

Chapter 7

Research Methodology

1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the conceptual framework employed for collecting and analyzing the data and spells out the empirical research questions pursued. This conceptual frame is one that links the theoretical insights from Chapter 2 (the three dimensions of reconciliation and the construction of ideological frames) to the practical intervention issues raised by the TRC in the two communities that were studied.

The purpose of this framework is to clarify the way in which competing conceptions of reconciliation can be elucidated through looking at contestations over the strategies employed to engage communities and manage individual cases.

After presenting this framework, the chapter unpacks the research questions that were addressed and the various research instruments used in the study. (Interview schedules are included as appendix A.) Lastly, it addresses the more concrete questions of the research methodology: the choice of communities that were studied, the data sources within the communities and the TRC, the sampling strategy and interview procedures.

2. Conceptual Framework for the Research

The empirical research examined the TRC's intervention at community level: what were the strategies employed, what were the goals of these strategies, and how was this intervention viewed by the various stakeholders in the community? This information provides a basis for understanding the contrasting approaches to reconciliation employed by various parties - revealing the lines of division and providing insight regarding the basis for underlying differences.

The basic research questions of the empirical study were:

1. What community engagement and case management strategies were used by the TRC?
2. Which strategies were contested, by whom, and what alternatives were proposed?
3. What were the goals or principles that motivated the strategies and opposition to them?
4. What conceptions of reconciliation underpin these strategies, and how are these differences related to divisions among stakeholder groupings? (Which differences characterize which stakeholder divisions?)

The starting point for this research was: a) to examine the TRC's intervention at the community level and to see how this became a source of conflict among different stakeholders who supported and opposed different strategies, b) to analyze the underlying principles and conceptions of reconciliation that explain these differences, c) specifically examine the hypothesis that competing top-down versus bottom-up approaches to

community reconciliation was a central difference among parties' conceptualizations, and that this was a central division which characterized the difference between community and TRC approaches, and d) to compare the explanatory power of this dichotomy (TRC versus community perspectives) with that of other explanatory variables.

b) Principles versus Ideological Frames of Reconciliation

The theoretical assumption underlying this analytical framework is that the strategies used and proposed to address community reconciliation arise from deeper positions around principles, and ideological frames of reconciliation. Whether these strategies are motivated by self-interest, religious beliefs or other factors, it is assumed that there is some logical conceptual framework that provides individual stakeholders with a sense of meaning for their behavior, and that an examination of these actual and proposed strategies would shed light on these underlying systems of meaning. This argument is developed in greater detail in the section on ideological frames in Chapter 2.

To recapitulate the argument presented in Chapter 2, different reconciliation approaches can be understood as arising from different ideological frames. The competing ideological frames of reconciliation can thus be analyzed in terms of their differential prioritization of the different components, spheres and levels of reconciliation. Each frame determines which components should be treated as essential (justice, truth, security and healing), and defines the type/form of change that would have to characterize that component. It defines the sphere of change that should be pursued (identity, values, attitudes and behavior), and possibly contains assumptions regarding

how these spheres are linked. Each ideological frame also outlines the social level (interpersonal, community, national) at which the intervention should be focused.

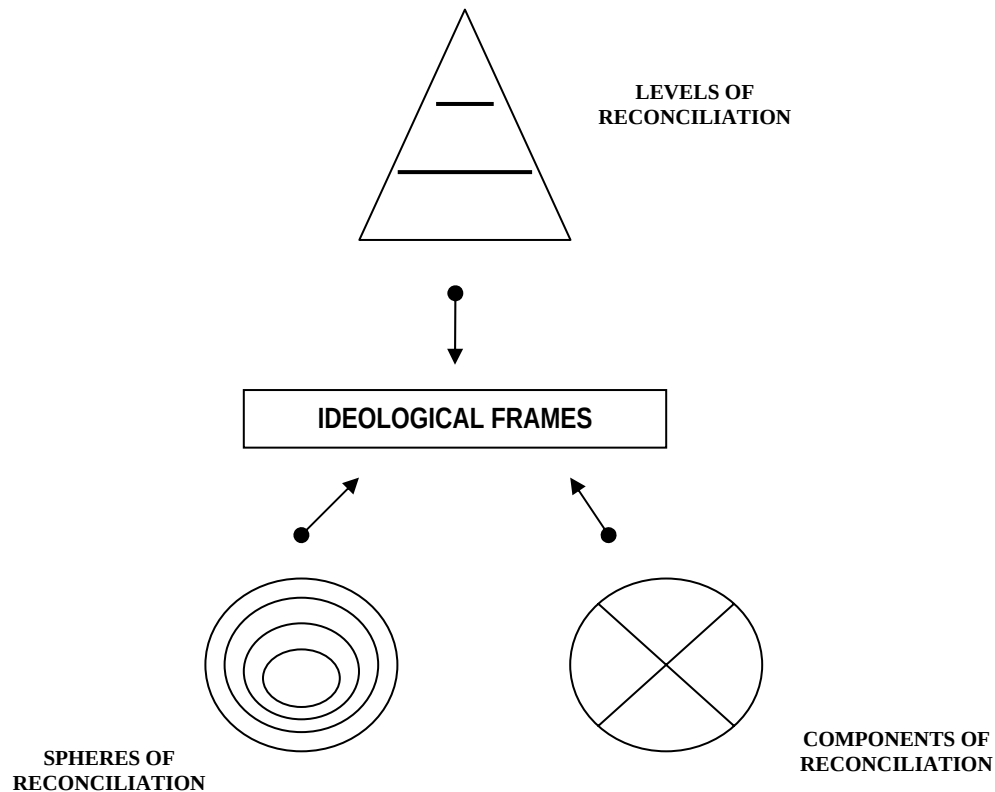


Figure 2.11: Ideological Frames of Reconciliation

In Chapter 2 it was argued that these competing approaches could best be understood as competing ideological frames because they embody systems of values and theoretical arguments that provide a broader framework for understanding reconciliation as an element in the process of maintaining social order. Such systems provide insights into underlying motives of stakeholders and incorporate a range of demands, positions and justifications within a unified logical framework.

Given the conflict situations found in the two communities described in the previous chapters, it would be reasonable to anticipate the participation in the reconciliation process of groups with different value systems, different interests, and different needs. Sub-groups within these stakeholder groups are also likely to have their particular experiences of the conflict, and as a result, their particular reconciliation needs.

In the light of the three-dimensions that constitute the ideological frames, these sub-groups thus have certain inherent/constitutive principled positions (*principles of reconciliation*). These positions locate the ideological frame in relation to a specific intervention dilemma (e.g., what does the frame say about the importance of justice or identity or interpersonal relations). Some of the principled divisions that may characterize different approaches to reconciliation are inherent in the dimensional understanding of reconciliation. The top-down versus bottom-up tension emerges out of the competing levels of reconciliation. Similarly, a contrast between those who view justice as central to reconciliation and those who do not, or those who see reconciliation as requiring identity change versus those who prioritize attitudinal change, may be apparent. Rather than directly seeking out these principled divisions in the data, the research process pursued is one that draws out the most explicative divisions from the data (essentially an inductive process). Other principles that do not directly emerge from the framework are thus also explored.

Principles of reconciliation are thus used to refer to basic preferences regarding how strategies should be pursued or what goals should be prioritized. These principles essentially differentiate people in a linear fashion along two extreme points on a

spectrum. The key differentiation between top-down and bottom-up approaches to reconciliation, for example, can be viewed as a principled division.

3. Operationalization of the Research Framework

a) Construction and Analysis of Reconciliation Strategies

The research methodology examines these principles and ideological frames both through direct questioning of parties regarding their understanding of reconciliation, and through observation/questioning regarding their preferred strategies.

While the logic of constructing behavior flows from ideological frame to principles to strategies, the analytical process used here traced the process in reverse. From identifying the strategic contentions, it abstracts the principles underlying the ideological frames that appear to give meaning to these strategies. It was thus anticipated that through examining different parties' strategic positions, the differences in the principles they believe in and the ideological frames they poses could be clearly elucidated.

While the principles are partially abstracted from the strategies and partially observed from goals and explanations provided by stakeholders, the ideological frames are almost pure abstraction that are not directly observable. They rather fit the analytical model of an ideal type (as used by Weber).

observation



observation



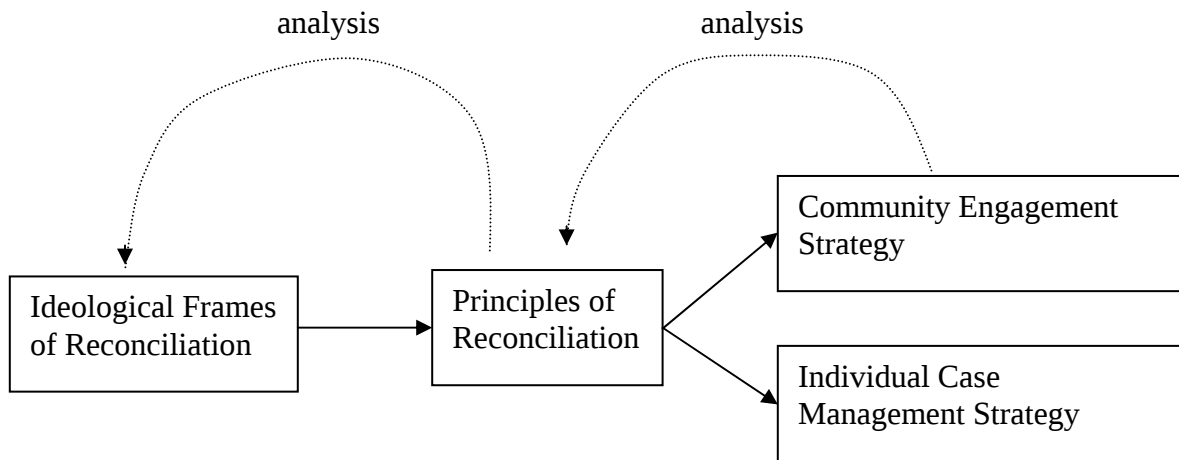


Figure 7.1: Construction and Analysis of Ideological Frames and Principles

The three layers (strategy, principles and ideological frames), one constructed on top of the next, are essentially three different levels of abstraction. The first, strategic contention, is perhaps the most visible. It is 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. It essentially asks what steps the TRC took which brought different (and sometimes competing) perspectives of the reconciliation process to the fore. From this first descriptive overview, the principles that appear to underlie these competing interpretations and priorities are identified and teased out in more detail. 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.

b) Comparing Parties' Strategies, Principles and Ideological Frames

The analysis of the reconciliation strategies contrasted the views of each stakeholder group with the others. It explored commonalities and differences among these stakeholder positions, among the underlying principles of the parties, and it examined the level of support for various ideological frames within these parties.

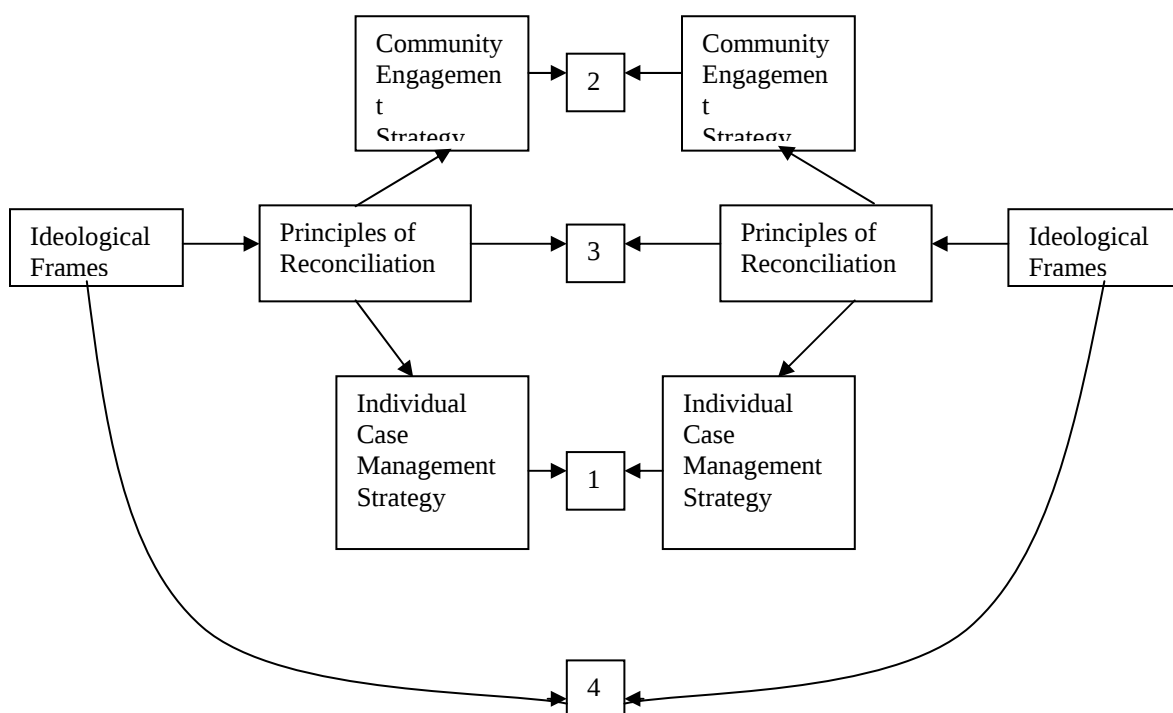


Figure 7.2: Framework for Analyzing Competing Strategies

The first step in this analysis is thus to identify the areas of tension between

(1) the various parties' individual case management strategies,

- (2) their community engagement strategies. (These is covered in Chapters 8 and 9.)

Secondly it was to examine:

- (3) the various commonalities and contrasts between their principles of reconciliation, and lastly to
- (4) compare the ideological frames present within the various parties. (These are covered in Chapters 10 and 11.)

c) Factors Influencing Ideological Frames (Independent Variables)

The research questions above essentially spell out the dependent variables that were analyzed (intervention strategies, principles and ideological frames). There were essentially three independent variables that were considered in relation to these questions, namely interviewee category, political identity and location (Duduza and Katorus). Taken together they delineate various stakeholder groups.

The various interviewee categories whose conceptions were considered are:

- a.* victims
- b.* ex-combatants
- c.* local community leaders
- d.* TRC Commissioners and staff

The key distinction in this research is that between TRC Commissioners and staff on the one hand and community members (victims, ex-combatants and leaders) on the other. Analyses were also, however, made of the differences among different community stakeholders.

A fifth group of interviewees was also included in the study, namely NGO and church staff. These interviewees were approached for their specialized knowledge of the communities concerned and their insights about the relationship between the TRC and the various sectors of the community. Their conceptions of reconciliation were not central in the analysis of competing principles and ideological frames.

The second factor, political identity, was analyzed in terms of:

- a.* political affiliation
- b.* ethnic/racial classification.

These variables were found to overlap to such an extent that separate analyses were not possible. The only distinctions made were in relation to community leaders in Duduza (white National Party community leaders, black ANC community leaders and black non-party leaders - who were broadly ANC aligned but not in official leadership positions), community leaders in Katorus (ANC and Zulu IFP leaders), and ex-combatants in Katorus (ANC and Zulu IFP ex-combatants). Political identity was thus only considered in much detail when examining the internal divisions within certain stakeholder groups (ex-combatants and local community leaders). In the other categories (victims and TRC staff), the overwhelming number of interviewees were from a particular political and ethnic group, and thus did not allow sufficient information for analysis.

The third factor, location, was simply categorized as Duduza or Katorus residents. Expanding on [Figure 7.1](#), the factors impacting on conceptions of reconciliation are thus:

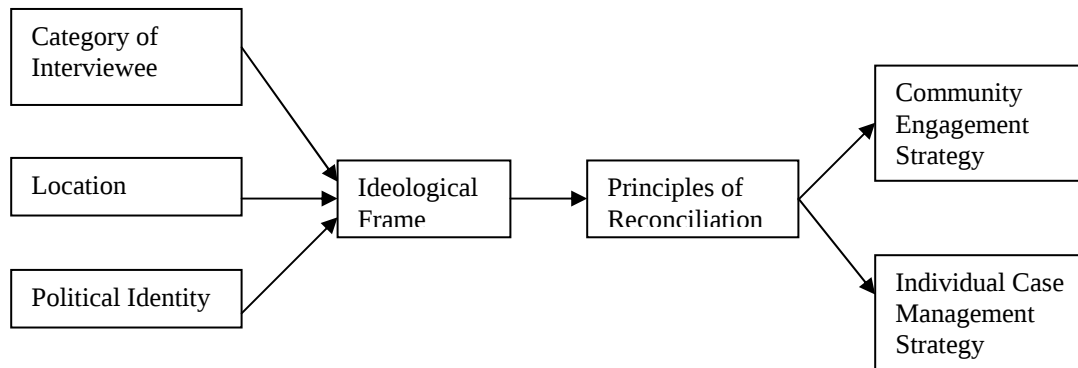


Figure 7.3: Factors Impacting on Conceptions of Reconciliation

d) Contrasting Community and TRC Conceptualizations

A key hypothesis in the study was that some of the differences in strategies would be related to underlying divisions between top-down and bottom-up approaches to justice. Furthermore, it was anticipated that top-down approaches would be supported within the TRC, while bottom-up approaches would be supported by one or more of the community stakeholder groups.

In terms of the effectiveness of the TRC's intervention, it was also important to examine if other principles could be identified that divided the TRC's conceptualization from that of community stakeholders. At the same time, however, the research examined the various perspectives to see if there were internal community divisions, or whether certain sections of the community had a closer affinity with the TRC's conceptualization.

The key differentiation in perspectives that would have strong implication for the credibility and effectiveness of the TRC's intervention was that between TRC and

community conceptions of reconciliation. Diagrammatically this analysis can be presented as follows:

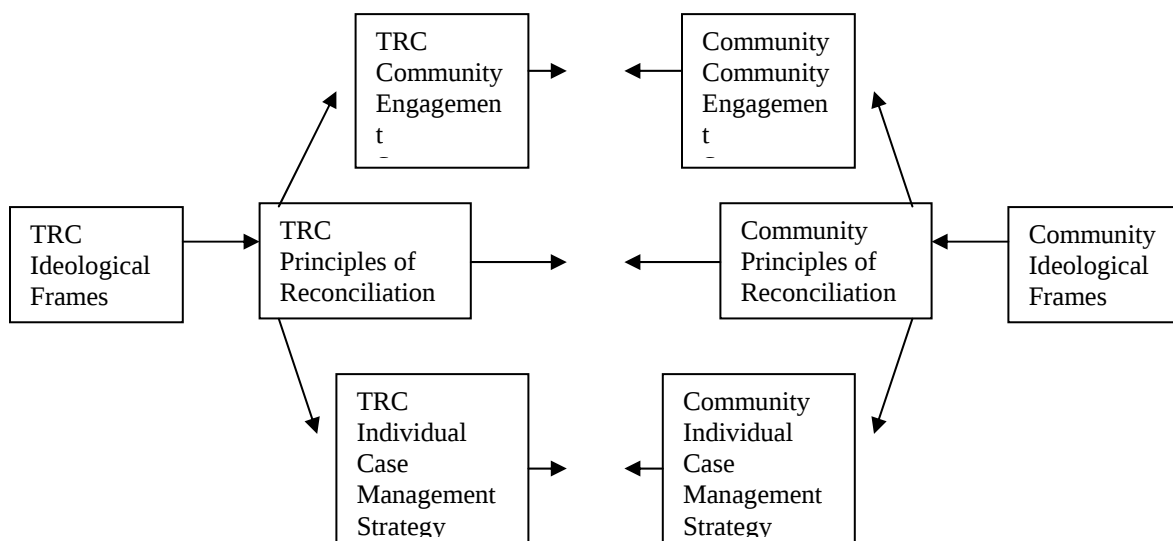


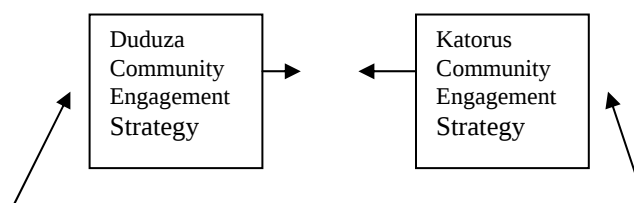
Figure 7.4: Contrasting Community and TRC Conceptions of Reconciliation

It was hypothesized that these competing strategies (those of the TRC and those proposed by the communities) would reflect underlying divisions between top-down and bottom up approaches to reconciliation. Rather than attempting to simply confirm or reject the hypothesis, the study aimed to elucidate the range of principles that are contested among the various stakeholder strategies, and to develop a tentative understanding of the ideological frames that explain the logic (and inconsistencies) within the various stakeholder positions.

This hypothesis underscored the key independent variable as stakeholder category, and proposed that the division would be between the TRC on the one hand and all community stakeholders on the other. Other lines of division were also examined.

d) Location and Political Identity as Explanatory Variables

The basis for doing a comparative community study, was that it could be argued that conceptualizations of reconciliation are specific to local communities (i.e., treating location as the main explanatory variable). The analysis thus also compared the differences in conceptualizations of reconciliation between community stakeholders (assessed, for example, in terms of differences between victims in the two communities, differences between political leaders in the two communities, etc.) in Duduza and Katorus. This comparative approach is developed in more detail in section 5.c. of this chapter.



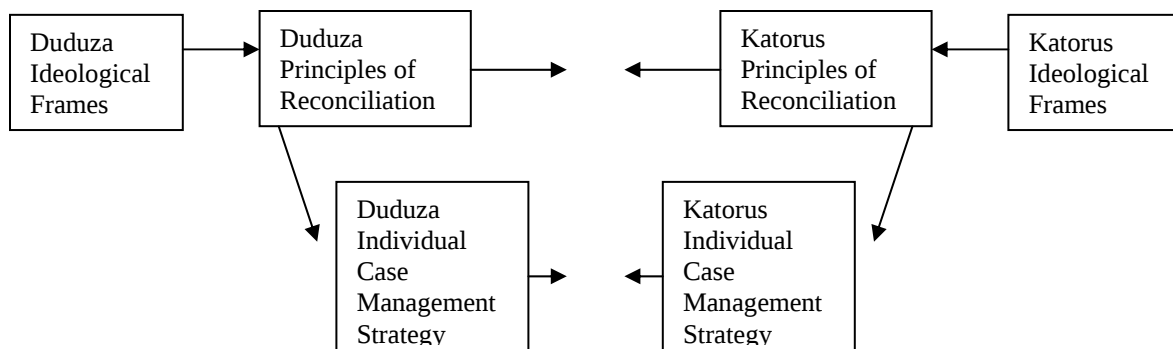


Figure 7.5: Contrasting Conceptions of Reconciliation in Relation to Location

Similarly, the political identity variable was examined for its explanatory power. The level of contrast/agreement among members of different political identities (within stakeholder categories) were explored. This meant contrasting, for example, ANC and IFP ex-combatants in Katorus, and ANC and NP leaders in Duduza.

4. Operationalization of the Research Questions

This section will briefly unpack the various key research questions in terms of the way that they were operationalized in the data gathering process.¹

The basic research questions spelled out in the previous section were:

- a. What community engagement and case management strategies were used by the TRC?
- b. Which strategies were contested, by whom, and what alternatives were proposed?
- c. What were the goals or principles that motivated the strategies and opposition to them?
- d. What conceptions of reconciliation underpin these strategies, and how are these differences related to divisions among stakeholder groupings? (Which differences characterize which stakeholders divisions?)

a) What community engagement and case management strategies were used by the TRC?

The strategies fell into two main categories: i) individual case management strategies and ii) community engagement strategies.

Individual case management refers to the manner in which the TRC dealt with individual victims and perpetrators, while community engagement refers to their interaction with representatives of the community and public interaction with the community. There is no clear analytical purpose in drawing this distinction, and certain strategic concerns could have been classified into either category. The distinction is mainly used as a data organizing tool.

¹ Certain aspects of the TRC's intervention in the communities fell outside the time frame of this research. The amnesty hearings that affected the two ex-combatants who had applied for amnesty, the urgent interim reparations, and the TRC's final report findings were all relevant issues. Their significance is however not seen as sufficient to undermine the findings in relation to available data sources.

For both the individual and the community engagement process, a central question was whether they (the individual and the community) were treated as subjects in their own right, or were they objects that were to be managed in the service of a greater social goal? For example, was the purpose of putting victims on a public platform to tell their story (1) for them to get a sense of public recognition and acknowledgment (i.e., part of a process of individual healing - a bottom-up approach), (2) the first step in bringing together the victim and perpetrator (i.e., part of interpersonal reconciliation - a bottom-up approach), (3) for the whole community to feel that their suffering is taken seriously by the country and to clear up misconceptions of who did what to whom in the community (i.e., part of community reconciliation - also mainly a bottom-up approach), or (4) for whites to get an understanding of how blacks suffered under apartheid (i.e., part of national reconciliation and a top-down approach to community hearings). If all of these are relevant considerations, then which is more central? Different foci lead to different strategies regarding which cases the TRC should select, what kind of interaction should occur between commissioners and victims, what kind of information and emotions should be elicited and what subsequent intervention is to be carried out.

Some of these issues were largely predetermined by the Act. Others were open to interpretation and decisions by the TRC itself.

i) Individual Case Management Strategy

The way in which a single case is managed reveals a lot about the ideology driving the intervention. Various aspects of the case-management process were examined:

What strategies are used to elicit victim statements?

How is the case processed by the statement taker (determination of relevant information, manage expectations, redefine demands and needs, classification of case, etc.)?

What process is used to select cases for public testimony at the community hearing?

How are information and attitudes managed in the public hearing?

Which cases are selected for further investigation?

What is done with information collected?

How are reparation policies decided?

How are individual reparation payments managed?

In the analysis of the data, the key contested areas were identified and analyzed in relation to the following issues:

- (1) The definition of a relevant abuse (what is considered a gross human rights violation, and who are the appropriate victims to be identified in the process?)
- (2) The strategy to solicit statements about abuses from victims (how broadly is the net cast to find victims who may qualify in terms of the act, how victim-friendly is the process, and how much community participation is there in this process?)
- (3) The process used to select cases for public testimony at the community hearing (what are the relevant criteria for selection: profile of the victim in the community or

country, level of local interest in exposing the truth about the case, level of potential benefit to the victim in testifying, etc.?)

- (4) The management of information and attitudes in the public hearing (showing concern for individual victims, focus on data collection, naming of perpetrators, etc.)
- (5) The subsequent management of the case (investigation, reparation, prosecution, etc.)
- (6) Victim-perpetrator dialogue (relevance of interaction, importance of an apology, etc.)

ii) Community Engagement Strategies

Similar questions were asked in terms of the community engagement strategy employed:

Who is targeted as “the community”?

How are people in different communities engaged?

What type of process are they drawn into? (educational workshop, public hearing, follow-up workshop, etc.)

Is a community treated as divided essentially (only) along racial lines, and what other divisions are anticipated or taken into account?

Is the community given any ownership of the process?

What is expected of community leaders in taking the process forward?

Again, the analysis (presented in the next chapter) highlights the most clearly contested aspect of these strategies, namely,

- (1) Who needs to be reconciled with whom? (which divisions are prioritized in the process black-white, police-community, political party divisions, etc.)

- (2) Community engagement in preparing for the hearing (party-political negotiations versus broader public participation)
- (3) Community ownership of the process (level of community control over issues affecting the hearing)
- (4) Goals of the hearing (truth, catharsis, promoting new values, developing an understanding of the conflict, etc.)
- (5) Post hearing follow-up (report-backs, further community interventions, etc.)

b) Which strategies were contested, by whom, and what alternatives were proposed?

This question simply expands the inquiry of the above question to the views of the other stakeholders. Which aspects of the case management and community engagement strategies were opposed and what alternative strategies were proposed or considered appropriate by these stakeholders?

c) What were the goals or principles that motivated the strategies and opposition to them?

Questions regarding the broader goals of, and explanations for, these strategies were more open-ended because they tried to pick up the various explanations and justifications regarding the strategies preferred by the various stakeholders. By inquiring about these underlying goals, basic principles regarding reconciliation were elicited, and explanations for the choice of strategies were elucidated.

These questions fell into five basic categories of inquiry:

- i) Purpose and appropriate forms of Justice
- ii) Purpose, nature and process of revealing Truth

iii) Significance of different levels of Reconciliation (Interpersonal, Community, National)

iv) Type of social bonds to be restored/created

v) Main lines of division in society that must be overcome

i) Purpose and appropriate forms of justice

Any conceptualization of reconciliation needs at some point to address the question of justice. Who should be held responsible? What type of action should be taken against those who are responsible? What are the social goals of these actions?

ii) Purpose, nature and process of revealing Truth

Truth has different connotations for different people. It has different standards and purposes, and can be pursued in a number of different ways. Are reconciliation and truth interdependent, independent or dependent variables? What aspect of truth is important, and how should it be revealed?

iii) Significance/Prioritization of different levels of Reconciliation

Reconciliation is being pursued at various levels between various individuals and groups. There are competing ideas of how reconciliation should be pursued, the differences being essentially about whether it should be viewed as top-down process, a bottom-up process, or a process that looks at the community (or the individual) as the basic building block of society.

iv) Type of social bonds to be restored/created

What are seen as legitimate, ideal or realistic forms of social bonding? Should social bonds be based on compatible self-interests among individuals, or on a deeper sense of brotherhood/sisterhood. Or is the model a mixture: on the one hand a deeper connection between people with ethnic affiliation, and on the other, cooperative relations among ethnic groups?

v) Main lines of division in society that must be overcome

Who needs to be reconciled with whom? What are the main dimensions of divisions that still occur in the community? What is the basis of these divisions, and how have they changed over the years?

d) What conceptions of reconciliation underpin these strategies, and how are these differences related to divisions among stakeholder groupings? (Which differences characterize which stakeholder divisions?)

This aspect of the analysis attempts to synthesize the various principles identified above into coherent frameworks of meaning. It is essentially an inductive process of constructing broader ideological frames on the basis of specific perspectives (guided by theoretical writings discussed in previous chapters).

5. The Research Subject and Methodology

a) Qualitative Analysis

The data regarding strategies, principles and ideological frames was essentially the result of post-coding. The variables identified are not ones that were specifically anticipated in the initial methodology. The data was thus not evenly collected for all respondents, and can not be meaningfully quantified, other than a rough more-versus-less sense.

A quantitative approach would not have matched the inductive nature of the research conducted here. So many of the dimensions of the dependent variables were left open-ended that a quantitative approach would have had to conceptualize the question very differently. The sensitive nature of the research context would also have made it very difficult to conduct this form of research without fundamentally compromising the credibility of the data.

b) Inductive and Deductive Processes

The central research question (the presence and location of tensions between top-down and bottom-up approaches to reconciliation) was framed in a deductive manner. Most of the other research questions (the identification of key principled divisions and ideological frameworks) were pursued in a more inductive manner.

c) Comparative Community Study

It was decided to look at the way that the TRC engaged with two specific communities. The study is essentially a comparative study of the views about reconciliation held by the various stakeholders in these communities. The reason for the comparison is to explore the differences and commonalities produced by the contrasting contexts (type of conflict and lines of division) in relation to which reconciliation is pursued. This allows the study

to examine to what extent conceptions of reconciliation might be products of specific conflict dynamics, party characteristics or local community versus national agendas.

The study thus tests which independent variables are the most significant in explaining conceptualizations of reconciliation - the ones that differentiate communities, or the ones that differentiate different types of stakeholders.

The study focused on the operation of the TRC in the Gauteng region. As noted in Chapter 6, this region encapsulates political dynamics, parties and TRC intervention processes that are similar to those found in most other provinces. This may lend some level of generalizability to the findings/hypotheses generated. Two factors set it apart from other provinces, namely, the level of organization among victims and the presence of NGO and church initiatives aimed at providing reconciliation/conflict resolution intervention. Both factors make this province more suitable in terms of access to specific reconciliation dynamics.

The two communities chosen were Duduza/Nigel and Katorus. They had a number of factors in common that made them particularly suitable. They had both experienced severe conflict over the last twenty years. The conflict in both communities has effectively (in terms of overt physical political violence) come to an end. The main (obvious) contrasts between the communities were:

- i) Town versus city: Duduza/Nigel is a town that is not part of the Johannesburg metropolis, while Katorus does form part of the metropolis, and
- ii) Nature of the division: the most intense aspect of the conflict experienced in Duduza was between ANC supporters (and aligned organizations) and the security forces,

while in Katorus, the dominant conflict since 1990 was between ANC and IFP supporters.

The significance of these two factors requires some explanation.

i) Town versus City

Duduza is in fact a suburb of Nigel, a town on the far-East Rand, located about 65 km south-east of Johannesburg. The town and its (de facto) racially segregated suburbs does form a geographic unit with natural boundaries. There are some who view the whole town as in some ways a community. There is a sense of inter-dependence, at least economically, and to a limited extent, socially. Politically they are united (since 1993) by a unified town council.

Katorus is the composite name of Katlehong, Thokoza and Vosloorus, three neighboring townships that have experienced very similar (and interconnected) political turmoil over the last few decades. It is located within the metropolis of Johannesburg and neighbors a number of white suburbs. Socially and politically (with regard to the conflicts) they are very interconnected, but in terms of local government structures they are split into separate local councils (each attached to a separate local council). The link with the various neighboring white residential communities is thus more of an artificial political construct.

ii) Nature of the Divisions

The conflict in Duduza, in broad terms, fits the profile of the black community in conflict with the apartheid state, but in a somewhat exaggerated sense. There were various protest marches, local community organizations mobilizing boycotts and other activities,

and there were underground ANC activities. The dynamics of conflict were also fairly typical of this period of resistance to apartheid, with many people being detained, tortured and killed.

In Katorus there were also similar conflicts between the community and the state, but these were eclipsed in the 1990s by very intense fighting between supporters of the ANC and the IFP. While many observers point to the role of the security forces in fueling tensions and supporting one side (and some claim both sides) in numerous ways including the supply of weapons, the community experienced a very clear internal division along political and (as the conflict progressed) also ethnic lines. While Duduza provides some commonalities with other communities that were in conflict with the apartheid state, Katorus reflects similar political tensions to those experienced in KwaZulu Natal. (The fact that conflict in KwaZulu Natal is mainly in rural areas, and is almost exclusively between Zulus and Zulus, makes any comparison highly tentative though.)

These two communities thus provided a very suitable context within which to examine the conceptualizations of reconciliation and the role of the TRC. They allow a contrast in terms of how reconciliation is viewed in relation to quite different conflict dynamics involving very different types of parties and divisions among disputants.

Duduza was examined on the one hand as a community in terms of the residential neighborhood, and on the other as a part of the larger town community. It was thus examined both with regards to the intra-community dynamics of the township and with regards to the inter-community dynamics between the township and the town.

Katorus was examined purely with regard to the intra-community divisions, and not in relation to the divisions which clearly still existed between the townships and their neighboring white areas. From a theoretical side, the main conflict dynamics were contained within the townships, and practically the linkages with the various different council structures would have been too complex (and somewhat artificial when examined as a community). The economic links between Katorus and the surrounding white neighborhoods are also not as intertwined as in Duduza, as Katorus residents work in various parts of the Johannesburg metropolitan area.

While Katorus consists of three distinguishable townships, the research focused on only two: Katlehong and Thokoza. They are treated as one community because the linkages and similarities between them are very extensive. Socially they are very interconnected, with people moving back and forth extensively. The dynamics of the conflict also did not recognize the boundaries between them. Groups from either side attacked their enemies both within their own communities as well as those within the neighboring community. There were some differences in conflict history as will be further examined in a later section. The main distinction is probably organizational. The IFP and ANC structures in the two communities operate independently from each other. This has been further underlined by their subsequent incorporation into distinct local council structures. The similarities are, however, perceived to outweigh the differences and thus make it possible to treat them, for the purposes of this research, as one community.

d) TRC Activities in the Two Communities

The TRC had held (public) human right violations hearings in both communities. They had both experienced relatively high levels of victim mobilization during the time of the public hearings.

i) TRC Involvement in Duduza

The various different accounts and interpretations of the TRC's engagement with the community is presented and analyzed in the following chapter. The following is simply a brief account of what the hearing entailed.

The TRC held a one-day human rights violation hearing in Duduza on 4 February 1997. The hearing combined cases from Duduza and neighboring communities of Ratanda, KwaThema and Tsakane. In preparation for the hearing the TRC met with various parties and individuals in the community. These included the local town council, the Civic Association (an ANC aligned community-based structure), trade unions and churches.

TRC statement takers came to the area and collected statements from the public on a specified day. Additional statements were collected by Khulumani (a victim-support organization) which was not included in the TRC's consultative workshops with the community.

The hearing was very well attended - the hall was filled to capacity and speakers had to be set up outside the hall. The hearing was mainly attended by local Duduza residents, with a few people coming from Ratanda, KwaThema and Tsakane. It appears there was only one white person from the local historically white town of Nigel - a National Party councilor. Of the ten cases heard on the day of the hearing, only three

cases were from residents of Duduza. The witnesses from Duduza who told their stories were:

1. victims of the 'zero-hand grenade' incident,
2. the sister of Maki Skhosana, and
3. a person who was tortured by police and accused by others in the community of being a police spy.

The other six cases were:

1. a mother whose 12 year old son was shot dead by police (KwaThema)
2. the mother of a COSAS activist who was injured by the 'zero hand grenade' incident and then shot dead by police (KwaThema)
3. an UWUSA (Inkatha-aligned trade union) member who was assaulted by COSATU (ANC-aligned union) supporters (Ratanda)
4. a COSATU member whose taxi was attacked by unknown assailants (Ratanda)
5. a woman whose (politically active) father died under mysterious circumstances in 1967, apparently in Rwanda.
6. an SDU member who was shot and injured by his comrades (for unknown reasons) (Ratanda)

ii) TRC Involvement in Katorus

The hearing in Katorus was scheduled for the same week as that of Duduza. (The whole of the East Rand was covered in one week). In preparation for the hearing the TRC met with the leadership structures of the ANC and IFP in each of the townships individually.

They also held three or four meetings with churches and political structures (SACP, the civic, trade unions) that were active in the area.

The venue that was chosen (by the TRC) for the Katorus hearings was Vosloorus, apparently for security reasons. The hearings were held over two days. Given the small number of IFP-aligned victims who had made statements to the them, the TRC had clearly made an effort to provide a balance in terms of the stories presented at the hearings. The hearings were not very well attended. The hall where the hearing was held was not much more than half full.

The list of cases heard on 7 and 8 February 1997 illustrates the range of experiences of victims who testified:

1. An IFP man whose brother was killed by ANC supporters (Vosloorus)
2. An IFP man who was shot by ANC supporters and whose brother was killed by soldiers (Thokoza)
3. An ANC supporter who was shot and blinded by police
4. A woman told of her two brothers who were shot and killed by IFP supporters (Thokoza)
5. An IFP member told of her brother and brother-in-law (both hostel dwellers) being shot by the police, and a second brother-in-law was shot by township youth (Thokoza)
6. A woman told of her husband disappearing after being abducted by hostel dweller (Thokoza)
7. A man told of being attacked by a group of Zulu-speaking people on a train on his way home to Thokoza (a number of fellow passengers were killed).

8. An SDU commander who was assaulted and tortured by police (Katlehong)
9. A woman who was assaulted by police and whose brother (and SDU member) was shot and killed by police (Thokoza)
10. An ANC member who was assaulted and whose friends were killed by an IFP member/gang leader (Thokoza)
11. A woman whose Zulu-speaking husband was shot by unidentified people (Thokoza)

The Amnesty Committee of the TRC also significantly engaged with the events in Katorus. Ten members of the SDU applied for amnesty for their role in killing ANC Youth League members. This was apparently in a conflict arising from allegations of SDU involvement in criminal activities. Over 150 residents also appeared in an amnesty applications regarding their involvement in SDU activities. Applicants included the most senior SDU leaders, active members and those who provided assistance to SDU members. While a significant proportion, these 150 applicants are, however, a minority of the total number of SDU members in the township. No SPU members appear to have submitted applications for amnesty.

e) Data Sources

The empirical data collection combined documentary research and semi-structured in-depth interviews. The main source of empirical information was the interviews. Most of the information about the way people understand reconciliation is not available in any documentary form, except for newspaper interviews, documentaries and other media materials which do not give sufficient depth of insight.

Documentary information was used to provide information about the structure and broad operation of the TRC. There was a (surprising) lack of documentation about the TRC's intervention in the specific communities studied (Duduza and Katorus). The TRC's efficiency in retaining and/or filing procedural documents was sadly lacking.

All the interviews were conducted between February and November 1997. Most of the Duduza interviews were in the period of March to June and those in Katorus from July to September. Interviews with TRC staff were mainly conducted in the first half of the year and those with NGO and church organization staff in the second half. No major changes in community dynamics or TRC activity occurred during the course of the research which were likely to affect the opinions collected at different times. The only serious factor that should be noted was that the community hearings in the two communities were held in February 1997. The interviews in Duduza were thus conducted in the five months following the hearing, while in Katorus there was a five month gap before the interviews were conducted.²

The interviews ranged from ½ hour to 2½ hours. Generally the victim interviews were the shortest and the TRC commissioner interviews the longest. Most interviews were about 1½ to 2 hours long.

Interviews were conducted with respondents from various key stakeholder groups: victims, ex-combatants, community leaders, TRC commissioners and staff, and NGO and church organization staff. In each community, interviewees were selected

² I stayed in touch with certain victims from Duduza and Katorus till the time of final editing (April 1999) and would have been informed of any significant developments affecting interviewee views of the TRC during its operation.

from three categories: victims, ex-combatants, and community leaders. A total of 85 interviews were conducted, involving 102 respondents. All interviewees were conducted one-on-one, in person (sometimes with an interpreter), except three group interviews involving a total of 20 ex-combatants. Of the 85 interviews, 24 were conducted in Duduza and 32 in Katorus.

The numbers of interviews according to their classification were:

Table 7.1: Respondents According to Interviewee Category

Category	Interviews	Interviewees	Interviews in Duduza	Interviews in Katorus
Victims	24	24	10	14
Ex-combatants	8	25	--	8
Community leaders	21	21	14	7
TRC commissioners and staff	19	19	--	--
NGOs and churches	13	13	--	--
Total	85	102	24	32

f) Sampling Strategy and Interview Procedure

i) TRC Commissioners and Staff

The sampling of TRC Commissioners and staff was the easiest to control. All the Commissioners and committee members³ in the Gauteng TRC office were interviewed. The only exceptions were those who were on the Amnesty Committee, as they were engaged in activities not directly related to the subject of this study. Other TRC staff that were interviewed were those who could shed light on different aspects of the TRC's work that had specific bearing on the research. Those interviewed were from different levels of seniority and came from a range of different departments within the TRC (e.g., research, investigations, community liaison, and different committees). While not a random sample, the sample was thus stratified in relation to seniority and departments. Individuals were selected (within the various departments) on the basis of opinions (by other staff) that they would be able to give me useful insights into the TRC's work and perspective on the issues that were covered in the research.

Staff were individually contacted by me after getting official permission from the TRC. All the interviews were conducted at the TRC offices, except one that was at the person's home. Some (particularly staff) were conducted after hours, as it was not TRC policy to allow outsiders to use staff time for research. All the interviews were conducted in English except for two people, for whom Afrikaans was a first language.

ii) NGO and Church Organization Staff

The NGO and church organization staff selected were simply those who were identified in the course of the research as the key people who had done work on community reconciliation, and those who had had extensive interaction with victims and ex-

³ Committee members were senior staff who took on the functions of Commissioners in the operation

combatants. The interviewees were staff from six organizations, with over half of them being staff of the Centre for the Study of Violence and the Khulumani Victim Support Organization.

The biggest problem with these interviews was getting church organization staff to keep appointments.

iii) Community Leaders

Community leaders in the two communities were selected mainly through a snowball process of identifying who the key leadership figures were. In Duduza, the interviews were (with one exception) arranged through direct personal contact (i.e., without introductions by a third party). The interviews were conducted at the person's house or office. Most of the interviewees in Duduza were selected because of their position in the town council, while others were more involved in internal community politics.

In Katorus, the interviews were all arranged via introductions by third parties. Some of the interviews were with formal leadership figures (e.g., political party chair), while others were with traditional leaders in the IFP (indunas). Leaders who could speak about the ANC-IFP relations and the interaction with the TRC were mainly targeted. The tension that still exists in Katorus made introductions by local contacts essential in providing a sufficient level of trust for them to talk fairly openly.

While the leaders were generally quite eloquent, the quality of the information was probably not as good as the other sources. Impression management was clearly the primary concern for many of them. Some were not willing to venture much beyond the

of the TRC, but who did not have the same decision-making powers regarding national policy.

formal line espoused by their party. All the interviewees spoke good English and no translations were needed. (However, it should be noted that my lack of African language skills may have influenced the selection of people to whom I was introduced.)

Partially as a balance to these official views, I also interviewed a number of key informants in the two communities. These were people who were in some way active in the political scene and who knew of the historical and present dynamics regarding political party processes. They were also familiar with the history of violence and some of the behind the scene tensions involving victims and ex-combatants in the community.

iv) Victims

Victims in the two communities were selected mainly using a snowball approach. The representiveness of the sample is therefore debatable. An effort was made to include significant numbers of both men and women in the sample.

In both communities, the main access point to victims was through Khulumani. In Duduza, I simply contacted certain key Khulumani members and asked them to introduce me to other victims in the community. Particular efforts were made to interview those who had testified at the public hearing. Other interviewees (such as community leaders) were also approached to put me in touch with victims (especially those who may not be part of Khulumani) but this was not fruitful. They did, however, sometimes refer me to one or other of the key Khulumani members whom I was already using as an entry point. These efforts appear to confirm the picture of a victim network that is fairly closed off from other political networks.

In Katorus the main source of interviewees also came through Khulumani. Rather than selected introductions, these interviewees were self-selected. Most of them were contacted at a Khulumani meeting in Katlehong. At the meeting I had explained what the research was that I was doing, and a number of people came to me after the meeting to say that they would be willing to be interviewed. Some of these victims then introduced me to other victims as well. Another entry point was an ex-combatant who was involved in community projects and thus knew some victims personally, and introduced me to two of them.

Victims were all assured that the interviews would be treated confidentially. (A few were, however, eager to get publicity for their stories, mainly to encourage investigation of the perpetrators.) Most of the victim interviews were conducted with only the victim present. The exceptions were the cases where translation was needed. In three cases in Duduza, translation was provided by another victim. In Katorus there were four cases where a victim arranged for a family member or neighbor to assist them with translations. In most of these cases the interviewee did speak some English, but wanted someone who could provide back-up. One interviewee was relieved to hear that I speak Afrikaans because he was afraid that he would not be able to express himself properly in English.

The only case where the presence of another person may have slightly compromised the openness of the interview was with the two victims who were introduced via the ex-combatant (who was present and assisted with translation). All the victim interviews were conducted in their homes.

One central limitation of using Khulumani, particularly in Katorus, was that they are mainly networked with victims who were broadly ANC aligned. Efforts were made to contact IFP victims in Katorus, but these were not fruitful. Victims in the IFP do not appear to have a united voice similar to Khulumani, which mainly operates in the ANC areas.

v) Ex-combatants

Ex-combatants were also approached via key individuals who introduced me to fellow ex-combatants. Three entry points were used, all ex-commanders of self defense/protection units in Katorus. These three people were now employed by NGOs in the conflict resolution/reconciliation field.

Only five individuals were interviewed one-on-one. The rest (20) were interviewed in three group interviews. These interviews were conducted in focus group style, with various people responding to any one question. In these group interviews, one of the individuals who had previously been interviewed acted as translator for those in the group who did not speak English.

The group interviews were conducted in a fairly informal manner and people did feel free enough to disagree with one another on a number of issues. Given the contentiousness of some of the issues discussed, the views expressed were, very likely, not as open or honest as would have been the case in one-on-one interviews. There did appear to be some reluctance by individuals to talk privately, possibly because this may be regarded with suspicion by others.

Interviews were only conducted with ex-combatants who had not applied for amnesty (with two exceptions). Efforts were made to contact others who had applied, but this proved unsuccessful.

g) Time Frame for Collecting Data

Most of the data collection happened in the 10 months immediately after the hearings in the two communities. This was a period when the respondents had the most immediate reactions to the TRC's intervention, and when there was still a high degree of uncertainty about what the TRC could or would deliver.

The time frame captures the most immediate disappointments among stakeholders. The hearings represented the peak in stakeholder hopes. Some were disappointed in the fact that the TRC did not hold a hearing in their immediate neighborhood (Thokoza and Katlehong), but they still held out hope that the TRC would come back to hold additional hearings. The actual event of the hearing was also a disappointment for some, while others found the lack of follow-through after the hearing to be the most frustrating. In the ten months following the hearing, there was a gradual process of fading hopes. People came to realize that their expectations for investigations, reparations and dialogue were not going to be realized to the extent that they had hoped.

On the one hand, this may be seen as the most pessimistic period for victims and other community members. It does, however, capture the contrast between the immediate expectations of the victims around the community hearing and their reaction to the TRC's involvement in their community.

Not too much changed after November 1997. In Katorus there were amnesty hearings in relation to abuses committed by the Self Defense Units, and in Duduza certain amnesty applications are still pending. These may have contributed (or may in future contribute) to assisting individual victims and the community as a whole in finding out more about the truth. From contacts with people in the respective communities, these are, however, not major impacts.

Another consideration that has not remained stable is the expectations regarding reparations. The TRC made draft recommendations at the end of 1997 for substantial reparations to be paid to victims. These recommendations were also repeated in the TRC's final report. Since then, these hopes were deflated by national ANC leaders who stated that they did not have the financial resources to cover such expenses (R3 billion over a six year period; R6 = \$1). Victims have protested against this claim and further lobbying and protests are likely before the issue is settled. Essentially, not much has thus changed since the time of the interviews, as victims are still unclear about what they are likely to receive from government.

6. Limitations of Interviewee Categorizations

Many of the interviewees did not fit only in one category discussed above. Some would easily have been classified in two or even three of these categories. While the specifics of who got put where is addressed in the data overview appendix (Appendix A), some methodological issues warrant a brief discussion at this point.

The identity of the individuals interviewed was, in some ways predetermined by the decision to target interviewees in various categories. People were approached with questions that related to their experience as a victim, as a perpetrator or as a community leader. Rather than have one questionnaire that would pick up on different parts of a person's identity/experience, interviewees were in effect pre-classified. While the interviews tried to be sensitive to these dynamics, some depth was probably lost.

I refer to this problem in terms of identity because in many cases the experience of two people can be very similar, but the way in which they interpret it and how they relate to it can be very different. Many of the victims did possibly participate in some way in the conflict, and were thus also ex-combatants (and possibly responsible for human rights violations). Some victims and ex-combatants have become leaders in their communities (placing them in a position of presenting their party line) and their opinions are often at odds with their personal emotional struggles to process their own feelings of anger, hurt, fear or guilt.

The term victim is itself a problematic one. The TRC has defined victims essentially in legal terms as victims of gross human rights violations (where a political motive was involved in the abuse). I did not limit myself to this definition, but in trying

to locate victims, it was probably inferred by others that this would also be what I was interested in.

Many so-called victims prefer the term survivor. They feel that they have worked through their sense of victimization and should thus not be labeled by this experience. Other victims are clearly still completely overwhelmed by their victimhood. I thus apologize for using the term, but do so because my analysis focuses on the impact of the victimization experience, rather than the psychological recovery process.

My victim-bias and ethical leanings have also prevented me from delving in any depth into the possible perpetrator aspects of victims' experiences. Victims have been blamed often enough in South Africa for bringing their suffering upon themselves through participating in protests against the government.⁴ It may have been explored in a sensitive manner by someone who had more time to build trust and provide some more serious input. Some of the victims also expressed some concerns about the way that some of the TRC Commissioners have cross-examined people about their political involvement.

The term ex-combatant is also a difficult one. Generally the terminological categories of the TRC has been that of victims and perpetrators. While the victims are categorized victims only if they are deemed a victim of gross human rights violations, a perpetrator is a perpetrator if guilty of any illegal action that may lead to civil or criminal sanctions.

⁴ The apartheid government, for example, argued that people suffered victimization as a result of their own political choices - those who suffered injuries as a result of the police firing at a crowd of protesters were responsible for initiating a potentially violent situation.

I suspect that many (if not most) of the ex-combatants that I interviewed were responsible for abuses of human rights. While initially I thought of them as the “perpetrator” or “victimizer” group, I was, however, deeply affected by their stories of their own victimization and their obvious remorse for what they had done in the past. The fact that most of them were in their mid-teens at the time of the conflict was also something that had an impact on my moral arithmetic. While the term “perpetrator” is used in most of the dissertation when referring to victims’ views, “ex-combatant” is used to refer to those who were interviewed.

7. Researcher Identity and Bias

a) The White South African as Researcher

An issue that I also constantly confronted when interviewing victims was the fact that I, a white, relatively wealthy South African, was requesting victims (of racial oppression) to help me do this research (and thus furthering my academic career).

I was never sure why victims appeared so willing to tell me their stories. To some extent, it appears that they appreciated being able to tell their stories, to have someone listen to them and take them seriously. Some saw it as an exchange of information where they could also find out from me what the TRC was doing or what they were likely to get from the TRC. In these cases, I tried to keep my input to a minimum till the end of the interview so as not to influence their responses. Some of them asked specifically to

know more about how they could contact the TRC to make a statement or to find out what is being done with their case.

I was most perplexed by those victims who told me about their victimization at the hands of white security force members. While some did not look at their victimization as overtly racially motivated, there were some who still expressed a fear and distrust of whites in general.

It was emotionally harrowing to listen to twenty-four stories of torture, abuse, killing and endless suffering. It was clearly also very painful for many of the victims to relive their pain as they told their stories. Many cried at points or got choked up with emotion. Some said that telling their stories (yet another time) made them feel better.

One possible explanation for people's willingness or eagerness to tell their stories is that it has become their source of power. They see the media, researchers and others who can convey their stories as channels of empowerment. While the silence of their suffering has been broken, they still feel that their community, the country and the world should hear their stories.

At the Khulumani meeting in Katlehong I was challenged by some of the people in the audience regarding my motives. One person expressed suspicion about the use of research by outsiders who could not be held accountable to the community. Why, I was asked, should people assist me in my research if the information I was collecting was not going to be used to improve their situation? My assurance that I would attempt to make my work of practical use to victims (via later feedback to Khulumani and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation), and that I would make an effort to publicize

their voices where possible, appeared to be key factors in determining their acceptance of my research work.

The ex-combatants' eagerness to talk was similarly puzzling. While not keen to tell their personal stories, they were eager to talk about their experience as ex-combatants. They had a similar sense of marginalization, of not being listened to. Some also expressed a need to confess and purge themselves, but the interview situation was clearly not the right context.

Another factor to consider was that I do not speak an African language. For most people I interviewed, especially African community leaders, victims and ex-combatants, English was a second or even third language. If I was able to speak an African language, it would probably have given me a higher quality of data, both because of the problems in people's ability to express themselves (and the information lost in translation) and because it would have instilled greater trust in interviewees' belief in my bona fides.

Another form of socio-political identification that probably influenced the responses I received was my connections with progressive NGOs. (It was known to many interviewees that I was previously an employee at a local progressive NGO.) This was partially a factor in providing me with access to certain interviewees. Most significantly, however, it probably affected the responses that I was given by TRC staff. Many TRC staff had come from NGO backgrounds (or were closely connected to these networks). They sometimes thus went to great lengths to justify why they could not do things in a way that would have satisfied NGOs (despite their level of sympathy and agreement with NGO perspectives).

b) Professional Role and Accountability

My research also clearly reflects my professional links to organizations involved in victim advocacy, community reconciliation and the promotion of human rights. Before starting the research I was employed in a community conflict resolution organization called Community Dispute Resolution Trust which provided me with many of the contacts to pursue the interviews in the respective communities. After the data-collection part of my dissertation I was employed at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, a Non-Governmental Organization involved in TRC work, and directly active in lobbying around victim needs and human rights issues. This orientation was undeniably influential in shaping my research goals, present in my data collection, and influential in my discussion of the findings. While this does not, I believe, detract from the validity of the data and the conclusions, it does suggest that my interests and conclusions were shaped and constrained by my concern for the practical utility of the research.

One obvious bias in presenting the data is a personal preference for bottom-up (as opposed to top-down) approaches to reconciliation. While trying to acknowledge the utility of top-down approaches and arguing for a more integrated approach that does not simply rely on one or the other, my concern for processes that engage more with the needs of local communities is inherent in much of the analysis.

8. Conclusion

In this chapter, the research methodology employed by the dissertation is directly linked to the analytical framework presented in Chapter 2 and expanded upon here. The exploratory nature of the research and the nature of the variables involved (conceptual frameworks, principles) created problems for the use of quantitative methods. If these variables were to be more concisely defined (as a result of the research or on the basis of more precise hypotheses), quantitative methods may prove useful in taking this research a step further.

The key research question underlying the methodology used was whether serious differences regarding reconciliation strategies were identifiable among stakeholders, and whether underlying differences in reconciliation perspectives (particularly those of the community and the TRC) could be characterized respectively as bottom-up and top-down approaches. Other differences (based on different reconciliation principles) and different stakeholder divisions were also explored to examine alternative explanations, and to provide insights into broader ideological frameworks of reconciliation.

The research provided many practical challenges regarding data collection (e.g., access to data, consistency and quality of data, influence of the researcher on data). Some of these were insurmountable because of the nature of the research context (language, culture, race, the level of fear and mistrust) and others were introduced by the nature of the research project (mainly time and resource constraints). The impacts of these constraints are examined in this chapter, and it is anticipated that the quality of the information collected does, however, allow certain tentative conclusions regarding the main research questions.

The next four chapters present the empirical data collected through the research process outlined in this chapter. Firstly, the data regarding individual case management is

presented in Chapter 8, and then the data regarding community engagement in Chapter 9.

Chapters 10 and 11 address the underlying principles and ideological frames identified in the strategic contentions. Through a discussion of the various perspective of these strategic issues, the underlying differences between stakeholder groups are elucidated.