking Principles to Dimensions of Reconciliation

From a theoretical perspective, the principles discussed above can be used to reflect on the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2.

³ NGO staff also held similar principled positions to victims and ANC leader which could also be understood in terms of their tendency to personally be ANC-aligned. They also saw their role as being victim-centered (victims being central recipients of their services).

The key dimension of reconciliation explored by this study was between different social levels of reconciliation. This tension between top-down and bottom-up approaches to reconciliation was thus used as the first principled division explored in this chapter. The other four principles discussed above were, however, inductively developed. They nevertheless relate back to the three dimensions of reconciliation identified in Chapter 2. These dimensions were diagrammatically represented by the following three diagrams:

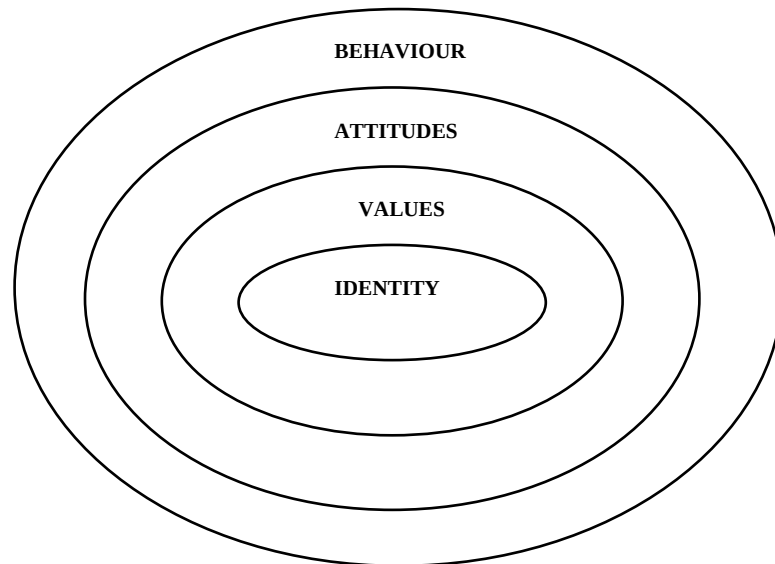


Figure 2.4: Spheres of Reconciliation

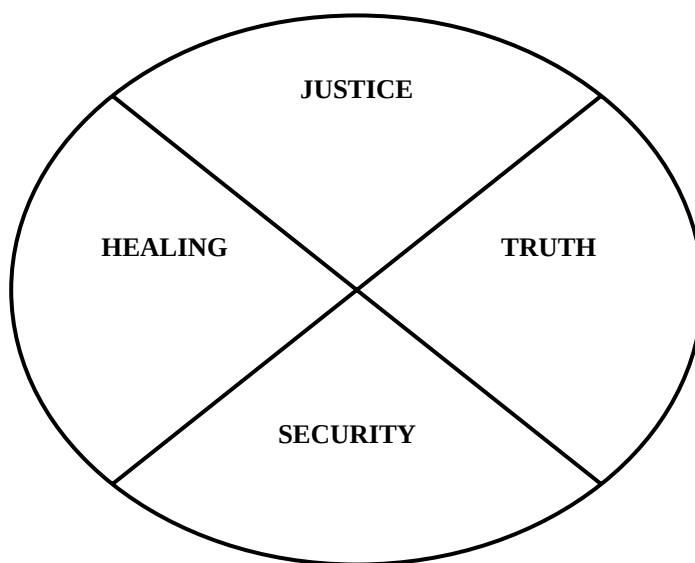


Figure 2.5: Components of Reconciliation

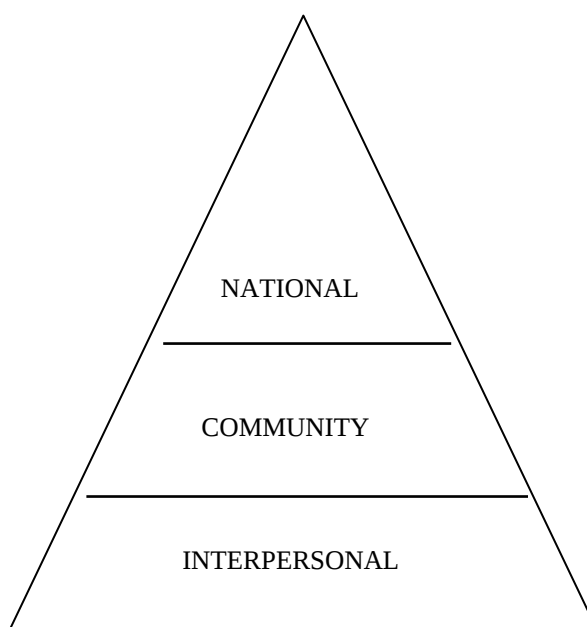


Figure 2.7: Levels of Reconciliation

The first principle (locus of reconciliation initiative) was directly deduced from figure 2.6 - levels of reconciliation. The third principle (basic nature of a “reconciled” society) and fourth principle (central form of relationship in a “reconciled” society) can both be related to the Spheres of Reconciliation dimension. The fifth principle (best way of pursuing social change) is linked to the Components of Reconciliation sphere.

Differences in views about the basic nature of a reconciled society (unification versus autonomy) were very direct references to the question of identity change (figure 2.4). Those who favored the unification approach argued for reconciliation through building a common identity, whereas those favoring the autonomy approach saw reconciliation as something that should respect (and even reify) existing identities while promoting change particularly in relation to attitudes among different identity groups.

Differences regarding the central form of relationships in a “reconciled” society (communal versus contractual bonds) essentially reflects different views about the attitudes and values that characterize a reconciled society. While both approaches aim at promoting cooperative forms of behavior, they differ on the attitudes and values that should motivate this behavior. From the contractual approach, cooperative behavior would flow from anticipated mutual benefit. Trust is, for example, essentially seen as arising from a mutually beneficial contract (or pattern of exchange) with sufficient guarantees of compliance. The communal approach views cooperative behavior as a product of affective ties and commitment to the well-being of the other. Trust is seen as arising from a belief in the other party’s altruistic motives.

The fifth principle, best way of pursuing social change, can be examined in relation to figure 2.5, the substantive components of reconciliation. This dimension differentiates the substantive issues on which reconciliation processes focus. Approaches that prioritize harmony in the above review of the data are essentially preoccupied with the issue of security. The basic principle is not to make people feel threatened. Emphasizing differences and stirring up emotions are seen as processes that can spiral out of control and erupt into violence. Security is seen as a fragile social construct that must be maintained above all else.

On the other hand, confrontation is an approach that involves emphasizing differences and challenging certain beliefs and positions. In this study these processes generally involve airing competing claims to justice and truth. In situations of severe conflict, justice and truth are concerns that are generally expressed in emotional, accusatory terms aimed at condemning the behavior or character of the other.

The second principle, the main factor bringing about reconciliation (structure versus agency), raises the theoretical question posed at the beginning of Chapter 2: structure versus relationship as the main cause of conflict (and as the avenue for its resolution). The competing analytical frameworks (as presented by Mitchell (1981) and Kraybill (1996)) are revisited by the respondents in their views of how reconciliation should be addressed. Some argue that addressing the structural causes (or dimensions) of the conflict will ultimately also lead to a process of rebuilding relationships. Reconstruction (the repair of physical damage) and conflict resolution (development of acceptable structures), it is argued, will lead to the reconciliation.

On the other hand, from the agency perspective, some argue that reconciliation should be addressed as a priority, in its own right. They argue that reconstruction and conflict resolution will not be sustainable unless it is accompanied by relationship-building processes. The Agency approach is one that advocates interventions to promote dialogue, understanding and trust-building.

6. Conclusion

The three-dimensional theoretical framework of reconciliation developed in Chapter 2 is generally supported by the data as significant tools to understand competing perspectives of the meaning of reconciliation in these two community studies.

The principles of reconciliation identified in this chapter indicate various dimensions along which different conceptualizations of reconciliation can be differentiated. These divisions indicate lines of agreement and disagreement among individual respondents and among specific stakeholder categories.

The central hypotheses of the dissertation were that top-down and bottom-up approaches to reconciliation is a central cause of division among stakeholder groups, and that this division separates community stakeholders (who generally subscribe to a

bottom-up approach) and TRC respondents (who subscribe to a top-down approach). These hypotheses are, on the whole, supported by the data. The qualifications are that NP and IFP leaders were fairly evenly split in their support for the two competing approaches and that a significant minority of TRC respondents supported bottom-up approaches. Many TRC respondents were openly regretful of their inability to provide more of a bottom-up intervention, and blamed this failure on their mandate or resource constraints.

Other principles of reconciliation were also found to be significant sources of differentiation in perspectives. These principles explain divisions within particular stakeholder groups (especially the TRC who were internally divided on every principle) and between different community stakeholders. Sometimes these differences were political (between ANC, IFP and NP leaders), while at other times they divided community leaders from other stakeholders.

The next chapter attempts to make sense of these five principles by relating them back to broader ideological frames which integrate principled positions into more integrated conceptual frameworks.